



MOULVIBAZAR-2

AL, JP clash over candidature

Situation tense as local AL backs party man instead of grand alliance nominee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Three persons were injured in a clash between supporters of Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP) at Uttar Bazar in Kulaura town over selecting candidate for Moulvibazar-2 constituency yesterday evening.

Meantime, BNP nominee advocate Abed Raja has got back his candidature for the same constituency through an order from the High Court. The clash at Uttar Bazar followed change of grand alliance candidate in the seat. AL's Central Election

Organising Committee Chairman HT Imam issued a letter asking party workers to campaign for AL nominee Aatur Rahman Shamim as the grand alliance candidate for the constituency as the High Court declared his candidacy valid.

Earlier, JP nominee Nawab Ali Abbas Khan had been declared as grand alliance candidate for the seat following negotiation between AL and JP high commands and local leaders and workers of AL started campaign for him.

During scrutiny of nomination papers, the returning officer (RO) had cancelled

Aatur Rahman Shamim's nomination paper. After the Election Commission (EC) upheld the RO's decision, Shamim challenged it before the High Court.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area as supporters of Shamim and Abbas took position at different places.

Kulaura police said three persons including a supporter of the JP nominee were injured in the clash.

JP leader Abbas said, "I was declared as grand alliance candidate through agreement of Awami League and Jatiya Party high commands. So Election Organizing Committee of Awami League has no right to change the decision. Local Awami League leaders and workers are still working for me."

Meanwhile, BNP nominee advocate Abed Raja got his candidature back for Moulvibazar-2 as the HC on Thursday declared his nomination valid. He has already started election campaign.

Earlier, the RO of Moulvibazar had cancelled his nomination paper during scrutiny due to allegation of his unpaid bank loan.

In absence of BNP candidate in the constituency, former lawmaker BNP leader MM Shahin sought party nomination but BNP high command declined it.

BNP leaders and activists in this constituency are now divided into two factions as a large section of local BNP men are supporting 'rebel' BNP candidate MM Shahin even after the return of BNP nominee Abed Raja.

Many local voters think that the main contest will be held between Ali Abbas Khan and MM Shahin.



Activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir distributing derogatory books on Awami League and its chief Sheikh Hasina during a campaign by four-party alliance candidate Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury in Chittagong-10 yesterday. (Story on page 1)

More election stories on page 5

BARISAL-5 Rebel BNP, AL men pull out for party nominees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Awami League leader Mahbubuddin Bir Bikram, independent candidate for Barisal-5, yesterday announced his withdrawal from the polls race in support of AL candidate Col (ret'd) Zahid Faruk Shamim. Mahbubuddin, popularly known as SP Mahbub, made the announcement at a programme arranged at the temporary office of the AL.

"Now it is the time to get united to regain this important seat. Following the principle of 'Bangabandhu' and in compliance with the party discipline, I have decided to discontinue my election campaign and work for party candidate Shamim," said Mahbub.

Hailing Mahbub's decision, Col Shamim said they now expect win in the constituency that was earlier considered as the fortress of BNP.

City and district AL leaders, BCC Mayor Mojibar Rahman Sarwar and a good number of grand alliance activists were present at the programme where Mahbub was greeted with a bouquet of flowers.

Meanwhile, former lawmaker Zahiruddin Swapon, central BNP information and research secretary, and independent candidate for Barisal-1 constituency, stopped his election campaign three days ago after BNP candidate Abdus Sobhan regained his candidature through an order from the Supreme Court.

When contacted, Zahiruddin Swapon said, "I belong to BNP. I have decided to refrain from the election race as the party candidate regained his candidature."

Last chance for JP to survive in politics

Ershad tells election rally at Muladi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said this is the last chance for existence of JP to survive in politics.

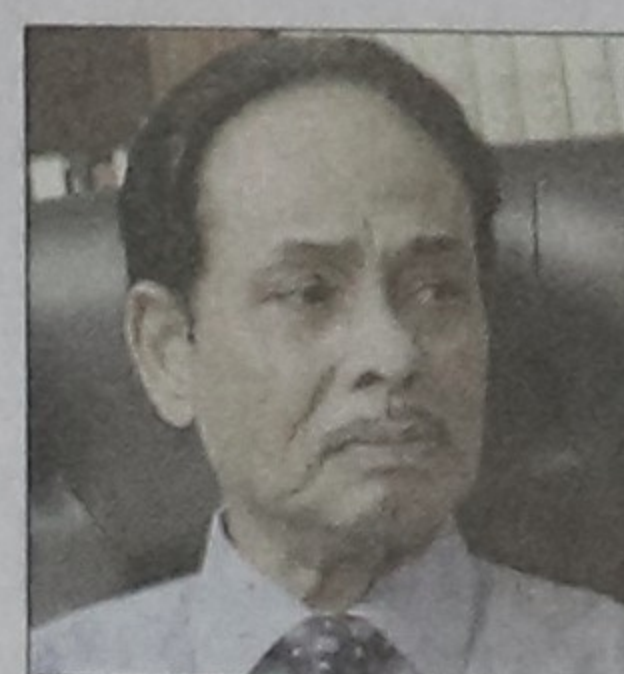
There is no difference between 'boat' and 'plough' and relation between us is not only political, but also originating from heart.

