

BARISHAL DIVISION
Contest unlikely
in 8 of 21 seats

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

At least eight out of 21 constituencies in Barishal division are unlikely to witness any significant contest in the January 7 polls, causing the voters of these constituencies to lose interest in exercising their franchise on the voting day.

The constituencies in question are Barishal-1 and 4, Jhalakathi-1 and 2, and all four constituencies of Bhola.

BARISHAL 1, 4
In Barishal-1 (Gournadi-Agailjara), incumbent lawmaker and Awami League candidate Abul Hasnat Abdullah has conducted vibrant campaigns from the very start to the end of the electioneering period.

In contrast, Jatiyo Party candidate Serniabat Sekhander Ali and National People's Party candidate Md Tuhin have hardly campaigned ahead of the polls.

Contacted, Serniabat said, "We are going from door to door even if we are not campaigning."

Meanwhile, voters of the Barishal-4 (Mehendiganj) constituency believe independent candidate Pankaj Nath is likely to have smooth sailing due to a lack of strong opponents, as the candidature of the AL candidate for this constituency, Shammi Ahmed, got cancelled due to his dual citizenship.

"There is hardly going to be any contest, so voters are not much interested in going to the polling stations," said Raihan, a young voter from the seat.

JHALAKATHI 1, 2
In Jhalakathi-1 (Rajapur-Kathalia), AL candidate Shahjahan Omar won't face much challenge as AL independent from the constituency, Md Moniruzzaman, withdrew his candidature. There are no other strong contenders for this seat.

Local AL leaders and activists, however, have not been active in supporting Omar. As a result, voters from this constituency hardly have any interest in the polls, said locals.

Elsewhere in Jhalakathi-2 (Sadarnalcity), veteran AL leader and incumbent lawmaker Amir Hossain Amu will have a smooth run with no other strong candidate contesting from this constituency.

Partha Sarthi Das, a freedom fighter and resident of Jhalakathi Sadar, said people are losing interest in going to polling stations in a likely one-sided election.

BHOLA 1,2,3 and 4
The polls in Bhola are likely to be a one-sided affair, with AL aspirants clearly ahead, as there are no strong contestants in all four constituencies.

In Bhola-3, former lawmaker Jasim Uddin is vying independently against AL's Nurunnabi Chowdhury, but locals said he did not campaign actively.



Hundreds of Ansar members gather at Suhrawardy Udyan for briefing yesterday morning. They will be deployed at polling stations across the capital today to ensure law and order on the polls day.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

No smooth sailing
for 'boat' in Sylhet

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Awami League candidates in four of the six constituencies of Sylhet district are likely to face tough contests from their opponents in the upcoming national polls slated for January 7.

The constituencies are Sylhet 2, 3, 5 and 6.

On the contrary, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmed, who are contesting from Sylhet 1 and 4 constituencies with AL ticket respectively, are likely to have an easy run as they have no strong contenders vying against them.

Momen is contesting against four other candidates while Imran has two contenders, but none of them stand much chance as they are not well known

politicians. **SYLHET-2**
AL eyes to regain the seat after 10 years as it previously sacrificed the seat to its ally Jatiyo Party in the last two national polls.

However, the path ahead is going to be a harsh one for AL candidate and former lawmaker Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury.

He is being challenged by Yahya Chowdhury, JP candidate and former MP, and Mokabbir Khan, Gonoforum's candidate and incumbent lawmaker.

Besides, Biswanath municipality mayor and local AL leader Muhibur Rahman, who got his candidacy back following a High Court order last week, also surfaced into the contest as an independent aspirant.

Trinamool BNP's candidate Abdur

Rab Mallik will also try to give a tough contest.

SYLHET-3
AL candidate and incumbent lawmaker Habibur Rahman is facing five other contenders, including independent aspirant and AL leader Ihteshamul Huq Chowdhury, and JP candidate Atiqur Rahman.

Atiqur previously lost to Habibur in the 2021 by polls, and may not give much contest this time too.

However, the electoral field in the constituency, comprising of Dakshin Surma, Fenchuganj and Balaganj upazilas, has heated up as Ihteshamul, also general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association, recently alleged that Habibur's supporters have been obstructing his campaign activities.

SYLHET-5
AL Sylhet city unit president Mashuk Uddin Ahmed, also a freedom fighter,

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AL grassroots
rooting for
independents

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

At least three Awami League candidates in Khulna, contesting the upcoming national polls with the "boat" symbol, are facing hurdles to win support of the party grassroots.

Many local AL activists are rallying behind independent candidates within the party ranks.

A total of 36 candidates are participating from the six constituencies of Khulna.

"Some opportunists openly support anti-Awami League candidates," said Narayan Chandra Chand, former minister of fisheries and livestock and AL candidate from Khulna-5.

Sheikh Akram Hossain, former Phultala upazila parishad chairman and president of Phultala upazila AL, is contesting as an independent with the "eagle" symbol from Khulna-5.

"Hundreds of local leaders support him over Narayan Chandra," said Mustafa Kamal Khokon, vice president of Khulna district AL.

Narayan Chandra said some leaders and their allies are working in favour of independents for their personal interests. It will not have any effect among grassroots activists, he added.

In Khulna-6 (Paikgacha-Koyra), AL pick Md Rashiduzzaman is facing a strong opposition from

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21 BARISHAL SEATS
250 centres get
ballots a day ahead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

All necessary preparations have been completed for holding the national polls in 21 constituencies of six districts under Barishal division.

