

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2008

Reasons behind fall of BNP heavyweights in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Local BNP leaders and workers are trying to find out the causes behind the defeat of the BNP-led four-party alliance candidates to AL-led grand alliance nominees in all the five constituencies of Gazipur. They think in Gazipur-1, the new generation voters did not cast their votes in favour of Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui due to his controversial role during the liberation war. Besides, the issue of concealing information regarding his jail term in his affidavit attached with the nomination paper also went against him. The government of Justice Abdus Sattar tried Tanveer for his corruption while he was a state minister for commerce in late President Ziaur Rahman's cabinet. He was sentenced to 14 years in

jail. Grand alliance candidate Mozammel Haque defeated Tanveer with a margin of 87469 votes. In Gazipur-2, four-party nominated candidate Hasan Uddin Sarker was the elder brother of Nurul Islam Sarker who was the then central leader of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal and the main convict in the killing of popular AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master in 2004. So when Zahid Ahsan Russell, son of Ahsanullah, was nominated as grand alliance candidate, he could easily draw the sympathy of the voters and defeated Hasan with a huge margin of 125432 votes. Prof MA Mannan, the four-party alliance nominee in Gazipur-3, was the state minister for religious affairs after he was elected a lawmaker in 1991 election. As

he was accused of embezzling money collected from hajj pilgrims his portfolio was changed to the ministry of science and information technology. He was also accused of concealing information regarding his illegal earning in his wealth statement to the anticorruption commission. So the general voters were unhappy with his past performance and as a result he lost to grand alliance candidate Advocate Rahmat Ali with a huge margin of 128029 votes. In Gazipur-5, BNP leader and former MP AKM Fazlul Haque Milon was accused in 10 cases including extortion, corruption and relief CI sheet embezzlement after the promulgation of the state of emergency. So he lost to grand alliance candidate Meher Afroz Chumki with a margin of over 50000 votes.



Prof Muzafer Ahmad speaks at a press conference on the ninth parliamentary elections at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday. On his right is Dr Badiul Alam Majumder. Shujan organised the event. (Story on Page 16)

3 graft cases against Sirajganj mayor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Three separate cases, including two for corruption, were lodged with Sirajganj Sadar Police Station in a day against Sirajganj Municipality Mayor and BNP leader TRM Nur-e-Alam Helal and his men. Police said ACC Pabna Deputy Director Khandaker Khalilur Rahman filed two separate cases on Wednesday against Helal and his men for misappropriation of money and misuse of power, while Nazrul Islam, a ward councillor of the municipality, lodged another case for attacking him and other officials following refusal to illegal proposal.

Khalilur in a complaint said the mayor with the help of some dishonest officials misappropriated around Tk 4,48,978 collected from an auction of Raikuthir Dakbanglo in the town. In another complaint, he said Helal and his associates misappropriated a large amount of taka collected from the lease of five hat-bazaar tenders. Helal embezzled all the money instead of its deposition at bank by misusing his power. The ACC official lodged the cases after conducting an investigation based on two separate complaints submitted by some councillors to the commission few months ago. On the other hand, Nazrul in his complaint said Helal and his followers made an attack on him and other officials at the hall room of the municipality on Wednesday evening during a meeting, as they refused to sign a regulation book made by the mayor and his associates for the last few years. The regulation book also carried much false information, the complainant added.

FOUR-PARTY ELECTION DEBACLE IN RAJSHAHI Price hike of essentials played key role

ABU KALAM, Rajshahi

Price hike of essentials during the reign of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government played a key role in their defeat in the 9th parliamentary elections. People from middle and lower income groups were frustrated by the skyrocketing price, city dwellers told this correspondent. Uttam, who works at a restaurant, said that he had to buy rice at Tk 35 per kilogram during the tenure of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government, whereas it was Tk 12 when Awami League was in power.

"When I heard that AL will reduce price hike of essentials if they are voted to power, I decided to cast my vote for AL," he added. Amjad, a rickshaw puller, said the lawmaker who was elected in 2001 from BNP in his area had pledged to reduce price hike of essentials in an election rally but they were only empty promises. "We are leading an inhuman life for the soaring price of essentials. My family members voted AL hoping that they will reduce the prices," he added. Jamil, a small trader in the

city's Boalia area, alleged that former BNP lawmakers were always busy with the personal gains of their political leaders and activists ignoring the demand of local people. He thinks that price hike of essentials and unbridled corruption were the main reasons behind the defeat of BNP in Rajshahi and across the country. Motiur Rahman Moti, a low earning service man in the city's Sultanabad area, also echoed the same. They, however, hoped that AL won't follow the footsteps of their predecessors. Rather, they would take necessary steps to check price hike of essentials and root out corruption from the society.



