

## BNP rebels worry 4-party in 6 Sylhet division seats

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet.

The BNP-led alliance is facing trouble from rebels in 6 constituencies in Sylhet division this time, though all the seats were captured by it in 2001.

Three of the seats are in Sylhet, two in Sunamganj and one in Moulvibazar district.

In 2001 election, four BNP nominees and two party rebels were elected in those seats. The two rebels returned to the party later but denied nomination this time.

Rebel contenders former lawmakers Syed Mokbul Hossain and MM Shahin and Nozair Hossain are on top of discussion now, who are worried for party nominees, sources said.

They said in Sylhet-6, Mokbul would bag most of BNP men's vote while 4-party alliance runner Moulana Habibur Rahman of Jamaat-e-Islami is getting support from a faction only. The contest would be between grand alliance candidate former lawmaker Nurul Islam Nahid and Mokbul, locals said.

Syed Mokbul Hossain was first elected in 1986 as an inde-

pendent runner. As an independent runner, he defeated AL's Nurul Islam Nahid in 2001 election also with a margin of 5,000 votes.

Mokbul enjoyed support of local BNP men as they had no party candidate at that time. This time also, BNP mysteriously sacrificed the seat to Jamaat's district Amir Moulana Habibur Rahman, who is contesting as a four-party alliance candidate.

After 2001 election, Mokbul joined BNP but was expelled from the party in 2006 as he protested alleged misdeeds of Saifur's son.

But Mokbul still enjoys support of a BNP faction and may show something different, many in the area believe.

Failing to manage BNP ticket in 2001, MM Shahin ran independent and was elected by defeating AL's Sultan Mohammad Mansur in Moulvibazar-2.

This time also, Shahin is an independent runner, facing BNP nominee Abed Raza. As Raza was disqualified for loan default, things went in favour of Shahin. But Raza came back to the scene again. However, it is too late.

The contest in Moulvibazar-2 would be between grand alliance nominee former lawmaker Nabab Ali Abbas Khan of Jatiya party (JP) and Shahin, a number of people said yesterday.

USAAAL leader Ataur Rahman Shamim was first given party ticket in Moulvibazar-2 dropping reformist Sultan. His nomination was cancelled for loan default, but it was cleared by the High Court. But it is too late.

Nozair Hossain is contesting in two seats—Sunamganj-1 and Sunamganj-4. Once a CPB man, Nozair was elected in 1991 from AL-led alliance and in 2001 he was elected with a BNP ticket from Sunamganj-1 (Tahirpur, Dharmapasha and Zamaiganj). Nozair was expelled from BNP in July this year for his role as a frontline reformist under the leadership of Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

In Sunamganj-4, Nozair is fighting former district BNP chief and whip Fazlul Haque Aspia. He is trying to cash in on the long absence of Aspia from the area after 1/11.

Party men said Nozair may do well in Sunamganj-4, where the grand alliance has fielded JP's

Mumtaj Iqbal against Aspia. Aspia has the image of a gentleman among people while AL men are working for Mumtaj Iqbal, the lone female runner in Sylhet division.

In his original constituency—Sunamganj-1, independent runner Nozair has been causing trouble for BNP's Dr. Rafique Chowdhury, a former leader of central BMA. AL has a new face there—Moazzem Hossain Ratan.

Locals said contest may be between Ratan and Nozair.

In Sylhet-3, four-party candidate former lawmaker Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury is facing independent runner Juba Dal central vice-president Abdul Quaiyum Chowdhury. Quaiyum may manage several thousand votes, locals said. Quaiyum was expelled from the party last week.

Independent runner BNP leader barrister Kutub Uddin Sikder is a headache for 4-party nominee Jamaat's former lawmaker Moulana Farid Uddin Chowdhury in Sylhet-5. AL's former lawmaker Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder is grand alliance nominee there.



PHOTO: STAR

Grand alliance candidate Mejar Uddin in Rajshahi-3 concluded his campaign yesterday with a big procession of buffalo carts carrying supporters with 'boat' symbols in hand.

### BRAHMANBARIA-2

## Ziaul hopes to beat Amini, thanks to feud in BNP

SHEIKH MD. SHAHIDUL ISLAM, BRAHMANBARIA

Conflict among the local BNP leaders about supporting the four-party alliance nominee and president of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini is brightening the prospect of AL-led grand alliance candidate Advocate Ziaul Haque Mridha winning in Brahmanbaria-2 constituency.

Jatiya Party central leader Advocate Ziaul Haque Mridha, a new face in the electoral race, thinks the delimitation of area of the constituency will also help him win.

A large number of voters of Shahjadapur and Kalikachchha unions of Sarail upazila said that they have been casting their votes for "Sheaf of Paddy" for long but they are still underprivileged. They want to say 'No' to four-party alliance and choose a new face this time.

At least a dozen of elderly people and elites of Shahjadapur village, locally known as a vote bank of BNP, said that Mufti Amini comes here only to beg votes but do not visit them later. He had failed to fulfill his commitments with the people of Shahjadapur village, they said.



