



The election buzz continued throughout the day with mayor candidates of Awami League and BNP campaigning in full swing in DSCC and DNCC areas. Clockwise from top left, Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh greets prospective voters on RK Mission Road in Old Dhaka. Ishraque Hossain distributes leaflets in Shahjahanpur area. Atiqul Islam waves at people in Mirpur-1. Tabitha Awal shakes hands with a resident in Uttara's Azampur.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, COLLECTED

A busy day for candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mayoral and councillor candidates for the two Dhaka city corporations polls spent a busy day yesterday trying to woo prospective voters.

A 19-day campaign for elections to Dhaka north and south city corporations officially began on Friday with the ruling party candidates pledging to continue the ongoing development work in the capital.

Meanwhile, the BNP candidates said they would participate in the elections to DNCC and DSCC for "re-establishing democracy" in the country.

The campaign will continue until midnight of January 28. The voting will start at 8am on January 30.

DNCC

On the second day of the campaign, candidates and their supporters held street meetings, conducted door-to-door campaigns and distributed leaflets among passers-by.

While following the campaign trails in Uttarkhan, Chalaban and Azampur areas, this correspondent saw people were enthusiastic and hopeful that their problems will be addressed and given priority.

These areas became a part of DNCC last year. "The roads in Chalaban area are very narrow for vehicles to ply. We hope the candidates will address the issue and keep their pledges once elected," said shop-owner Rahamat Mia.

Nazrul Islam of Azampur said, "We continue to face waterlogging issues. The mayoral and councillor candidates must do something about it if they want our votes."

Mostafa Kamal, a private job holder from Uttarkhan, said their main concern is waste management and the mayoral candidates should give priority to that.

Amid such expectations from people, Awami League



Govt to grade recruiting agents based on efficiency

Expatriates' welfare ministry to monitor low-performing agents

JAMIL MAHMUD

The government is going to identify "outstanding" recruiting agents based on their track record under a new monitoring mechanism -- aiming to efficiently promote human resource export.

As per the mechanism, a committee headed by an additional secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry will evaluate agents' performance in light of 14 types of activities related to labour migration and its trade.

For example, an agent will be evaluated as an efficient one if he or she can arrange recruitment of 200 workers whose migration costs will be borne by the recruiters.

Likewise, an agent will be recognised as a superior one if 40

percent of workers sent by them in a year are in the "skilled" category.

This way, recruiting agents will be rated or classified in four categories: Grade-A (outstanding), Grade-B (satisfactory), Grade-C (standard), and Grade-D (below standard).

A recruiting agent will be given a grade for two years, according to the draft rules.

The government will promote the classification and indicator against each of the grades among people, especially those who are interested in recruiting agents and overseas employment, says a clause of the draft rules.

Besides, the government will "consider and implement" different incentives including recognition for "safe, quality and responsible"

activities on a regular basis, it says.

Ahmed Munirur Saleheen, additional secretary at expatriates' welfare ministry, said the mechanism will help the ministry promote competent agents.

"A person [recruiting agent] facing punishment will obviously not be included in Grade-A," he recently told this newspaper over phone.

Saleheen said the ministry will strengthen monitoring of low-performing recruiting agents and try to find out the underlying reasons to take necessary steps for improvement.

The rules will be formulated in line with the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act-2013, said officials of the ministry.

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INCREASING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A failure of the state and society: Naripokkho

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite public and private initiatives, violence against women continues to escalate, which indicates a failure of the state and society, said activists of Naripokkho, a women's rights platform.

Terming the involvement of ruling party men with such violence "deeply concerning", the platform, in a campaign yesterday in front of Dhaka City College, also urged all to step up efforts against such violence.

They organised the event as part of their campaign titled "Drive against Violence on Women 2019".

Naripokkho has been staging the event fortnightly in the city since September last year.

Members of the platform staged a sit-in, gave away leaflets, shouted slogans, and played protest songs at the spot as part of

the campaign.

Two members of the organisation read out a leaflet which contains the current scenario of violence against women across the country.

Compiling data from different newspapers, they said that around 1,115 women have been raped between January and October 2019.

Of them, 57 were killed after rape while eight died by suicide.

Moreover, three women and two men were killed for protesting rape.

Leaders and activists of the ruling party are directly or indirectly involved with many incidents, which is very concerning... absence of rule of law and justice, unethical influence of ruling party men, and corruption in the administration have left the country in this situation, they said.

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PM leaves for Abu Dhabi today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka today for Abu Dhabi on a three-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to attend "Abu Dhabi Sustainable Week", "Zayed Sustainable Awards Ceremony" and other programmes.

A VIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the premier and her entourage will depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Abu Dhabi at 5pm.

The flight is scheduled to reach Abu Dhabi International Airport at 8:55pm (local time) where Bangladesh Ambassador to

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Bring an end to crimes against humanity

Bangladesh to UN Security Council

UNB, Dhaka

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, Ambassador Rabab Fatima, has urged the UN Security Council to bring an end to crimes against humanity and genocide.

