

18 DAYS TO VOTE



PHOTO: STAR/COLLECTED/AZAHAR UDDIN/TITU DAS

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL.. Clockwise from top left: Islami Andolan Bangladesh Ameer Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim addresses a rally in support of the party candidate for Dhaka-3. BNP candidate Shafiqul Haque Milon, from Rajshahi-3, during a voter outreach programme in Naohata. Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal nominee Dr Manisha Chakraborty, from Barishal-5, meets voters in town. The National Citizen Party unveils its election theme song at Shahbagh. The photos were taken yesterday.

‘Engaging children in sports, culture can curb online harm’

Tarique addresses reels competition winners; Zaima urges awareness against online harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said effective primary education and engaging children in productive activities would help reduce the misuse of the internet and harmful exposure among the youth, stressing his party’s plans to include sports and culture in school curricula.



“If we teach children from an early age what is right and what is wrong, what is fair and what is unfair, then when a child reaches a certain stage, these ideas will stay in their mind.

“When these children pass primary and secondary education and enter society – whether in business, jobs or other professions – they will gradually apply these social values,” he said at a meet and greet with 10 winners of the national reel-making competition “Amar Bhabnay Bangladesh” at Justice Shahabuddin Park in the capital’s Gulshan yesterday afternoon.

Emphasising the role of primary school teachers, he said, “A primary teacher shows a child the world. If teachers teach values properly, children will remember them. This is how gradual change can be brought.”

“That’s why we want to give more importance to primary education. Our goal is not to build new three- or four-storey school buildings. Instead, we want to use that budget to make primary teachers more qualified and provide them with training.”

About internet misuse and exposure to harmful content, Tarique said more work was needed in this area. “A child between the ages of

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‘They wanted to isolate us, but now they are alone’

Says Islami Andolan chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim, ameer of Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB), has said a section of people began dreaming of coming to power alone after the July uprising, but have since become isolated.

“We were following a simple and sincere path. But that section created such a situation through various conspiracies that we would either have to fall into a trap or be left alone,” he said, without naming anyone directly.

The party chief, who is also the Pir of Charmonai, made the remarks yesterday afternoon while addressing an election rally at Sonarang Amtali Madrasa field in Tongibari upazila, in support of party candidate KM Billal Hossain for the Munshiganj-2 constituency.

“They trapped other non-Islamist parties and created trouble to push us out. Islami Andolan Bangladesh is no longer alone. Rather, they [conspirators] have become isolated,” he said.

He further claimed that those who carried out conspiracies using Islam would not run the country under Shariah law because they had become detached from true Islamic principles. “People who love Islam have left them and come to us,” he added.

Rezaul also alleged that while IAB genuinely loves the country, the “conspirators” held secret meetings with the United States in the name of patriotism.

At the rally, he urged voters to cast their ballots for IAB’s Billal.

On January 16, IAB announced it would contest the national election independently, pulling out of the Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance.

The alliance was formed ahead of the polls through a joint movement of eight mostly religion-based parties to press demands including elections under a proportional representation system and a referendum before the polls.

Besides Jamaat and Islami Andolan, the parties in the alliance were Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party, Nezam-e-Islam Party, and Bangladesh Development Party.

‘Will form inclusive govt if voted to power’

Jamaat ameer tells rally in Sirajganj

STAR REPORT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said his party would form an inclusive government involving all sections of people if it came to power.

“If we get the opportunity to govern, Insha’Allah, we will form a government taking everyone along. United efforts are needed to move the country forward,” he said while addressing an election rally at Islamia Government College ground in Sirajganj.

Shafiqur also said justice would be ensured for all irrespective of religion or ethnicity, adding that the establishment of justice in the judicial system would accelerate the country’s overall development.

At a different rally during his tour of North Bengal, the Jamaat



ameer said he does not want to “humiliate” young people by offering unemployment allowances and promised jobs for educated youth.

“We don’t want to turn Bangladesh into a factory of the unemployed by offering unemployment allowances. We want to turn every young hand into that of a nation-builder. As soon as their education is completed, we want to ensure dignified employment for educated jobseekers.”

To create jobs, he promised to establish agri-based industries and export processing zones (EPZs) in the northern districts, alongside restoring the vitality of the region’s rivers.

Expressing determination to rebuild what he described as a “gradually strangled” North Bengal through education, industry and healthcare, Shafiqur called on the local youth to create a wave of support in favour of a “Yes” vote in the referendum.

The Jamaat chief made these remarks yesterday, when he addressed six rallies across four districts on the second day of his North Bengal tour ahead of the 13th national election slated for February 12.

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BNP leader dies from gunshot wound

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A union-level BNP leader in Dhaka’s Keraniganj upazila died at a hospital in the capital yesterday after he was shot by unidentified individuals on Thursday night.

Hasan Molla died while undergoing treatment at Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital around 3:00pm, Jahangir Alam, additional superintendent of police (Keraniganj Circle), told The Daily Star.

Police are investigating the shooting incident and trying to arrest those involved, he added.

Hasan, general secretary of BNP’s Hazratpur union unit, was shot near his residence in Keraniganj’s Dhalikandi around 9:30pm on Thursday.

Critically injured, he was first taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

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BNP dismisses India deal claim as ‘disinformation’

Slams fraudulent attempts centring its welfare plans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has rejected the claim of a deal with India, calling it “complete disinformation meant to create controversy” ahead of the election.