Ziaul Haque Mridha



Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini

Most of the BNP leaders said Amini, who lost his security money in 1996 election won the seat as a four party candidate in 2001. But after winning the seat with the help of BNP and other four party alliance partners he gave privileges only to the workers of IOJ and did nothing for either the people of the area or BNP men.

Agitated BNP workers also stopped Amini's car at Dewra village when he went there for campaign. They asked him angrily why he did not involve BNP leaders and workers in development works when he was an MP for the seat. His car was also stopped at Kalikachchha and Akhitarar on the same grounds.

Amini is also facing hur-

dle as the two unions --- Chandura and Budhumti known as vote bank of BNP have been shifted to Brahmanbaria-1 and eight unions of Ashuganj upazila, a strong hold of AL, have been shifted to Brahmanbaria-2.

Though grand alliance candidate Advocate Ziaul Haque Mridha is a new face here, he is trying to woo the voters by saying that as a local person he will do development works for the constituency, if elected.

BNP-led alliance headed by former state minister Advocate Abdus Satter Bhuiyan is trying to solve the crises prevailing among the BNP leaders and local elites with a view to winning Amini.

### Two brothers contesting in Kurigram-3

ABDUL WAHED, Kurigram

Two brothers, living in the same residence, are contesting for the post of MP from Kurigram-3 constituency (Ulipur and four unions under Rajarhat upazila) in December 29 parliamentary election.

The two brothers are former BNP leader AKM Maidul Islam of Jatiya Party (Ershad) and independent (BNP rebel) candidate Tashvirul Islam. One of them may win from the constituency this term.

AKM Maidul Islam contested as BNP candidate from the constituency in the national election in 1996 and 2001. He secured the third position receiving 18,662 votes in 1996 and the second position bagging 63,582 votes in 2001. But, he joined the Jatiya Party (Ershad) this year. JP chairman HM Ershad nominated him as a candidate of the party for Kurigram-3 seat. The district is considered as leaning towards the Jatiya Party. As a candidate of the Awami League-led Grand Alliance the position of Maidul Islam became stronger in the electoral race.

JP candidate Md. Motiur Rahman who was elected MP from the seat in 2001 has left Jatiya Party and joined BNP. The BNP-led four party alliance has nominated Rahman for Kurigram-3 seat.

Maidul Islam's younger brother Tashvirul Islam who was made president of BNP Ulipur upazila in 2003 worked hard for strengthening the party base there. After being denied party ticket this year he submitted his nomination paper as an independent runner for Kurigram-3 seat.

## Wind blows against war criminal in Khulna-6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna-6 will witness an all out battle between pro- and anti-liberation forces in Monday's national election, observe leaders and workers of Awami League led 14-party grand alliance.

Grand alliance nominee freedom fighter advocate Sohrab Ali Sana of Awami League is fighting four-party alliance's Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader.

Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus is on the list of 600 war criminals in the country, announced by Bangladesh Mujibjoddha Sangsad recently. Polls campaign by the Jamaat leader suffered a big jolt after his name appeared on the list of war criminals published in some vernacular national dailies in Dhaka.

Locals said Shah Ruhul Quddus, who headed the Paikgacha Peace Committee during the War of Liberation, is gradually losing ground to seek vote from people.

People of Khulna-6 com-

prising Paikgacha and Koira upazilas were so long not aware that he was on the list of war criminals, said prominent Awami League leader in Paikgacha Sheikh Belaluddin Bilu.

But prominent leaders of Paikgacha and Koira upazila units of Jamaat claimed that the 'boat' will sink in the surge of 'our candidate's unchallenged popularity'.

On the other hand, AL leaders in the two upazilas said they do not even count Ruhul Quddus as a factor in the poll race.

Apart from his anti-liberation role as president of Paikgacha peace committee in 1971, Ruhul Quddus remained isolated from people of his constituency most of the time after he was elected for the first time from Khulna-6 in 2001 election.

Allegations have it that he and his relatives were allegedly involved in toll collection from 15,000 bawalties in the Sundarbans, who are inhabitants of Khulna-6 area.

The 15,000 bawalties, most of them hailing from Koira upazila, may be a factor in the

coming poll, locals said.

"We want to live from hand to mouth instead of being biased by religion-based politics of Jamaat", said a prominent leader of Khulna district Bawali Association requesting anonymity fearing reprisal from Jamaat cadres after election.

Over 10,000 fishermen hailing from the constituency also have similar views against Jamaat.

A large number of the fishermen have started campaign in favour of 14-party candidate advocate Sohrab Ali Sana of AL.

Being worried, Ruhul Quddus has adopted a new technique to win voters.

Women activists and supporters of Jamaat started door-to-door visits since Tuesday. They are trying to infuse religious sentiments among women voters and asking them to discard temporal happiness for eternal peace.

Yet, the wind is blowing against the listed war criminal, political circles believe.

There are 2,81,292 voters in Khulna-6, said sources at Khulna district election office.