Ershad said this at an election rally yesterday at Muladi Degree College ground under Muladi upazila in Barisal.

He said he had already instructed the JP leaders and workers to work together to ensure victory of the grand alliance candidates.

He also sought vote for Golam Kibria Tipu, a Jatiya Party candidate under grand alliance for Barisal-3.

HM Ershad hoped that the grand alliance would go to power as waves of 'Sonar Bangla' and 'Natun Bangla' have been combined in a



HM Ershad

he added.

"While they illegally laundered abroad crores of taka from the country, how can four party alliance talk about saving the country and the people?"

They smuggled out the money they had got from kickbacks. Don't they feel ashamed to seek vote on the excuse of saving the country? Ershad quipped.

So to save the country from corruption, militancy and terrorism there is no alternative to electing grand alliance candidates and rejecting the BNP-Jamaat led four party alliance, the former president Ershad stressed.

The Jatiya Party chairman is set to address another public meeting same day at Bakerganj Government College for ABM Ruhul Amin Howladar, JP candidate under grand alliance in Barisal-6.

Level of their edn talk of the town

SHEIKH SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Barisal

It is a talk of the town that many of the contenders in the upcoming parliamentary election in Brahmanbaria could not even cross high school.

Out of 36 candidates in six constituencies, 13 have little or no formal education, according to data available from the election office.

Two of the contenders can only read and write Bangla, two read up to class V111, two passed the SSC examination and seven crossed HSC level.

BNP candidate in Brahmanbaria-1 SA K Ekramuzzaman passed HSC. Six others having the same education are Md. Omar Ali of NAP (Muzaffar) and independent candidate Abdul Halim in Brahmanbaria-2, independent runner Jahurul Haque Chowdhury in Brahmanbaria-3, Bikalpa Dhara's Khadaker Hejfur Raman in Brahmanbaria-4, BNP's Anwar Hossain in Brahmanbaria-5 and AL's AB Tajul Islam in Brahmanbaria-6.

Abdul Hamid of Islami Andolon in Brahmanbaria-2 and Md. Mushfiqur Raman (independent) in Brahmanbaria-5 read up to class V111.

Md. Salim Kabir of Jaker Party in Brahmanbaria-3 and Md. Nazrul Islam of Kallyan Party in Brahmanbaria-4 are lucky enough to obtain SSC certificates.

Niazul Karim of Islami Andolon in Brahmanbaria-3 and Musleh Uddin Bhuiyan of the same party in Brahmanbaria-4 can only sign their names.



Rejecting four-party nomination to Jamaat leader Maulana Habibur Rahman for Moulvibazar-6, Beanibazar BNP convener Shamsul Islam addressing a street rally in the upazila yesterday.

Pro-Ilyas men say 'no' to Sylhet-6 Jamaat runner

Procession, rally held at Beanibazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The BNP activists brought out a procession with sheaf of paddy at Beanibazar upazila headquarters protesting against four-party alliance nomination to a Jamaat leader in Sylhet-6 (Golapganj and Beanibazar upazilas) constituency.

Independent candidate former lawmaker Syed Mokbul Hossain, who was earlier expelled from BNP, and former AL lawmaker Nurul Islam Nahid are considered as major contestants in the constituency.

The organisers of yesterday's protest programme, known as belonging to the pro-Ilyas faction of local BNP, also held a brief rally with upazila BNP convener Shamsul Islam in the chair.

The other faction is working for Jamaat's district Amir Moulana Habibur Rahman, the four-party candidate for the constituency while Mokbul Hossain is running as

an independent candidate with blessings from a section of local BNP men.

Mokbul Hossain was first elected in 1986 as an independent runner. In 2001 again as a non-party candidate he defeated AL's Nurul Islam Nahid by over 5,000 votes. However, he had enjoyed support from a good number of BNP activists, as none from the party contested in the election.

Mokbul later joined BNP but he became vocal against former minister BNP stalwart M Saifur Rahman and his son former lawmaker Naser Rahman's alleged corruptions in mid-2006.

Since then he has no link with the BNP as the party also expelled him.

Industrialist Mokbul, who still enjoys support of a BNP faction in the area and has a good reputation as a donor, is looked upon by many locals as a potential candidate this time too.

In quest of Mr Clean

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

People of Jhenidah will cast vote for honest candidates, not party symbol. This is the general opinion of voters according to this correspondent who concluded his visit to various parts of the district recently.

In Jhenidah-1 (Shaikupa) constituency, there is a bright prospect for AL leader Abdul Hye who is vying with former BNP lawmaker Abdul Wahab. As Wahab lost support of his party men, Hye is likely to come out winner in the seat.

In Jhenidah-2 (Harinakundu) and part of Jhenidah Sadar constituency, AL nominee Shaiful Islam Apu will contest with former BNP whip Moshirur Rahman who was accused in four cases including murder, extortion and hiding information in wealth statement.

