



Rajshahi AL finally extends support to Badsha

But over 100 of his party men join BNP

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton and local Awami League (AL) have finally extended their support to grand alliance candidate Fazle Hossain Badsha in Rajshahi-2 constituency in the upcoming parliamentary election.

However, frustration of Badsha, also a Politburo member of Workers' Party, is still to end as he is facing opposition from a group in his own party.

Over 100 leaders and activists of Workers Party (WP) and its youth front Jubo Moitree (JM) left the parties and joined BNP yesterday to strengthen hands of Badsha's rival BNP candidate Mizanur Rahman Minu.

Liton, also chief coordinator of Rajshahi unit of grand alliance, at a meeting of alliance's workers yesterday, introduced Badsha as an alliance candidate. The meeting was held at Rajshahi Zilla Parishad auditorium.

Liton asked all party-men to dedicate them to ensure his victory in the election forgetting the 'bitter past' as he (Badsha) termed the election as a 'war against fanaticism, communalism and corruption'.

But Badsha had to say 'sorry' for his alleged role against Liton during the August 4 Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) polls.

Pressurised by Awami

League (AL) high command, local AL held a six-hour extended meeting of party workers at Rajshahi city AL office Friday evening.

AL workers at the meeting demanded of Badsha to say 'sorry' for not taking part in Liton's election campaign in RCC polls and telling his party men not to vote for Liton, meeting sources said.

Later at around 9pm, Liton and Badsha arrived at the

meeting. As Badsha said 'sorry' at the meeting, Liton asked party men to make sure Badsha's victory.

Earlier in the morning, about 105 leaders and activists of WP and JM joined BNP at BNP candidate Mizanur Rahman Minu's election office at Sona Dighi crossing.

Minu welcomed the group led by former Jubo Moitree president Mahfujul Hasnain

Hikol.

The 105 activists are among 300 who resigned from their parties in September protesting what they called 'wrong decisions' of senior leaders during August 4 RCC polls.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi city WP general secretary Liakat Ali said that the renegades were expelled from the parties many times earlier for anti-party activities.



Grand alliance nominee Fazle Hossain Badsha receiving a 'boat' as polls symbol at a campaign meeting at Rajshahi Zilla Parishad auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Hasina, two AL stalwarts vie for 3 Gopalganj seats

SUBROTO SAHA BAPI, Gopalganj

Three VIP candidates are contesting in three parliamentary seats in Gopalganj this time. The three are top leaders of Awami League, which is leading the Grand Alliance.

The three have been repeatedly elected from the seats securing record number of votes. Most of these candidates are yet to start their election campaign, as their rivals are very weak. As a result the electioneering has not yet got momentum in the three Gopalganj constituencies. In the town election is mainly confined to leisurely talks and in the teashop gossips.

The VIP candidates are AL president and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, party presidium member and former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and the party's industries and commerce secretary former lawmaker Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan.

District election office sources said, Sheikh Hasina won four times from Gopalganj-3 (Tungipara-Kotalipara) constituency, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim five times from Gopalganj-2 (Sadara-Kashiani) seat and Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan twice



Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Selim and Faruk Khan (bottom right)

from Gopalganj-1 (Mukshudpur-Kashiani) seat with huge margin of votes. The three were elected with record number of voters.

In 1991 seat Sheikh Hasina won Gopalganj-3 seat bagging 67,945 votes while her nearest rival Hafez Omar of Khelafat Majlish got 17,256 votes. Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim clinched Gopalganj-2 constituency getting 93,015 votes against his nearest rival BNP candidate AFE Sharfuzzaman

Jahangir's 9,661 votes.

In 1996 Sheikh Hasina won Gopalganj-3 constituency with 1,02,689 votes while her nearest rival BNP's Bishnupada Halder got 2,568 votes. Sheikh Selim won Gopalganj-2 seat bagging 1,15,032 votes against his nearest rival BNP candidate Sharfuzzaman Jahangir's 7,825. In Gopalganj-1 seat Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan was elected securing 1,19,536 votes. His nearest rival BNP's Md Khairul Baqui got 4,914 votes.

