



ELECTION 2008



UPDF, 2 rebel candidates stand in alliances' way

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Two rebels and a United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) candidate have posed a threat to both the candidates of grand alliance and four-party alliance.

This is because of popularity of the three candidates in big Khagrachhari constituency comprising Khagrachhari Sadar, Panchhari, Dighinala, Mohalchhari, Manikchhari, Matiranga, Laxmichhari and Ramghorupazillas.

Rebel Awami League (AL) candidate Mohammad Zahedul Alam, contesting as an independent candidate, has cornered grand alliance candidate Jotindra Lal

Khagrachhari district

Tripura, also president of District AL. Many party leaders and indigenous candidates are also backing Zahedul.

When contacted, Jotindra Lal said he is hopeful of winning because he will receive votes of majority of indigenous voters.

But Zahedul cited Wadud Bhuiyan's example who won the 2001 elections although he was a BNP-nominated Bengali candidate. Jotindra has no acceptance among his own community people, he said. Because he had contested for the chief post of Bangladesh Tripura Kalyan Sangsad, the highest post of Tripura ethnic

community, on May 23 where he got only 28 votes which questions his popularity, Zahedul said.

When contacted, Jotindra Lal said he is contesting to regain the seat that was lost in 2001 elections.

Four-party alliance candidate and district BNP advisor Samiron Dewan is also under pressure of rebel candidate Daudul Islam Bhuiyan, also former vice president of district Jubo Dal. Daud is contesting as an independent candidate to whom most of BNP leaders are backing. He also got support of 101 members of

district Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

However, most of the leaders at the grassroots level are with Samiron.

UPDF candidate Uzzal Smrity Chakma is a major factor before both the alliances.

When contacted, Uzzal Chakma said he and his organisation work for indigenous people. It will continue in future also whether he is elected or not, he said. If voted to power, he will change fate of indigenous people in Chittagong Hill Tracts, he said.

There are 3,37,397 voters in the constituency including 1,73,781 male and 1,63,616 female voters, election office sources said.



The election rally held yesterday in favour of Awami League-led grand alliance candidate Jatiya Party leader Anisul Islam Mahmud at Hathazari bus termina in Chittagong.

Biharis may play decisive role in Nilphamari-4

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Urdu speaking people of the railway city of Saidpur, commonly known as 'Biharis', can play a decisive role in the upcoming election in Nilphamari-4 constituency comprising Saidpur and part of Kishoreganj upazila.

As they constitute about 30 percent voters, they can make a different result from rest of the country.

In the constituency, there is no common candidate of grand alliance. The parliamentary seat has been kept open for both the candidates of Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP).

A total of five candidates are contesting in the constituency. It is presumed the main contest will be among three candidates. They are AL's Col (ret) Maruf Saqlain, BNP's Amzad Hossain Sarkar (4-party Alliance) and JP's Md Sawkat Chowdhury.

Although the total number

of voters in the constituency is 2,46,492 but in Saidpur municipality alone there are 70,000 voters. Most of them are Biharis most of whom migrated from India after partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

During our liberation war most of them supported Pakistan. After independence of Bangladesh, many of them declared themselves as Pakistani citizen and went back to Pakistan.

Rest of them are still living in 21 refugee camps in Saidpur as stranded Pakistanis.

At that time a good number of Biharis accepted Bangladesh as their own land and became Bangladeshi citizens. They and their descendants are now voters. As a minority community, they are united.

JP chairman H M Ershad is well known to them as he was commander of Saidpur Cantonment in mid-1971. Leading personalities of the

Urdu speaking community established good relationship with him.

On the other hand, AL candidate Col (ret) Maruf Saqlain was also commander of Saidpur cantonment a few years ago just before his retirement from army. Then he stood beside local people in time of flood and disaster. He is also liked by many people as an honest and a straight forward person.

Former BNP lawmaker Amzad Hossain Sarkar was elected here in 2001 election. Again he became a candidate of 4-party alliance. While allotting houses of government's Uttara Housing project at Dhelapeer here, he helped Biharis get most of the houses. Many Biharis were given important posts in the BNP committees here.