But in Jhenidah-3 (Kot Chandpur and Maheshkhali) constituency, AL candidate Shaiful Haq Khan Chanchal may face a tough fight with Jamaat-e-Islami nominee Motiur Rahman who is comparatively in good position.

The two AL nominees of Jhenidah-2 and Jhenidah-3 constituencies are new faces.

In Jhenidah-4 (Kaliganj) and part of Jhenidah Sadar constituency, AL's Abdul Mannan is in the race with former BNP lawmaker Shahiduzzaman Beltu who lost already tarnished his image due to bad record.

Motiur back to race with 'boat' symbol, full vigour

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

AL candidate in Mymensingh-4 constituency Principal Motiur Rahman won the legal battle and got the election symbol back yesterday.

Posters and leaflets with his election symbol "boat" have created enthusiasm among the voters of grand alliance in Mymensingh-4 (Sadar).

Both Rahman and Jatiya Party (JP) presidium member Rowshan Ershad are the candidates from Mymensingh-4. Still there is a confusion among the voters as to who is the candidate of grand alliance.

Campaigns of both Rahman and Rowshan as grand alliance candidates are still going on simultaneously. JP brought out an election rally in the district town seeking vote for "plough" yesterday evening.

After Principal Rahman's

Mymensingh-4

getting back on the polls race, the election scenario in the constituency has changed. AL men are out now with hectic election campaign with fresh vigour. Campaign is on with rallies and slogans participated by AL men spontaneously.

On contact, a JP leader said that they must obey the court verdict. "We will sit shortly to find out a way, said the source claiming Rowshan as the grand alliance candidate.

According to AL sources, Rowshan was fielded as grand alliance candidate in Mymensingh-4 earlier following a letter signed by AL Chief Sheikh Hasina on December 11. But in another letter on December 12 night from central AL, it was said that Principal Motiur Rahman is



GM Quader

expressed sympathy to the leaders and workers of BNP.

The Grand Alliance candidate alleged that recently it has been learnt that fake election ballot papers for Lalmonirhat-3 seat have been printed under the UNO's supervision. News of printing ballot papers secretly is a matter of serious concern for

neutrality of election, the JP leader maintained.

In the written complaint GM Quader also mentioned that there were press reports that KM Ali Newaz attended the secret meeting of some government officials at Uttara, Dhaka. Quader requested the returning officer to relieve the UNO from all election related work for holding the polls in a free and fair manner.

Copies of the complaint were sent to the Chief Election Commissioner and secretary to the Election Commission secretary through fax yesterday.

Lalmonirhat Sadar UNO KM Ali Newaz talking over cell phone yesterday afternoon denied the allegations. He said he was discharging his responsibilities properly and declined to say anything further in this regard.

Fake ballot papers being printed in Lalmonirhat

GM Quader brings charges against UNO

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Awami League-led Grand Alliance candidate in Lalmonirhat-3 constituency Jatiya Party presidium member Golam Mohammad Quader yesterday brought serious allegations against Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer and appealed to the deputy commissioner and Returning Officer to relieve the UNO of all election related responsibilities.

In a written complaint to the deputy commissioner and district returning officer yesterday noon GM Quader alleged that, UNO KM Ali Newaz is learnt to be linked with BNP through family relations. Besides, different sources said that UNO Newaz publicly supported the party and

Momtaj lone woman runner in Sylhet divn

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Jatiya Party leader Momtaj Iqbal, contesting as Awami League-led grand alliance candidate in Sunamganj-4 (Sunamganj Sadar and Biswambharpur) constituency is the lone female candidate in 19 constituencies under Sylhet division this time.

Momtaj, who fought in the 2001 polls and held the third position with 30,160 votes, is facing BNP's Fazlul Haque Aspia, the winner that time.

Wife of late JP minister Major (ret'd) Iqbal, Momtaj bears a good prospect of winning if she gets full support from the AL, said several JP leaders and activists in Sunamganj.

In 2001 polls, two other women fought in Sylhet division -- independent runner Azizunnesa (1782 votes) from Sylhet-2 and Nazma Akhtar Chowdhury of JP-Manju (3,389 votes) from Sylhet-5.

In 1996, Shamima Akhtar of JSD (Inu) got 1,005 votes while independent runners Ruhela Hossain Rina and Nilufar Zaman Nila Chowdhury got 327 and 255 votes in Sylhet-1 and Moulvibazar-3.

In 1991, only female candidate in the division was Minara Begum who bagged the lowest number of votes among six candidates in Sylhet-4.

Police, patrol police and reserve force will be deployed in risky centres to ensure foolproof security and maintain law and order in all the polling centres during election, said Police Super Abdul Mannan.

The Returning Officer and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Maksudur Rahman Patwari has expressed his confidence that a free, fair and peaceful elections will be held across the district on December 29.

331 polling centres risky in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A total of 331 polling centres, out of total 879, in 12 upazilas under eight constituencies in Tangail district have been identified as risky.

Police, patrol police and reserve force will be deployed in risky centres to ensure foolproof security and maintain law and order in all the polling centres during election, said Police Super Abdul Mannan.

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Poster published by AL candidate Principal Motiur Rahman.