Meanwhile, 250 of the 2,812 polling stations in the division, are considered risk-prone and located in remote areas, where the ballots will be sent a day ahead.

"The ballots will be sent to risk-prone polling stations in remote locations and riverine areas in the six districts on Saturday," said Md Alauddin, regional election officer in Barishal.

The other 2,568 centres will receive them in early morning on the voting day, he added.

However, around 1,457 polling stations are marked as highly important regarding fear of sabotage, and influence of candidates, after analysing information from previous polls.

Alauddin said they have taken all necessary steps to ensure a free and fair election. "We will shut down voting if we find information regarding violence from any polling station," he added.

Barishal division has 74,23,522 voters, including 37,74,148 men, 36,49,317 women, and 57 hijra voters.

Poster pollution
plagues Khulna



Ignoring the Election Commission's directive, candidates across Khulna have set up non-biodegradable plastic-laminated posters across the district.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DIPANKAR ROY

Candidates for the 12th parliamentary elections have put up a large number of laminated and polythene coated posters in many areas across the six constituencies of Khulna, posing an environmental threat.

When confronted, they provided excuses, saying they are only using it for a short time to protect posters from rain, fog, humidity and dust.

The Election Commission strictly forbade the use of plastic in campaigns. However, multiple candidates in the district used plastic, disregarding the environmental consequences.

Environmentalists say wrapping posters in plastic will lead to grave consequences for the environment. This plastic will neither be destroyed nor reused.

Visiting different areas of Khulna-1, Khulna-2 and Khulna-3 over the last week, this correspondent saw thousands of

plastic wrapped posters on display. They could be seen in Boikali, Charerhat, Bastuhara, Daulatpur, Phulbarigate, and Khalishpur of Khulna-3.

The same conditions prevailed in Jinnapara, Rupshaghat, Tutpara and Dolkhala of Khulna-2.

According to locals, the situation is similar in Khulna-4, 5 and 6.

"I actually did not know about the violation of law. My nephew and some supporters did it. I will remove [plastic posters] as soon as possible," said Fatema Zaman Sathi, independent candidate from Khulna-3.

Md Abdullah AL Mamun, who is contesting from Jatiyo Party in the same constituency, and Nani Gopal Mondal, AL nominated candidate of Khulna-1 (Batiaghata-Dakope), echoed her.

Almost 14 unions from the Khulna district have been covered in plastic posters. Since Khulna is very close to the Sundarbans, this plastic may harm the ecology of the

mangrove forest, feared experts. Sadhon Chandra Swarnokar, assistant professor of Environmental Science Discipline at Khulna University, said the chemicals used in making these plastics are toxic and harmful to the environment.

"Not only environmentalists, doctors are also worried about the consequences of using plastic in election campaigns. It can break down into small micro plastic particles, which can eventually return to our food chain," he added.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, divisional coordinator of BELA, said these anti-environmental actions from potential public representatives demonstrate their lack of commitment to environmental causes, which is a major concern for coastal areas.

Khandaker Yasir Arefin, returning officer of Khulna, said they are yet to charge anyone, but are alerting them not to use plastic for their campaigns.

'Jan 7 polls
questionable'

University Teachers' Network rejects national elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network rejected the upcoming election, calling it questionable and suggesting it could lead the country down a dark path.

In an open statement released yesterday, they called for the government to address the escalating political crisis through democratic means.

The statement, signed by Dhaka University Prof Gitira Nasreen, cites the past two "questionable" elections as evidence of a dangerous trend towards an authoritarian one-party regime.

During this period, the constitutional rights of the people of this country, especially the freedom of expression and demonstrations, and human rights have been violated, the statement read.

"We hoped for a collaborative effort towards a free, fair, and impartial election. However, we are deeply disappointed about the next election, which appears to be designed solely to perpetuate the absolute power of the ruling regime," it added.

"Holding a parliamentary election in any manner, simply on the pretext of upholding legal or constitutional norms, is not the end of

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PRAYER
TIMING
JANUARY 6



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SkyVillage
3-Bedroom
Apartments
at Bashundhara
Block G Near 300 Feet Road
With Access To Both Roads 07 & 09

Call: 16687
01713098449
01713331201
01713018408

ASSET DEVELOPMENTS
Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd
91 Gulshan Avenue
www.asset.com.bd

Office of the Patiya Pourashava
Patiya, Chattogram.
Web site: www.patiyapourashava.gov.bd
Memo No. 46.00.1561.033.02.139.23-14 Dated: 04-01-2024.

Invitation for e-Tender (OTM)
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the below schemes/packages:

Tender ID.	Schemes/Packages Name	Tender Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
930014	LGCRPP/Patiya/2023-24/W-06 1. Construction of RCC road & drain at Munsef Bazar, Ward No. 02 under Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram 2. Rehabilitation of Gopal bari road (ch. 0+00.0+765m) ward No-02 under Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram 3. Rehabilitation of Afuiddin Shah Mazar Road, (ch. 00+225m) Ward No 03, under Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram.	29-Jan-2024 Time 16:00	30-Jan-2024 Time 15:00
930025	LGCRPP/Patiya/2023-24/W-07 1. Maintenance of Mahmud Zaman Sikder road (Ch. 0+00.0+650m) Ward No. 06, under Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram 2. Maintenance of South Ghata road (Ch. 0+00.0+880m) Ward No. 06, under Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram	29-Jan-2024 Time 16:00	30-Jan-2024 Time 15:00

These are an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Assistant Engineer
Patiya Pourashava
Chattogram

GD-32