

## Dhaka air 'very unhealthy'

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka again topped the list of cities worldwide with the worst air quality with an AQI score of 271 at 8:50am yesterday morning.

Dhaka's air was classified as "very unhealthy", posing serious health risks to residents, according to the air quality index.

India's Kolkata, Delhi and China's Wuhan occupied the second, third and fourth spots on the list, with AQI scores of 244, 231 and 231 respectively.

When the AQI value for particle pollution is between 101 and 150, air quality is considered "unhealthy for sensitive groups", between 150 and 200 is "unhealthy", between 201 and 300 is said to be "very unhealthy", while a reading of 301+ is considered "hazardous".

The AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, informs people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

The AQI in Bangladesh is based on five pollutants: particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2, and ozone.



A man rushes through a gust of dust while crossing a road in Tongi. Air pollution has been a pressing problem for years, with Dhaka topping the list of cities worldwide with worst air qualities yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAMUL HAQ

## 2 heavyweights lose to AL independents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The constituencies of Rangpur-1 and Dinajpur-1 saw two heavyweight candidates, also incumbent lawmakers, embrace defeat against two grassroots Awami League leaders who contested the polls independently.

In Rangpur-1 (Gangachhara upazila and wards 1-8 of Rangpur City Corporation), former Jatiyo Party secretary general and three-time lawmaker Moshir Rahman Ranga contested independently this time.

JP fielded Hossain Mokbul Shariar Asif, nephew of the party's founder late HM Ershad, as its candidate from the seat after ruling Awami League left the seat to JP.

However, Asaduzzaman Babul, general secretary of Gangachhara upazila AL unit who contested independently, won by a big margin.

Babul bagged 73,927 votes, while Ranga got 24,332 and Asif managed only 10,892 votes, according to Election Commission.

Asif went on to lose his security deposit as well.

Of the 3,32,219 eligible voters from the seat, a total 1,14,847 voters cast their ballots on Sunday.

In Dinajpur-1 (Birganj and Kaharol), AL candidate and incumbent lawmaker Manoranjan Shil Gopal lost against independent aspirant Md Zakaria Zaka, also president of Birganj upazila AL unit, in a close contest.

# Mostly 'free and fair' but lacked festivity

Say invited foreign observers; urge EC to take action against those involved in polls violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A section of foreign observers yesterday urged the Bangladesh Election Commission to take strong steps against those involved in electoral violence.

They said the polls were largely free, fair and peaceful, but noted that the abstention of campaigning from some political parties and non-participation of a major political party made the national polls on January 7 less festive.

The Awami League won the polls that were boycotted by the BNP and its allies.

Over 100 foreign observers, including from the US, Canada, UK, Japan, and India, came to visit Bangladesh at the invitation of the Election Commission and their visits were facilitated by the foreign ministry.

However, the embassies of the US and Canada, and UK High Commission have not sent any official election observers to Bangladesh. Some private citizens were in Bangladesh to observe the election and they spoke for themselves or their

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organisation, the foreign missions said.

Syed Ali Zahir, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress MP, and other observers condemned the actions of setting fire to a train and damaging polling stations and vehicles, calling for strong measures against the perpetrators upon arriving in Bangladesh on January 5.

Independent observers from the US,

UK, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Japan, Iraq, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives were present.

During their visit, they inspected around 30 polling centers in Dhaka and its vicinity, and claimed to have observed long queues of men and women without any reported obstacles or intimidation.

However, Syed Ali suggested that political party members should refrain from being in or around polling centers to ensure voters cast their ballots without fear.

Responding to a question on how credible the election was, Snehasis Sur, president of Kolkata Press Club, said it was up to the people, media and the political parties of Bangladesh to make assessment of the credibility.

Terry L Easley of the US said, "Considering the overall situation, all the observers present here agree that the 12th National Parliamentary Election of Bangladesh was held peacefully and with the participation of the common people. It was free, fair and very safe."

## POLLS DAY CLASH Cops sue 15 BNP leaders, 200 others in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday filed a case against 15 BNP leaders and 200 unidentified individuals in connection with clashes with law enforcement during Sunday's national election in the port city's Chandgaon.

Jahidul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Chandgaon Police Station, told The Daily Star, "We filed a case accusing 215 persons, naming 15 BNP leaders with the police station. We are trying to identify those who led the clash."

The clash erupted between police and BNP members at Sarafat Ullah Petrol Pump in Chandgaon around 9:15am when a group of party activists attempted to block Arakan Road in support of their countrywide hartal.

Subsequently, the demonstrators attacked the police multiple times when law enforcement tried



to disperse them. At that point, the police opened fire to bring the situation under control.