Earlier, it was found that whoever won in Saidpur municipality having majority Biharis voters were able to become lawmaker.

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Reject war criminals in polls

Expatriates in Sylhet urge voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A 20-member delegation of United Kingdom (UK)-expatriate Bangladeshi community yesterday urged voters here to reject war criminals in the upcoming Jatiya Sangsad (JS) election.

They said this while addressing a press conference in the city where UK chapter of Bangladesh Awami League (AL) joint secretary Syed Faruque read out a written statement.

The delegates urged voters to cast vote for candidates who can commit to work for punishment of war criminals.

Expatriates are contributing equally towards economic development of UK as well as Bangladesh, speakers said. Expatriates contributed immensely during Bangladesh liberation war in 1971, they said. "We need a favourable atmosphere for investment here after a free and fair polls," they said. They cautioned voters against political parties who had patronised militancy and fanatic fundamentalist forces during their rule previously and asked people to prevent them from coming to power again.

Among others, AL president member AMA Muhit who is a candidate in Sylhet-1 constituency, councillors Mushtaq Qureshi, Hormuj Ali, Alhaj Somru Miah, Habibur Rahman Habib, Shoib Ali, Sitab Chowdhury and Misbahur Rahman Misbah spoke on the occasion.

Besides, Prof Dr MA Momen from the USA, Sylhet district AL president ANM Shafique and city AL general secretary Misbahuddin Siraj were present.

The team arrived here last week to campaign for AL candidate in Sylhet-1 constituency AMA Muhit.

He also said, as Bogra is a fort of BNP the presence of central leaders in the election campaign is not necessary here.

A four-party alliance candidate and BNP leader in Bogra on condition of anonymity told this correspondent over cell phone that he does not feel Tarique Rahman's absence in election campaign in Bogra has any impact on his campaign. None of his workers told him that they were feeling the absence of Tarique.

He said as the election laws has become stricter, on the one hand the election cost has come down and on the other the leaders and workers need not run after leaders like

Local Awami League (AL) leader Sabber Ahmed died of cardiac arrest immediately after delivering his speech from a stage built for campaigning yesterday.

According to witnesses and party sources, Sabber was one of the speakers for AL candidate and President of district AL Brig General Enamul Haque of Chapainawabganj-1 (Shibganj) constituency on Ranibati High School premises at 4:30pm.

As he was getting down from the stage after his speech he felt severe pain in his chest. Party leaders and activists took him immediately to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital where the doctor on duty declared him dead.

Sources said Sabber was the general secretary of Shibganjpora AL. He had submitted his nomination paper for upazila chairmanship in coming upazila parishad election.

Vote for grand alliance to root out corruption, militancy

Ershad tells Ctg rally held for Anisul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday urged people to vote for grand alliance candidates to help free the country from 'corruption, militancy, looting and poverty'.

"The people now want a country free from corruption and terrorism. The grand alliance was formed with the noble objective of ridding the nation of a deep crisis as people want change in politics," he said at a large rally at Hathazari Bus Stand in support of grand alliance candidate barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud.

JP (Ershad) leader Anisul Islam Mahmud is contesting from Chittagong-4 (Hathazari).

Anisul Islam Mahmud and Morshed Murad Ibrahim are the two JP (Ershad) leaders contesting under the banner of AL-led grand alliance in Chittagong district.

Recalling the role of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for the creation of independent Bangladesh, the JP chief said, "Bangabandhu had a dream for Sonar Bangla. I also dreamt for Notun Bangla. Now time has come to



Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad greets Chittagong Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury at the election rally yesterday.

materialise both the dreams." Urging the AL supporters to cast vote for 'plough' symbol in Hathazari, Ershad said both 'boat' and 'plough' symbols stand for the same interest -- making the country a developed one.

Grand alliance candidate Anisul made different pledges including reconstruction of flood-protection embankment, prevention of erosion by River Halda, creation of

huge employment through industrialisation and setting up technical training institutes.

Chaired by JP upazila unit leader Principal Mohammad Ismail, the rally was addressed, among others, by Chittagong City Corporation Mayor and Awami League city unit President ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, former education minister Zia Uddin Bablu and Awami

League leader advocate Ibrahim Hossain Bablu.

