



Now that the national election has ended, the Dhaka South City Corporation workers have started removing campaign posters to keep the city clean. The photos were taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kakrail and Topkhana Road yesterday.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ, AMRAN HOSSAIN, PRABIR DAS

### President, PM greet

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 was a glorious year in history of the Bangalee nation... let the New Year bring in happiness, peace and prosperity to all."  
 The premier said Bangladesh witnessed glorious success in 2018 in the arena of diplomacy, maintaining constitutional and democratic continuation and upholding the spirit of the Liberation War.  
 Terming Bangladesh the "role model" for development in the world, she said, "We have made huge developments as per the election pledges in sectors including agriculture, education, health, communications, information technology, infrastructure and power in the last 10 years."  
 "We sent Bangabandhu Satellite-1 to the orbit, which made us the 57th country having satellite in space," she said.  
 Hasina said the annual growth rate of GDP (gross domestic product) hit record 7.86 percent in the outgoing year, which is the highest in the country's history while the per-capita income surged to \$1,751.  
 "Reducing poverty rate in the country now stands at 21.8 percent while the extreme poverty rate at 11.3 percent," she added.  
 Mentioning the literacy rate is 73 percent, she said students are getting free books. She said 90 percent of people have been getting electricity and hopefully it will be upgraded to cent percent within a short time.  
 Talking about healthcare services, she said it is now at every doorstep of the grassroots people. Also, the average life expectancy has increased to 72 years.  
 "Digital Bangladesh is now a reality," she continued.  
 At the end of the year, the pro-liberation forces are going to form the government once again as Awami league has become the winner in the parliamentary election, she said, adding that it is the biggest achievement in the outgoing year.  
 "Let's build a 'Golden Bangla' free from hunger, poverty, illiteracy and communalism, as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she added.

### Polls outcome marred

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 democracy," he said.  
 Allegations of such harassments continued to surface till election day. This has possibly created public distrust in the democratic system, he added.  
 The way the chief election commissioner tried to ignore many opposition polling agents' absence at polling centres was "embarrassing". It makes one wonder whether Election Commission led by him could deliver its constitutional duty properly, Iftekharuzzaman said.  
 He said incidents of violation of the RPO, like stopping the voting process for "lunch break", happened in the capital.  
 It is important to ensure fair probe into incidents like this and snatching away of ballot boxes full of ballot papers before voting started, shortage of ballot papers before voters could cast their votes, and assault on candidate at polling centre, he said.  
 Conducting fair probe of such incidents by the EC to determine its failure and making those public are essential, he added.  
 "Ensuring justice through a judicial probe of the allegations will be of immense value for the credibility, self-confidence of and public trust in a government that is being formed in the wake of an unprecedented outcome of an unprecedented election," Iftekharuzzaman said.  
 Meanwhile, issuing a separate statement, rights body Ain O Salish Kendra yesterday expressed concern over violent incidents on polls day and the previous night. It called upon concerned authorities to take effective measures to stop post-polls violence.

### Time to clean up the posters

MATHEWS CHIRAN  
 While the 11th national election has just been done and dusted, it has left its mark on the capital -- as it has on the rest of the country -- through thousands of posters and banners strewn across thoroughfares and alleyways alike.  
 While these promotional materials added an air of festivity to pre-electoral proceedings, they run the risk of being an eyesore and a hazard if not removed and disposed of quickly, according to citizens.  
 "Some posters are torn out now, and ropes are indiscriminately hanging in the alleys. These sometime tangle with rickshaws and might cause accidents. So it is necessary to bring those down as early as possible," said Sazia Afrin, a resident of Khilgaon area.  
 Md Marsud, a businessman in Badda, said, "Some of the tattered posters are already drifting onto the roads. These need to be disposed of properly before they spread all over the place, making the streets dirty."  
 During the campaign, almost all political parties and candidates used plastic posters so that those do not get damaged in rain or mist. For environmental activists, the use of plastic has been a big cause for concern, because of its adverse effects on the environment.  
 Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin said, "The use of plastic is illegal, and its use in election campaign posters is unfortunate."  
 He said plastic posters need to be disposed of as early as possible, or those might end up in the drains and cause water-logging on city streets. Besides, the disposal of plastic requires special management, as those do not biodegrade.  
 When contacted, Air Commodore Zahid Hossain, chief of waste management of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), said "We have already started removing the posters and banners. We will do the same for the plastic coverings of the posters. We want to keep the city clean," he said.  
 On the other hand, Dhaka North City Corporation's (DNCC) chief waste management officer Commodore MA Razzak said that they haven't yet received any directive regarding removal of posters and banners of the city yet.  
 Local units of political parties also say they will help remove their posters in some areas.  
 "The election has just ended, and now as per directive of our ward commissioner, we will take down the posters, banners and other materials from tomorrow (today) and keep them in a designated place. Then the city corporation personnel can take them away," Deen Mohammad, president of Awami League's unit-1 of ward-19 under DNCC told The Daily Star.

