

A battle of 'Saifuls'

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establishing medical colleges in every district, and promoting moral education.

On women, the Jamaat candidate said his party will ensure their education, employment, and security, with a zero-tolerance policy against violence and harassment.

At the local level, Milton said his priorities include stopping extortion and drug abuse, resolving gas shortages, addressing waterlogging and ensuring public safety.

Meanwhile, talking to this newspaper, BNP-backed candidate Saiful Huq accused Nirob and his supporters of obstructing his campaign.

Expressing confidence, Huq said he is receiving a strong response from voters.

Like his rivals, Huq pledged to tackle extortion, drug abuse and illegal occupation, and promised to make the constituency business-friendly and livable by resolving water, gas, electricity and sewerage issues.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati President Taslima Akhter, vying for the constituency under the banner of Ganosamhati Andolan, called for a peaceful democratic transition.

She emphasised women's empowerment and a labour-friendly environment, pledging to continue her struggle on both fronts.

Nargis, a middle-aged woman who has been selling rice cakes (pithas)

in Tejgaon for nearly a decade, said she is eager to vote after many years.

"My vote is my right, and I will vote for the most suitable candidate," she said while talking to The Daily Star.

She hoped for a positive change through the February 12 election, and demanded an end to extortion from whoever wins this seat.

Mojibur Rahman, a 43-year-old private-sector employee, said he is satisfied with the election environment and hopes for a fair polls.

Citing load shedding, drugs and teen gangs as key problems, he said the next government must ensure security, improve law and order and control the prices of essentials.

Businessman Rezaul of Poschim Rajabazar and Giasuddin Torofdar, secretary of the Manipuri Para Welfare Association, identified mosquito, rickety footpaths, and sewerage problems as the main issues of the constituency.

Both hope these problems will be resolved by the next elected government.

This newspaper also spoke with some Hindu voters in Shahinbag Hindupara, who said the election lacks the festive atmosphere seen around previous times.

"The country's current situation is complicated, and the coming days may get worse. But we want peace and to build the nation together," said one voter, requesting anonymity.

Submit probe

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constituency, was shot in Dhaka's Paltan area while campaigning. He died on December 18 while undergoing treatment in Singapore.

On December 14, Inqilab Moncho Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber filed an attempted murder case with Paltan Model Police Station against Faisal and several unnamed individuals, which later turned into a murder case.

On January 6 this year, investigation officer Faisal Ahmed, an inspector at the Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, submitted a charge sheet in the case before the court, naming prime accused Faisal Karim Masud, four of his family members, and 12 others.

On January 15, the complainant, Abdullah Al Jaber, filed a no-confidence (naraji) petition with the court, rejecting the probe report.

After granting the petition, the court directed the CID to conduct further investigation into the case.

150 agri

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Following the evaluation, 150 students from 13 universities were selected.

The review process was conducted by a panel of academics from different institutions to ensure transparency and fairness.

The complete list of scholarship recipients is available at: <https://prayashscholarship.thedailystar.net/winners>.

The initiative reflects a shared commitment to investing in young talent and supporting the future of agriculture in Bangladesh.

PDB overpaid BPC

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the first time.

PDB is the main consumer of BPC's furnace oil, which is used in government-run oil-fired power plants.

The country currently has 5,634 megawatts of furnace oil-based power generation capacity, about 20 percent of total capacity. BPC sells around 8-9 lakh tonnes of furnace oil annually.

Of this, about 1,200MW of capacity is government-owned and fully dependent on BPC. In the 2024-25 fiscal year, the unit cost of electricity from these plants was Tk 27.39 per kilowatt-hour, compared to an average generation cost of Tk 12.98 per kWh.

Despite receiving Tk 38,637 crore in government subsidies that year, PDB incurred a loss of Tk 17,021 crore. In contrast, BPC posted a profit of Tk 4,316 crore from oil sales to PDB.

"PDB remains in loss as electricity is sold below production cost. The loss increases when furnace oil is bought at a higher rate from a government agency," PDB said.

PDB proposed fixing the furnace oil price at Tk 50.83 per litre, based on a weighted average of BPC's local production and import costs.

BPC proposed reducing the price by Tk 5 to Tk 81 per litre, based on Platts rates from October to December last year.

Meanwhile, BERC's technical evaluation committee recommended

a price of Tk 74.04 per litre.

