

## Dhaka South to plant 3 lakh trees in next five years

Says administrator  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) will be planting 3,00,000 trees over the next five years within areas under its jurisdiction, said Administrator Md Abdus Salam yesterday.

He was addressing the inauguration of a tree plantation programme as chief guest, organised with the support of Srijoni Bangladesh and held in the residential area of Dhaka University.

"There is no alternative to tree plantation. Therefore, the prime minister's nationwide tree plantation programme must be turned into a mass movement," he said.

Aligning with the PM's initiative, an ambitious plan has been adopted to plant a total of 3,00,000 trees between 2026 and

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Mulberry trees are in full bloom at the Rajshahi Silk Factory and Sericulture Research and Training Institute. Grown mainly for their leaves -- the primary food for silkworms -- the fruits are rich in vitamin C, iron, and antioxidants. Mulberries are now available locally, selling for around Tk 400 per kg.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## DSCC plans to turn waste into energy at Matuail

Urban planner warns waste-to-energy plan may not be feasible without proper research



DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) plans to convert the Matuail landfill into a modern Resource Circulation Park, aiming to turn city waste into electricity, fuel, and fertiliser.

The initiative supports the government's "Clean City, Green City" vision, which aims to modernise waste management and curb environmental hazards.

On March 12, DSCC Administrator Abdus Salam met with a technical team from the South Korean firm B&F Company at Nagar Bhaban to review the master plan for this project.

Around 3,500 tonnes of waste are generated daily within the 109.24 square kilometre area under DSCC's jurisdiction, most of which ends up at the Matuail landfill.

The new project seeks to use advanced technology to repurpose this refuse.

Under the plan, an estimated 15,000 tonnes of methane will be extracted from nearly 100 acres of the landfill annually for generating electricity. Solar power will supplement the energy production.

At the same time, a pilot Material Recovery Facility is set to process 300 tonnes of household waste daily.

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## BOGURA-6, SHERPUR-3 Jamaat seeks polls cancellation over 'irregularities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday staged a protest rally in Dhaka, alleging widespread irregularities, including vote rigging, ballot stuffing, grabbing of polling centres, and attacks on opposition activists during the Sherpur-3 parliamentary election and the Bogura-6 by-poll.

The elections to the two constituencies were held on April 9. BNP candidates won in both seats.

The rally was held at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers, followed by a protest procession that marched through Paltan intersection and ended at Bijoyagar roundabout.

Speaking at the event as chief guest, the party's secretary general, Mia Golam Porwar, termed the elections in the two constituencies "farical" and demanded cancellation of the results.

"The scale of vote rigging, occupation of polling centres, ballot stuffing, and attacks on opposition leaders and activists in the first election under the BNP's tenure has surpassed even that of the Awami League regime," Porwar said.

He alleged that despite media reports on irregularities and attacks on opposition activists, the chief election commissioner "made a mockery of the nation" by claiming the polls were fair.

Referring to the referendum, the Jamaat leader said the BNP had pledged before the national elections to fully implement its outcome if it won. "But after forming the

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## Of smoke, soot, and suffering

Factory emissions blanket eight villages in Khulna's Rupsha, harming crops, fish, public health

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Toxic emissions from a factory in Rupsha upazila of Khulna have been causing environmental pollution in at least eight neighbouring villages.

The fumes originate from Mimco Carbon Company Limited, an export-oriented factory beside Padma Beel in Tilak village. Established in 2013 on around 45 bighas of land by a businessman from Jamalpur, the factory was inaugurated in March that year by Mannujan Sufian, then state minister for labour and employment.

After operations were halted due to loan default, the factory was later leased from a bank and is now being run by local businessman Shahjahan Shikari and his nephew Masum Billah Shikari.

Locals said since the factory began operations, vast stretches of cropland, fish ponds and residential areas have repeatedly been blanketed by soot and ash from fumes emitted by its furnaces, which operate without emission control, particularly in the evening and at night.

