



On the campaign trail...Clockwise from top left: BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman meets the family of Shaheed Abu Sayed in Rangpur's Pirganj; Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman addresses an 11-party alliance rally at Feni Government Pilot High School grounds; Fatema Rahman Bithi, Ganosamhati Andolon candidate for Tangail-5, campaigns among farmers; Manisha Chakraborty, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal candidate for Barishal-5, collects donations saved by ordinary citizens in clay banks at her party office in Barishal city; and Taslima Akhter, Ganosamhati Andolon candidate for Dhaka-12, joins a procession on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL/STAR/TITU DAS/FIROZ AHMED



## ‘Persecutors of Hindus in 1971 back in polls’

### Says Salahuddin

UNB, COX'S BAZAR

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday said those who persecuted the country's Hindu community during the Liberation War have returned in a new form to contest elections, raising concerns about the safety of all citizens in Bangladesh.

He made the remarks at an interaction meeting with members of the Hindu and Buddhist communities in Bishwas Para of Pekua upazila in Cox's Bazar.

"During the Liberation War, a religion-based group inflicted the most suffering on our Hindu brothers and sisters. Those who did not believe in independence or opposed it were responsible for this persecution," Salahuddin said.



SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

## Hasnat slams ‘biased admin’, ‘broker media’

### Warns they will face ‘people’s court’

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

NCP Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah yesterday issued a stern warning to the media, police, and administration, urging them to remain accountable to the people rather than to any political party.

"If another revolution takes place, it will be against the media and the administration," Hasnat, the 11-party alliance candidate from Cumilla-4 (Debidwar), told a rally in Laksham.



SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## ‘BNP-Jamaat rule made country champion in graft’

### Says IAB chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan Bangladesh Ameer Mufti Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim yesterday said neither BNP nor Jamaat can be trusted, as both parties had failed to fulfil people's aspirations despite being in power.

Addressing a campaign rally at Konabari College Field in Gazipur, the IAB chief, also known as Charmonai Pir, referred to the BNP-Jamaat alliance's 2001-06 tenure and said the country became the world's most corrupt nation five times in a row during that period.

"The nation was tormented by terrorism. Corruption spread through every layer of the state. The responsibility for 1/11 in 2006 also lies with BNP-Jamaat. Due to their manipulation of the caretaker government system, the



SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

## 12 hurt in pre-polls violence in 3 districts

STAR REPORT

At least 12 people were injured in pre-polls violence in Noakhali, Bhola and Natore since Thursday night.

In Noakhali's Hatia upazila, eight people were injured in a clash between activists of BNP and NCP during the inauguration of a ferry service on the Nalchira-Chairman Ghat route around 4:00pm yesterday.

Supporters of NCP candidate for Noakhali-6 Abdul Hannan Masud and BNP aspirant Mahbubur Rahman Shameem present at the programme were chanting slogans in favour of their respective candidates, triggering tension. At one stage, the two groups got into an altercation, which escalated into a clash.

Later, security personnel charged batons to disperse the groups and brought the situation under control. None of the candidates were present at the spot.

Talking to journalists, Hannan Masud and Mahbubur Rahman Shameem traded allegations against each other's supporters and demanded their immediate arrest.

Confirming the incident, Hatia Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Alauddin said eight to 10 people were injured.

Contacted, Hatia upazila health and family planning officer Dr Manoshi Rani Sarker said eight people were admitted to the upazila health complex.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

## Tarique seeks vote for ‘yes’ in referendum

FROM PAGE 1

The manifesto targets 36 key issues, focusing on sectors spanning governance, economy, social welfare, environment, and defence.

Targeting governance and justice, the manifesto pledges to establish an independent commission to oversee reform commitments, form a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" to investigate past atrocities and extrajudicial killings, and require ministers, MPs, and senior officials to publicly disclose their assets and income.

Under defence modernisation, the manifesto has plans to create a reserve force twice the size of the regular armed forces, establish a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) brigade, and acquire at least eight medium-range surface-to-air missile batteries.

On foreign policy, NCP pledges a firm stance on border killings and water-sharing disputes with India while committing to ASEAN engagement to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

On the economic front, NCP promises to create one crore jobs within five years, lower inflation to six percent, and raise the tax-to-GDP ratio to 12 percent. To improve the business climate, it also vows to eliminate extortion and political levies through hotlines and strict enforcement.

To encourage youth and civic participation, there are proposals to lower the voting age to 16 and establish a "Youth Civic Council" to institutionalise young voices in policymaking.

Education reform includes the creation of an "Education Reform Commission", mandatory six-month internships or thesis research for undergraduates, and funding to reverse brain drain by bringing back skilled professionals.

For the modernisation of the healthcare sector, NCP wants to build specialised health zones for complex diseases, introduce NID-linked digital health records, and gradually expand national health insurance.

Social welfare pledges include six months of maternity leave and one month of paternity leave.

To strengthen ties with the diaspora, the party proposes a one-stop "Diaspora Digital Portal" for essential services, alongside investment and pension benefits tied to remittance inflows and "RemitMiles" travel rewards.

In energy and agriculture, the manifesto sets targets of 25 percent renewable electricity and 40 percent electric government vehicles within five years, while promising direct NID-linked subsidies for farmers and stronger local seed research to ensure food sovereignty.

"My question is – good people stay with good ones, don't they? If BNP is really a bad party, then why did they stay with us for five years?" he said.

"Either the party has lost its senses, or they are lying about their own leadership."

Describing Rangpur as land "mixed with the sacred blood" of Abu Sayed, a martyr of July uprising, Tarique said the sacrifices made during the movement must not be allowed to go in vain.