PDB Chairman Md Rezaul Karim said power generation costs are rising due to high fuel prices, adding that adjustments are needed to protect consumers.

"We do not want any company to become unprofitable, but it is not right for one company to make a profit at the expense of another," he said.

BPC General Manager (Accounts) ATM Selim said the global price cited by PDB does not include additional costs such as duties and charges.

BPC and three distributor companies -- Padma, Meghna, Jamuna, as well as Standard Asiatic Oil Company also proposed higher distribution margins, claiming furnace oil sales are loss-making despite overall profitability.

During cross-examination, the companies acknowledged distributing profit bonuses and dividends of up to 180 percent to shareholders.

"Most earnings came from non-operating segments, not from core business," a BPC representative said.

BERC Chairman Abdul Jailil said a decision would be made after reviewing all data and evidence to ensure no party gains unfairly.

Written submissions will be accepted until February 3, after which BERC will announce its decision.

January saw

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wants to exercise their civic rights through voting, but their fears regarding life, livelihood, property, and dignity remain unaddressed.

"The responsibility for any discouragement of minority voters must be borne by the government, the administration, the Election Commission, and political parties," Nath said.

He also criticised the introduction of 'Yes' and 'No' votes under the referendum system, claiming it excluded secularism as a fundamental principle of state governance.

"The government and the Election Commission are directly campaigning in favour of this, which is sorrowful, unfortunate, and clearly biased," he said.

The Oikya Parishad placed seven demands, including ensuring a level playing field for minority candidates and voters; banning the use of religion and communal sentiments in campaigns; deploying adequate law enforcement, and if necessary the army; and declaring minority-dominated areas as risk-prone zones with enhanced monitoring.

It also called for a strict ban on election campaigning at places of worship and demanded that hate speech, incitement, and the spread of communal rumours be treated as criminal offences under special laws.

The organisation urged the Election Commission and relevant authorities to act decisively to restore confidence among minority voters ahead of the polls.

Rohingya

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the remarks when the newly appointed country representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ivo Freijsen, paid a courtesy call on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on Wednesday, said the Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the UNHCR representative highlighted the "dramatic decline" in aid for Rohingyas living in camps in Bangladesh's southeastern district of Cox's Bazar and stressed the need for greater self-reliance and livelihood opportunities in the settlements.

Prof Yunus said the Rohingya crisis was not receiving the attention it deserved, despite the interim government of Bangladesh organising a series of high-profile events over the past year, including a visit by the UN secretary-general to the camps during Ramadan, which helped draw international focus to the humanitarian issue.

Jamaat, NCP tug

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supporters have been chanting boycott slogans against the NCP.

"Jamaat activists and supporters have been continuing this opposition both on social media and in public. Jamaat still has not officially campaigned for the NCP candidate," said Rokibul Hasan, chief election agent of the NCP candidate and coordinator of the party's Boalkhali unit.

"Instead of cooperation from our alliance partner Jamaat, we are facing opposition. We have already informed the central leaders of the alliance about these issues," he added.

Chattogram - 8 constituency has 5,49,136 registered voters and 179 polling stations. A total of seven candidates are contesting the seat.

The BNP candidate is Ershad Ullah, president of Chattogram City BNP.

During visits to the constituency over the past two days, voters said they remained unclear about the candidate representing

the II party alliance. Tarek Bin Sagir, a voter from Chandgaon, told The Daily Star, "We want to support the anti-fascist forces in the upcoming polls but remain uncertain whom to vote for, as two candidates associated with the July movement appear to be contesting from the same alliance."

Saimun Sultana Priya, a homemaker from Gomdandi in Boalkhali, said, "I heard that the Jamaat candidate has withdrawn. But people on Facebook and elsewhere are saying he might return to the race. So we are confused about who the alliance's candidate actually is."

Contacted, alliance candidate Arif said he has yet to receive any support from Jamaat.

"Local Jamaat leaders approached our leaders in Boalkhali seeking permission for their candidate to contest this seat, but the NCP central leadership did not approve it," he said.

He said he hopes Jamaat will join his campaign soon.

Women can't be

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The interviewer pointed out that women had served as prime ministers of Bangladesh, saying, "So clearly women are capable of leadership positions."

Shafiqur reiterated his stance, "Even most of the countries in the world did not consider this feasible. This is the reality of the world."

