



## Dengue claims one more life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One dengue patient died while 29 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new figures, the total number of deaths and cases this year rose to 11 and 785 respectively, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 149 dengue patients are still under treatment at different hospitals across the country, including 59 in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, 625 dengue patients have already been released, including 221 in Dhaka.

Last year, the country witnessed 1,705 dengue-related deaths and 3,21,179 cases of the mosquito-borne disease were reported.



A Chinese acrobatic group enthralls audience with its performance at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on Wednesday night. The performance was part of the celebration marking the friendship between Bangladesh and China. This year's "Voices of Spring Golden Dreams", a cross-border spring festival and cultural opus, featured performances from artists of both the countries.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

## What's the point of DoE?

Asks HC, slams the dept for failing to curb pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday expressed dissatisfaction at the Department of Environment for its failure to control pollution.

"The Department of Environment cannot play any effective role in stopping the pollution. Is there any necessity of this office? The rivers are polluted, air is polluted and the situation of Dhaka is worse and therefore, we are in a state of fear," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said.

The bench made the remarks while hearing a petition moved by senior counsel Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

In the petition, HRPB said licenses are reportedly being given through director of DoE (administration) to the owners of illegal brick kilns.

The organisation prayed to the HC to pass necessary directives to this effect.

Murshid told the HC bench that the DoE is playing role in the environment pollution by issuing licences to illegal brick kilns taking bribe. The DoE has not implemented

**The DoE cannot play any effective role in stopping the pollution. Is there any necessity of this office? The rivers are polluted, air is polluted and the situation of Dhaka is worse... therefore, we are in a state of fear.**

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## 'Long road ahead, but we'll prevail'

Say BNP leaders on ongoing movement to oust govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP believes that even if the road ahead is long, their ongoing "peaceful movement" will eventually overthrow the Awami League government.

"We may have a very long way to go in our movement. However, we truly believe the movement to bring democracy back must be systematic and peaceful," said BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan at a discussion meeting at the engineers' institute in Ramna yesterday.

The party held the discussion to observe the 88th birth anniversary of the party founder late Ziaur Rahman.

"Even if the government starts shooting, we have to resist that. It is important to keep in mind that establishing people's rights is not an easy task," said Moyeen Khan.

**We may have a very long way to go in our movement. However, we truly believe the movement to bring democracy back must be systematic and peaceful.**

ABDUL MOYEEN KHAN  
BNP standing committee member

"We have started a challenging fight, and we aim to continue the movement till the end," he added.

At another discussion, BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said, "We are in a battle with an autocratic government. There is no country in the world where a movement like this has borne fruit so quickly."

Addressing BNP men, he said, "I know you're not frustrated. Otherwise, leaders and activists wouldn't be on the streets now."

The BNP leader said they will carry on with their movement until the party's top leaders are released from prison.

BNP standing committee member Selima Rahman said, "We will win this battle, and this regime will surely fall. BNP is supported by people everywhere."

During their speeches, many senior leaders asked the party men to take an oath not to leave the streets until their demands were met.

## Bangladesh falls short of hajj quota again

79,000 slots remain vacant; HAAB, ATAB blame high cost for poor response



RASHIDUL HASAN

Around 79,000 hajj quotas remained vacant as the last date of hajj registration ended yesterday.

Due to a poor response, the religious affairs ministry earlier extended the deadline for registration twice.

The ministry will hold a meeting on Sunday to discuss the overall situation and decide the next course of action, Matiul Islam, additional secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The hajj registration started on November 15 and continued till December 10. The ministry later extended the deadline till December 31, and following the poor response, extended it again till January 18.

According to the ministry, 47,773 aspirants have completed their registration, against the total quota of 1.27 lakh.

Among the registered aspirants, 3,772 will perform hajj under government management, while 44,001 under private management.

According to the agreement between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis will get the opportunity to perform hajj this year, among which 10,000 are supposed to do that under government management.

Leaders of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) expressed disappointment in this regard, saying their businesses will be affected due to the unfulfilled hajj quota.

HAAB and ATAB leaders said many are not showing interest in registering due to the high cost of hajj packages this year.

