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A tale of the minnows

Except 3, no other party participating in Jan 7 polls could obtain even 1pc votes in 2008, 2018 elections

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A trilling 0.01 percent, 0.73 percent and 0.22 percent -- these are the share of votes Jatiya Party (Manju), an Awami League ally, was able to bag out of the total vote cast in the constituencies it vied for in the last three national elections.

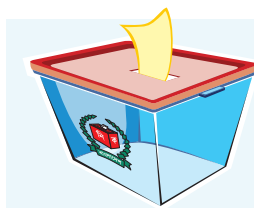
The poor show in the 2008 polls, in which all seven of its candidates lost spectacularly, led to the forfeiture of its security deposit with the Election Commission.

In the following polls, it suffered defeat in 24 of the 28 seats it ran in, and about 86 percent of its deposit was forfeited.

Data on deposit forfeiture in the 2018 election is not available.

The mandatory security deposit is forfeited if candidates get less than 12.5 percent of the votes cast in their constituencies.

This is not the only party to stage an abysmal showing in a national election.



- » 27 parties contesting in Jan 7 election
- » 20 of them got less than 1% votes in 2018 polls
- » 19 of them got less than 1% votes in 2008
- » 4 parties first time taking part in 2024 polls

(SEE PARTIES AND THEIR SHARE OF VOTES ON PAGE 2)

There are about 20 other political parties that bagged less than 1 percent of the total votes cast in the 2018 elections, raising questions about the motive behind their shot at the parliament.

In the last election, 19 of them secured less than 0.5 percent of votes.

In the 2008 election, seen as one of the most credible elections in Bangladesh's history, at least 18 of them were voted by less than 0.5 percent of the electorate.

All those 21 political parties bagged less than 3 percent of the total votes cast in the 2008 elections and all those parties are contesting in the upcoming national election too.

"From my experience, these name-only parties use their party registration to earn money and be a helping aide of the government to make the election inclusive," said M Sakawat Hossain, a former election commissioner.

Take another example of an ally of the ruling party.

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Help ensure presence of voters on Jan 7

DMP seeks Dhaka ward councillors' assistance, promises security for people going to cast votes

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday sought assistance from the city's ward councillors to ensure the presence of voters in the January 7 national election.

DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman made the request at a closed-door meeting with the councillors at the Rajarbagh Police Lines auditorium.

He emphasised the need to notify

law enforcers if anyone attempts to obstruct voters from coming to polling centres.

Councillors were also instructed to create awareness among voters and inspire them to vote, while law enforcers were asked to ensure their security and create a safe atmosphere for a free and fair election.

The meeting addressed 172 councillors from the 129 wards of Dhaka south and north. DMP

invited them to discuss the country's law and order situation.

At least three councillors shared details of the meeting with this newspaper.

A councillor, preferring anonymity, said, "We have been tasked with bringing in voters, but the challenge lies in the fact that people are hesitant to express their opinions."

As a strategy, police are

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FAZLUR RAHMAN (1947-2023)

Farewell to a trailblazer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fazlur Rahman, the chairman and managing director of City Group, breathed his last at United Hospital around 4:00am yesterday at the age of 76.

He is survived by his wife, three daughters and a son.

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A road in the capital's Jhigatola is awash with posters of the candidates vying for Dhaka-10 seat as electioneering for the January 7 polls is going on in full swing. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL



Independent has edge over AL candidate

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, from Munshiganj

In Munshiganj town, the Awami League leader running for parliament as an independent seems to have more party leaders rallying behind him than the party nominee.

Mohammad Faisal, a two-time mayor of the municipality, is vying for Munshiganj-3 constituency as an independent.

Mrinal Kanti Das, the current MP, is running with the AL electoral symbol of a boat. But almost all the top leaders in the district are campaigning for Faisal, whose electoral symbol is a pair of scissors.

A total of 11 people are vying for the constituency which comprises Munshiganj sadar and Gazaria. But Faisal and Mrinal's campaigns are by far the most visible in the town.

One of the reasons why Faisal has so many leaders joining him on the campaign trail is because he spends more time with local politicians than Mrinal, who often lives in Dhaka, according to local leaders.

The fact that Faisal's father Mohammad Mohiuddin has been the president of Munshiganj district AL for 32 years gives the so-called AL independent an additional advantage.

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A close race in the offing

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU, from Faridpur

Candidates are campaigning in Faridpur-2 (Nagarkanda-Saltha) for what is likely to be a close race between ruling Awami League's Shahdab Akbar Labu and independent aspirant Jamal Hossen Mia.

Two late stalwarts -- AL's Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and KM Obaidur Rahman of the BNP -- fought electoral battles for this seat, which grabbed the attention of the people.

Labu, the youngest son of four-time MP Sajeda, was elected lawmaker in the by-polls last year after the demise of his mother. His contender Jamal is the general secretary of Nagarkanda upazila unit AL.

Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan's Joynal Abedin Bakul Mia is also vying for the seat. The total number of voters in this constituency is 318,472.

Speaking to The Daily Star, many voters said it would be a tight race between Labu and Jamal.

The campaign has already heated up, with both candidates unleashing a war of words against each other.

According to locals and AL leaders, Kaichail, Charjashordi, Fulsuti, and Dangi unions are considered strongholds of the AL nominee, while Jamal has strong voter bases in Talma and Ramangar unions.

Sixty-year-old Nazrul Islam, who runs a tea stall

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আমরা শোকাহত

যমুনা ব্যাংকের পরিচালক ও বিশিষ্ট শিল্পপতি সিটি গ্রুপের চেয়ারম্যান জনাব ফজলুর রহমান-এর মৃত্যুতে যমুনা ব্যাংক পিএলসি পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত।

ব্যক্তিগত এবং কর্মজীবনে প্রেরণাদায়ী মরহুমের পরিবারের প্রতি আমাদের গভীর সমবেদনা।