Jamaat was a key partner in the coalition government led by the BNP, which was headed by Khaleda Zia, who served as prime minister for three terms.

When asked if he thought Khaleda did a good job as prime minister, Shafiqur refrained from a direct assessment. "It's not our decision; it's their party decision."

"We should respect the party opinion. We cannot impose anything upon anyone."

Asked about the five-hour work time proposal for women, he said, "I said a mother who is looking after children and also spending the same amount of time working with gentlemen, it is no justice... at least during the lactating period. In this period, they have to be shown honour. Some sisters, they feel it is not possible to continue the job, so they gave up the job. But if you reduce the hours for a certain period... it is not mandatory for all. It is optional."

When Srinivasan

asked, "So this is for lactating women only?", he responded, "Basically that. But if some lady says 'no, I want to do the eight-hour duty', then no problem. It's an option... Maternity leave is only for six months. It's not sufficient, we feel."

The interviewer raised the question of cultural rights and media freedom, highlighting the "provocative" calls of Jamaat's student leaders at universities against media houses and cultural institutions, including Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Chhayanaut and Udichi Shilpogoshi -- all of whom were attacked last month.

At that, Shafiqur said, "But you have not observed the statements of the party... We have already condemned it, we never supported it."

Claiming that his party and the student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir have distanced themselves from those who made the calls, he said, "Chhatra Shibir will decide what move to make [against them]. It is not our matter... Please ask them... We can give only our opinion or suggestion."

Asma's quiet

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candidate campaigning this way made people take notice. "We don't usually see women candidates walking around with a small group. It made us stop and listen," he said.

At around 12:30pm, Asma held a small roadside rally at the Bahaddarhat junction to reach floating voters. Her campaign materials were modest: a hand mic, a poster bearing her name and symbol, and leaflets outlining her message.

Addressing the gathering, she spoke about issues affecting ordinary people, including access to health services, quality education and fair wages for workers.

"I don't have the money or manpower to organise large rallies or processions," Asma said. "But I believe real politics is about speaking to people directly."

In Chattogram-10, there are 4,86,316 registered voters and 139 polling centres. Nine candidates are contesting the seat, including BNP's Saeed Al Noman and Jamaat-e-Islami's Shamsuzzaman

Helaly.

Later in the afternoon, Asma and her team held a small street-corner meeting in Sholoshohor. Speaking to residents, she said she was seeking votes to fight fascism and work towards a fair and equal society.

Chattogram-10 comprises eight wards of the Chattogram City Corporation, covering parts of Double Mooring, Halishahar and Khulshi.

Asma said women candidates often face additional barriers in politics. "Women rarely get space in this system. The field is not equal. That is why I prefer to stay on the ground and talk to voters myself," she said.

The constituency has previously been represented by the late BNP vice chairman Abdullah Al Noman, who later served as a minister. It is home to industrial factories, key railway facilities and several elite residential neighbourhoods.

In this constituency, another woman candidate, Sabina Khatun of Insaniyat Biplob Bangladesh, is also contesting.

A daughter

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Speaking about the election atmosphere, Habiba said the contest lacks a level playing field. "In football there are 11 players. I am playing without a goalkeeper -- you can understand what that means," she said.

She said she finds encouragement when voters respond positively as she asks for their support. "I left my own daughter in Dhaka. Daughters are closest to their fathers -- that's why I came out to seek votes for mine," she added.

Habiba also spoke about the deployment of army personnel in Babuganj and Muladi. "I welcomed it for the safety and security of the people and the protection of polling centres," she said.

"People are our strength -- people are my strength," she said. "I have appealed to them, saying: I am your daughter. Please give your vote to my father and help bring him back to you."

Later in the day, she was seen travelling by trawler along the banks of the Sugandha river, continuing her door-to-door outreach in riverside villages as part of the campaign.

Putul's doorstep

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had previously listened to her problems. "I have no one to turn to, and I do not even have a social allowance card. For the first time, I am able to share my struggles," she said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Putul said many elderly residents had raised similar concerns about the absence of social safety net cards. She said she had assured them of working to address the issue if elected.

Natore-1, which has around 3.68 lakh voters, continues to grapple with long-standing problems, including poor communication infrastructure in rural and char areas. The lack of industrial development has also limited employment opportunities for local residents.