They said the pollution has severely affected the predominantly agricultural area spanning Tilak, Amdabad, Machuadanga, Noihati, Debipur, Samantasena, Patharghata, Godaikhali and other nearby villages.

Padma Beel, covering around

140 hectares, is a vital agricultural zone, with nearly 110 hectares under cultivation.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the factory producing carbon black in 42 furnaces by burning jute sticks, while 18 more furnaces were under construction.

Despite being only two to three kilometres from the upazila

Many believe the factory operates with the backing of influential quarters.

"In recent years, many people here have developed asthma, heart disease and chronic respiratory conditions due to prolonged exposure to the toxic fumes released from the factory's furnaces every evening," said Hosne Ara Banu, a resident of Tilak village.



parishad and within one kilometre of more than six educational institutions, the factory has continued operating for years amid a lack of effective monitoring by the authorities concerned, villagers alleged.

Despite repeated protests, human chains and press conferences, no steps have been taken in this regard, locals said.

Children are the worst affected, she added.

Farmer Gaffar Sheikh of Debipur village said the pollution has adversely affected crop production.

"We no longer get expected yields. Paddy plants die; tomato and gourd production has declined as flowers wither prematurely. The ash settles in fish ponds, reducing

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## BNP begins sale of nomination forms for women's reserved seats

Over 500 ones taken on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday initiated its internal selection process for candidates in the election to the women's reserved seats in the 13th National Parliament by beginning sale of party nomination forms.

The election is slated for May 12.

BNP senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi inaugurated the sale of nomination forms at the party's Nayapaltan central office around 11:00am.

The nomination forms would be sold till Sunday and would also have to be submitted within the same period.

Addressing the aspirants, Rizvi said BNP's parliamentary board would take the final decision after assessing all relevant factors, including the aspirants' political records, role in the party's movements over the past 16-17 years, personal competence, speaking ability in parliament and other necessary aspects.

Rizvi urged the aspirants to accept the party's decision in a disciplined manner and avoid creating any disagreement over the final nominations.

"There should not be any unpleasant situation arising if one person gets nomination while another does not," he said.

"You have all endured much hardship and pain for the party. So, I firmly believe you will accept the party's decision," he added.

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## Army chief returns home from US

STAR REPORT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman returned home yesterday after an official visit to the US.

During the visit, he took part in various programmes in Georgia and held meetings with important personalities, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The ISPR said the Georgia state authorities handed him a special resolution in recognition of the commendable contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers to UN peacekeeping missions.

The statement also said a number of bilateral meetings were held during the visit, where issues of mutual interest between Bangladesh and the US were discussed.



## BANGLADESHI STUDENTS Malaysia considers more scholarships

STAR REPORT

Malaysia has expressed readiness to consider expanding scholarship allocations for Bangladeshi students under existing and future higher education programmes.

Malaysian Minister for Higher Education Zambry Abdul Kadir conveyed the interest during a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister's Adviser on Education, Labour, and Employment Mahdi Amin yesterday.

Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Ariful Haque Chowdhury also attended the meeting, according to a press release from the Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia.

Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in higher education, research collaboration, skills development, and workforce mobility, with emphasis on expanding

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Light classical music evening 'Thumri' performers take to the stage at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area yesterday evening.

## Bengal Foundation hosts evening of thumri

CITY DESK

Bengal Foundation organised a light classical music evening titled "Thumri" at Bengal Shilpalay in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area yesterday evening, celebrating the rich heritage of North Indian semi-classical music traditions.

The programme featured performances of thumri, chaiti, kajri and dhun by vocalists Susmita Debnath (Suchi), Abhijit Kundu and Mirajul Jannat Sonia. They were accompanied by sarangi player Shounak Debnath Rik and sarod artist Ilham Fuljhuri Khan, according to a release from Bengal Foundation press release.

The musical accompaniment was provided by Iftekhar Alam Pradhan on tabla and Bijon Chandra Mistry on harmonium, both senior scholars of Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay.

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