Ayachak Ashram, Bangladesh takes out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday to mark the Morality Campaign Day.

BISHWA IJTEMA Foreign devotees to get on-arrival visas for 45 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will issue on-arrival visas for 45 days to the foreign devotees coming to Bangladesh to attend Bishwa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of the Muslim Ummah after Hajj. The decision was taken at a meeting at the home ministry on Wednesday with Home Adviser MA Matin in the chair. The three-day Ijtema begins at Tongi on January 30. Guests from 72 countries across the globe will attend this year's Ijtema. Stringent security measures will be taken to maintain in and outside the Ijtema, the meeting decided.

The home adviser said massive preparation had been taken to hold the Ijtema. "On-arrival visa for 45 days will be issued at the airport and for that purpose a special desk has been set up at the airport." Some 10,000 security personnel, comprising police, Rab and APBN will be deployed while CCTVs will be installed at the venue. Helicopters will also be there to have a look on the devotees. He said special arrangement will be taken to control traffic movement on the day of 'Akhari Munajat'. A sub-committee, headed by the Dhaka divisional commissioner, has been formed and a control room with nine sub-centres will be set up soon, said the home adviser. On the possibility of security threat, he said, "There is no such possibility. Still, police will set up a security cordon round the venue of Ijtema." He said militants are being arrested and thus there is no threat from the group. "We do not claim militants have been rooted out. If police remain active the country will be free from it," he added.

3 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Three people were killed and a minor boy injured in separate road accidents in Naogaon and Dinajpur on Wednesday. Our RU correspondent reports: Two Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists were killed and a minor boy was seriously injured in a road accident on Naogaon-Mahadevpur highway at Shibganj in Naogaon on Wednesday evening. The dead were identified as Sagar, 28, and Sweet, 26, while the injured was Babu, 6. Babu was seriously injured when a Naogaon-bound speeding passenger bus hit him while he was crossing the road. Following the accident, Sagar and Sweet chased the bus on a motorcycle, but it was hit by a truck coming from the opposition direction. Following the accident,

local people put up a barricade on the Naogaon-Mahadevpur highway but police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The injured was rushed to Mahadevpur health complex. Our correspondent in Dinajpur adds: A sub-inspector of Birganj Police Station in the district was killed in a road accident on Birganj-Panchagarh highway on Wednesday midnight. The victim was identified as Syed Shafiqur Huda, who was on patrol duty. Officer-in-Charge of Birganj Police Station Md Mozammel Haque quoting villagers said that a speeding Panchagarh-bound truck hit him while he was crossing the road and another speeding truck crushed him under its wheels. Police seized the trucks chasing about 10 kilometres and arrested one of the drivers. Police handed over the body to his family members after autopsy at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital yesterday.

All issues to be resolved as per CHT peace treaty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bir Bahadur, the winning candidate of Awami League (AL) in Bandarban constituency, has said he will ensure equal development of the district. Bir Bahadur was speaking at a grand rally organised by Bandarban Nagorik Committee at local Rajar Math on his fourth time victory in national polls. "People have proved again

that they love me. Now it is my turn to do best for my people," he said. Bir Bahadur assured that all unresolved matters will be resolved according to CHT peace treaty. Presided over by Prasanna Kanti Tanchangya, president of district AL, the rally was addressed by Kew Swe Aong Marma, president of Jatiya Party (Ershad), and Kazi Mujibur Rahman, general secretary of district AL.

7th Int'l Writers' Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The seventh International Writers' Day was observed in the country on Wednesday. Bangladesh Writers' Club declared the day and observing since 2002. The day was observed through discussion, recitation of poem and placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar. This year the main programme was organised in Chittagong. Programmes marking the day were also held in different districts in the country. Speakers at a discussion marking the day congratulated the countrymen for electing the pro-liberation forces in the parliamentary elections.

