

They're still unaware about candidates, polls date

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

A large number of voters in Bogra district, especially women, are yet to know the date of the upcoming parliamentary election and identity of the candidates in the constituencies concerned.

It was revealed as The Daily Star correspondent recently talked to a number of voters in seven constituencies under Bogra district.

Sources at district administration, however, said several organisations including NGOs and government establishments earlier conducted awareness programmes for the 'innocent' voters.

Zulikha, 60, wife of a day labourer at Haddipotty in Bogra town, is a voter in Bogra-6 (Sadar) constituency. In a reply of a question about the candidates in the seat, she said, "Khaleida Zia

A day with Bogra voters

[BNP chairperson], Sheikh Hasina [Awami League president] and Momtaz Uddin [AL Bogra district unit president] are contesting in the seat.

"I don't know the election date," Zulikha said, adding, "Six people including my husband Razzak Molla became voter in Jubilee School centre."

According to the election office BNP Chairperson Khelada Zia is contesting in Bogra-6 (Sadar) and Bogra-7 (Gabtoli-Shahjahanpur) constituencies. AL Bogra district unit President Momtaz Uddin is contesting for Bogra-6 seat as grand alliance candidate with 'boat' symbol.

Three other candidates are also contesting for the same seat. AL President Sheikh Hasina is not a candidate for the seat.

Mohammed Ashraf Uddin, 65, of Darihasraj Village under

Sonatola upazila of the district, enrolled his name in the last voter list for Bogra-1 (Sariakandi-Sonatola) constituency.

"I don't know who are contesting for the seat. I heard that only 'nouka' (boat) and 'dhaner shish' (sheaf of paddy) candidates are in the election," he said.

AL central leader Abdul Mannan is contesting for the seat as grand alliance nominated candidate and Mohammed Shokrana are contesting as BNP nominated candidate for the same seat, district election office sources said.

"I know two candidates in this seat [Bogra-2]. Four-party alliance candidate AKM Hafizur Rahman has 'sheaf of paddy' symbol. But I don't know the symbol of grand alliance candidate Shariful

Islam Jinnah. I am not sure

about the election date," said Mohammed Mozaffar Hossain, 55, of Baniapara Village in Shibganj upazila.

Lazem, 37, of Pirapara Village in Kahaloo upazila said he knows Hossain Ali and Mamdudur Rahman as candidates for Bogra-4 (Kahaloo-Nandigram) constituency.

According to the election office, the four persons contesting for the constituency are -- Mostafa Ali Mukul of BNP, AKM Rezaul Karim Tansen of JSD, Mamdudur Rahman of LDP and Abdul Haque Azad (Islami Shashantantra Andolon).

"I heard from locals that parliamentary election will be held on next Monday," said Lazem.

"I don't know who are contesting for this seat [Bogra-7 -- Gabtoli-Shahjahanpur]. I don't know the election date either," said Swaraswati, 50, a housewife at Munshipukur village in Shahjahanpur upazila.

5 UPDF men held while on 'no vote' campaign

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The security personnel in last two days nabbed five activists of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), a CHT based political platform of the indigenous people, from two separate places in charge of conducting campaigning for casting 'no vote'.

The arrestees were identified as Lotaram Chakma, Subhas Chakma and Smritibindu Chakma from Jurachhari upazila headquarters, Kajolmoy Tangchangya and Jyoti Bikash Chakma from district town.

All of the arrestees were produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday.

When asked about the arrest of UPDF members district election officer Syed Md. Amirul Islam said, "I don't know why they have been arrested and about the violation of election code of conduct. I am only assisting the returning officer to hold the election here."

Contacted Md. Nurul Amin, deputy commissioner of Rangamati and RO said he had no knowledge of such arrests.



Jamaat candidate Latifur Rahman (marked by circle) trying to prevent party activists from attacking men of Pratihshuti, an NGO, after it distributed leaflets urging people not to vote for war criminals.

PHOTO: STAR

FACE TO FACE WITH VOTERS IN C'NAWABGANJ

Leaflets against war criminals anger Jamaat-Shibir men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Two candidates out of three in Chapainawabganj-3 (Sadar) constituency yesterday appeared on the same dais for a 'face to face programme with voters' and pledged to work for development of Chapainawabganj, if voted.

Former lawmaker and BNP nominee Harunur Rashid and former lawmaker and Jamaat-e-Islami nominee Latifur Rahman also promised to make Chapainawabganj free of corruption, violence, terrorism and drugs.

Awami League nominee Abdul Odud Biswas was not present as he was in the capital, party sources said.

As the programme started, a local NGO distributed leaflets urging people not to vote for war criminals. This angered Jamaat-Shibir

activists who shouted and asked for withdrawing the leaflets and departure of the NGO men.

