



“Canada doesn't live because of the United States. Canada thrives because we are Canadian.”
Canadian PM Carney says in Trump retort

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION



DHAKA SATURDAY JANUARY 24, 2026

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXVI No. 11

MAGH 10, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHABAN 4, 1447 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

Election race heats up

From streets to doorsteps, candidates spend a busy day courting voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The candidates of major political parties and independents stepped up their campaigns yesterday, the first weekend of the electioneering window, spreading out across cities and villages to woo voters ahead of the February 12 polls.

From busy streets to quiet lanes, aspirants and their supporters distributed leaflets, raised slogans and went door to door, appealing for votes with vision-filled promises.

With posters banned for the first time, many say the festive mood is muted, though small processions through neighbourhoods and side streets have revived a sense of competition reminiscent of past elections.

“After a long hiatus, seeing different parties hold processions in our locality is refreshing,” said Rezaul Karim, a resident of Mirpur 10. “Finally, we are witnessing a real campaign and true competition.”

Friday prayers added rhythm to the campaign. In many areas, candidates and their teams gathered outside



PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman addressing a rally in Bhasantek area of the capital yesterday evening.

BNP ready to deliver change

Tarique vows rehabilitation for Dhaka slum dwellers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said his party has always stood by the people and, if voted to power, is ready to deliver the change they want.

Addressing a rally in the capital's Bhashantek area, part of Dhaka-17 from where he is contesting, Tarique said that after the disruptive rule of the previous regime, people now want good governance, which the BNP has delivered in the past.

“Every time the people of this country have elected the paddy sheaf symbol, there has been development and positive changes,” Tarique told the rally at the BRB

ground, his first campaign event in the capital.

On Thursday, the BNP chief kicked off his party's election campaign with a rally in Sylhet and later joined rallies in Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Narsingdi and Narayanganj on his way to Dhaka.

For his constituency, Tarique pledged skills training for youths to prepare them for work abroad, family cards for women, and the promotion of sports as a profession.

Tarique also promised rehabilitation for slum dwellers. “Bhashantek residents have said that housing is their main problem. We will solve it,” he said, urging

people to vote for BNP in the upcoming election.

The BNP leader said addressing people's security, jobs, education, and healthcare – and solving these problems step by step – requires a democratic government.

“We have seen what happened over the last 15/16 years. On August 5, 2024, a change took place in the country. I believe people across the country want change and they want positive change,” he said.

“Only a government elected by the people can solve their problems,” Tarique added, emphasising that the BNP stands ready to meet the people's aspirations.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

MANIFESTO EXPECTATIONS

With the national election less than a month away, political parties are finalising their manifestos. The Daily Star spoke to experts to identify the pressing issues that should top the agenda for parties.

Business community wants well-defined economic roadmap

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and JAGARAN CHAKMA

Political parties need to prioritise law and order, macroeconomic stability, and ease of doing business in their election manifestos, say business leaders and trade bodies.

The parties should focus on maintaining law and order to facilitate a better business environment, and commit to time-bound reforms, better access to finance, and reduction of logistics costs to support sustainable growth.

“Ensuring security and public order should be the top priority in the manifestos of political parties,” Faisal Samad, director of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

US ‘armada’ heads towards Iran

Trump renews warnings to Tehran against killing protesters

- Rights group confirms over 5,000 killed during protests
- UN rights chief urges Iran to ‘end brutal repression’
- Iran internet blackout lasted two weeks: monitor

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump said on Thursday that the United States has an “armada” heading toward Iran but hoped he would not have to use it, as he renewed warnings to Tehran against killing protesters or restarting its nuclear program.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, say the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers will arrive in the Middle East in the coming days.

One official said additional air-defence systems were also being eyed for the Middle East, which could be critical to guard against any Iranian strike on US bases in the region.

The deployments expand the options available to Trump, both to better defend US forces throughout the region at a moment of tensions and to take any additional military action after striking Iranian nuclear sites in June, reports Reuters.