Director Social Development Programme

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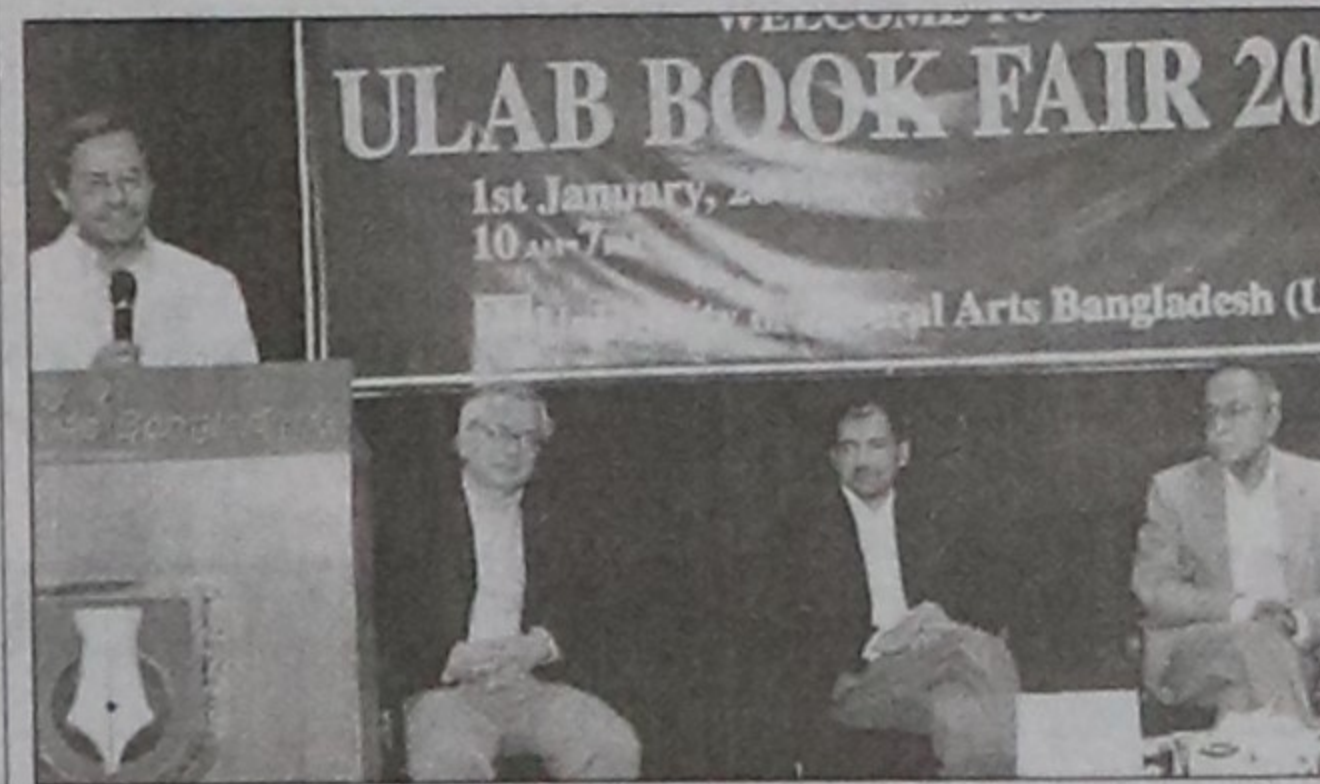
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Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

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Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam speaks at the inaugural function of Ulab Book Fair 2009 at the Dhanmondi campus of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Prof Muhit-ul Alam, Dr Kazi Anis Ahmed and Ulab Vice-Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Islam.

Power distribution cos propose tariff hike

Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd (DPDC), West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd (WZPDC) and Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd (DESCO) have proposed tariff hike at consumer level by 14.77 percent, 15.18 percent and 14.77 percent respectively, says a Berc press release. These companies have already submitted their proposals in this regard to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc). The commission at its administrative meeting on Tuesday considered the proposals and decided to hold individual open meetings with Desco on January 11, with DPDC on January 13 and with WZPDC on January 15 for further evaluation. The Rural Electrification

Board (Reb) has also submitted a proposal for tariff hike by 11.52 percent at subscriber level. But the commission at its primary scrutiny found the proposal incomplete and directed the Reb to put up the proposal again at its next meeting after furnishing missing information. Any interested individual/firm/organisation can participate in the meeting to present their formal proposal by registering with the commission 24 hours before the meeting. They can also give their opinion for or against the proposal. A copy of the proposal for tariff hike can be collected from the commission office during the office hours on payment of Tk 300 per application.

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