A Bangladeshi will have to spend a minimum of around Tk 6 lakh to perform hajj under private and government management this year.

A Bangladeshi pilgrim will have to spend around Tk 7 to 8 lakh on average to complete the total formalities of hajj, which has discouraged many aspirants, said HAAB and ATAB leaders.

This year, hajj is set to take place on June 16, depending on the sighting of the moon.

ATAB Secretary General Abdus Salam Aref said many travel agencies will be severely affected due to the poor response.

Meanwhile, the government could not further extend the deadline as the Saudi government has been repeatedly asking to inform them of the total number of Bangladeshi aspirants for better management of hajj this year, said Matiul Islam.

Mentionable, the country also fell short of hajj quota by around 3,500 last year.

## TIB speaks the same language as BNP

Says Quader; Hasan Mahmud, Arafat slams it for report on national polls

STAR REPORT

Two ministers and one state minister slammed Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday alleging that its report on the national election was partial.

Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader alleged that the report was one-sided, anti-government and unrealistic.

"Their [TIB] every word is one-sided; they advocate for the BNP. They are an anti-government [organisation]. TIB also speaks the same language as BNP," said Quader at a press briefing at the political office of the AL president in the capital's Dhanmondi.

He also alleged that the organisation is BNP's agent.

TIB, in a report published on Tuesday, said the 12th parliamentary election was one-sided and staged to appear competitive.

"We have realised from history that TIB has always been against the Awami League. They have always worked for the BNP. They

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Time for sweet-talking the govt is over: JPPP

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiyo Party Parliamentary Party (JPPP) yesterday instructed all party MPs to stop sweet-talking the Awami League government in parliament or showering it with praise, the way they did in the previous two parliaments.

Instead, JPPP has asked its MPs to strongly play the role of opposition by raising their voices in the House in favour of the public and the country, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

The meeting was held at the office of the deputy leader of the opposition and Jatiyo Party chairman GM Quader at the Jatiyo Sangsad Bhaban.

JP was labelled as a "domestic opposition party" during the 10th and 11th parliaments, as its MPs used to flatter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government during their speeches in the House.

At the JPPP meeting, 10 out of 11 JP MPs were present, with GM Quader in the chair, meeting sources said.

"It was decided that JP would play its due role in parliament as an opposition party. We will have to say what is necessary in parliament for the sake of the country and its people," a JP lawmaker, who was present at the meeting, told this correspondent.

Some JP lawmakers used to flatter the prime minister and her government while delivering their speeches in the House during the 2014 and 2018 parliaments, which made people laugh, he said.

The JP chairman instructed all not to repeat such practices, another JP MP said.

The JP lawmakers also discussed the reasons behind the party's debacle in the January 7 polls.

Some MPs argued that the administration betrayed JP candidates in different constituencies and didn't cooperate with them.

JP had contested a total of 265 seats in the 12th parliamentary election. As part of the understanding, AL withdrew their candidates from 26 of the 265 seats.

In the meeting, GM Quader, Anisul Islam Mahmud, and Mujibul Haque Chunnun were elected as the parliament's opposition leader, deputy leader, and chief whip, respectively.

A letter will be sent to Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, informing her of the decision.



PRAYER TIMING		JANUARY 19	
Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib Esha
5:30	12:30	4:15	5:40 7:00
JAMAAT	6:05	1:15	4:30 5:44 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			



**THE 16<sup>th</sup> BANGLADESH INT'L PLASTICS, PRINTING & PACKAGING INDUSTRY FAIR**

**VISITOR Pre-registration**

\*Children under 16 are not admitted to entry.

[f](#) IPF - Bangladesh [|](#) [Q](#)



বাংলাদেশের প্লাস্টিক, প্যাকেজিং ও প্রিন্টিং ইন্ডাস্ট্রির বৃহত্তম প্রদর্শনী এখন আমাদের দোর গোড়ায়

# 24 - 27 JAN. 2024

## NEXT WEEK!

**ICCB** International Convention City Bashundhara **12:00 - 20:00** (Last day till 19:30)