On his way back to the city Ershad also addressed four street rallies two at Fateyabad and Oxygen intersection under Chittagong-4 constituency and two at Shershah and Muradpur under Chittagong-9 constituency.

Earlier in the morning, the JP chief addressed three street rallies in the city's Halishahar Nayabazar, Dewanhat and East Nasirabad areas under Chittagong-9 (Double Mooring) constituency in support of grand alliance candidate Morshed Murad Ibrahim, also a JP leader.

Terming contest of AL leader Dr Afsar Amin in the same seat with 'boat' symbol as 'unfortunate', Ershad said, "Morshed Murad is the legal candidate of the grand alliance. So, it is expected that boat and plough together fight against the opponents."

About candidates from both AL and JP two key partners of the grand alliance, in eight constituencies throughout the country, the JP chief at a press conference in the afternoon said the matter would be resolved through discussion with AL central body.



Polls runners from faridpur-1, grand alliance's Abdur Rahman, four-party's ex-MP Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Jatiya Oikya Front's Sharif Kaiser and Islami Andolon leader Md Hafizur Rahman vow to root out corruption at a programme at Boalmari upazila auditorium yesterday.

JOYPURHAT-1, 2 CANDIDATES' EXPENSES 9 out of 10 depend on relatives, donations

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Nine candidates out of ten in two Joypurhat constituencies are depending on relatives and individual donors for meeting major portion of their election expenses.

Only Abdul Aziz Mollah who is contesting in Joypurhat-1 and 2 constituencies as independent candidate will meet his election expenses from own sources.

However, local election monitoring cells are closely watching election expenses of the candidates as per their survey reports.

According to the affidavits submitted to the election commission by the candidates, they declared that donations from their relatives and well wishers would be used, along with their own funds.

Md. Abdul Aziz Mollah mentioned in his affidavit that he has a budget of Tk 5 lakh for running from the two constituencies. He will bear the election expenses from his own fund.

In Joypurhat-1 (Joypurhat Sadar and Panchbibi) AL led Grand Alliance candidate Md. Khaza Shamsul Alam Chowdhury will spend Tk 8 lakh on election. Of the amount, Tk 3.5 lakh will be collected from the relatives and Tk 75,000 will be given by different persons as donations.

BNP candidate in the constituency Md. Mozahar Ali Proddhan will spend Tk 11.5 lakh on election. Of the amount, relatives will provide Tk 7.5 lakh while different persons will give Tk 3 lakh as donations.

Dewan Muhammad Zahurul Islam, candidate of Islami Andolon Bangladesh, will spend Tk 1.95 lakh. Of the amount, Tk 15,000 will be provided by the relatives and Tk 44,000 will be given by different persons as donations.

Wazed Parvez of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) showed his election expenses at Tk 2.10 lakh. Of the amount Tk 20,000 will come from his job, Tk 90,000 from

relatives and Tk 1 lakh as donation from different persons.

Dewan Bodiuzzaman of CPB will spend Tk 1.25 lakh. Of it, Tk 50,000 will be given by relatives and Tk 50,000 by different donors.

In Joypurhat-2 (Khetlal, Akkelpur and Kalai) Grand Alliance nominee Abu Sayed Al-Mahmud Swapan will spend Tk 15 lakh. Of the amount only Tk 2.5 lakh will come from his businesses. Tk 6 lakh will be collected from his relatives while different persons will donate Tk 4.5 lakh.

BNP led 4 party alliance candidate Md. Golam Mostafa's election budget is Tk 12 lakh. Of the amount, Tk 3 lakh will be collected from relatives and Tk 7.5 lakh from different donors.

BSD candidate Shah Zaman Talukder has estimated his election expense at Tk 1.80 lakh. Of the amount, Tk 25,000 will come from his own business, Tk 75,000 from relatives and Tk 80,000 from party men and different individual donors.

Tarique's absence in Bogra hardly felt 5 Chandpur seats may see fight between alliances

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

The absence of BNP senior joint secretary general Tarique Rahman in the election campaign for the four-party alliance candidates in Bogra has not made any difference.

