

## The struggling successors

**Mahi B Chowdhury, Antara running lacklustre campaigns in Munshiganj-1**

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, back from Munshiganj

Although the successors of two political parties are competing for the Munshiganj-1 constituency, their campaign has fallen short in gaining traction among the voters compared to their rivals from the Awami League and an independent candidate from within the AL.

The incumbent MP and Joint Secretary-General of Bikolpodhara Bangladesh, Mahi B Chowdhury, is contesting as the candidate of his party, aiming to retain the constituency.

Mahi is the son of former president and Bikolpodhara supremo Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Notably, he was elected in the last term after contesting with AL's "boat" symbol. However, he was not given the much coveted symbol this time.

Meanwhile, Antara Selima Huda, the

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Draped in red and green, Malek Bepari has become a familiar face in Barishal city these days. The 63-year-old roams the city streets carrying miniature boats (Awami League's election symbol). He said come election -- be it city or national polls -- he moves to the city from Ujirpur upazila and campaigns for his party. He is more enthusiastic this time as the prime minister is scheduled to visit Barishal tomorrow.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## 3 NETRAKONA SEATS Tough battle in two, not much in another

MD ABBAS, back from Netrakona

Awami League candidates in Netrakona-1 and 5 are set to face challenges from their independent party colleagues, while the AL ticket holder in Netrakona-4 is likely to have a smooth sailing for lack of a strong opponent in the upcoming national polls.

Mustaque Ahmed Ruhi, a former lawmaker from Netrakona-1 (Durgapur and Kalmakanda), will be challenged in a tough battle by AL independent Jannatul Ferdous Ara (Jhuma Talukder), who stepped down from the post of chairman at Durgapur upazila to contest the polls.

Jannatul, a former Netrakona district unit AL member and the incumbent women's affairs secretary at Durgapur upazila unit of AL, is the daughter of the former three-time MP and freedom fighter Jalal Uddin Talukder.

Voters in the constituency said despite not getting an AL ticket, Jannatul is a strong contender.

"Her father was a popular figure in the area. Besides, she has her own vote bank," said Nurul Haque, a resident of Kalmakanda upazila.

Many others echoed him.

On the other hand, Ruhi, an advisory member of Netrakona district AL, has resurfaced with

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# Most Ctg BNP men on the run to evade arrest

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Most BNP leaders and activists in Chattogram went into hiding to evade arrest or "police harassment" since the incidents of violence during the party's rally on October 28.

BNP sources claimed most party men have not been seen in public recently as police have been arresting them indiscriminately.

The party offices have also remained padlocked since October 28. BNP's Chattogram city unit office opened on December 14 only for a few hours to observe Martyred Intellectuals Day, said sources.

Police, however, claimed to have arrested only the accused in different cases and those involved in criminal activities.

Visiting the port city's Kazir Dewri area recently, BNP's Chattogram city unit office was found padlocked with no party men seen in or around the compound, while some policemen were on duty in front of it.

Meanwhile, Shahadat Hossain and Abul Hashem Bakkar, two top BNP leaders in Chattogram city, were seen in public for the first time since October 28 last Thursday while distributing leaflets on the party's "non-cooperation movement".



Contacted, Shahadat, convener of Chattogram city unit of BNP said 40 cases were filed against BNP men in port city, 32 in southern upazilas and 33 in northern upazilas of Chattogram since October 28. A total of 1,500 party men have been arrested during this time, he added.

"Although the home minister has claimed that only warranted accused are being arrested, in reality, police have been arresting BNP leaders and activists indiscriminately, indicting them in false cases," he claimed.

Asked about the "non-cooperation movement", Shahadat said, "The success of any movement depends on people. We have appealed to the people and I hope they will respond to this call."

Echoing the same, BNP assistant organising secretary (Chattogram division) Harun-ur-Rashid said, "Our party men can no longer stay at home as police have been raiding their houses almost every night." "Despite that, the morale of our activists is still high," he added.

Contacted, Krishna Pada Roy, commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, refuted the allegation of arresting BNP men indiscriminately.

Police arrested only those who were involved in criminal offences, he said.



The BNP office in the port city remains padlocked since October 28. BNP's Chattogram city unit office at Kazir Dewri opened on December 14 only for a few hours to observe Martyred Intellectuals Day.

PHOTO: STAR

## NATIONAL POLLS

# SC to decide fate of 4 candidates Jan 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fate of two Awami League candidates -- Enamul Haque Babul, contesting for Jashore-4, and Shamim Haque, running for Faridpur-3 -- will be decided on January 2.

Additionally, the electoral destiny of AL independent candidate Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, a former mayor of Barishal City Corporation eyeing the Barishal-5 constituency, and independent candidate Ahmed Alam for Gazipur-4, will also be determined the same day.

The Supreme Court full bench, headed by the chief justice, is set to conduct final hearings of the petitions. Mentionable, the candidature of five AL nominees was cancelled by the Election Commission.

Following Supreme Court orders, three AL nominees, Babul, Shamim, and AL independent Serniabat Sadiq, regained their candidatures. However, their rivals filed petitions against the SC orders.

Besides, a final decision on the candidature of independent candidate Ahmed Alam (Gazipur-4) will also be given by the SC on the same day.

**Fasluur Rahman**  
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