She was addressing the Security Council's open debate on Friday on "Upholding the United Nations Charter to maintain International Peace and Security".

Reiterating Bangladesh's abiding commitment to the UN, Ambassador Fatima recalled Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's maiden speech at the UN in 1974 where he said, "The noble ideals enshrined in the charter of the United Nations are the very ideals for which millions of our people

have made the supreme sacrifice."

It is from this same steadfast commitment Bangladesh continues to be a leading contributor to the UN peacekeeping, said a press release yesterday.

The humanity and courageous leadership shown by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in hosting more than a million persecuted Rohingyas -- which saved the region from potential destabilisation -- also stems from that commitment, the ambassador added.

Highlighting the new and emerging challenges such as cybercrimes, climate change, poverty and inequality, violent extremism, and displacements, she underscored the growing relevance of multilateralism and the UN in addressing those.

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Year-long event involving UN planned

'Mujib Borsho' countdown begins in Bangladesh missions

AGENCIES

Ambassador Rabab Fatima, the permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, has announced that a year-long programme involving the UN will be organised to celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She made the announcement on Friday while celebrating Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu as well as inauguration of the countdown to "Mujib Borsho" at the New York mission's Bangabandhu Auditorium, reports UNB.

The messages of the president and prime minister issued on the occasion were read out at the beginning of the event. Later, a documentary highlighting the day's significance was screened.

Ambassador Fatima said the return of Bangabandhu to independent Bangladesh

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Rape has become an epidemic: Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alarmed by the growing incidents of rape in the country, Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged people to forge a movement to ensure people's security and establish the rule of law.

"Rape has turned into an epidemic, we are getting news of rape not only from Dhaka but also from Chattogram and rest of the country every morning through newspapers," Dr Kamal, also the president of Gonoforum, said.

While addressing a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, the eminent jurist blamed the deteriorating law and order situation for this increase in rape incidents.

"Why is there a rising trend in rape cases? Why does lacking still remain in our law and order? It has really emerged as a deep concern for us," Kamal said at the human chain.

Claiming that it is constitutionally recognised that there will be rule of law and security of people's lives and properties in the country, Kamal said those who take charge of the country should give first priority to these two issues.

"Why will this not stop? This should be stopped immediately and effective steps should be taken to this end. Otherwise, give the people a scope to elect a capable government that can free the society from violence," Kamal said.

He also criticised the government for its failure in dealing with the issues and said there is no democracy in the country in a true sense.

"We are seeing a light of hope as people are standing up now. Let's come forward unitedly to continue the fight for establishing effective democracy in the country," he said.

DHAKA TODAY

DIALOGUE

On creating a women friendly Dhaka

Organiser: Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

Venue: Sufia Kamal Bhaban, Segunbagicha

Time: 11am

SEMINAR

On climate change adaptive embankment construction

Organiser: Coast Trust

Venue: Cirdap

Time: 10:30am

DISCUSSION

Observing the 86th execution day of revolutionary Masterda Surya Sen

Organiser: Siren

Venue: Masterda Surja Sen Hall, Dhaka University

Time: 3:30pm

CELEBRATION

Marking the 157th Birth

Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

Organiser: Vivekananda Shiksha O Sangskriti Parishad

Venue: Jagannath Hall, University of Dhaka

Time: 9:30am

FAIR

Dhaka International Trade Fair

Organiser: Ministry of commerce and Export Bureau of Bangladesh

Venue: Agargaon

Time: 10am

'Rapists cannot enjoy impunity'

Protesters at DU demand speedy trial, exemplary punishment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demonstrating students yesterday marched to the crime scene in the capital's Kurmitola, demanding a speedy trial to ensure justice for the Dhaka University student who was raped on January 5.

Over 100 protesters under the banner of "Student Community Against Rape and Sexual Violence", before starting their procession, held a rally at the Raju Memorial Sculpture near Teachers-Students Center (TSC) on DU campus.

Speaking at the rally, the platform's convener Shiblee Hasan said the country has been witnessing a massive infrastructural development but equity and social justice are yet to be established.

He further said such mass procession could play a vital role in raising awareness against rape and in ensuring a safe country

for women.

"The accused must be given exemplary punishment so that no one can dare commit such barbaric crime against women in future," he said.

He demanded completion of the trial within 90 days under speedy trial tribunal, beefing up security and bringing the entire area from Kurmitola bus stand to airport under CCTV surveillance.

In his speech, DU History department Professor Mesbah Kamal said rape incidents are on the rise as rapists manage to ensure impunity by taking advantage of legal loopholes. "The existing law was also not enacted properly earlier," he said.

He further said rape and capitalism are interrelated as capitalism does not allow women to be "human beings", turning them rather into "commodities".

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Dr Kamal Hossain speaking at the human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: STAR