“We have a lot of ships going that direction, just in case ...I'd rather not see anything happen, but we're watching them very closely,” Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on his way back to the United States after speaking to world leaders in Davos, Switzerland. At another point, he said: “We have an armada ... heading in that direction, and maybe we won't have to use it.”

The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said yesterday it had confirmed that 5,002 people had been killed, including 4,714 protesters, 42 minors, 207 members of the security forces and 39 bystanders.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



mosques to reach large groups of male voters as they streamed out after Juma prayers, handing out leaflets and exchanging greetings.

With just 19 days to go, the tempo is expected to grow even more relentless, in what is widely seen as the country's first truly competitive election since 2008. Campaign teams are working tirelessly to ensure their candidates are visible everywhere.

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman addressed a rally at dawn at the Begum Anwara Degree College ground in Panchrukhi, Arai-hazar, Narayanganj. Later in the evening, he went to BRB Maidan in Bhasantek, part of the Dhaka-17 constituency, from where he is contesting. It includes the Cantonment area, where he spent a significant period of his life.

He said people want change and solutions to their problems. If voted to power, the BNP will listen to public demands, he said. Freedom of movement and ensured security are essential to establishing good governance, Tarique added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman speaking at a gathering in Thakurgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PARTY'S FACEBOOK PAGE

‘North has long been treated like a stepchild’

Jamaat ameer promises to turn it into capital of agro-based industries

STAR REPORT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said five years would be enough to transform the northern region, asserting that “the region is not poor but has been kept in this condition through deliberate neglect”.

“The North has been treated like a stepchild. It has been intentionally kept backward,” he told an election rally in Panchagarh.

The Jamaat leader is touring the region as part of the campaign for his party and the 10-party alliance. He left Dhaka in the morning and addressed

rallies in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Rangpur.

At the gatherings, he promised that if Jamaat came to power, the northern region would be developed as the country's “capital of agro-based industries”.

He also pledged to upgrade Dinajpur into a city corporation, reopen closed sugar mills and revive the region's rivers.

He said the first and most important task would be implementing the Teesta project. “If the Teesta can be saved, the northern region will survive.”

Before leaving Dhaka for a two-day

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

T20 WORLD CUP ROW

ICC yet to respond to BCB's latest request

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As of yesterday, International Cricket Council has not responded to Bangladesh Cricket Board's latest letter seeking the intervention of ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee to review the board's request to relocate the national team's matches in next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup from India.

BCB made the request to ICC on Thursday, hours after Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul declared there was “no scope” to change Bangladesh's stance of not sending the team to India over security concerns, saying it was “the government's decision”.

The previous day, ICC had rejected Bangladesh's relocation request and set a one-day deadline for BCB to convey whether the Bangladesh team would travel to India for the World Cup, set to begin on February 7, with online reports indicating Scotland could replace the Tigers if BCB doesn't change its decision.

The deadline ended on Thursday but the game's governing body is yet to respond.

Yesterday morning, Times of India reported that BCB had sent a letter to ICC, seeking the involvement of the Dispute Resolution Committee. A BCB director, seeking anonymity, confirmed it to be true to The Daily Star.

As per the Terms of References of the ICC's Dispute Resolution Committee, it is an independent arbitration

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Rajshahi Warriors players celebrate with the trophy after winning the final of the Bangladesh Premier League by beating Chattogram Royals by 63 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

‘Rohingyas are not Bengalis’

Bangladesh rejects Myanmar's ICJ submissions

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has strongly rejected Myanmar's recent submissions to the International Court of Justice, saying references to the Rohingyas as “Bengalis” distort history, undermine their identity, and seek to justify atrocities committed during the 2016-17 violence.

“The Government of Bangladesh calls upon Myanmar and others having authority over Rakhine to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the recognition of Rohingyas as an integral part of their society and State, and facilitate their return by creating conducive atmosphere in Rakhine and their reintegration with equal rights, in safety and with dignity,” read a statement issued by the foreign ministry yesterday evening.

In the detailed statement, Bangladesh said Myanmar's portrayal of the Rohingyas

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6