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3 DAYS TO VOTE



Tarique pledges real change

Campaigns in Dhaka constituencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged people to be vigilant about protecting their voting rights from “a group that is using religion to mislead the public and carry out plans to manipulate the electoral process”.

“We have already seen their party members caught while trying to make fake seals. We have seen them taking bKash numbers and national IDs from mothers and sisters to confuse them,” Tarique said at an election rally in the capital’s Mirpur-2 in the afternoon.

“During the 1990 movement, they participated in elections with the dictatorship, leaving the people behind,” he added.

Calling on citizens to safeguard their voting rights, Tarique said, “No one should be able to trap your vote in a ‘dummy’ election and lock it in the box. Stay alert so no one can change the results through conspiracies.”

The rally was organised at the National Bangla High School ground organised in support of BNP’s Dhaka-14 candidate Sanjida Islam Tulee.

PROMISES FOR DHAKA

- » Transform Dhaka into a safer city
- » Set up 40 playgrounds
- » Evict occupiers of canals
- » Put an end to waterlogging
- » Build hospital in Mirpur
- » Widen street from ECB Chattar to Jashimuddin Road
- » Resume construction of 100-foot-wide road in Mirpur

Referring to Tulee’s struggle for the return of her brother Sajedul Islam Sumon, who was a BNP leader, and other victims of enforced disappearances, Tarique said she symbolised years of suffering under authoritarian rule.

“For 16 years, we have lost many beloved ones in the struggle for democracy. Can we

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Army personnel check the belongings of a passerby near the Deputy Commissioner’s Office in the capital’s Old Dhaka yesterday. Nearly 10 lakh security personnel from various agencies have been deployed nationwide to maintain law and order ahead of the 13th national election and referendum on February 12.

PHOTO: STAR

No DP World deal during this govt’s tenure

Says Ashik Chowdhury as the UAE company seeks time; strike at Ctg port suspended till Feb 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The much-talked about concession agreement between DP World and Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) regarding the operation of the port’s New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) will not be signed within the current government’s tenure, as the UAE-based port operator has sought more time.

DP World needs more time to complete the internal review of the draft agreement, said Ashik Chowdhury, chief executive officer of the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), at a media briefing yesterday.

“Only two working days remain, and realistically, it will be difficult to complete our own cabinet approval process and formal signing in this term.”

The project started in 2019; the final phase of understanding began over the past month and is still ongoing.

Officials at various levels of the government are continuing discussions with them, which will remain ongoing.

He also dismissed reports that a fixed signing date was set for February 1, calling it a “rumour” and reiterating that no deal should be rushed at the cost of national interest.

Subsequently, the port workers and employees under the platform of Chattogram Bandar Rokkha Sangram Parishad have put a pause on their indefinite strike

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Govt to buy 14 Boeings for up to Tk 35,000cr

US may cut tariff for Bangladesh to 18% under a trade agreement to be signed today, a high official says

RASHIDUL HASAN and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government is set to sign a deal with Boeing to buy 14 planes valued between Tk 30,000 crore and Tk 35,000 crore for Biman as part of the country’s efforts to reduce the trade gap with the US, and in return have the tariff on Bangladeshi products cut.

“A techno-financial analysis has been completed based on the proposals received from Airbus and Boeing. A negotiation team led by Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud negotiated the price with Boeing,” Commerce and Civil Aviation Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin said at a press conference at his office yesterday.

“This negotiation is still ongoing. If we complete this process, Alhamdulillah, but if not, unfortunately, we won’t be able to complete our procurement,” the adviser said.

“The aircraft buying proposal that we are making may be valued between Tk 30,000 crore and Tk 35,000 crore. We will have to pay this amount over 10 years. In fact, it may take even longer than that, because the payment schedule is very long-term. It may take as much as 20 years to complete the payment. So, if you consider this, we may have to pay around Tk 1,500 crore to Tk 2,000 crore per year,” he added.

According to sources, Biman will buy eight 787-10s, two 787-9s, and four 737 MAX 8s from Boeing.

Meanwhile, a senior commerce ministry official, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star

yesterday that the Trump administration may reduce the reciprocal tariff rate for Bangladesh to 18 percent from the current 20 percent after the signing of a trade agreement following Dhaka’s negotiations with Washington.

The signing ceremony is scheduled to be held in a hybrid format today. Adviser Bashir Uddin and Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman



will attend virtually, while some senior officials of the ministry have travelled to Washington to take part in person alongside their American counterparts.

During the negotiations, Bangladesh has promised to increase imports of American goods and reduce the bilateral trade gap.

In exchange, the US will not levy tariffs on garment items made from American raw

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Guard polling stations to protect July

Says Jamaat ameer while campaigning for Nahid in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday urged leaders, activists, and supporters of the 11-party electoral alliance to guard polling stations on February 12 to protect the spirit of the July uprising.

“No miscreant should dare to tamper with your votes. Just as you guarded July bravely, you must guard in the same way on the 12th to make July successful,” he said while addressing an election rally of Nahid Islam, the 11-party alliance candidate for Dhaka-11 and convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP), at the DIT Project playground in Merul Badda.

Stressing that every vote and every parliamentary seat is crucial, he urged them to guard their votes until they are cast into the ballot box.

Referring to young leaders like Nahid, Shafiqur said they would sit as pilots and captains of the “aircraft named Bangladesh” in the future, while the current leaders would sit as passengers. “We believe they will take Bangladesh to the right destination. Insha’Allah,” he said.

The Jamaat chief said Nahid would “definitely” be made a minister if the alliance wins.

He also expressed hope that voters would reject the corrupt, extortionists, “case traders”, and land grabbers in the election.

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- » Vows to transform country in 5 years, if elected
- » Young leaders to steer the country, old guards to take backseat
- » Nahid to be made a minister if the alliance wins
- » Terms BNP’s family and farmers’ cards ‘false promises’

Army officers returned from Rab as ‘killers’

Ex-army chief Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan tells ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Testifying before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday, former army chief General (ret’d) Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan said his greatest distress was seeing professional army officers return from the Rapid Action Battalion postings transformed into what he described as professional killers.



He also told the tribunal that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, acting through her relative Maj Gen (ret’d) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, exploited state security agencies to tighten control over the armed forces, suppress political opponents, and channel widespread corruption through national projects.

Iqbal, the first prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case against Major General (relieved) Ziaul Ahsan, also

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Women from all walks of life, including activists, students, and job holders, took part in the fifth edition of the ‘Shekol Bhagar Jatra’ (March to Break the Shackles) last night, marching from Shahbagh to Kalabagan via Manik Mia Avenue to protest what they described as misogynistic politics and hate speech. The photo was taken in the capital’s Dhanmondi at 1:09am.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

In the run-up to February 12 polls, Shakeel Anwar goes on the road for STAR to hear directly from voters about their hopes, demands and expectations.

In haors, vote and hope tied to embankment safety

SHAKEEL ANWAR, from Tahirpur, Sunamganj

Driving through the haors – vast, bowl-shaped freshwater wetlands – in Sunamganj, one grasps what immensity and remoteness truly mean.

Shanir Haor in Tahirpur upazila felt exactly like that to me. In February’s dry season, the wetland stretches out as a sea of deep-green young rice plants,



deceptively calm at this stage of the agricultural cycle. It is planting time. Farmers are busy lifting young saplings from densely grown seedbeds and replanting them in neat rows, spacing each by careful measure. Crossing a narrow clay ridge, I reached a group absorbed in the work – Abdul Wahid, Zahed Ali and Rahim Ali, all

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