In 2001 election Sheikh Hasina won Gopalganj-3 seat with 1,54,130 votes while her nearest rival Khelafat Majlish candidate Hafez Omar got 7,223 votes. In Gopalganj-2 seat Sheikh Selim won securing 1,85,821 votes while his nearest rival BNP's Sheikh Saifur Rahman Nantu got 8,164 votes.

In the elections many of the contestants lost their security deposit against their three VIP rivals.

This time four party alliance has fielded BNP leader SM Jilani against Sheikh Hasina in Gopalganj-3, BNP leader Sirajul Islam Siraj against Sheikh Selim in Gopalganj-2 and BNP's Md Selimuzzaman Mollah against Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan in Gopalganj-1 constituency.

Khulna has no independent candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

There is no independent candidate in any of the six constituencies in Khulna in the upcoming parliamentary election.

The number of candidates in the six constituencies now stands at 31 after withdrawal of nomination paper by 10 candidates and grant of appeal of three candidates by the Election Commission.

The highest number of eight candidates is in Khulna-2 (Sadara-Sonadanga), considered the most prestigious parliamentary seat in the district.

Veteran politician and former speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali who filed nomination paper from Khulna-6 as an LDP candidate finally withdrew his candidature.

The return of Proshika chief Kazi Faruque Ahmed in the polls race is a matter of concern for his rivals. His nomination paper was cancelled by Khulna returning officer but the Election Commission granted his appeal.

Faruque is thought to be the richest among 31 candidates in the six constituencies.

3 women runners in Faridpur

REZAUL KARIM, Faridpur

Three female candidates are in parliamentary poll race in Faridpur.

Awami League Presidium member Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury is contesting from Faridpur 2 (Nagarkanda, Salha and Krishnoper union of Sadarpur) constituency. She faces BNP ticket holder Shama Obaid Rinku, daughter of late KM Obaidur Rahman. Sajeda Chowdhury contested from the constituency three times and won once.

In Faridpur-4 (Bhanga, Sadarpur and Charvadrason), Nilufa Zafarullah, wife of AL Presidium member Kazi Zafarullah, won the party ticket. She will fight with four-party candidate Shah Alam Reza and Zaker Party candidate Mostofa Amir Faysal.

AL rebel candidate Begum Saleha Mosarraf withdrew her candidature in Faridpur-4.

There are four parliamentary constituencies in Faridpur.



Sajeda Chowdhury



Shama Obaid



Nilufa Zafarullah

Shefali of Natore-1 finally gives in

A CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Though Shefali Momtaz clinched Awami League ticket defeating her brother-in-law Abul Kalam Azad in the fight for nomination she could not hold the ground in Natore-1 (Lalpur-Bagatipara) constituency.

Killed former lawmaker Momtazuddin's widow Shefali Momtaz had to concede to MA Talha of Jatiya Party who was finally chosen as the Grand Alliance nominee in the seat.

Party sources said, BNP central publicity secretary former state minister Fazlur Rahman Patal won the seat for four times in a row with huge margin of votes.

Former MP Momtazuddin was killed by terrorists on June 6, 2003. Following his death his wife Shefali Momtaz and their son Sagor got entangled in a leadership feud with Momtazuddin's brother district AL vice president Advocate Abul Kalam Azad. After a long struggle Shefali Momtaz on November 17 got AL nomination signed by

party chief Sheikh Hasina for contesting in the upcoming national election from Natore-1 constituency. Advocate Azad made an abortive attempt to change the nomination in his favour. But at last the ticket went to Grand Alliance partner Jatiya Party's MA Talha.

In his reaction to Talha's nomination Advocate Abul Kalam Azad said he would work as per party decision. He said if the alliance partner candidate takes AL election symbol boat the winning would be easier.

