

## Want to see democracy in action: 9 envoys

*Foreign minister not happy with their 'intervention'*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Western diplomats in Dhaka said they want to see democracy in action at the Dhaka City Corporation election polls, set to be held tomorrow.

"The Dhaka City Corporation elections on 1 February are an opportunity for the citizens of Dhaka to exercise their democratic rights," said a joint statement of nine diplomats posted on UK High Commission's Facebook page yesterday evening.

"We look forward to seeing democracy in action in polling centres across the city," they said.

They also hoped that the government of Bangladesh, the Election Commission and all political parties will respect rights of citizens to cast their votes in a peaceful and festive atmosphere, and count the votes with fairness and integrity.

The signatories to the statement include Benoit Prefontaine, high commissioner of Canada; Charlotta Schlyter, ambassador of Sweden; Earl R Miller, ambassador of United States; Robert Chatterton Dickson, high Commissioner of UK; Sidsel Bleken, ambassador of Norway; Winnie Estrup

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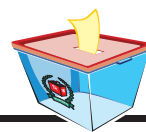


PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ahead of the DNCC and DSCC polls tomorrow, polling materials, including the electronic voting machines, started to file into voting centres yesterday. This photo was taken from Dhaka's Residential Model School and College.

DHAKA CITY

POLLS 2020



## A new beginning from Feb 1: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A conspiracy to occupy and control at least 170 polling centres in Dhaka South City Corporation area is ongoing, warned Awami League candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

Taposh made the remark while campaigning in Gopibagh area. On the last day of electioneering, Taposh started his campaign from Brothers Union Club field in the afternoon.

He urged law enforcers to take necessary measures to maintain a congenial atmosphere on the polls day. "If congenial atmosphere prevailed, we will win by a huge margin," said Taposh while talking with reporters.

He said they are a bit concerned as few days back they saw BNP activists, in presence of their mayor candidate, went to an Awami League councillor aspirant's camp and attacked AL activists and leaders who were campaigning peacefully.

He said they also heard that a person got arrested, who showed his identity as the personal secretary of the BNP candidate. That person also fired bullets on the day, Taposh added.

"If they [BNP candidates] try to occupy any centre, residents of Dhaka will resist it. We will stay with you and resist it," he added. "You all have to be prepared to drive them out."

Urging Dhaka dwellers to cast their vote for "boat", electoral symbol of Awami League, Taposh also pledged to work for the betterment of the capital and people.

"This is an election to the local government. Go to the

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## Exercise your right: Ishraque to voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP's mayoral nominee for Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Ishraque Hossain yesterday called upon voters to cast their votes on polls day "in order to establish people's rights", overcoming panic and "threats from the ruling quarter".

"I want to dedicate my life to establish people's rights. So, don't allow any obstacle and don't be afraid of anyone," he said, calling upon people to cast their votes.

Ishraque, son of former undivided Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, was speaking at a short rally at his Gopibagh home, at the closing of his electioneering yesterday evening.

The candidate of BNP's election symbol "sheaf of paddy" said he has garnered enormous love from the people during electioneering in the last few days.

After thanking his party leaders and activists for their efforts in campaigns, Ishraque chanted slogans for his symbol as hundreds of leaders and activists of BNP echoed him.

Earlier in the day, Ishraque participated in several meetings with top local BNP leaders held at different parts of Old Dhaka, his birthplace.

Sources at those meetings said the mayoral candidate gave directives and exchanged views with top leaders on various strategies ahead of the election -- slated for tomorrow.

Later in the afternoon, Ishraque campaigned at Tikatuli, Hatkhola, Central Women's College, KM Das Lane, Gopibagh rail gate, and RK Mission Road areas.

Meanwhile, BNP yesterday urged the Election

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## Choose 'boat' for development: Atiq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid enthusiasm and festivity, Awami League mayor candidate Atiqul Islam carried out his campaign yesterday -- on the last day of electioneering.

He started the day with a visit to Bhasantek Area (ward-15) under Dhaka North City Corporation around 11am.

His supporters, however, started thronging the area since early morning, shouting slogans in favour of "boat", AL's electoral symbol.

Atiqul also brought in some star power to woo voters, mostly slum dwellers. A number of media personalities including Hyder Husyn, Tanvin Sweetey and Azmeri Haque Badhon conducted campaign in his favour. They spoke to residents and handed out leaflets.

While talking to journalists, Atiqul said, "When I took oath for the first time as mayor on March 7 last year, the prime minister told me to prioritise Bhasantek slum."

"No one will be evicted from the slum without being rehabilitated," he assured locals.

