



From wading knee-deep water to staying in inundated homes, the residents of Shyampur's Dhaka Match Factory area in no way deserve to live like this. But a botched development work made their lives miserable last year, and since then, dealing with such misfortune has become a chore.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Flooded homes, wretched lives

Shyampur residents' year under knee-deep wastewater



HELEMUL ALAM

Taslima Begum has been wading through knee-deep wastewater to get home for the last nine months. The wastewater comes from nearby factories at Shyampur, which clog the streets with no way to pass through drains. As a result, the area has remained submerged for so long.

Every day, Taslima and her family try their best to get the water out of their home. They sweep, use buckets, but the floor still remains knee-deep under water.

"Every household work we do, like cooking, we have to do it standing in the dirty water that flows in from the buildings in Dhaka Match Factory area," Taslima said.

Like Taslima, residents of the new colony at Shyampur's Dhaka Match Factory area have been living just like this for an entire year.

But it's not just limited to the colony. As the main road from Match Factory area to Railway Bazar, stretching for around half a kilometre, is also under two-feet-deep dirty water.

"The area was in good condition even two years back, but after works for a rail-line extension project started, the wastewater can't pass at all," said Abul Hasnat, a shopkeeper from the area.

Contacted, Md Abu Naser, spokesperson of DSCC, said the problem started after a drain and another outlet to pass the water got blocked due to the railway line extension project.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor

Taposh and Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan visited the spot on October 20 last year.

The ministry and DSCC held a meeting where some decisions regarding the issue were taken, including construction of a culvert to transport the wastewater to Buriganga by a storm-water drain, Naser said. The railways ministry will construct the culvert at Shyampur, he added.

However, if factory owners from the match factory area do not treat their wastewater, DSCC will not allow them to use the storm-water drain, he warned.

Ministries of industry and commerce will take an initiative to coordinate with the factory owners, Naser said.

DSCC will re-excavate Shyampur canal to bring back its water-flow, while

water will be transported to Buriganga through three outlets. "We will start our work in the next two months," he said.

During the visit, Mayor Taposh had said since the very beginning, they have been telling government agencies to coordinate with DSCC while taking up new projects. But DSCC has observed that rather than doing that, the agencies point the finger at the city corporation at the last stage of the projects' implementation.

Taposh said normal water-receding processes are being hampered due to the works of the rail-network project of Padma Bridge.

A railway official said to resolve the problem, they will set up culverts using their project funds at places earmarked by DSCC.

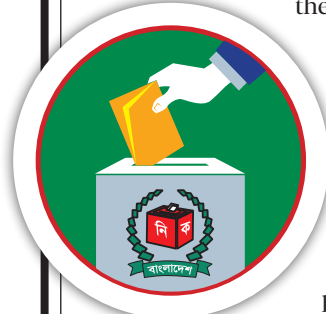
Why didn't voters know about this?

13 NCC councillor-elects have history of murder, arms cases; experts blast EC for not making info public

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SANAD SAHA

As the Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) elections came to a close, it was found that at least 13 councillors with murder, drugs, arms or explosives related cases against them won their respective ballots on Sunday.

Among the elected councillors, 14 are from Awami League, although a majority took part as independent candidates; nine are from BNP, who also stood as independent candidates, as the party did not officially take part in the polls.



Of the other three, two are from Jatiya Party, while a lone post was won by Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD).

Of them, eight of the BNP councillors have had such cases filed against them, although they claimed all the cases were politically motivated.

Among the AL winners, four

This goes to show that the Election Commission didn't do its work properly. Data related to these cases are an essential part of the candidates' personal information, and it's the duty of the commission to inform the voters about this.

BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR
Secretary of Shujan

councillors – Matiur Rahman, Shahjalal Badal, Md Mizanur Rahman Khan and Ruhul Amin – have had these cases filed against them, along with another councillor – Israfil Pradhan – an ex-BNP affiliate who switched allegiance to AL.

Of BNP's newly elected councillors, Iqbal Hossain, Golam Muhammad Sadril, Ohidul Islam, Shawkat Hashem, Sultan Ahmed Bhuiyan, Abul Kawar, Maksudul Alam Khandaker Khorshed, and Md Nur Uddin Miya have multiple cases of these types filed against them.

BNP-affiliate Nur Uddin and AL-affiliate Shahjalal Badal are the brother and nephew, respectively, of seven-murder case convict Nur Hossain.

Nur Uddin was elected from Ward-4 for the first time, while Shahjalal was the incumbent councillor of Ward 3.

Nur Uddin, former VP of Siddhirganj Thana BNP, has had eight cases filed against him, while Shahjalal has 12. These include arms, drugs and extortion related cases. Of the cases, Nur Uddin has got relieved from two, while Shahjalal got relieved and acquitted from eight.

Mentionable, Kashimpur Central Jail authorities recently seized a cellphone from death-row convict Nur Hossain, who was allegedly working for his brother and nephew ahead of the polls, according to leaked audio clips.

Nur has been in jail since 2017, after he was sentenced to death in the case.

Meanwhile, AL's Matiur Rahman, who won

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER
TIMING
JAN 18



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:30	12:45	4:15	5:40	7:00
Jamaat	6:05	1:15	4:30	5:44	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Those aged 50 now eligible

Says home minister about booster dose

UNB, Dhaka

The government has lowered the age limit for receiving the Covid booster dose up to 50, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday.

"We have enough vaccines in stock," the minister said while talking to reporters at the secretariat. So far, he said, seven lakh booster doses have been administered in Bangladesh.

"In last 15 days, the positivity rate increased to 18 percent and it will reach 30 per cent by a month and a half. If such a rate continues, there will be no seat available in any hospital."

The minister said the government is worried about the current Covid situation. "So, everyone must wear a mask and follow health protocols." He warned that the situation will worsen if people move recklessly. "The 11-point restriction of the government has to be followed. Otherwise, the Omicron cases will increase further."

Earlier, the minister had a meeting with the Russian Ambassador. In this regard, the minister said there was an agreement with Russia on vaccine procurement but the country has not received those yet. "They want to provide their Covid vaccine 'Sputnik Light'. But we asked them to send vaccines as per the agreement first."



SOLIDARITY WITH SUST... Protesting the police attack on students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology on Sunday night, students of Dhaka University bring out a procession in TSC area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

64pc school students vaccinated

Says deputy education minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine has been given to 64 percent of students between the age 12 and 18, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury, deputy minister for education, told parliament yesterday.

He said the number of students belonging to the mentioned age group in the country is about 1 crore 16 lakh 23 thousand 322. Of them, the first dose of vaccine was given to 77 lakh 18 thousand and 337 students till Sunday.

Mohibul also said the government has been able to vaccinate all university teachers.

He further mentioned that 90 percent of the public university students residing in the university halls have already been vaccinated.