



Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump waves to supporters after holding an event at the Eisenhower Hotel and Conference Center in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, yesterday. Trump delivered a policy speech announcing his plans for his first 100 days in office. PHOTO: AFP

## Trump gains on Clinton

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Trump's argument that the Nov 8 election is "rigged" against him has resonated with members of his party.

"Remember folks, it's a rigged system," Trump told a Pennsylvania rally on Friday. "That's why you've got to get out and vote, you've got to watch. Because this system is totally rigged."

Clinton led Trump 44 percent to 40 percent, according to the Oct 14-20 Reuters/Ipsos poll, a 4-point lead. That compared with 44 percent for Clinton and 37 percent for Trump in the Oct 7-13 poll released last week.

An average of national opinion polls by RealClearPolitics shows Clinton 6.2 percentage points ahead at 48.1 percent support to Trump's 41.9 percent.

Trump is slated to give a speech Saturday in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, best known as the site of a decisive Civil War battle and cemetery, and the place where Republican President Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous address.

Aides told reporters on Friday night that Trump would make his closing argument to voters in his speech, and preview what he would do in his first 100 days in the White House.

"I think this site is fitting in terms of understanding a positive vision for the

Republican party," an aide said.

Trump's campaign was thrown into crisis after a 2005 video released this month showed him bragging about groping and kissing women. He has since faced accusations - which he has said are "absolutely false" - that he made improper sexual advances to women over decades.

The Reuters/Ipsos survey found 63 percent of Americans, including a third of Republicans, believe the New York real estate mogul has committed sexual assault in the past.

Reuters contacted a few of the poll respondents who said they felt that Trump had likely "committed sexual assault" but were still supporting his candidacy. Their answers were generally the same: Whatever Trump did with women in the past is less important to them than what he may do as president.

At a Trump rally in Fletcher, North Carolina, Harold Garen, 75, said he was skeptical of complaints from women about Trump's behavior. "I don't believe all of this 30 years later, no," Garen said.

Garren also shrugged off Trump's lewd bragging about women, caught on the 2005 tape. "I've used that barnyard language myself," Garen said, clarifying that it was when he was younger and before he knew better.

Both candidates spent Friday in battleground states, where the vote could swing either way. Clinton, 68, campaigned in Ohio, while Trump, 70, was in North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Trump, his voice lacking some of its usual energy in his third rally in one day, told voters in Newtown, Pennsylvania they had to vote or else he would have wasted a lot of "time, energy and money."

Trump has been coy about whether he will accept the results of the election should Clinton beat him.

The Reuters/Ipsos data showed only half of Republicans would accept Clinton as their president, and nearly 70 percent of them said a Clinton victory would be because of illegal voting or vote rigging.

Trump's crowd chanted "Lock her up!" at a rally in Johnstown, Pennsylvania after he declared Clinton a "corrupt globalist," a reference to campaign documents released by WikiLeaks in which Clinton was quoted advocating free trade and open borders.

After the chant went around the room for several seconds, Trump responded, "Don't worry, that whole thing will be looked into."

The New York businessman's assertion that the election is being rigged

and his refusal to commit to accepting the outcome of the election if he loses has challenged a cornerstone of American democracy and outraged Democrats and many Republicans.

Asked if he would commit to a peaceful transition of power during Wednesday's debate, Trump replied: "What I'm saying is that I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense. OK?"

In Ohio on Friday, Clinton called his refusal unprecedented. "Now make no mistake: by doing that, he is threatening our democracy," she told a rally in Cleveland.

"But we know in our country the difference between leadership and dictatorship, right? And the peaceful transition of power is one of the things that sets us apart," Clinton said.

Trump has offered no widely accepted evidence to back up his claims of vote-rigging. Numerous studies have shown that the US election system, which is run by the states, is sound.

Trump told an earlier rally in Fletcher, North Carolina, that he wanted to have no regrets about whether he worked hard enough to win the election, and urged followers to get out to vote.

"Win, lose or draw - and I'm almost sure if the people come out, we're going to win - I will be happy with myself," he said. "We have to work, we have to get everybody out there."

## Shamsur Rahman

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the poet's birthday.

Rahman was born in Old Dhaka on October 23 in 1929. His poems largely feature the Liberation War. Barnomala Amar Dukhini Barnomala, Asader Shirt, Tomake Pawar Jonno Hey Swadhinata and Uddhad Uter Pithe Cholechhe Swadsh are some his works depicting various aspects of national transitions at different times.

The number of his books published in his lifetime is 112, including four novels, 67 on poetry, a short story, and six translations.

He made his professional debut as a journalist of the daily Morning Sun in 1957. Later, he worked for Dainik Pakistan and Dainik Bangla, where he also served as its chief editor.

