

Bangladesh Election 2026

Disinformation Forms, Spread, and Targets

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SCOPE	Pre-election Facebook activity around Bangladesh's 2026 General Election
SOURCES	37 political influencers and 40 fake news outlets
EVIDENCE	2,685 Facebook posts analysed
FOCUS	What disinformation looked like, how it spread, and who it targeted

OVERVIEW

What this research examines

This study analyses 2,685 Facebook posts collected during the critical pre-election period before Bangladesh's 2026 General Election. It examines the forms disinformation took, the way it moved through the observed Facebook ecosystem, and the groups or institutions it targeted.

What did election disinformation look like, how did it spread, and who did it target?

1

Research question

The study asks three linked questions: What does disinformation look like? How does it spread? Who does it target? These questions determine the content classifications, engagement measures and network relationships examined in the dataset.

2

Materials and methods

The evidence comes from two groups: 37 named political influencers - public figures with large Facebook followings - and 40 fake news outlets, pages posing as news organisations. The analysis combines content analysis, engagement statistics and network analysis.

Dimension	What was examined
Accounts	37 political influencers; 40 fake news outlets; 77 accounts combined
Posts	1,000 influencer posts; 1,685 fake-news posts; 2,685 total
Collection period	10 Dec 2025-23 Jan 2026 (influencers); 11 Dec 2025-12 Feb 2026 (fake news)
Analysis	Content classification, engagement statistics and network analysis

3

Results

3.1

What did disinformation look like?

Type	Scale	What the study observed
Identity impersonation	1,685 posts	Fake pages mimic real broadcasters and use journalistic branding.
Hidden words	269 posts	Bengali words are deliberately broken to evade automated moderation.
Fake polls & election lies	489 posts	Fabricated polls, seat projections and mobilisation content.
Religion weaponised	172 posts	Religious-content pages combine trusted religious material with partisan content.
Anti-India fabrication	142 posts	Invented geopolitical stories attributed to unnamed media leaks.
Attacking journalists	566 posts	Editors and journalists are framed as agents, operatives or enemies.

3.2

The strongest signals in the dataset

22x

surge in fake-news posts by election eve

955K

interactions on the most viral post

1 in 3

fake-news posts targeted journalists

6.8x

more reaction to anti-India stories than election content

8 pairs

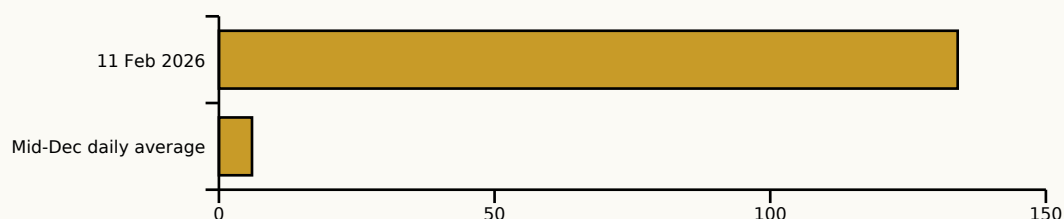
of influencers with identical topic coverage

3.3

How did disinformation spread?

The most striking spread pattern is the acceleration of fake-news posting as election day approached. Output increased from an average of 6 posts per day in mid-December 2025 to 134 posts on 11 February 2026, the day before the election. The study reports a z-score of 4.59. The influencer dataset did not show a comparable surge on the same date.

Fake-news posting volume



3.4

A two-tier ecosystem

Fake news pages - volume layer. Forty outlets produced high-volume content averaging 42 posts per outlet, saturating the observed information environment with partisan narratives, fake polls and anti-journalist content.

Political influencers - amplification layer. Thirty-seven named individuals posted less frequently but reached much larger audiences. The most viral post received about 955,000 interactions, 678 times the corpus median.

3.5

Extreme attention concentration

Audience attention was highly unequal. The Gini score was 0.849 for political influencers and 0.842 for fake-news outlets, meaning a small minority of posts captured a very large share of engagement within each dataset.

3.6

Who was being targeted?

Target	Posts	Primary method	Median engagement
General electorate	599 (22.3%)	Fake polls, false projections, mobilisation	1,075
BNP supporters	561 (20.9%)	Candidate endorsements, alliance framing	1,348
Jamaat / Shibir supporters	336 (12.5%)	Religious legitimisation, alliance promotion	1,843
Journalists & press institutions	566 (21.1%)	Delegitimisation, fabricated accusations	1,257
Anti-India sentiment	142 (5.3%)	Invented 'West Bengal media leaks'	7,346
Yunus / interim government	105 (3.9%)	Framed as hostile to BNP-Jamaat interests	-
Awami League and supporters	134 (5.0%)	Framed as criminal force subverting election	-

The press was a primary target in the observed ecosystem.

With 566 posts targeting journalists or media, press delegitimisation is a major pattern in the corpus. Network analysis found BNP promotion and anti-journalist content co-appearing in 98 posts.

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Key findings

4.1

A structured pattern, not random noise

The two-tier ecosystem, election-eve surge, identical topic coverage among eight influencer pairs and the topic network together support the study's interpretation of an organised information operation.

4.2

Fear outperformed direct partisanship

Anti-India disinformation generated 6.8 times more audience reaction than explicit election content in this corpus.

4.3

Religion functioned as a delivery channel

Religious-Jamaat co-occurrence appeared in 172 posts, while large religious-content pages delivered partisan political material to established audiences.

4.4

Moderation evasion was deliberate

A total of 269 posts used Bengali word-breaking to reduce automated detection, indicating awareness of platform moderation mechanisms.

4.5

Attacking journalists was structurally important

The corpus contains 566 posts targeting journalists, with press attacks and BNP promotion co-occurring in 98 posts.

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Implications

For democracy and the electoral process. The dataset documents exposure to fabricated opinion polls, false candidate projections, geopolitical outrage and partisan religious endorsements during the pre-election period.

For journalists. Journalists were a major target category. Anti-India frames generated especially high engagement, while fake polls and religiously framed disinformation created difficult fact-checking and moderation challenges.

For platform governance. Bengali word-obfuscation shows how automated moderation can be deliberately evaded and raises questions about the effectiveness of Bangla-language content moderation.

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Limitations

The dataset represents observable Facebook activity from 77 selected accounts during defined collection windows. It can establish patterns in posts, engagement, co-occurrence and network structure within that corpus. It does not independently establish the full information environment, private coordination, intent, causation or platform-wide prevalence.

The study interprets converging indicators as evidence of an organised information operation. Under Dataful's evidence framework, coordination should remain identified as an inference unless independent evidence of planning, direction or common control is available.

What we found - and how we know.