The activists launched another attack at 11:00am when border guards joined the police to chase them.

The clash resurfaced in the Moulavipukurpar area at 12:30pm when BNP members targeted a Rab vehicle with projectiles. The confrontation spread to the nearby Tejbazar area.

## HC issues rule over hajj package

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain in two weeks why the current hajj package that allegedly fixed excessive costs for the pilgrims should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court asked the authorities concerned to show causes why they should not be directed to allow all the international airlines operating in Bangladesh to carry the pilgrims at a competitive fare price.

The bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Atabullah issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Ashraf Uz Zaman, a Supreme Court lawyer and chief coordinator of the Al-Quran Study Centre, challenging the hajj package, Assistant Attorney General Md Selim Azad told The Daily Star.

Writ petitioner Ashraf Uz Zaman told this correspondent that the religious affairs ministry on November 8 last year issued a notification fixing the hajj package for the pilgrims, which is very unreasonable and beyond the reach of general people.

## S Alam Group appeal hearing

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has been filed by S Alam Group's owner Mohammad Saiful Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen on August 21 last year through their lawyers also seeking a stay on the HC order.

However, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Justice Borhanuddin passed the deferment order after their lawyer Ajmalul Hossain sought an adjournment of the hearing.

Other three judges of the bench are Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique.

Senior lawyer Ajmalul told the SC bench that the leave to appeal petition is involved with the question on whether the High

Court can issue a suomoto (voluntary) rule on this issue.

So, this matter needs to be heard and disposed of by the full bench of the apex court comprising all of its six judges including the chief justice, he said.

Barrister Ajmalul told The Daily Star that the SC's chamber judge's order, which on August 23 ordered the parties of the case to maintain status quo on the issue, will continue till further order of the apex court.

Senior lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) while senior lawyer Ahsanul Karim was also present for Saiful and Farzana.

On August 6 last year, the HC issued the suomoto

rule and ordered the ACC, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police to conduct inquiry into allegations disclosed in The Daily Star report published on August 4 last year and submit their reports to the HC as early as possible preferably in two months.

In the rule, the HC asked the authorities concerned to explain why their failure and inaction in taking appropriate legal steps and action against the entities and persons mentioned in a news report published in The Daily Star on August 4 shall not be declared illegal, and asked them show causes why they shall not be directed to hold inquiry into the allegations.

## Obituary

STAR REPORT

**Rajia Sultana**, wife of retired senior Bangladesh Bank official Hafizur Rahman, passed away at Evercare Hospitals, Dhaka on Sunday night. She was 78.

She had been suffering from old-age complications, said family members.

Rajia Sultana left behind her husband, two daughters, a son and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

She was laid to rest at Banani Graveyard yesterday.



A vegetable farmer ploughs his field in Kalirhat area of Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Six out of 12 city corporations

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Mymensingh City Corporation also came up with a similar explanation, but they had no idea where to dump the waste. "We may sell it out to waste collectors," said Mohabbat Ali, MCC's waste management officer.

Meanwhile, Cumilla City Corporation's waste management inspector Alamgir Hossain said they were still waiting for directives to start the process.

In this regard, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon suggested the systemic removal of the posters and banners, or else it may create environmental hazards.

BAPA General Secretary Alamgir Kabir said, "If the



laminated posters are not recycled systematically, then it will create environmental hazards, as roadside people have started collecting them and setting fire to them to save themselves from the cold."

Prof Adil Mohammed

Khan of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Jahangirnagar University said city corporation authorities should take immediate steps to remove the posters to bring back the cities' beauty.

## Image crisis

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The JP leader said the party also does not have strength to field its candidates in 265 seats.

**'ELECTION WAS CONTROLLED'**

Contacted, GM Quader said the January 7 election was a controlled one.

Everything happened as per the will of the government. There were many irregularities and vote rigging, he alleged.

He said, no one will trust this government.

"The government decided who would pass in different seats and who wouldn't," he added.

"The government promised the administration will play a neutral role. But they didn't keep their promises," he said.

He said the election won't get any acceptance.

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Sl. No.	e-Tender No.	Nature of e-Tender	Name of items	Date of publish	Last date & time for submission of e-Tender	Date & time for opening of e-Tender
01.	21/2023-2024	International	Supply of 6,600 kgs UV Curing Varnish with Photoinitiator for 100 Taka Bank Note.	09/01/2024	13/02/2024 upto 11.00am	13/02/2024 at 11.15am
02.	22/2023-2024 & 23/2023-2024	Local/International	Supply, Testing & Commissioning of 02 (two) Battery Powered Fork Lift (Reach Truck) Trucks.	16/01/2024	20/02/2024 upto 11.00am	20/02/2024 at 11.15am

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