



With only four days remaining for Sylhet City Corporation polls, AL mayoral candidate Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury (left), and JP candidate Nazrul Islam (right), are actively engaging with voters, making pledges, and conducting rallies and programmes. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

As elections near, promises get bigger

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

With only four days remaining for Sylhet City Corporation Polls scheduled for June 21, seven mayoral candidates are leaving no stones unturned in their campaign efforts, despite the occasional rainfall.

Although no candidates have officially declared their election manifesto, they are actively engaging with voters, making promises, and conducting rallies and programmes.

Among the contenders, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, the Awami League nominee, and Nazrul Islam, the Jatiya Party nominee, have emerged as the leading candidates.

The cityscape is covered with posters showcasing these candidates, and their parties' leaders and activists are campaigning and distributing leaflets filled with promises.

The boycott of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh nominee Mahmudul Hasan, has altered the dynamics of the competition. The remaining candidates, including Jahirul Alam of Jaker Party and independent candidates Salah Uddin

Rimon, Abdul Hanif Kutu, Shah Jahan Miah, and Mostaque Ahmed Rouf Mostafa, appear to be relatively inactive in the field of competition.

Anwaruzzaman appeared content with the electoral environment, while Nazrul Islam expressed concerns regarding the fairness of the election.



During a press conference held at his electoral camp on Wednesday, Nazrul voiced his apprehensions over a statement made by the chief election commissioner following the recent BCC polls.

He alleged that there is a conspiracy against him, favouring the Awami League candidate, and claimed that his electoral campaign was being obstructed by members of the ruling party.

Nazrul further accused the returning officer of failing to address his complaints regarding violations of the electoral code of conduct by the AL candidate.

In response to these allegations, Anwaruzzaman said, "There is no time to comment on his baseless allegations. I prefer

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IAB protests attack on Faizul

Holds rallies in Dhaka, Barishal, Bogura

STAR REPORT

The leaders and activists of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh yesterday held rallies in Dhaka, Barishal, and Bogura protesting the attack on party second in command Syed Faizul Karim during the Barishal City Corporation polls.

In the capital, IAB held a protest rally in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers.

Sayed Mosaddek Billah, a presidium member of the party, several other central leaders and hundreds of their activists joined the protest, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, in Barishal, the city and district units of the IAB held a protest rally in front of the Ashwini Kumar Town Hall.

Another protest rally was brought out in Bogura in accordance with the central decision to address their demands.

From the rallies, the leaders of the party demanded resignation of the incumbent chief election commissioner and the government.

They also announced that the party would not participate in the upcoming general elections unless a national government is formed.

IAB mayoral candidate

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PRAYER TIMING		JUNE 17	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05		12:45	5:00
JAMAAT 4:40		1:15	5:15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION		6:50	8:15
		6:55	8:45

Will the voters show up?

Making Rajshahi polls participatory AL's major challenge

ANWAR ALI

In the absence of BNP and Islami Andolon Bangladesh, the upcoming Rajshahi City Corporation election is now revolving around a single question: will the voters show up at the polls?

Seeking to ensure voters' presence on the election day on June 21, the Awami League candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton is relying heavily on the efforts of councillor candidates who are campaigning throughout the city day and night, not only for their own aspirations, but also to inspire the voters to vote on election day, in order to present the polls as participatory.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission remains hopeful.

"Some parties have boycotted the election, but a mentionable number of councillor candidates

are contesting. We hope the voters will go to the polling centres," EC Rashida Sultana said in Rajshahi yesterday.

She was attending a day-long training programme for the presiding officers at the city's Nanking Darbar Hall.

Meanwhile, Liton is also visiting door-to-door. He has assigned the newly formed Rajshahi AL committees to persuade voters to participate in the upcoming election.

Speaking with The Daily Star, Liton expressed his commitment to achieving a 70 percent turnout in the upcoming election.

"Historically, voters from low- and middle-income groups have displayed a greater interest in participating on election day. My campaign team is focused on mobilising these specific demographics to ensure a high voter turnout," he added.

Mohammad Ali Kamal, acting president of city AL, said, "Even before the official commencement of the election campaign, the Awami League has conducted over 80 meetings with various professional groups, trade organisations, and development associations."

"During these meetings, we have encouraged all attendees to visit the designated vote centres."

Kamal, who is also the convener of Liton's election campaign committee, mentioned that party's women activists are also actively engaging in door-to-door visits to further promote voter turnout.