He said the sacrifices of Sayed and around 1,400 others killed in the uprising would be truly honoured only when the political and economic rights of the people are established.

Tarique said, "Just as the killers of Abu Sayed must be brought to justice, those who looted public wealth and laundered money abroad must also be tried in this country. We must try to bring that stolen money back and use it for the people."

Candidates from 33 constituencies across eight districts of the Rangpur division joined the rally, where BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was present.

Earlier, at a roadside rally in Bogura, Tarique said in the polls, the people of Bogura will prove that the district is not only a BNP stronghold but also one of the party's strongest bases.

"Every time the sheaf of paddy has run the country, we have tried with all our strength to develop this area. Many tasks are still undone."

He sought vote for party's Bogura-2 (Shibganj) candidate at Mokamtala Bandar around 3:15pm yesterday, before heading to Rangpur's Pirganj to visit the grave of Abu Sayed.

Calling himself a son of Bogura, Tarique said, "If the Almighty gives me the opportunity to serve the country and its people, I will seek everyone's prayers."

As Tarique took the stage, loud chants echoed across the area, with supporters waving flags and raising their hands in response to his address.

Earlier, he offered Juma prayers at Bogura town's Baitur Rahman Central Mosque, whose foundation stone he laid on March 26, 2004.

After offering prayers, Tarique told the devotees, "This mosque was built for the people of Bogura. Allah gave us the opportunity to build such a mosque in a place like Bogura. Many works of the mosque are still unfinished. What we had planned could not be fully implemented. If Allah gives us the opportunity, the mosque will be developed properly in the future so that the people of Bogura can feel proud."

"Everyone must work together. If Allah gives us the chance and we are given responsibility of the country in the future, we will work across the whole country."

ABU SAYED'S GRAVE

Around 5:50pm, Tarique visited the grave of Abu Sayed in Babanpur Jafarpara village of Rangpur's Pirganj upazila.

He then spoke to Sayed's father Mokbul Hossain, mother Monowara, brothers, and other family members.

Sayed's father told him, "If Allah brings you to power, you must first ensure justice for the killing of my son and all those killed during the July uprising. You must arrange proper treatment and rehabilitation for the injured. You must also create jobs for the people of Pirganj and across Bangladesh."

The BNP chief assured that if BNP is elected, justice will be ensured.

Before he reached the spot, members of police, BGB, and Rab took positions at different points in the area. Only journalists were allowed to remain at the spot.

Tarique then went to a madrasa field in the same area.

Speaking there at a rally, he said he has come to the area many times in winter to distribute blankets. "I seek your votes for the sheaf of paddy."

[Our Bogura and Lalmonirhat correspondents also contributed to this report.]

## ‘Voting age 16, one crore jobs’

FROM PAGE 1

The manifesto targets 36 key issues, focusing on sectors spanning governance, economy, social welfare, environment, and defence.

Targeting governance and justice, the manifesto pledges to establish an independent commission to oversee reform commitments, form a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" to investigate past atrocities and extrajudicial killings, and require ministers, MPs, and senior officials to publicly disclose their assets and income.

Under defence modernisation, the manifesto has plans to create a reserve force twice the size of the regular armed forces, establish a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) brigade, and acquire at least eight medium-range surface-to-air missile batteries.

On foreign policy, NCP pledges a firm stance on border killings and water-sharing disputes with India while committing to ASEAN engagement to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

On the economic front, NCP promises to create one crore jobs within five years, lower inflation to six percent, and raise the tax-to-GDP ratio to 12 percent. To improve the business climate, it also vows to eliminate extortion and political levies through hotlines and strict enforcement.

To encourage youth and civic participation, there are proposals to lower the voting age to 16 and establish a "Youth Civic Council" to institutionalise young voices in policymaking.

Education reform includes the creation of an "Education Reform Commission", mandatory six-month internships or thesis research for undergraduates, and funding to reverse brain drain by bringing back skilled professionals.

For the modernisation of the healthcare sector, NCP wants to build specialised health zones for complex diseases, introduce NID-linked digital health records, and gradually expand national health insurance.

Social welfare pledges include six

### KEY PLEDGES

➤ Mandatory asset disclosure for ministers, MPs, officials

➤ Reserve force, UAV brigade, missile batteries for military

➤ Firm stance on border killings and water-sharing disputes with India

rather a clear list of what issues will be prioritised if it becomes a partner in the government."

NCP spokesperson Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan said the manifesto reflects extensive youth surveys, expert discussions, and nationwide seminars.

"We have made promises that can actually be implemented. Over the next five years, our main goals are higher allocations for health and education, stronger social security, and major economic reforms."

Poet, writer, and thinker Farhad Mazhar, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Dhaka University teacher Shehreen Amin Bhuiyan, and foreign diplomats stationed in Dhaka were also present at the event.

## COVERAGE OF PROTESTS

### Trump attorney general orders arrest of ex-CNN anchor

AFP, Minneapolis

The Trump administration said yesterday that it had ordered the arrest of a prominent journalist over coverage of immigration protests in Minneapolis, as the president branded a nurse shot dead by federal agents in the city an "agitator."

The arrest of former CNN anchor Don Lemon came as President Donald Trump walked back his conciliatory tone following public outrage over the killings of Alex Pretti, a veterans' hospital nurse, and another American citizen in Minneapolis.

Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a post on X that Lemon and several other people had been arrested "at my direction" on unspecified federal charges in connection with what she called a "coordinated attack" on the Cities Church in St. Paul, the twin city of Minneapolis.