Mahdi Amin, spokesperson for the BNP’s election steering committee, outlined the party’s position at a press conference at the party office in the capital’s Gulshan yesterday.

His remarks followed a statement by Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, who claimed at a rally in Cumilla that a party was “making a deal with India” to rule the country.

Responding, Mahdi said, “Naturally, he could not and will not be able to present any proof to support his claim. The information in his claim that appeared in the media has no minimum basis in reality and no truth at all.

“If he was given wrong information or this was done to spread confusion, then is that his ignorance? We believe it is either a political tactic or ignorance.”

Mahdi emphasised that BNP’s politics is pro-Bangladesh. “The politics of our leader Tarique Rahman puts Bangladesh first – Bangladesh’s interests, sovereignty and empowerment of the people,” he said.

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‘The days of neglecting Dhaka-9 over’

Says Tasnim Jara as she reveals her six-point manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tasnim Jara, an independent candidate for the Dhaka-9 constituency and a former NCP leader, yesterday unveiled her six-point election manifesto, pledging to address the area’s long-standing problems.

Sharing the manifesto on Facebook, she said she would present a concrete action plan to resolve the issues if elected.

“The days of neglecting Dhaka-9 are over. We pay equal taxes; our rights must be equal. This time, we will claim our fair share,” she said, referring to her constituency, which covers Khilgaon, Sobujbagh, and Mugda thana areas under the Dhaka South City Corporation.

Though not a “professional politician”, Tasnim said she belongs to the area.

“During elections, leaders come, take votes, and disappear. The state treats us only as a source of revenue. We pay the same taxes as Gulshan-Banani but receive third-class services,” she wrote, outlining proposals to end the disparity.

She proposed a ‘No Service, No Bill’ policy for gas and utility services and promised to draft a law in parliament to enforce it. She also vowed to dismantle the

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Family, farmers cards BNP ploy to buy votes: Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and the 10-party alliance candidate for Dhaka-11, yesterday alleged that the BNP is using family and farmer cards to buy votes.

“People do not trust these promises anymore. They want implementation because they have heard too many false assurances in the past,” Nahid told journalists while campaigning at Queens Garden area in his constituency, where he inaugurated an election office.

He also alleged that the BNP is violating the electoral code of conduct and intimidating NCP activists.

Nahid claimed that the party has prepared a list of NCP well-wishers, supporters, and activists and is either filing false cases against them or planning to “deal with them” after the polls.

The NCP leader said BNP activists were hanging and plastering posters in the area in clear violation of the electoral code of conduct, while his banners and posters were being torn down.

“We are witnessing an atmosphere of fear in different areas of my constituency,” he said, adding that the prevailing environment is not conducive for voters to cast their votes freely.

“If we see the Election Commission lose its neutrality at the final stage, we will launch an all-out movement against it. This is our warning,” he said.

He also alleged that land grabbing and illegal occupation have intensified since August 5 under a specific political group.

“Land grabbing is continuing, particularly by our rival candidate. We are committed to fighting corruption, discrimination, and authoritarianism,” he said, reaffirming his pledge to push

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9 Indian officials leave Rampal plant without approval

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Nine Indian officials from the Rampal Power Plant, operated by the Bangladesh India Friendship Power Company Limited (BIFPCL), have left Bangladesh without prior approval.

The plant’s Deputy General Manager (Public Relations), Anwarul Azim, told The Daily Star yesterday, “Nine Indian officials, including eight engineers and one finance officer, left the plant today without formally notifying the authorities. We only became aware of their departure this morning when they were absent from their posts.”

The plant authorities later confirmed that the officials had returned to India without informing the management.

Anwarul added that the authorities are investigating the reasons behind their sudden departure.

“Despite their sudden exit, there will be no disruptions to the plant’s operations. Our local engineers are capable of managing the facility independently, and we do not anticipate any technical or operational issues,” he said.

Further action will be taken after reviewing the circumstances of the incident, he added.

Man killed, dismembered

Woman arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have arrested a woman after recovering the body parts of a murdered butcher in Bayezid Bostami, Chattogram.

The victim, Anis, 38, was identified after police recovered parts of his body from canals and other locations in the Shahidnagar and Loharpul areas over two days until Friday.

Amirul Islam, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said at a press briefing on Friday night that Sufia, 39, a resident of Raozan, was arrested from Shahidnagar after police confirmed the victim’s identity.

Acting on her statement, police recovered additional body parts, he said, adding that Sufia’s brother may also be involved.

Police have also detained two more individuals for questioning in connection with the incident.

Earlier, police recovered two severed hands and two legs of an unidentified person from two separate locations near the Oxygen intersection on Thursday night. A forensic team later confirmed the victim’s identity through fingerprint matching.

Police said Anis was a resident of Raozan upazila and worked as a butcher in the Oxygen area.

Later, police recovered his head from a canal in the Loharpul area on Friday afternoon.

Zahedul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Bayezid Bostami Police Station, said Sufia and Anis had been in an extramarital relationship for a long time.

“Recently, a dispute arose between them. Following this, the killing took place,” he said, adding that the body parts were disposed of in different locations in an attempt to conceal the crime.

Police said further investigation was under way.