

Noise pollution alarming in port city

Noise level has surpassed WHO recommendation

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Noise pollution in the port city has reached an alarming level as about 30,000 buses, trucks and auto-rickshaws with their roaring sounds reign the roads.

Noise from vehicles has made the lives of city dwellers miserable.

Whether it is 8.00am, 12.30pm, 6.00pm or 10.00pm, it has no difference. From early morning to late in the night, the sound of 'harsh' vehicles that ply recklessly is most deafening.

"We get up from bed amid noise pollution, go to work amid noise pollution, return home amid noise pollution and go to bed amid noise pollution," said Monwarul Haq Shamim, a physician at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

According to sources in the Department of Environment (DoE), about 20,000 auto-rickshaws, 4500 trucks and 4000 buses ply city roads. And these vehicles not only are polluting environment but also causing serious risk to the public health as silent killer.

The World Health Organisation

(WHO) has fixed acceptable sound limits for silent zones at 45 decibels (db) during the day and 35 db at night. Day and nighttime specifications for other areas are: residential areas (50 db and 40 db), mixed areas (60 db and 50 db), commercial areas (70 db and 60 db) and industrial areas (75 db and 70 db).

Noise level has surpassed the levels in all areas in the port city recommended by WHO.

As per medical science, the sound tolerant capacity of a human being is 45 to 70 decibels. But, the figure currently in Chittagong stands between 85 to 110 decibels what the DoE said is alarming.

"Just a little louder conversation creates noise pollution of about 60 decibels, the electric horn of vehicles up to 100 decibels while factories, industries, workshops and repairing of engineering instruments produce 80 to 100 decibels," said DoE sources.

Hydraulic horn of the trucks and buses causes the worst sound hazards and produces 125 decibels of pollution, sources said.

"The extent of noise pollution

by bus, truck and auto-rickshaw sometime differs slightly depending on density or rush of vehicles at some city points and thoroughfares," DoE Director in Chittagong Mosharraf Hossain said.

He said the 'faulty' buses, trucks and auto-rickshaws reign throughout the day at Anderkilla, Chawk Bazar, GEC Intersection, New Market, Muradpur, Sholoshahar No-2 Gate, Tigerpass, Dewanhat, Agrabad Commercial Area, Bandar, Station Road, WASA Crossing and Bohaddarhat Intersection points. And sound pollution takes it's worst toll at these areas.

He said, "Although hydraulic horns are banned, most of the buses and trucks use those defying law."

"Our job is to identify the vehicles with excessive decibel and inform the law enforcing agencies concerned for proper action against the vehicles. And we do conduct survey each year in the cities in this regard," said a DoE chemist requesting anonymity.

Acting on our findings or survey, sometime the traffic department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) takes actions but most of the time the faulty vehicles

ply without any problem, he added.

The auto-rickshaws and tempos with faulty silencer pipe or without filter also attribute to the serious noise pollution, sources said.

Physicians said that noise pollution causes blood pressure, headache, peptic ulcer, insomnia, indigestion, hypertension and permanent hearing impairment and children are the worst victims.

"Noise pollution cut down the retentive faculty, creates headache, insomnia, indigestion and deafness. It may also cause harm to the hearts and liver cirrhosis," said child specialist Dr Nasiruddin Mahmud.

Doctors and DoE officials said that the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) could help reduce noise pollution while renewed fitness certificates to the vehicles.

"If the BRTA set a mandatory sound limit for the vehicles during the renewal of fitness certificate noise pollution would surely come down to a great extent," they said.



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A dream come true

MONIRUL ALAM

"I have achieved what I had dreamt of," said Jharna Chakma, a former Union Parishad (UP) member of Sapchhari Chakmapara near Rangamati town.

Jharna who studied upto class eight won the National Youth Award 2003 for her success in cattle rearing.

"It was the proudest moment and memorable event for me when I received the award from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at a function in Dhaka in December last year," she said. "I was the first indigenous woman who got the national level award," Jharna added.

"It was a challenge for me when I had started my struggle to show a family of four prosperity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with two milk cows of Tk 16500," Jharna said. She bought the cows selling out her last resorts -- domestic goats, ducks, cocks and hens in early 2000. Besides, she added to it her small savings from selling vegetables she ploughed around her cottage at Sapchhari Chakmapara.

Jharna Chakma won the National Youth Award 2003 for her success in cattle rearing

Jharna now earns Tk 12,000 to 15,000 a month from selling milk. She spends Tk 40 for each cow a day and earns about Tk 200. "I collect milk twice a day and sell it at Tk 18 per kg at wholesale rate," Jharna said. She is also using cow dung at the bio-gas plant that she set up beside her kitchen with the assistance of Upazila Livestock Office. "I'm getting multiple benefit from the cattle rearing," she said.

She is now confident enough of life as she leads a happy family along with teenage son Rocky, daughter Nilanjana and school-teacher husband Bipin Bikash Chakma.

"I took care of cows like my child," proud Jharna said when this correspondent visited her

farm-cum-house recently. The four cows she raised give some 50 kgs of milk a day.

It was a great lesson to her that three to four milk cows are enough to run a five-member family.

"Anyone can bring a change in his or her living by rearing three to four milk cows," Jharna said.

Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Abdullah Al Noman flew to her residence on August 7 to see for himself the cattle farm. Noman lauded Jharna for her success as an indigenous woman in raising cattle.

