

# **‘Religion card’ no longer fooling citizens : Salahuddin**

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Online Desk : Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Standing Committee Member and nominated candidate of Cox’s Bazar-1 constituency Salahuddin Ahmed on Monday said the people of the country have already unmasked those who have no political principles or development plan, but are still trying to deceive the nation by selling a ‘religion card’. Speaking at the inauguration of BNP’s second day of the “Plan to Build the Country” programme, he also said anyone attempting to obstruct the democratic transition or the restoration of voting rights through various tactics will be rejected by the people, reports UNB.

“Those who want to enter Jannah (heaven) without any effort should first find out where its bus station is. People understand these things,” the BNP leader said. Salahuddin, BNP senior leader, also said their party is preparing plans for how it will govern the country if voted to power, because, in their view, planning is half the job.

“If you don’t plan, you are planning to fail. If we do not prepare a proper plan before running the state, we are actually preparing for failure. I think this message is meant for our friends who are indulging in business using religion,” he said.

In a veiled reference to Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, the BNP leader said this party leaders claim that anyone voting for their symbol will easily reach paradise. “But what about survival in this worldly life? They have no guidance on that. Just a few days ago, they even recruited a (Hindu) friend in Khulna. I won’t say more about it,” he added. Salahuddin said a party that has no principles, no ideology, no plans—only trying to cheat the nation by selling a ‘religion tablet’—the people have already identified them. “Their real face has been exposed.” He said BNP is planning for a modern, democratic, and prosperous Bangladesh and is involving professionals, experts, and citizens in shaping the country’s future roadmap.

“BNP’s policies and plans are designed for the people’s welfare, not for emotional exploitation. We are not here to sell a religious tablet. We must present our plans for economic freedom and public welfare in a simple and clear way so that people understand,” the BNP leader said. Referring to various initiatives by the late President Ziaur Rahman and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia – including literacy campaigns and the Food-for-Education programme – Salahuddin said BNP has a record of implementing transformative national programmes through careful planning.

“First comes policy, then programming, project implementation and monitoring. This is how a state is run, not by making false promises about Heaven,” the BNP leader said. He said BNP’s 31-point outline a realistic vision for good governance, democracy, and development, which the party will implement if voted to power. Salahuddin urged party activists to communicate BNP’s policies to the public in simple, relatable terms, highlighting programmes such as the Family Card for women and the Farmer Card for peasants which aim to empower the people, provide social security, and improve economic welfare.

He stressed that BNP’s vision focuses on people’s education, health, and economic strength, noting that informed and empowered citizens form the backbone of the nation. Salahuddin also highlighted BNP’s democratic legacy under Ziaur Rahman and Begum Khaleda Zia, saying that safeguarding democratic institutions and prioritising Bangladesh’s national interest remain central to the party’s agenda. “A strong democratic Bangladesh can only be built if state and constitutional institutions are strengthened on firm foundations,” the BNP leader said. He urged the party leaders and activists to raise awareness about the importance of exercising voting rights in the upcoming elections. “We achieved the right to vote through years of struggle and sacrifice. The success of that democratic movement now depends on how we use that right. Anyone who tries to create obstacles in this democratic journey will be rejected by the people,”

Salahuddin said.

Addressing the programme, BNP Senior joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said JCD leaders and workers will be trained on eight subjects so that they can reach out to people in their areas and explain BNP's plans, election manifesto, and promises ahead of the election. He said some parties are trying to mislead people using religion by talking about a 'ticket to heaven' and urged JCD leaders to counter this with suitable arguments. Rizvi said by talking about the 'ticket to heaven', Jamaat is following an old European practice in the Middle Ages, when priests sold indulgence letters from the Pope to exploit people. On November 27, BNP announced a six-day programme titled "Plans to Build the Country", involving its affiliated bodies, including Chhatra Dal, Krishak Dal, Ulema Dal, and Swechchhasebak Dal, ahead of the upcoming national election.

Salahuddin inaugurated the second day's programme at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) auditorium in Dhaka's Farmgate. BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman is scheduled to address the concluding session in the afternoon.

Leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal from across the country joined the event.