Putul said that if elected, she would prioritise infrastructure development in remote areas, including canal excavation for irrigation and improved drainage to address waterlogging.

She also pledged to work towards industrial development to create jobs for the local workforce.

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সরকারি অনুদানে পূর্ণদৈর্ঘ্য ও স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাণের জন্য প্রস্তাব জমাদানের সময় বৃদ্ধি

চলচ্চিত্র শিল্পে মেধা ও সৃজনশীলতাকে উৎসাহিত করা এবং বাংলাদেশের সকল জনগোষ্ঠির আবহমান সংস্কৃতির প্রতিনিধিত্ব করার লক্ষ্যে মানবিক মূল্যবোধ সম্পন্ন, জীবনমুখী, শিল্পমান সমৃদ্ধ ও বহুসর বিবৃত করে এমন পূর্ণদৈর্ঘ্য ও স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাণের জন্য ২০২৫-২৬ অর্থবছরে সরকারি অনুদান প্রদানের উদ্দেশ্যে কাহিনী ও চিত্রনাট্য বাছাইয়ের জন্য প্রযোজক/পরিচালক/চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাতা/চলচ্চিত্র ব্যক্তিত্ব/সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে পেশাদার প্রতিষ্ঠান/লেখক/চিত্রনাট্যকারদের নিকট থেকে পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্যাকেজ প্রস্তাব জমাদানের নিমিত্ত কতিপয় শর্তে গত ০৯ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখে বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করা হয়। পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্যাকেজ প্রস্তাব জমাদানের শেষ সময় ২৯ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখ নির্ধারিত ছিল।

০২। বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত রেখে পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্যাকেজ প্রস্তাব জমাদানের সময়সীমা ০১ মার্চ ২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা হলো। পূর্ণদৈর্ঘ্য ও স্বল্পদৈর্ঘ্য চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাণের জন্য অনুদান প্রাপ্তির লক্ষ্যে গল্প, চিত্রনাট্য এবং চলচ্চিত্র নির্মাণের সার্বিক পরিকল্পনাসহ পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্যাকেজ প্রস্তাব আগামী ০১ মার্চ ২০২৬ তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়ের চলচ্চিত্র-২ শাখায় (রুম নং-৮০৮) পৌছাতে হবে।

১৫/০১/২০২৬
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GD-221

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH
Planning & Development Department
INVITATION FOR TENDER

1. Sealed Bids are hereby invited from the Bonafide Contractors / Vendors for "Construction of Rest House, Open Shed & related facilities" at Kaliakoir Land of IUB, Gazipur. The bidders shall be required to submit a complete offer in two separate envelopes, one for the Technical Offer while the second envelope shall contain the sealed Financial Offer.

2. Interested bidders shall apply in their official letter heads to the undersigned along with the following documents:

- Updated Trade License, latest Income Tax Clearance Certificate, VAT Registration Certificates & Ownership evidence of the Company / Firm.
- Experience certificate of similar type of work (with minimum Tk. 1.5 crore in single Work Order over a period of 5 years).
- Certificate of General Experience at 5 years in Civil & Steel Structure Construction.

3. Interested bidders are requested to collect the Bid Documents from the Office of the Dy. Director and Head, P&D, IUB, between 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM up to Tuesday, 17th February 2026 on payment of a non-refundable amount of Tk. 1,000/- (Taka one thousand) only in cash.

4. A Pre-bid Meeting with the intended bidders will be held on Tuesday, 10th February 2026, at 11:30 AM at the Office of the Dy. Director and Head, P&D.

5. The Bids will be received at the Office of the Dy. Director and Head, P&D up to 1:00 PM of Thursday, 19th February 2026 and the Technical Offers shall be opened at 01:30 PM on the same day and at the same place, in presence of the bidders who may wish to attend the Tender Opening.

6. The Financial Offers of the technically responsive bidders shall be opened separately with due notification to the respective bidders

7. All bidders should mention their contact number, email address & website address (if any) clearly in the forwarding letter of the Tender.

8. The bidders shall furnish an earnest money, equivalent to 2.5% of the bid amount in favour of Independent University, Bangladesh, in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from a scheduled Bank of Bangladesh.

9. IUB Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Engr. Kazi Din Muhammed
Dy. Director and Head, Planning & Development
Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), Plot-16, Block-B, Bashundhara, Dhaka