### A glowing example

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 queues and inside polling centres and no one told me they faced any threat, harassment or intimidation," he said.  
 He said voters had trust and confidence in the Election Commission and authorities concerned that they would follow the best practices in the election; the arrangements helped voters to cast their votes smoothly and with safety.  
 Another observer from Nepal, Advocate Mohamadin Ali, said Bangladesh has set the best example of a high standard election.  
 Former minister and member of Nepal Communist Party, Hakikullah Musalman, said he was immensely impressed to see such a peaceful, disciplined and orderly election in Bangladesh.  
 Speaking at the press conference, Prof Mohammed Abed Ali, executive director of Election Monitoring Forum, informed that the forum is an association of 31 organisations and 26 NGOs registered under the Election Commission.  
 He said they deployed 5,765 observers in 214 constituencies out of 299, who visited 17,165 centres. Abed Ali said it was a peaceful election and it was far better than previous ones.  
 Director General of External Publicity Wing of the Foreign Ministry, Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood; Canadian observers Tania Dawn Foster and Chally Foster; Nepalese Communist Party member and former MP Nazir Mia; lawyer of Kolkata Judge Court Gautom Ghosh; writer and researcher from Sri Lanka Mohammed Ehsan Iqbal; and SAARC Human Rights Foundation's director Masum Chowdhury were also present at the press conference.

### Severe cold wave sweeping through Panchagarh

UNB, Dhaka  
 A severe cold wave is sweeping through Panchagarh district of Rangpur division.  
 Besides, Mymensingh division, the rest of Rangpur division, Tangail, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Sitakunda, Sreemangal, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Khulna, Jashore, Chuadanga and Barisal are experiencing mild to moderate cold wave.  
 The cold wave may continue through some parts of these areas, said Met office.  
 The lowest temperature was recorded 5.1 degrees Celsius at Tentulia.  
 Night temperature is likely to rise slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

### Govt set up 21,000 mosques, religious establishments

BSS, Dhaka  
 The government repaired and reconstructed 21,000 mosques and religious establishments alongside building a 170 feet high minaret and expanded female prayer room of Baitul Mukarram national mosque during the last 10 years.  
 "With the expansion work of female prayer room of Baitul Mukarram national mosque, 5,600 women can perform prayers at a time. The government has repaired and reconstructed 21,000 mosques and religious organisations," an official of the religious affairs ministry told the news agency.  
 He said the government is constructing model mosque-Islamic cultural centres in districts and upazila towns across the country with Saudi Arabia's financing.  
 According to the planning ministry, the model mosques would disseminate "accurate and correct" information about Islam across the country and prevent militancy, violence towards women and increase awareness.  
 He said the government created 80,000 employment facilities by introducing mosque-based child education and mass education across the country at a cost of Tk 1,500 crore.  
 Some 96.16 lakh students have been getting education facilities under the mosque-based education programme.  
 The government also distributed 4 lakh copies of the Holy Quran among mosque-based students and introduced honours courses at 80 madrasas. It set up 28,000 libraries in mosques and established 100,000 mosque-based maktabs (Islamic

### Mukabbir, one of the fortunate

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 political stand. "My political view differs from that of missing BNP leader M Ilias Ali, but he is still popular in the area. The sympathy for his condition also helped me win the polls."  
 Mukabbir is originally from nearby Sylhet-3 (Dakhin Surma, Fenchuganj, and Balaganj).  
 "My home is at Chandairpara of Balaganj upazila, and it's adjacent to Osmaninagar. The two areas became separate upazilas only a few years back. Since my home is closer to Osmaninagar, I contested from this constituency," he said.  
 Mukabbir said he will focus on local development and enhancement of GonoForum's popularity.



Election observers share their findings with media at Jatiya Press Club yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



A moving truck loaded with the belongings of a family in Chattogram city yesterday. The last day of the year usually sees more people moving than any other month. But fewer seem to have done so this year because of the national election. The photo was taken in Kazir Dewri area. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

### Nilufar Jahan laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon  
 Nilufar Jahan, wife of Awami League lawmaker Nurul Islam Sujon, was laid to rest in Panchagarh yesterday.  
 Nilufar, who died at a Dhaka hospital on Saturday, was buried at their family graveyard in Moidandighi village of Boda upazila.  
 She was admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital on December 23 with pneumonia, family sources said. She was later transferred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.  
 On December 28, she was admitted to Dhaka's Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, where she had been on life support.  
 Former Jatiya Sangsad speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Asaduzzaman Noor MP, AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP, among others, attended her namaz-e-janaza at Moidandighi High School.

### BNP leader Dulu

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 Police submitted a charge sheet in 2017, showing Dulu fugitive in the case and appealed to a court to issue a warrant against him.  
 On December 12, detectives picked up the BNP leader from his Gulshan residence in connection with the case.

The following day, a Dhaka court sent him to jail and fixed December 23 for the hearing.  
 Dulu was a Jatiya Oikyafront aspirant for the 11th parliamentary election held on December 30.  
 But his candidature was cancelled due to the conviction and sentence.

### SunEdison challenges cancellation

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 6482.4 million units of electricity from the firm over a period of 20-years at an estimated cost of Tk 8,595.66 crore.  
 Seeking anonymity a top official of the power division said, SunEdison had obtained the project on an unsolicited basis with much higher tariff compared to other similar projects, but failed to prove its efficiency.  
 The firm had been struggling with the project since it received the Cabinet Purchase Committee's approval on October 1, 2015.  
 SunEdison became bankrupt in 2016, plunging into big financial crisis and even failed to purchase required land in Teknaf upazila for the project.  
 Some local firms came to rescue the firm by arranging 700 acres of land for the project, the power division officials noted.  
 As per the deal, the US firm was supposed to set up the park as an independent power producer (IPP) investing about \$300 million.  
 PDB officials said private solar plants have been part of the government's plan to generate 24,000MW of electricity by 2021, of which a certain portion will come from renewable energy.  
 They said special emphasis was laid on power production from non-conventional sources like solar photovoltaic and wind.  
 The government has aimed to increase the total solar power production to 2,000MW by 2020.  
 But the total solar power production in Bangladesh has not crossed 300 MW yet.