## Process

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of the Philippines charged Filipino businessman Kim Wong for his involvement in the money laundering incident.

## Massive crowds sing royal tribute to late Thai king

AFP, Bangkok

Tens of thousands of black-clad Thais converged on Bangkok's Grand Palace on Saturday to sing the royal anthem in a recently deceased King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The monarch, who died on October 13 following years of poor health, was seen as a moral icon and rare figure of unity in a kingdom dogged by corruption and political turmoil.

His death has plunged the nation into grief, with the government declaring a one-year mourning period and urging the public to don black and dial down all festivities for at least 30 days.

## Grassroots

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He added, "We are old enough. You [Joy] will have to lead Bangladesh in future. Youths like Joy will lead the country as well as politics."

"Joy has come. His friends will come too and they will steer the country forward."

After Ashraf's remarks, Joy stood up and waved to the audience amid huge applause.

Of the district leaders, Khulna AL President Harun-ur-Rashid said Joy should be in a respectable position in the party. "We want to see Joy in a respectable party position in this council as part of efforts to build future leadership."

Harun, however, said Awami League's enemy lies within the party. "We should discuss and sort out the problems within our party but not in public forum."

He alleged the top leaders do not discuss with the grassroots any development activities by the government.

The grassroots leaders made their speeches after lunch while Sheikh Hasina, also the prime minister, and Joy, who is the PM's ICT adviser, were present on the dais.

Earlier in the morning, Hasina inaugurated the two-day council at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan.

Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu, Borguna AL president, said Joy's role in building Digital Bangladesh is incom-

parable.

"The nation is eagerly waiting to see a respectable position for him," he said. But, he added, Sheikh Hasina will have to continue leading the party from the front.

This view was echoed also by Bogra AL President Moutaj Uddin, Gopalganj AL President Chowdhury Imdadul Huq, Chittagong (North) AL General Secretary Abdus Salam, UK Awami League General Secretary Syed Sajedur Rahman and AL's US chapter President Siddikur Rahman.

Today, 6,570 councillors will elect the party's next leadership for three years and approve amended party declaration and charter.

The second day's programme will begin at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) at 9:00am today.

Besides the party president and general secretary, 11 presidium members, one treasurer and 31 secretaries, including three joint general secretaries, and seven organising secretaries, will be elected.

For the election, the AL formed a three-member election commission led by Mashiur Rahman, an adviser to the PM.

At the beginning of the second day's programme, AL high-ups would hear grassroots leaders. After that, the commission will dissolve the existing central committee to pave the way for the new one.

## IS executes hundreds

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On the ground, Iraqi army troops yesterday stormed into a Christian region that has been under Islamic State control since 2014.

The advance took place as US Defense Secretary Ash Carter arrived on a visit to Baghdad to meet Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and assess the campaign that started on Monday with air and ground support from the US-led coalition.

A military statement said Iraqi units entered the center of Qaraqosh, a mainly Christian town about 20 kms (13 miles) southeast of Mosul, and were carrying out mop-up operations across the town.

Further action was under way to seize a neighboring Christian village, Karamless, also known as Karemash in the Syriac language.

Earlier this week, Iraqi special units also captured Bartella, a Christian village north of Qaraqosh.

Iraqi troops are also advancing toward Tal Kayf town and plan on storming it, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said yesterday.

The Chaldean town of Tal Kayf is approximately 10 kilometers (six miles) north of Mosul. CNN analysis indicates this is the closest Iraqi Security Forces have come yet to the city of Mosul.

The offensive on Mosul is expected to become the biggest battle fought in Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003.

The militants retaliated to the advance of the Iraqi forces and the Kurdish fighters in Mosul by attacking on Friday Kirkuk, an oil city that lies east Hawija, a pocket they continue to

control between Baghdad and Mosul.

Authorities in Kirkuk regained control of the city yesterday and partially lifted a curfew declared after the militants stormed police stations and other buildings. The region's oil producing facilities were not damaged.

At least 50 people have been killed and 80 others wounded in clashes between security forces and the militants in Kirkuk, according to a hospital source.

However, jihadist snipers and suspected suicide bombers were still at large, prompting Baghdad to send reinforcements.

The large city, which lies in an oil-producing region some 240 kilometres (150 miles) north of Baghdad, woke up on Friday to find jihadists roaming the streets of several neighbourhoods.

They used mosque loudspeakers to broadcast praise of their self-proclaimed "caliphate", which has been shrinking steadily since last year and is looking closer than ever to collapse.

One attacker captured by the Kurdish security services on Friday claimed that the Kirkuk raid was planned by IS supremo Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as a diversion from the offensive on Mosul.

Mosul is much the most populous city in the "caliphate" Baghdad declared in June 2014 and the operation to recapture it is Iraq's largest in years.

