



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 Andolok 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 Andolok 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, Bholi 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
fascist rule gripped the country, BNP placed a 31-point reform proposal before the nation.

The BNP chief said they later saw that the interim government formed a reform commission and invited most political parties of Bangladesh there. "We also went. We placed our reform proposals. And largely, the proposals they placed were similar to the ones we had already presented before the people much earlier."

"There may be differences with us on some points. But if there are differences we did not hide anything. We openly told the people which points we agreed with and where we have some disagreements. There is nothing hidden or secret about this."

In his speech, which lasted around 25 minutes, Tarique made pledges that BNP would ensure the repayment of microloans taken from registered NGOs, waive agricultural loans of up to Tk 10,000 with interest, and provide special support to establish agriculture-based industries.

Party leaders and activists began gathering at the venue from noon. They arrived in small processions, carrying sheaves of paddy and placards bearing photos of candidates. As Tarique spoke, the ground became packed with supporters.

Tarique said if BNP forms the government, it will begin work as quickly as possible to fulfil the dream of the Teesta barrage for the people of this area.

Outlining the Teesta masterplan, he said it would include canal excavation, forest conservation and job creation.

At the rally, hinting at Jamaat, the BNP chief questioned why a party remained an alliance partner for five years if BNP was a "bad" political party.

"There is a party that has been spreading lies against BNP for the last few days; they did so again today [yesterday]."

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 Jafarpura 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

1 Mandatory asset disclosure for ministers, MPs, officials

2 Reserve force, UAV brigade, missile batteries for military

3 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 Bhuyain 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 Alexei Pappas, 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.