Thana Awami League general secretary Ishaque Ali speaking on behalf of Shefali Momtaz said, all will have to work accepting the party decision.

JP leader MA Talha expressing his reaction to getting Grand Alliance ticket said, "I have been nominated by the Grand Alliance. But so far I have received no written papers. However, I hope to get a letter jointly signed by Sheikh Hasina and HM Ershad in a day or two."

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407 out of 600 polling centres risky in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 407 polling centres out of 600 in Pabna are identified as risky, district police department sources informed.

District Special Branch (SB) of Police identified the risky centres in the district. The District SB sources also said that they have already informed the matter to the higher authorities. According to the sources, out of 600 polling centres in 9 upazilas of the district 407 have been identified as risky while only 193 polling centres were marked as normal.

According to the official sources, 75 polling centres out of 114 centres are risky in Pabna Sadar upazila, 68 centres out of 72 in Ishwardi upazila, 13 centres out of 36 in Atghoria upazila, 26 centres out of 40 in Bhangura upazila, 34 centres out of 74 in Chatmohar upazila, 30 centres out of 42 in Faridpur upazila, 38 centres out of 64 in Bera upazila, 37 centres out of 62 in Sujannagar upazila, 49 centres out of 59 in Santhia upazila and all 37 polling centres in Ataikula police station area have been identified as risky.

District police will give top priority to ensure foolproof security and maintain law and order in all the polling centres during and after the December 29 parliamentary election. The security measures would be taken in three steps in these centres, the SP said.

Apart from police force deployed in those centres, mobile police force and also striking reserve of police would be active for the most important polling centres. Md. Jamil Ahmad, the superintendent of Police (SP), Pabna told this correspondent yesterday over phone.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ-1, 2

Four contenders still face corruption, criminal cases

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Parliamentary election candidates in Chapainawabganj-1 and Chapainawabganj-3 constituencies include at least four who are still accused in different corruption and criminal cases.

The four are former lawmaker and district BNP president Shahjahan Ali in Chapainawabganj-1 (Shibganj); former lawmaker and BNP secretary Harunur Rashid, former lawmaker and district Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Latifur Rahman and Samik League leader Abdul Wadud in Chapainawabganj-3.

Latifur Rahman is also a member of majlis-e-surah (central working committee) of Jamaat.

Shahjahan Mia in his affidavit stated that he is still accused in five cases for graft, extortion and cheating. One of his cases is under trial in Chapainawabganj Judicial Magistrate Court and four others are stayed by the High Court.

Harunur Rashid is accused in three criminal cases for graft and extortion. All the cases have been stayed by the High Court. Harun filed nomination paper in Chapainawabganj-3 constituency.

Abdul Wadud Biswas, contestant in Chapainawabganj-3, is accused in criminal cases. One of the cases is stayed by Chapainawabganj Judicial Magistrate Court



Clockwise: Shahjahan Mia, Harunur Rashid, Abdul Wadud and Latifur Rahman.

and the other by the High Court.

Latifur Rahman of the same constituency is accused in a criminal case filed with Sadar police station in 1988 under section 147, 148, 448, 302, 427, 109, 149 of Penal Code and Explosives Act. The case has been stayed by the appellate division of Supreme Court.