He also promised, "Once elected, I, along with the support of working class people and slum dwellers, will make a permanent arrangement for those living in the slums."

Responding to a query, he said, "The symbol of boat means development. We have no intention to thwart the election. Instead, we have heard that the opposition party is bringing in outsiders to create chaos during the polls. Just go to the polling centres and cast your votes."

Present at the campaign, former lawmaker Tara Halim said, "Please go through the manifesto of our mayor

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## One held for opening fire during Wari clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a man early yesterday for shooting during a clash between supporters of BNP and Awami League candidates in the city's Wari area on Sunday.

Police claimed the man is a personal assistant of Ishraque Hossain, BNP's mayoral candidate for DSCC. Ishraque, however, while talking to reporters near his Gopibagh house, denied this, saying he has no assistant.

Ariful Islam (47) was held from Hatirjheel area in possession of a gun and 50 bullets, said Abdul Baten, additional commissioner (detective) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, at a press briefing at DMP Media Centre yesterday.

Ariful was a former leader of Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal, the police officer said.

The bullet shell recovered from the spot primarily matched with bullets in his gun, Abdul Baten said, adding that a case will be filed against him under the arms act.

The arrestee was identified after examination of video footage collected from nearby areas, the police officer said, claiming Ariful admitted to opening fire on that day during primary interrogation.

"I'm contesting as a BNP candidate. Thousands of leaders are coming, volunteering and participating in my various activities. I don't know what the outsider [Ariful] said. All I can say is propaganda is being spread to divert people's attention, seeing the waves of support for us," he said when reporters asked about the police claim.

On Sunday, supporters of Ishraque and AL-backed councillor candidate Rokon Uddin Ahmed clashed during campaigning, leaving at least 15 people injured.

Several gunshots were heard during the clash, and a number of vehicles were vandalised.

Police arrested several BNP men after a local AL leader filed a case accusing around 200 BNP leaders and activists after the incident.

## Unsure if polls will be free, fair: Tabith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only a day left to the city corporation polls, BNP mayor candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Tabith Awal said he was still not sure whether the election will be free and fair.

Speaking at a views-exchange meeting with journalists in the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, he also expressed his apprehension over neutrality of Election Commission (EC) and fairness of electronic voting machine (EVM).

"Our fear is centring the election day, which is drawing nearer. I am not sure whether all of our agents will be able to go to the polling centres or not on that day," Tabith said at the event.

"On election day, we will realise how the EVMs ultimately work. We will also see how the EC acts following polls violence and irregularities. The whole country is waiting to see what EC does," he added.

At another views-exchange meeting, held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU), the BNP leader alleged the EC showed a lack of sincerity towards the opposition party candidates, as it denied many of their complaints regarding attacks and electoral code violation.

He also urged journalists to play a responsible role, so that the real picture of the election comes out through their reporting.

On the last day of electioneering, Tabith spent a busy day yesterday talking to electorates and the press.

Speaking at one of the programmes, Jatiya Press Club President Saiful Alam expressed hope that the election would be free and fair. He also urged the candidates to

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Members of Border Guard Bangladesh have started patrolling the streets of Dhaka since yesterday morning. A total of 75 platoons were deployed in both Dhaka north and south city areas to avert any untoward incident during the polls. Their deployment will run for four days, until February 2.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### HOW TO FIND YOUR POLLING CENTRE AND VOTER NUMBER

sms

Text "PC  
<space>  
your NID  
number"  
to 105



Visit [https://services.nidw.gov.bd/voter\\_center](https://services.nidw.gov.bd/voter_center) and enter your NID number, date of birth and the given captcha

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BY SCANNING THE QR CODE



Call the EC  
helpline 105  
between  
8am an 8pm

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We fondly remember **Late Aziz H. A. Sattar**, the founding Managing Director of GMG Group of Industries, on his 27th death anniversary. He was a pioneer and a role model of industrialization in this country. His unfathomable depth of knowledge, vision, uphill struggle and firm determination may inspire all of us. Today we solicit doa for his departed soul.

**Family members, well wishers & employees  
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১৯১৪-২০০৫  
আব্বা  
তুমি জে  
আব্বা  
আনোক্তিত

৩১ জানুয়ারী ২০২০

পরম শ্রদ্ধেয়

আলহাজ্ব মোহাম্মদ আব্দুস শাকুরের  
১৫ তম মৃত্যু বার্ষিকীতে

পরম শ্রদ্ধার সাথে

নাসিমা মাহমুদ, ড. তসলিম শাকুর, ডাঃ সেলিম শাকুর  
ড. শামীম শাকুর, নাসিমা আব্বাসী  
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