Amid the trouble, Jamaat candidate Latifur Rahman urged party men to calm down and saved the situation.

Sachetan Nagarik Committee, a unit of Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB), Shushahoner Janney Nagarik (Shujon) and Committee for Resisting Corruption jointly organized the programme held at Birshreshtha Jahangir Mukto Mancha in the town. Over 400 voters attended the programme that continued till 1 pm from 10 am.

Prof Dr. Sirazul Islam, president of the local corruption resistance committee presided over the meeting.

Both of the contestants also promised two build pakka roads and ensure smooth power supply in char area covering seven unions.

HC ORDER

Monzur Quader returns to race in Sirajganj-5

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An influential BNP leader and former MP of Sirajganj-6 constituency (Chowhali-Shahzadpur) Major (ret) Monzur Quader has got back his nomination for Sirajganj-5 constituency (Belkuchi-Chowhali) on Sunday as the High Court issued order to the Election Commission with permission for Quader to contest in the upcoming parliamentary election.

There is no further hindrance for Quader to participate in the election, though there were many complaints of corruptions against him.

Meanwhile, returning officer in Sirajganj has allocated him "Sheaf of Paddy" symbol. Earlier, the returning officer cancelled his nomination papers, submitted for Sirajganj-5 constituency due to his loan and bill defaulting.

Provocative brochures, leaflets, CDs seized

All addressed to Khulna Jamaat Ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seizure of 20,000 brochures and 30,000 leaflets fraught with provocative political write-ups from Khulna SA Paribahan courier service storeroom has created sensation among the people and worried civil and police administrations ahead of the election.

Police said they seized the brochures and leaflets following secret information from intelligence agencies.

The brochures were sent from Magbazar, Dhaka and addressed to Khulna Ameer of Jamaat Mian Golam Parwar.

The leaflets were addressed to Jamaat leader Moulana Abdul Kader in Paikgacha upazila of Khulna district.

The 15-page brochure titled 'Logi Baitha Noi, Desh Gorer Rajniti Chai' is edited by Farhad Mazhar. His name was printed at the bottom of the brochure.

The leaflets sent to Moulana Abdul Kader also have the same contents as in the bro-

chures. Police on Friday seized over 100 CDs and audio cassettes from Continental Courier Service storeroom.

The CDs contain photos of incidents of violence on October 28, 2006 during the hartal called by 14-party alliance in protest against the controversial general election scheduled for January 22 last year. The election was not held.

Police said the brochures, leaflets, CDs and audio cassettes were brought to Khulna for distribution among people to provoke them against 14-party candidates in Khulna-5 (Dumuria-Phultala) and Khulna-6 (Koirapaikgacha).

City Ameer of Jamaat Mian Golam Parwar is contesting from Khulna-5 while Moulana Abdul Kader is election agent of Jamaat leader Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus in Khulna-6.

None of the two Jamaat leaders could be contacted for their comments as they were busy campaigning.

More election stories on page 5

It was attempt to kill me: Omar Faruk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Awami League candidate Omar Faruk Chowdhury in Rajshahi-1 constituency yesterday expressed concern over security of grand alliance candidates following an attack on him during campaign on the previous night.

At a press conference at his house in the city, Omar Faruk said the attack was an attempt to kill him. He demanded his security or return of his legal firearm.

Rajshahi mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton who was present at the press conference apprehended that political godfathers of terrorists might have masterminded the attack fearing their defeat in the upcoming election.

Omar Faruk came under the attack at Buraburi crossing under Pachondar union in Tanore upazila at around midnight Saturday night while he was returning after campaign in Mundumala municipal area.

The terrorists barricaded his road by placing a tree and with two trucks and two microbuses. As his jeep stopped yards away, the terrorists swooped on his vehicle hitting it with sticks, Omar Faruk told the press conference.

Sensing danger, his companions took him down the roadside crop field in the dark and the terrorists chased them shouting 'shoot', 'shoot'.

In the meantime, a police patrol team reached the spot forcing the terrorists to flee toward Naogaon in a microbus kept ready there, he said.

After the incident, police said they seized the two trucks and arrested their drivers and helpers from the scene, but they denied their involvement in the attack.

Mymensingh-4 may see battle of alliances

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

There is likely to be a tough fight between grand alliance candidate Principal Motiur Rahman and four-party alliance nominee former minister AKM Mosharrif Hossain in Mymensingh-4 (Sadar) constituency, local voters said.

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina introduced Principal Motiur as a candidate of grand alliance at a mammoth election rally held at circuit house ground yesterday.

Four-party alliance nominee Mosharrif promised renovation of all educational institutions on priority basis. Grand alliance candidate Motiur Rahman pledged to do his best to remove water logging, a chronic problem in Mymensingh town as well as development of communication system in his constituency.



