



A specialised vehicle of Dhaka North City Corporation sprays water on the roads and trees to keep dust pollution in check. Winter is a time when the capital's air significantly deteriorates due to the dry environment. This photo was taken yesterday from Monipuripa area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Dhaka most polluted city in the world

Says Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is the most polluted city in the world, and air pollution is the main cause for respiratory issues, said Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

"We are aware of it. We are working to get rid of the problem," said the mayor while addressing the first National NCD Conference at a Dhaka hotel.

Yesterday was the second day of the three-day event.

He said DSCC is working to reduce non-communicable diseases and improve

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the corporation's basic amenities like parks and playgrounds to achieve sustainable development goals.

"We do not have sufficient walkways, parks and playgrounds. We have to ensure them now. We are preparing a 30-year master plan in this regard, so that we can increase these facilities by 2050," said Taposh.

"To prevent non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cancer and high pressure, we have to improve facilities to reduce mortality rate," mayor Taposh added.

Taposh said they have already taken initiatives to establish more parks, widen footpaths and create walkways.

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# 38 days of fresh air in 6 years

Study on Dhaka finds; says nighttime air carries more risk

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Residents of the capital have inhaled clean air for only 38 days in the last six years, found a study, highlighting the gravity of the air pollution that over two crore people of the city are exposed to every day.

The alarming figures came up in a study conducted by Stamford University's Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies from 2016 to 2021.

For the last six years, the average AQI (Air Quality Index) scores in Dhaka was 219, which falls in the category of extremely unhealthy, the report said. The permissible limit of clean air is AQI 0-50.

Dust generated from development work contributes 30 percent to air pollution, while about 29 percent of due to industries and brick kilns.

Ambient air pollution accounts for an estimated 4.2 million deaths globally per year. They die from stroke, heart disease, lung cancer as well as acute and chronic respiratory diseases.

The report, released yesterday, also stated that nights in Dhaka provide little relief from the pollution. "It was found that nighttime is riskier for residents than daytime, as the air quality nosedives at night due to multiple factors."

The reasons include trucks carrying construction materials and inter-district buses entering the city at night, city corporation workers sweeping the roads during that time, and the dip in temperature that allows dust to hang in the air for a longer time.

From 2020-21, air pollution has increased by 9.8 percent, the report stated, adding that it was mainly due to economic activities getting back on track after Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed.

Professor Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder, chairperson of Stamford University's environmental science department, who led the study, told The Daily Star that Dhaka's air starts deteriorating from 4:00pm, and pollution peaks around 2:00am.

"The air quality is better after 2:00am till 6:00am. Then it dips again from 6:00am to 9:00am, as office and school-goers hit the streets," he said at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) in the city yesterday.

Taking part in the discussion, Bapa General Secretary Sharif Jamil said Dhaka's AQI was above 300 on 37 days of the last six years, which is seriously hazardous for people.



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"Under Environment Conservation Act-1995, when air quality deteriorates to such a level, the department of environment [DoE] must issue a warning to residents about this health hazards. We never saw any such notice or warning from it, which indicates their sheer negligence," he said.

He also alleged that foreign companies that are executing the country's mega projects do not comply with environmental guidelines, disregarding people's health.

The Daily Star called Ashraf Uddin, director general of DoE, and Md Asadul Haque, director (Dhaka metropolitan) of DoE for their comments. They did not receive the calls nor replied to texts.

The High Court on November 24 last year issued nine instructions to DoE, two city corporations and BRTA to make sure that waste-carrying vehicles, construction materials and construction sites are covered with tarpaulin, and that water is sprinkled on streets.

According to a World Bank study, air pollution kills 10,000 people in Dhaka alone every year, while 1,53,000 people die across the country.

# Poetry the language of protests

Says PM at inauguration of Bangabandhu National Recitation Festival

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said poets and reciters were most vocal against the ban on politics after the assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"After August 15, 1975, when political activities were not possible at all, the language of protest was poetry and people were



"After August 15, 1975, when political activities were not possible at all, the language of protest was poetry and people were inspired by words."

inspired by words," she said.

She also pointed out that nothing else can inspire people to protest as much as poetry, songs, drama and arts in general.

The premier made the remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

# How could you violate PM's directive?

Atiqul asks BR director general over allowing construction on canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday asked Bangladesh Railway's director-general how they allotted a waterbody for the construction of a five-star hotel and shopping complex, violating the prime minister's direction.

The mayor asked the question to DG Dharendra Nath Mazumder over phone, while conducting a drive to recover a waterbody at Kuril Biswa Road.

"Check and cancel the allotment. We are demolishing the structures," he told the DG.

Afterwards, DNCC officials demolished a large signboard of Millennium Holdings Limited set up on the waterbody.

The mayor also made a phone call to the railways minister in this regard earlier, during which the minister assured of taking appropriate steps.

"This waterbody has been playing a vital role to save Nikunja residents from waterlogging for a

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PRAYER  
TIMING  
JAN 28



	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:35	12:30	4:15	5:46	7:15
Jamaat	6:10	1:15	4:30	5:50	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Dare not skip 'guest room meeting'

Made to stare at bright light by 'BCL members', DU student passes out

DU CORRESPONDENT

A first-year mass communication student at Dhaka University was allegedly bullied and mentally tortured by a few seniors in the guest room of Bijoy Ekattor Hall on Wednesday night.

A probe body was formed yesterday by the hall authority after the student submitted a written complaint to the provost's office, as confirmed to this correspondent by Prof Abdul Bashir, provost of Bijoy Ekattor hall.

According to Akhtarul Islam's complaint, he was summoned to the guest room around 10:00pm by five-six second-year students. He was made to stare at a bright light for over 10 minutes.

Akhtarul's alleged ordeal continued till the accused asked him to leave the guest room after he started feeling unwell. He became unconscious upon reaching his dorm room and had to be rushed

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

His only fault was that he could not attend the last "guest room meeting" as his father was unwell, he said.

The accused are Kamruzzaman Raju of sociology; Saiful Islam of international relations; Hridoy Ahmed Kajal of history; Yamin Islam of social welfare and research; Saiful Islam Rohan of public administration; and Omar Faruk Shuvo of psychology.

Akhtarul and the witnesses said all of them are BCL activists of the DU unit.

However, Omar Faruk Shuvo denied the allegations and termed the accusations "false and baseless".

Sources said the accused belong to a BCL faction led by its activists Abu Yunus and Rabiul Islam Rana.

"Our organisation doesn't support any such inhuman acts. Strict steps will be

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Braving the morning cold, first-time vaccine-seekers lined up in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. They said the rise in the Omicron variant's spread as well as effective awareness campaigns influenced them to finally get their jabs.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# 11-yr-old dies falling down building stairs

UNB, Dhaka

An 11-year-old boy died after falling down stairs of a building in the capital on Wednesday night.

The deceased is Md Roman, son of Jahangir of Charfashion upazila in Bhola district. He was a student of Class IV.

Police said Roman was playing with other children on the stairs of the building in Hazaribagh Bou Bazar area. Around 8pm, he lost balance while catching a ball and fell down the stairs.

Roman was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was declared dead around 9:30pm, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of the hospital police outpost. The building staircase was filled with rainwater, he added.