BNP Bogra district committee president Rezaul Karim Badsha on Friday afternoon told this correspondent over cell phone that after the party chairperson Khaleda Zia visited Bogra on December 17 such a situation has been created that no absence of anybody, if even felt earlier, is now being felt.

He also said, as Bogra is a fort of BNP the presence of central leaders in the election campaign is not necessary here.

A four-party alliance candidate and BNP leader in Bogra on condition of anonymity told this correspondent over cell phone that he does not feel Tarique Rahman's absence in election campaign in Bogra has any impact on his campaign. None of his workers told him that they were feeling the absence of Tarique.

He said as the election laws has become stricter, on the one hand the election cost has come down and on the other the leaders and workers need not run after leaders like



Tarique Rahman. He claimed that they do not need any leader this time as common people are working for him.

Anwar Hossain, who is working for BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia's election campaign in Bogra-7 (Gabtol) constituency said, he worked for the BNP nominee in last three elections. He does not feel the impact of Tarique Rahman's absence in the election campaign.

Another BNP worker in the same area Azizar Rahman said, Tarique's absence is not creating any problem as the candidate in Bogra-6 and Bogra-7 seats are party chairperson Khaleda Zia herself. There is no necessity of any publicity by any other central leader in these two seats.

In the five constituencies of Chandpur district the campaign of Awami League-led Grand Alliance candidates and four-party nominees are most prominent.

Besides, the publicity of 'Rising Sun' - symbol of Gano Forum candidates - and 'Hand Fan' of Islami Andolon are also seen.

In Chandpur-1 (Kachua and Narayanpur union of Matlab upazila) four party alliance candidate former state minister ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon has engaged all his strength to win the seat.

Though Mir Iqbal is campaigning with AL symbol "boat" after former AL state minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir got back his candidature through court order confusion has arisen as to who is the candidate of the Grand Alliance.

In Chandpur-2 (Matlab North and South) the activities of three candidates are more visible. They are: Grand Alliance nominee former air chief air vice marshal (ret) Rafiqul Islam, four party

alliance candidate Md Nurul Huda and BNP rebel Dr Jalal Uddin.

In Chandpur-3 (Chandpur Sadar and Haimchar) Grand Alliance candidate Dr Dipu Moni has been active in the field level from early stage. She is carrying out hectic mass contact, rallies and processions. Four party alliance candidate in the seat GM Fazlul Haque was a little late in the electoral field this time. But he is also making up.

In Chandpur-4 (Faridganj) Grand Alliance candidate journalist Shafiqul Rahman is campaigning tirelessly to ensure victory for boat. At the initial stage the four party alliance had crisis regarding selection of candidate. Now Lion Harunur Rashid is very active in the race.

In Chandpur-5 (Hajiganj-Shahrasti) a dual fight between Grand Alliance candidate major (ret) Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam and four party alliance nominee Engineer Mominul Haque is likely.

The Grand Alliance candidates are trying hard to regain all the five seats in Chandpur.

Polls free of black money, muscle

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Five candidates out of six contesting the Jatiya Sangsad election from Gazipur-4 (Kapasia) constituency yesterday appeared in same dais and holding hands of each other vowed to keep the election free from the influence of black money and muscle power.

They also pledged that whoever wins the race others will extend their hand of cooperation to the victor. They took vow to work unitedly for the development of the area and welfare of the country.

Vow 5 Gazipur-4 runners

They made the pledge in a "Face the Voters" programme organized jointly by Kapasia upazila corruption resistance committee and Shusasoner Janno Nagorik (Shujan) jointly

organized the programme at Kapasia Pilot High School Ground Friday afternoon.

The people present at the programme threw three questions at each of the candidates. Several thousand people there also took oath not to vote unfit, controversial, dishonest, extortionist candidate. Former

adviser of a caretaker government and Shujan vice president M Hafizuddin Khan led the oath to the voters.

Grand Alliance candidate Tanjim Ahmed Sohel, four party alliance nominee Mohammad Abdul Majid, Islami Andolon Bangladesh's Azahar Hossain Khan, independent runners Mahmudul Alam Khan and Farida Yasmin also spbke.