PHOTO: STAR

Ektatarer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee forms a human chain at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi yesterday urging people not to vote for communal and anti-liberation forces and militants.

MAGURA-2

'1/11 was plot against top politicians'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

'One eleven was a deep rooted conspiracy against democracy and political leaders in the country and the situation was created only to tarnish the images of well reputed political figures', said former BNP lawmaker from Magura-2 Quazi Salimul Huq.

Salimul Huq has been charge-sheeted in three criminal cases along with BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia's son Tarique Rahman and former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar.

He said this at a rally yesterday at Nomani Maidan in Magura town.

Quazi Salimul went into hiding just after 1/11 and was on the run for about two years. He got bail from the High Court recently.

He claimed that he was accused and charge-sheeted in the cases as a part of conspiracy against political leaders.

HECTIC CAMPAIGN IN C'NAWABGANJ-1

Kansat 'hero' Rabbani obstacle to bigwigs

RABIUL HASAN, C'nawabganj

With tough contest looming large in vital Chapainawabganj-1 (Shibganj) constituency, all the three prospective candidates are passing time amid hectic campaign.

District BNP President former lawmaker Prof Shahjahan Mia, district Awami League President Brig Gen (ret) Enamul Haque and Gono Forum candidate Golam Rabbani, the popular leader of 'Kansat movement' during the four-party alliance government, are contesting here.

BNP candidate Shahjahan Mia, five times lawmaker from the constituency, won the seat by defeating AL leader Enamul Haque by 11,833 votes in 2001 parliamentary election.

But after 1/11 changeover last year, Shahjahan was accused in five extortion cases, arrested and remained in jail custody for 18 months.

He lost much of his popularity during the last couple of years, said several locals.

Enamul Haque was defeated in 2001 poll battle, but he continued maintaining

close contact with the local people and party activists and now has a good position in his constituency.

However, Kansat movement leader Golam Rabbani is likely to appear as a big barrier for the two candidates from major political parties.

Good reputation for his social work and popular image for 'Kansat movement' is Rabbani's main advantage.

Local people said, in 2006 when movement for palli bidyut (rural electrification) in Kansat was in full swing under the leadership of Golam Rabbani, 17 people were killed in police action.

A large section of local people held former lawmaker Shahjahan Mia responsible for allowing police atrocities against local people that time.

Rabbani is likely to get support from a section of supporters of BNP, Awami League and a few other parties. Floating voters may also favour him.

Price control first task if voted to power: Ershad

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, Sirajganj

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman H M Ershad yesterday urged the people to vote for grand alliance candidates to save the country from anti-liberation forces and make it free of corruption, militancy.

He said, the grand alliance is promise-bound to build a happy and prosperous society in a peaceful atmosphere.

The former president said the people suffered much during what he called 'misrule' by BNP-Jamaat government and corruption of its leaders.

The price level tripled during the government's tenure, but it did not take any step as its leaders and workers were involved in profiteering through syndicates. Low-income groups were the worst sufferers.

The first task of the grand alliance, if voted to power, will be to take steps to reduce prices of essentials, he said.

Referring to nine years of Jatiya Party rule, Ershad said, price of rice was Tk. 8 to Tk 12 per kg, which rose to Tk 30-35 during the BNP-Jamaat government, he said.

Ershad was addressing at



Erosion by Jamuna will be checked and the rail line from Sirajganj Bazaar station to Sadanandapur would be restored. Ershad expressed his disappointment finding no Awami League leader on the podium during the rally.

"I addressed at least seven rallies arranged by Awami League in different areas of the country.

"Awami League leaders should have attended the rally arranged under the banner of grand alliance", he said.

He introduced Aminul Islam Jhantu as grand alliance candidate in Sirajganj-2 constituency (Sirajganj Sadar-Kamarkhanda) and begged vote for him.

He also warned grand alliance leaders that if they fail to achieve victory this time due to any wrong decision, they will be 'destroyed' and people of the country will face a serious crisis.

Among others, Jatiya Jubo Sanghati secretary and JP nominee Aminul Islam Jhantu, Jatiya Party Presidium member Muzibor Rahman Juktibadi, district secretary Gazi Faruk Ahmed spoke.

an electoral rally arranged by Sirajganj district Jatiya Party. Held at Sirajganj Varsity College ground in the town, it was presided over by district JP president Lutfar Rahman. Ershad said, there is no gap between AL and JP. The grand alliance has been formed bid to fight corruption and establish real democracy in the country. He called upon the people to vote for 'plough' or 'boat' symbols to place the grand alliance to power. Turning to local problems, Ershad said, if elected, the grand alliance government will reopen Qami Jute Mills, shut during the four-party alliance government.