Nurul Islam Sarker Aslam, a key member of Liton's campaign committee,

said, "The challenging weather conditions may discourage voters at some places, where voters may need to walk more than one kilometre to reach their designated polling stations."

WEAKER RIVALS

The mayoral election features other candidates besides Liton, namely Saiful Islam Swapan from the Jatiya Party and Latif Anwar from the Jaker Party.

However, Liton's dominance in the campaign is evident when comparing various aspects of their activities.

Liton's campaign utilises approximately 40 loudspeakers to convey their message,

while Swapan and Anwar have been using only four loudspeakers each. Furthermore, Liton has established over 30 election camps whereas Swapan has six and Anwar has just one.

The city streets are filled with an abundance of posters and banners promoting Liton, while the campaign materials for the other mayoral candidates are scarce in comparison.

It is worth noting that although Murshid Alam, the candidate from Islami Andolon Bangladesh, has a valid candidacy, he announced his decision to boycott the polls following an attack on the party chief during the Barishal City Corporation election.

While the BNP is not participating in the election, 16 BNP members are still contesting for councillor posts in Rajshahi. Additionally, nine candidates from Jamaat are also taking part in the election.

The voting will be held on June 21 at 155 vote centres, 80 of which are being considered as "important" by the EC and law enforcers.



Awami League candidates are not only campaigning for their own aspirations, but also to inspire voters to vote on the election day. As part of that, AL held a colourful procession in the city's Kadirganj Mor area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: STAR

'We don't want artificial lake inside forest'

Members of Garo community tell rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The members of the Garo community in Tangail pledged yesterday that they would not allow anyone to dig an artificial lake on their traditional farmlands.

Protesting against the forest department's plan to create an artificial lake for tourists on agricultural land in Madhupur forest, they voiced concerns about the detrimental impact it would have on their livelihoods.

The safety of local women and children might be compromised for increased tourist movements, they added.

The forest department plans to dig an artificial lake on 12-bigha land near Dokhala rest house in Amtoly area of Madhupur National Park to attract more tourists.

The rally was held under the banner of "Adivasi Bikkhubddo Janata" at Dokhala, where the Garo community leaders said Abdur Razzaque, agriculture minister and local lawmaker, recently expressed his determination to dig the lake, ignoring the objections of locals.

"We condemn the minister's statement. We want to warn him that we will resist any attempts to dig the lake here," said the speakers.

Former president of Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad and veteran Garo leader Ajay A- Mree, its incumbent president Eugene Nokrek, Bangladesh Garo Student Organisation's President John Jetra, Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad's General Secretary Alik Mree, among others, spoke at the rally.

Four held with 9.6kg gold in Ctg

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday detained four members of a family from a bus in Chattogram city and recovered 9.6kg of gold from them.

The detainees -- Alak Dhar, 25, Narayan Dhar, 38, Julie Dhar, 35, and Gita Dhar, 38 -- are from Bashkhal upazila of Chattogram, said Dulal Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team halted the bus coming from Cox's Bazar in Shah Amanat Bridge area around 9:30am and recovered the gold from the four people, he said.

3 killed, 4 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and four were injured in road accidents across the country in the last two days.

In Chapainawabganj, a woman was killed in a road accident in Shibtala area yesterday.

The deceased is Suchitra Rani, 65, resident of Malo Para in the town.

Quoting locals, OC Sazzad Hossain of the Sadar Police Station said the accident occurred around 9:15am, when a truck hit Suchitra while she was standing near the highway.

Police recovered the body and sent it to a local hospital. The truck driver fled the scene.

Meanwhile, a cattle trader was killed and four others were injured in a road accident on Mirdangi-Nekmarad road in Ranishankoil upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Toriqlul Islam, 35. Quoting locals, OC Gulfamul Islam of Ranishankoil Police Station said several traders were bringing cattle to Lahirihat in Baliadangi upazila from Moheshpur village on a Nasiman (locally improvised vehicle).

As the vehicle reached Mirdangi village, it fell in a road side ditch.

The injured are receiving treatment at a local hospital. A case was filed as well.

On Thursday night, Farid-uz-Zaman Rifat, a student of Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, was killed in a road accident in Paboi area on Purbadhala-Durgapur road in Netrakona's Purbadhala upazila.

The 22-year-old was a student of veterinary science.

Quoting locals and family members,

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