"I was inspired by an elderly man whom I met at DC's office in Rangamati town as a female member of Shapchhari Union Parishad. He advised me to raise cattle and start with goats preliminary," Jharna said.

She is one of 30 women peasants from across the country who visited Nepal in 2002 as 'ideal kishanee'.

She has also planted many species of fruit trees at the courtyard of her house and earned a handsome from selling fruits a year.

"Two of my dreams are yet to be fulfilled -- one is building a big farm of milk cows and the other is higher education for my daughter," Jharna said.



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Jharna Chakma

Her husband Bipin Bikash Chakma said "though she is my wife, actually she is my guardian. I

take her advice when I need like other villagers."



Models on catwalk enthrall the audience at a fashion show at Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Sunday. Portrait, a photographic organisation, arranged the show under the auspices of Elite Paint.

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CMCH to be upgraded

The process of upgrading Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) to a 1500-bed hospital is underway.

To this end the selection of space is already completed. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman said this while presiding over the meeting of the Health Service Improvement Committee at CMCH on Saturday.

He said development of health and educational institutions was one of the pre-conditions of turning Chittagong as the commercial capital.

Referring to the 16-point proposal submitted to the prime minister, he said a good number of projects have already been implemented for developing infrastructures and installation of equipment for the health service here.

Singapore Market opens

The Singapore-Bangkok Market, a shopping arcade selling goods from Singapore and Bangkok, opened at the Agrabad Commercial Area on Friday.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the market of modern archite-

tural design unveiling the plaque as the chief guest.

The building was constructed on one acre of land at a cost of Tk 17 crore financed by Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

Mohiuddin in his speech said that CCC helped construction of seven shopping centres including Singapore-Bangkok market in the city to restore the tradition of business in Chittagong. These markets created increased scope for better shopping for both the businessmen as well as customers, he said.

Film fair ends

A three-day film fair of Theatre and Arts for Less Fortunate (TALF), a non-government development organisation, ended here on Friday.

The film wing of TALF organised the programme screening national award winning short-film "Lal Shalu" to popularise fair films in the society.

The screening was held at Agrabad Employees Welfare Centre auditorium at Agrabad.

The film was screened thrice a day.

Edn materials distributed

Jubo Red Crescent (JRC), Chittagong on Tuesday dis-

tributed education materials among students of 24 schools in the city.

JRC distributed the education materials under its International Friendship Exchange Project under the auspicious of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Chittagong city unit.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) Chairman Major General (Retd) ZA Khan was the chief guest at the function at Mulsim Institute.

Shoe traders seek govt support

The speakers at a meeting here on Sunday said that with proper support and facilities from the government leather sector could a revenue of over Tk10,000 crore annually.

Chittagong Small Shoe Industry Owners' Group organised the gathering at Muslim Institute auditorium to mark its 10th anniversary.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman said based on leather sector many small and medium shoe industries grew up in the country creating huge employment opportunity.

He assured the shoe unit owners that discussing the potentiality measures would be taken to provide all facilities for the flourishing of shoe

industries in the country.

Sadharan Bima Corporation Director and former vice-president of Chittagong chamber MA Latif was special guest at the gathering. Chamber director Mostafa Kamal Chowdhury also spoke.

Group President Rafiqul

Islam put up a six-point demand including training for shoe industry workers, ban on import of lower quality shoes.

Huge timber seized

Chittagong South Forest Division (CSFD) seized huge quantity of timber and earned revenue of Tk1.5 crore from the sale proceed of seized forest produces during the last financial year.

CSFD Range authorities



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Young visitors flip through books at the Children Book Fair organised by Shishu Shahitya Sangsad, Swakal, at JM Sen Hall on Thursday.

the week that was

conducted anti-smuggling drive on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong road, Kaptai-Chittagong road, the Karnaphuli river and different places where illegal timbers were being stocked. The drives were conducted jointly by police, coast guard and district administration. They seized 52, 458 cft teak and other valuable timbers, 20,699 cft of firewood, 1449 nos of Balli and one lakh pieces of bamboos.

They also seized 82 vehicles used by the traffickers and sealed off 64 unauthorised saw mills at Rangunia, Patiya, Anwara, Lohagara and Satkania upazila.

Thai hospital offers package treatment

Kasemrad Hospital, Bangkok offers treatment under package with subsidised prices for Bangladeshi patients. A group of Thai physicians said this at a projection meeting organised by Thai Bangla Multipurpose Business Company (Pvt) Limited (TBMBCPL) at a local hotel here on Sunday.

Chittagong chamber President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury inaugurated the briefing session. Dr. Surapong Ambhanwong, Dr. Sant Chaiyodsilp and Dr. Apichai Kongsayreeping of the hospital and Thai chamber also spoke.

They were offering special subsidised prices (under package treatment) on Aesthetics, Dental, Lasik, cosmetic surgery as well as all other sub-specialised and specialised treatments and facilities for the patients from Bangladesh.

The new services on subsidised prices will start from next month through its two representation offices at East Nasirabad in Chittagong and at Green Road in Dhaka.

Besides, they suggested patients to take free consultation from the hospital through e-mail address: tashishop_bd_ctg@yahoo.com

Int'l Space Week ends

A seven-day programme in observance of the "International Space Week 2004" with the theme "Space for Durable Development" was ended on Sunday.

Chittagong University Astronomical Association (CUAA) organised the programme at Central Library Auditorium.

Vice-Chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury inaugurated the programme.