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Tall promises, small actions

Manifestos contain same old pledges that fall short of fulfilment

ASIFUR RAHMAN and NILIMA JAHAN

Combating the mosquito menace was a key promise in the manifesto of Mohammad Hanif, who became the first elected mayor of the undivided Dhaka City Corporation in 1994.

"There would be a permanent mechanism to curb the menace in the city," said the Awami League leader, in his election manifesto.

But eight years later, BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka, who would soon succeed Hanif as the mayor, said the measures taken by the AL leader to solve the problem fell short of people's expectations. "Perhaps, the mosquito repellents were adulterated or there were some problems in those. If elected, I will try to use the right repellents and technology," he said at a press conference during electioneering for the second DCC polls.

Since then, Dhaka city has seen a rapid unplanned urbanisation with changes to its infrastructural and environmental landscape. The responsibilities of the city authorities have also changed. City dwellers, however, hardly got respite from the mosquito nuisance.

Before becoming Dhaka South mayor in 2015 -- four years after the DCC was split into two -- Sayeed Khokon, son of late mayor Hanif, too said mosquito control was one of his top priorities and promised to launch frequent anti-mosquito drives in the capital.

Despite that, city people continued to endure the menace in the last five years.

Mosquito-borne diseases -- dengue and chikungunya -- turned acute in the city several months ago, and many blamed the two city corporations for their failure to prevent the outbreaks.

Government documents show around 166 people died of dengue and more than 1.01 lakh were infected with the disease in the last nine

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DHAKA CITY

POLLS 2020



AL mayor candidate for DNCC, Atiqul Islam, is the immediate past mayor of the city corporation. A former BGMEA president, Atiqul promises to make Dhaka a modern, healthy, and more accessible city. He wants to introduce an electric bus service and prioritise recovery of lakes and canals from grabbers.



BNP mayoral nominee for DNCC, Tabith Awal, is the party's executive committee member. A businessman by profession, Tabith is also a sports organiser. He pledges to ensure safe food, healthcare for the poor, environmental protection and public safety. He vows to free the city dwellers from perennial traffic jam.

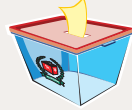


DSCC mayor candidate from the AL, Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, is a barrister and a three-time lawmaker from Dhaka -10. He plans to turn the city corporation area into a tourist destination. He has pledged not to hike the holding tax. He wants to make DSCC the first autonomous city corporation and form a team of firefighters at DSCC.



BNP mayoral hopeful for DSCC, Ishraque Hossain, pledges to turn Dhaka south into a modern and world-class metropolis. An engineer by profession, the BNP leader wants to free the South city from pollution, traffic congestion and waterlogging. He also plans to build skywalks in different areas.

DNCC	AREA	DSCC
196.228 sq km	109.259 sq km	
59,43,316	POPULATION	38,83,423
30,10,273 (male 15,49,567, female 14,60,706)	VOTERS	24,53,150 (male 12,93,616, female 11,59,536)
1,318	POLLING CENTRES	1,150
7,846	VOTING BOOTHS	6,588
876	'RISKY' CENTRES	721
6 candidates vying for one mayor post		7 candidates for one mayor post
251 aspirants for 54 general ward councillor posts		326 aspirants for 73 general ward councillor posts
77 candidates for 18 posts of reserved ward councillor for women		82 candidates for 23 posts of reserved ward councillor for women



VOTING TIME
8:00am -- 4:00pm

AL, BNP face off as Dhaka goes to polls

Concerns remain over EVM, violence

LAW ENFORCERS
49,000
MAGISTRATES
236 (executive 172, judicial 64)
ELECTION OFFICIALS
45,770
POLLS OBSERVERS
1,013 local, 74 foreign
EVMs
28,878
One EVM for each polling booth, another one will be kept on standby
ARMY TECHNICIANS
two for each polling centre

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and WASIM BIN HABIB

A little over a year after the parliamentary election, the two arch-rival political parties once again lock horns in the much-anticipated Dhaka city polls today amid widespread fears of violence and concerns over the use of EVMs.

Many residents expressed fears that there will be violence on the polling day because clashes between the AL and BNP men took place during the campaign.

On January 21, BNP's DNCC mayoral nominee Tabith Awal was attacked by supporters of an AL-backed councillor candidate in Mirpur.

According to the returning officers for the DNCC and DSCC, Abul Kashem and Abdul Baten, 66 percent of the 1,318 polling centres in DSCC and 63 percent of the 1,150 centres in DNCC are important. Other Election Commission officials said "important" was a euphemism for the presence of risks of violence.

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Don't leave your voting centres

CEC urges polling agents of candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday requested the polling agents of the mayor and ward councillor candidates not to leave the polling centres even if they were asked to do so.

He also urged the agents to stay inside the polling booths to exercise their responsibilities.

The CEC was briefing reporters after a meeting with the election commissioners at the Nirbachan Bhaban in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. The meeting discussed the Election Commission's



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EC looks up to young voters

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission hopes that the voter turnout will increase in Dhaka city elections with participation of young voters.

Over 53.64 lakh voters, half of them aged between 19 and 36 years, are expected to cast their votes this year, said the Election Commission (EC) officials.

Today, the voters of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) would elect their mayors and ward councillors for the next five years.

"If the youths come to the polling centres, total turnout will increase," said DNCC returning officer Abul Kashem.

Amid reservations of multiple political parties and confusion among many voters, all the polling centres of DSCC and DNCC would use Electronic Voting Machines

(EVMs) this year.

According to the EC officials, there are 54.64 lakh voters in the capital. In the 2002 Dhaka City Corporation polls, there were 28.69 lakh voters and after that, about 25.96 lakh voters enrolled in the voters' list, who were between the ages of 19 to 36 years.

Meanwhile, in the 2015 DNCC and DSCC elections, there were 42.19 lakh voters, after which 12.44 lakh voters were enrolled in the voters' list.

Redwan Ibne Shams, a university student in Mirpur-10 area, said, "I am looking forward to the polls and excited to cast my vote using the EVM. However, the law and order situation is an important consideration."

VOTER TURNOUT A CONCERN

Speaking at a meeting with the chiefs of different law enforcement agencies

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Bangladeshi citizens, mostly students, wearing facemasks wait at Wuhan airport yesterday, as the Bangladesh government prepares to evacuate them following coronavirus outbreak in the city of Wuhan in China.

PHOTO: AFP

CORONAVIRUS
UPDATE

213
DEATHS (ALL IN CHINA)

9,821
CONFIRMED CASES

Hajj camp readied for 361 returnees from Wuhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities have prepared a Hajj camp in Dhaka to keep 361 Bangladeshis who are set to return home from coronavirus-hit Chinese city Wuhan early today.

The returnees would be kept quarantined for 14 days on the second floor of Ashkona Hajj Camp,

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Don't go to China

US warns citizens; other countries tighten travel curbs as WHO declares global health emergency; first UK, Russia cases confirmed

REUTERS, Shanghai

The United States and other countries tightened travel curbs yesterday and businesses said they were facing supply problems because of the coronavirus in China, a day after the World Health Organization declared a global health emergency.

With the death toll rising to 213, all of them in China, the United States warned Americans not to travel to the Asian country, where the outbreak first appeared

in Wuhan, capital of the central Hubei province.

Japan advised citizens to put off non-urgent travel to China, Iran's health minister urged a ban on all travellers from China and Britain and Russia reported their first two cases of the virus.

Singapore said it was suspending entry to travellers with a recent history of travel to China and suspending visas for Chinese passport holders. The ban will also apply to those transiting Singapore, a

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