KHAGRACHHARI BNP

Samiron still fighting rebels

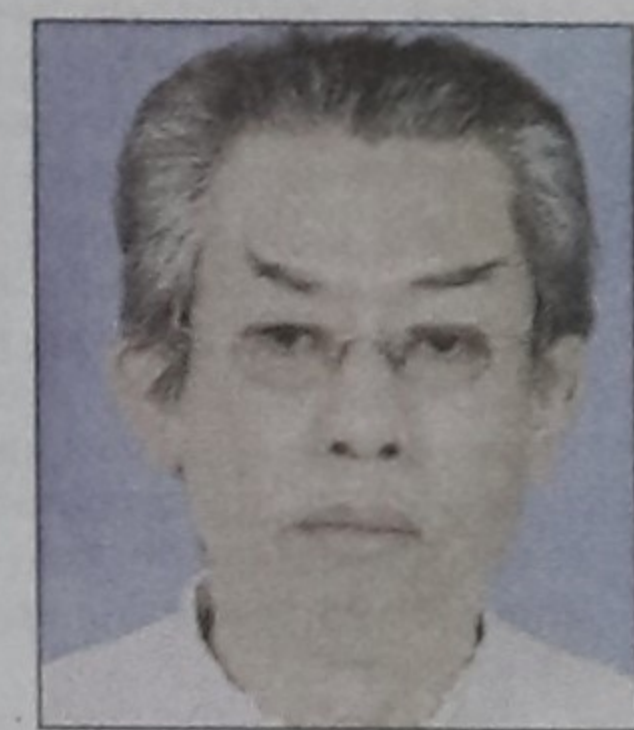
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

BNP nominee in Khagrachhari Samiron Dewan yesterday said he will take control of the party office on December 15 and requested the local administration to help him.

The party office is now held by party activists loyal to Wadud Bhuuiyan, now in jail in corruption cases.

At a press conference at his house in the hill town, Samiron said those who are occupying the party office are not BNP members. If they are party men, they should allow him to use it for poll campaign, he said.

Samiron said he has requested the deputy commissioner to help him take



control of the district party office.

"The rebels are opposing the party decision and they should be expelled from the party," he said.

He said, out of 101 members of the district committee, only three are recognised by

central BNP.

They are press secretary Mohammad Nazrul Islam, cultural affairs secretary Mohammad Belayet Hossen Majumder and district committee member Mohammad Ali Badsha.

Membership of the rest, recruited by Wadud Bhuuiyan, are not valid as they have no approval by BNP central committee, Samiron said.

"So, they are not members of district BNP".

Many leaders and activists of district BNP and its front organisations told me over phone that they were under pressure from Wadud to campaign for me," Samiron told the press conference.

"This will not be a problem in my victory," he said.

AL, BNP both have rebel candidates in Dinajpur-4

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rebel contenders of Awami League and BNP, Mizanur Rahman Manu and Md Hafizur Rahman Sarkar have collected their electoral symbols to contest in the December 29 election from Dinajpur-4 (Chirirbandar and Khansama) constituency.

Mizanur Rahman Manu, former whip of AL, is contesting as an independent candidate with 'television' symbol as he failed to get party ticket. He resigned from AL recently.

Manu was elected lawmaker from Dinajpur-4 constituency with AL ticket in 1996 but lost 2001 election to BNP candidate Md Akhtaruzzaman Miah.



Hafizur Rahman



Mizanur Rahman

Former ambassador AHM Mahmud Ali got AL ticket from this seat.

Failing to get BNP ticket, Md Hafizur Rahman Sarkar filed his nomination paper as independent candidate from

Dinajpur-4 constituency and got his electoral symbol 'table clock'.

Industrialist Hafizur Rahman Sircar had got BNP ticket for January 22, 2007 election (later cancelled).

Md Akhtaruzzaman Miah, former lawmaker from the constituency, secured BNP ticket to contest from the seat.

Local sources said followers of Hafiz and Akhtaruzzaman Miah earlier engaged in several clashes over the nomination.

Meanwhile, local political observers said popularity of AL rebel candidate Mizanur Rahman Manu has receded in his constituency as he remained inactive in local politics since the January 11 changeover last year.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF



Clockwise: Four-party candidate Enamul Haque conducting mass contact in Rajshahi-1, grand alliance nominee Omar Faruk Chowdhury campaigning in the same constituency, alliance nominee Iqbalur Rahim leading a procession in Dinajpur-3, and supporters propagating for four-party nominee Shamsul Alam in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR