

RAJSHAHI DIVISION

Anti-Jamaat sentiment in BNP makes grand alliance stronger

ANWAR ALI, RAJSHAHI

BNP candidates in a number of constituencies in Rajshahi division are unlikely to achieve any gains despite support of its key alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami due to widening rift and anti-Jamaat sentiment in BNP.

Moreover, the vote tally of past elections and the raising demands for resisting war criminals suggest that Jamaat candidates in at least a dozen constituencies, out of total 18 seats where Jamaat-e-Islami has its nominees in the northern region, are likely to see their grand alliance contestants to be stronger.

In three constituencies Chhainawabganj-3, Rajshahi-3 and Sirajganj-4, Jamaat rebellion may pave the way for grand alliance candidates who are also plagued by Awami League candidates' rebellion at some five constituencies: Dinajpur-6, Nilphamari-4, Rangpur-4, 5 and Kurigram-4. Strong battle is expected between grand alliance and Jamaat nominees at Pabna-1 and 5 constituencies.

Taking advantage of the situations, grand alliance candidates are expecting to win a record number of seats in the 16 districts of the division where there are 72 seats in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Four-party alliance leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is contesting from Bogra-6 and 7 constituencies while grand alliance's leader Sheikh Hasina will contest from Rangpur-6, Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad from Rangpur-3 and Kurigram-2 and his wife Rawshan Ershad from Gaibandha-5 constituencies.

BNP's vital candidate Mizanur Rahman Minu at Rajshahi-2 is frustrated over his cold war with several party leaders.

The split between Minu and another BNP candidate Kabir Hossain at Rajshahi-3 is an open secret. It is believed widely by many BNP workers that Minu

had role behind Jamaat candidate Ataur Rahman's rebellion against Kabir at the latter's seat.

For Ataur's rebellion, Awami League candidate Miraj Uddin Mollah had chances at the constituency. On the other hand, Kabir followers' revenge against Minu can make the sail of grand alliance's Fazle Hossain Badsha over Minu easy at Rajshahi-2.

Apart from the group of former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mustafa, Minu is also having some distance with the group of Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul who lacked Minu's support during his August 4 mayoral contest against city mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton.

The group of Nadim Mustafa who is now fleeing abroad being convicted in several corruption and extortion cases has remained silent even during the last-minute campaign for BNP candidate Nazrul Islam at Rajshahi-5. Nadim is annoyed as he failed getting his wife nominated by BNP.

Many BNP men are frustrated over their political fate as in absence of jailed BNP deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu, his wife Sabina Yasmin Chhobi was nominated at Natore-2 constituency.

BNP candidate Enamul Haque at Rajshahi-1 is also facing a strong grouping over local BNP's politics centring his family. Enamul was nominated in absence of his brother Barrister Aminul Haque who is now abroad after being convicted in a militancy case.

Some BNP nominees including Jatiya Sangsad speaker Barrister M Jamiruddin Sarker, Asadul Habib Dulu in Lalmonirhat-3, Shahjahan Mia of Chhainawabganj-1, Harun Rashid in Chhainawabganj-3, Fazlur Rahman Patil in Natore-1, Kazi Golam Morshed in Natore-3, Mozammel Haque in Natore-4 and M Shokrana of Bogra are contesting amid similar problems.

However, although Rajshahi is a

stronghold of BNP-Jamaat, the alliance is now facing an image crisis among the voters as a number of its party leaders are facing charges for graft and abetting militancy.

"The splits in party and above all, BNP's alliance with Jamaat are not tolerable to many party workers like me. If BNP were not allied with Jamaat, perhaps, we would not have to be known as militancy abettors", said a BNP leader asking for anonymity.

"The BNP splits in Rajshahi region are more or less due to BNP leaders' loyalty to Jamaat-e-Islami. BNP in many places lost supremacy since the fundamentalists' role", said a BNP leader of Rajshahi-1 constituency who was able to avail BNP nomination this year.

He argued that Barrister Aminul Haque phoned from abroad to Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matiur Rahman for leaving Rajshahi-1 constituency for his brother, not to any BNP leaders. The phone call was made while Nizami was on a visit to Rajshahi and Chhainawabganj, confirmed a Jamaat candidate at Chhainawabganj-3 Latifur Rahman.

Several BNP leaders at northern districts including Natore and Rajshahi echoed the anonymous BNP men.

However, deputy speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiki in Naogaon-3 and Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir at Thakurgaon-3, Jamaat Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami at Pabna-1 and ABM Abdus Subhan Mia at Pabna-5 are likely to have strong fight with grand alliance candidates.

AL's Asaduzzaman Noor is contesting with Jamaat M Moniruzzaman at Nilphamari-2, Noor won the 2001 election by 2 percent votes without the support of Jatiya Party that bagged 22 percent votes.

Jamaat won Nilphamari-3 seat by over 5 percent votes in 2001, but this time JP's Kazi Faruk Quader is a stronger candidate with Awami League support.



PHOTO: ISPR

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman awards 'Chief of Air Staff's Trophy' to Squadron Leader Md Mezbah Uddin for his best performance in No 79 JCS Course at CSTI at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

16 injured in pre-poll violence

METRO DESK

Sixteen people were injured in electoral clashes in Rajshahi and Barisal in last two days.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reports: Two activists of Awami League were seriously injured as BNP cadres attacked the procession of grand alliance candidate Omar Faruk Chowdhury in Rajshahi-1 constituency at Tikorpara village under Godagari upazila in Rajshahi on Saturday night.

The injured were identified as Zubul, 23 and Zahid, 50. The injured were admitted at Godagari Health Complex.

Locals said BNP cadres attacked AL leaders and activists when they brought out a procession at Tikorpara village at 11:00pm. BNP cadres attacked the AL procession with bamboo sticks and threw bricks when the procession reached in front of the BNP election campaign office. They also damaged AL election campaign office, banners, posters and electoral symbols.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. A huge number of police were deployed there to avert further incident.

On the other hand, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between the activists of grand alliance candidate Engineer Enamul Haque and independent candidate Sarder Amzad Hossain in Rajshahi-4 constituency.

The injured were treated at Bagmara health complex.

Our correspondent from Barisal adds: K M Shahidullah, commissioner of ward-12 of Barisal City Corporation (BCC) and panel mayor of BCC, was injured as Shafiqul Alam Gulzar, former district unit treasurer of BNP, who recently joined AL and also commissioner of ward-11, allegedly beat him centreing electoral campaign early yesterday.

The 16 pro-BNP ward commissioners of BCC in a press conference at a restaurant in the city yesterday said the attack happened following participation of huge number of people from the ward of Gulzar in an electoral campaign organised by Shahidullah.

Denying the allegation

Gulzar said local people assaulted Shahidullah when he tried to use muscle power and black money in collecting votes.

Moreover, Kaisul Huq Raju, AL leader, son of late AK Fazil Huq and grandson of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazil Huq, told the

journalists that a group of BNP activists attacked his car at Rayer Hutz yesterday noon.

Raju, Khairul Alam, and another passenger of the car were injured in the attack.

Later, Raju lodged a complaint with Banaripara Police Station in this connection.

Certificate giving ceremony of 79th BAF Jr Command Course held

METRO DESK

The certificate giving ceremony of the 79th Junior Command and Staff Course of Bangladesh Air Force was held at the BAF Command and Staff Training Institute at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, says an ISPR press release.

Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman attended the ceremony as the chief guest and distributed certificates among the graduating officers.

Ten officers from Bangladesh Air Force, one officer each from Bangladesh Navy, Sri Lanka Air Force and Indian Air Force attended the course.

Squadron Leader Md Mezbah Uddin of Bangladesh Air Force was awarded the 'Chief of Air Staff's Trophy' for his best performance in the course.

Diplomats of the participating countries, Principal Staff Officers of BAF and senior BAF officers were present on the occasion.

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JAMUNA BRIDGE APPROACH ROAD: A DEATH TRAP

Road crashes claim 1500 in 10 yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The road from Jamuna bridge to Mirzapur in Tangail has become a death trap due to widespread violation of traffic rules and insufficient space for movement of large number of vehicles.

At least 1,500 people were killed and 3,500 others injured in about 1,250 road accidents on the highway after the inauguration of the Jamuna bridge in 1998, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and police sources said.

Violation of traffic rules, plying of unfit vehicles carrying passengers on the roof, insufficient space for vehicular movement, inefficient drivers and reckless driving are the main reasons behind the increasing number of road accidents on the highway, they added.

A total 24 day-labourers travelling on an iron rod-laden truck were killed yesterday morning as the truck skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch at Kandila in Tangail after the driver lost control due to dense fog.

Earlier on November 1 last, at least 10 day-labourers mostly rickshaw-pullers traveling by a fertilizer-laden truck were killed as the truck plunged into a ditch by the highway at Pouli in

Kalihati upazila.

On April 19 last, at least 18 people were killed as a bus skidded off the highway and fell on the nearby railway track at Hatia in the same upazila.

Just three days before the accident, about 17 cloth traders were killed in a collision between a bus and a train at Rajbari rail crossing in the same upazila.

The Jamuna bridge was inaugurated on July 23, 1998. Since then around 5,000 vehicles including buses and trucks have been crossing it to and from 16 northern and five southwestern districts everyday.

There have also been allegations that most of the time drivers are not penalised for reckless driving.

Although highway police

had been deployed to ensure safety on the highway, they do not perform their duties properly, Tangail Transport Owners' Association sources alleged.

Highway police, however, told The Daily Star that the number of accidents is on the rise, as it is not wide enough for the movement of huge number of vehicles.

There have also been allegations that most of the time drivers are not penalised for reckless driving.

Road accidents kill four

METRO DESK

At least four people were killed and seven others injured in separate road accidents in Comilla and Gaibandha yesterday.

A CORRESPONDENT from Comilla reports: At least three people, including a minor girl, were killed and seven others injured in a road accident on Comilla-Shyhet bypass road in Monamoti area in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Md Moshad, 20, of Gonjor village under Muradnagar upazila, Md Mohsin, 35, of

accident on Gaibandha-Sunderganj road yesterday.

The victim identified as Rezaul Karim, 32, a field official of NGO TMSS of village Gopal under Pirkachha upazila.

The accident when motorcycle of Rezaul was crushed under the wheel of a Sunderganj-bound BRTC bus at Jaramandi when he was going to his office at Shovaganj, leaving him injured seriously.

Rezaul succumbed to his injuries on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The driver and helper of the bus, however, managed to escape.

Denying the allegation

1 sqft = 0.092 sqm (approx.)

SALEABLE PROJECTS (IN DHAKA CITY)

Gulshan	North Gulshan	Gulshan	Niketan	Niketan	Banani	Banani	Banani	Boridhara
PARK SHORE 2325-4982 sqft	THE PALICAN 3710 & 3730 sqft	DREAM ISLAND 1785 sqft	Spring field 1401-1807 sqft	SUMMER BREEZE 1828 sqft	SIX SEASON PARK 1524 sqft	SILVERSHINE SERENADE 1615 sqft	FELMONT HEIGHTS Up coming	CASSIOPEIA 1144 & 1512 sqft
Uttara	Uttara	Moghbazar	Mirpur	Nazimuddin Rd.	Nazimuddin Rd.	Shiddheswari	Mitali Rd.	Wari
Amadues 1460 sqft	ARIANA 1494 sqft	DEER PARK 1245 & 1382 sqft	PEONENZA 1078-1270 sqft	PARK Valley 1259-2149 sqft	Crystal PLAZA Shops & Commercial	SERENITY 1310 & 1349 sqft	BLUE Bells 1118 sqft	Crimson Vale 1221-1466 sqft
1460 sqft								