### GAZIPUR-1

## Tanveer Siddiqui conceals info of his jail term

MASUDUL HAQUE, Gazipur

Four party alliance candidate in Gazipur-1 constituency Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui was convicted to 14 years in jail for corruption but did not mention it in his affidavit submitted with his nomination paper.

BNP standing committee member Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui was sentenced to 14 years in jail during the rule of President Abdus Satter. He spent more than three years in jail. After becoming president HM Ershad granted Chowdhury General amnesty and he came out of jail.

Chowdhury Tanveer is contesting December 29 parliamentary election from Gazipur-1 constituency against his main rival AL-led Grand Alliance candidate AKM Mozammel Haque.

Awami League candidate Rahmat Ali was elected MP three times from Gazipur-1 seat comprising Kaliakoir and Sreepur upazila since 1991. This time the seat has been delimited, Sreepur upazila has been excluded and Bason, Konabari and Kashimpur unions of Gazipur Sadar upazila have been included in Gazipur-1 seat.

Though six other candidates are contesting in the seat the main fight would remain confined between AL candidate and BNP nominee, observers said.

### Tangail-6 may see triangular fight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Voters in Tangail-6 (Nagarpur-Delduar) constituency may witness a triangular fight among BNP, Awami League (AL), and independent candidates in the upcoming election.

BNP-led four-party alliance has nominated former minister Gautam Chakrabarty in the constituency who won twice in 1996 and 2001 elections defeating AL candidate Khandakar Abdul Baten.

Ahsanul Islam Titu is a fresh AL-led grand alliance-nominated candidate who will run the race against Gautam.

Ticket-deprived 'rebel' AL leader Khandakar Abdul Baten, also a freedom fighter, is another candidate here who is contesting as an independent candidate.

Tangail district AL has expelled Baten for violating decision of AL Parliamentary Board.

Eighty-two AL leaders and activists of Nagarpur upazila and different union and ward committees were also expelled after their resignation from party protesting Titu's nomination.

As all the three candidates are almost 'similarly strong', there is likely to be a tough contest among them, political circle said.

There are 3,13,388 voters in the constituency. Of them, 1,84,144 are in Nagarpur and 1,29,244 are in Delduar.



Clockwise: Saifur Rahman, Mojibur Rahman Chowdhury, Shahabuddin, Noab Ali Abbas, Ebadur Rahman, Syed Mohsin Ali and MM Shaheen.

## 7 old faces look stronger in Moulvibazar district

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Seven out of 20 candidates who are contesting from four constituencies in the district are old faces. This time they appear to be strong candidates.

Of the new faces, only one candidate appears to be a strong candidate.

Former finance minister and BNP nominee M Saifur Rahman is a strong candidate in Moulvibazar-3 (Sadar and Rajnagar) constituency. Earlier, he won Jatiya Sangsad (JS) elections in 1979, 1996, and 2001.

Former chief whip of the opposition in parliament and AL candidate vice principal MA Shahid is another strong candidate in Moulvibazar-4 (Srimongal and five unions of Kamalganj) constituency. Previously, he was elected a lawmaker in 1991, 1996 and 2001 elections.

Former state minister and BNP nominee Advocate Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury is a strong candidate in Moulvibazar-1 (Baralekha and Juri) seat. He was elected a lawmaker in this seat with Jatiya Party (JP) ticket in 1988 and 1991 elections. Later, he joined BNP and won election in 2001.

Grand alliance nominee and JP leader Nawab Ali Abbas Khan who of Moulvibazar-2 (Kulaura and four unions of Kamalganj) constituency was elected from this seat with JP ticket in 1988 and 1991 elections. This time also, he appears to be a strong candidate in the seat.

BNP rebel and independent candidate MM Shahin who is contesting in Moulvibazar-2 (Kulaura and four unions of Kamalganj) constituency is also a strong candidate in the seat. In 1996 election, he was elected a member of parliament (MP) with BNP ticket. Being deprived of BNP ticket in 2001 election, Shahin contested as an independent candidate and won the election.

AL candidate in Moulvibazar-1 (Baralekha and Juri) constituency Md Shahab Uddin Ahmed seems to be another strong candidate. He was elected a lawmaker from this seat in 1996.

Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury BNP nominee for Moulvibazar-4 (Srimongal and 5 unions of Kamalganj) is contesting in the election for second time. In 2001 election, he sought AL nomination and was refused. Later he contested in that election as AL rebel independent candidate and secured second place. In 2006 he joined BNP to play election. He was nominated for cancelled 2007 election from BNP. This time he has got BNP nomination again and hopeful for victory.

Grand alliance nominee and AL leader Syed Mohsin Ali is a new face in the race in Moulvibazar-3 (Sadar and Rajnagar) constituency but he poses a threat to former finance minister M Saifur Rahman.

Other old faces in the race are Mamunur Rashid Suhel (BSD) and Alaur Rahman Fulori (JSD- Rab). They are contesting in Moulvibazar-3 (Sadar and Rajnagar) seat.

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