Its loss would deal a huge blow to IS and could mark the end of its days as a land-holding force in Iraq.

With 3,000 to 4,500 men facing tens of thousands of Iraqi forces backed by massive US-led air power, the outcome of the battle is in little doubt.

## Relief, not tailbacks

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weekday and all the government offices and educational institutions will open after a two-day weekend.

"I had two important meetings today but I postponed them as my clients did not want to get out of their home fearing sufferings on the road," Mokhlesur Rahman, a businessman who lives in Malibagh, said yesterday.

Ashiana, a class-IX student of a Dhanmondi school, had to skip one of her coaching classes after the coaching centre sent her a text message, saying she need not attend classes yesterday.

However, many commuters faced immense sufferings, especially in the morning, due to lack of public transports. The AL council started at the Suhrawardy Udyan around 10:30am.

"My office is in Karwan Bazar but I had to come to Gulistan as I failed to get any bus to reach my destination," said Ismail Hossain, who was waiting in Gulistan for another bus to go to his office around 9:30am.

Taking the advantage of the transport crisis, drivers of some buses and CNG-run auto-rickshaws, and rickshaw pullers charged passengers extra.

"The CNG fare for a distance from Kataban to Kalyanpur is around Tk 150. But most of the drivers were asking for Tk 350 to Tk 400," Moazzem Hossain, a businessman from Kataban, said yesterday.

### HOSPITAL SITUATION

The number of outdoor patients at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Birdem Hospital was lower than that of other days.

Many of the patients faced trouble getting to the hospitals due to lack of transports.

"I have made the entire distance from Jurain in a rickshaw. It cost me Tk 250," said Fazila Begum, aged around 60, who had gone to the BSMMU at Shahbagh to bring medicines for her ailing husband.

Many patients had to visit the hos-

pital on foot as traffic movement on some adjacent streets was restricted.

On an average, some 3,500 patients receive the hospital's outdoor services but the number was quite low yesterday, said authorities at the Birdem hospital.

"As most of the people already knew about the programme at nearby Suhrawardy Udyan, they decided not to come to the hospital," an outdoor official told The Daily Star.

Farid Uddin, an attendant of a patient, said he waited at the Shahbagh intersection for over an hour to go to Sadarghat. He got a CNG-run auto-rickshaw later but it charged him an additional Tk 100.

Some DMCH patients who were suggested to have some pathological tests done at a Dhanmondi centre had a hard time in the morning as some of the streets near the hospital, in Buet and Palashi area, remained restricted to traffic.

But the situation improved later on and the patients had no trouble in getting back to the hospital.

## Fury at UN as Wonder Woman

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and gender equality. She was unveiled in a ceremony at the UN on Friday attended by actors who have played her on screen.

Using the slogan "think of all the wonders we can do", the campaign aims to promote the achievements stemming from female empowerment.

It will also highlight examples of "women and girls who have made and are making a difference every day by overcoming barriers and beating the odds to reach their goals".

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is one of the UN's 17 sustainable development goals, which aim to tackle poverty and inequality.

Cristina Gallach, UN under-secretary-general for communications and public information, said: "While we have achieved progress towards gender equality, in many parts of the world women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence.

"Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a foundation for a

peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world."

But Wonder Woman's appointment was strongly criticised by some UN staff.

A petition was launched within the organisation, questioning why the UN was not able to find a real-life woman to serve as the ambassador.

"The character's current iteration is that of a large breasted, white woman of impossible proportions, scantily clad in a shimmering, thigh-baring body suit with an American flag motif and knee high boots - the epitome of a 'pin-up' girl," the petition said.

"It is alarming that the United Nations would consider using a character with an overtly sexualized image at a time when the headline news in United States and the world is the objectification of women and girls."

The petition also pointed out that the rights to Wonder Woman are owned by DC Comics, "a for-profit entertainment corporation."

A Wonder Woman film will be released next year and the association

with the UN campaign is unlikely to harm its marketing campaign.

Around 50 UN staff turned their back on the ceremony of Wonder Woman's appointment and others voiced their disapproval.

"Disgusting that the UN substitutes sexualized fake for real woman leader," said former UN advisor Anne Marie Goetz on Twitter.

"Hope Wonder Woman's lasso of truth reveals hypocrisy."

The UN representative for Lithuania, Raimonda Murmokaite, tweeted: "There should be plenty real life women and girls to inspire the rest of us."

However, some people praised the decision.

Film critic Anna Smith told Sky News: "Wonder Woman the film is coming out next year, this is an opportunity to have a film directed by a woman, starring a woman as a first major female superhero.

"It has got to be a positive strike for women and I think this helps draw attention to that."