



Metropolis sees a rise in mercury level

Experts say the city would turn into a furnace unless heat emission is reduced

RAHMAN SABUKTAGIN

The annual average temperature of Dhaka City has increased about two degrees Celsius in last five decades and this rate of increase can be dangerous for all living things and the ecosystem, experts cautioned.

This increasing trend also has a bad impact on the socio-economic conditions, they added.

Experts related the recent power and water crises with the increase of heat.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) data shows a change in annual average temperature at 0.016 degrees Celsius from 1954 to 2004.

The data revealed that the annual average temperature was nearly 25 degrees in 1954 and the graph reached over 26.5 degrees Celsius in 2004.

Samarendra Karmakar, deputy director of the Meteorological Department told Star City that intention of natural disasters of meteorological origin would increase in the metropolis if this trend continues in the future.

Frequency of natural disasters will also increase which will obviously have a socio-economic impact," he added.

Sarwar Jahan, professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) told Star City that the increase of population, hazardous urbanisation, lack of greenery and water bodies are changing the micro climate of Dhaka and "the green house effect will be increasing if effective measures not taken immediately."

He said: "Increasing heat is a

chain reaction." People spend much money to be cool and in the process produce chlorofluorocarbons by using more air conditioners, refrigerators and other types of cooling systems, than necessary, thus prompting the increase of heat.

Use of more cooling systems increase the demand of power and create crisis, he said.

On the other hand the poor who live without these facilities are losing energy and productivity due to heat, he added. "These things bring a negative impact on the socio-economic condition of the metropolis, Sarwar added.

Ashraf Mahmood Dewan, assistant professor of Geography at Dhaka University (DU) told Star City that thickness of building walls is creating an "Urban Heat Island", hindering reduction of temper-

ature of the metropolis as air fails to circulate properly.

"Increase of heat is related with people's living costs as they have to spend a lot to live in comfort if temperature gets high", he said.

Ferdousi Begum, a plant biologist and executive director of the Development of Biotechnology and Environmental Conservation Centre told Star City that increase of heat dries up the soil and disrupts its nutrition system, causing much harm to plants.

Felling trees causes increase in heat, brings down water levels and has a great impact on the yearly rainfall in the area, thus causing the city to lose its biodiversity, she said.

"The city is dying, but no effective initiatives are available to get rid of the heat," she said.



A rickshaw puller in old Dhaka bracing the scorching heat as he gets about his normal day's work.

NATIONAL CHILD PARLIAMENT SESSION 2006

Child MPs condemn physical punishment at schools

CITY CORRESPONDENT

"My teacher asks me to pluck grey hairs from his scalp when he is supposed to teach me lessons," said a member of a parliament in a room packed with parliamentarians across the country.

"When teachers are recruited they have to give bribes. My cousin had to give Tk 55,000 to get the job as a teacher," said Mithun Chandra Deb, another parliamentarian.

This was a full-fledged parliament session with live debates and banter. The speakers were quick pointing out mistakes and giving floors. The only difference was that the parliamentarians were children.

Reasons for dropouts were students' fear of teachers and the punishments that deterred their mental growth.

ways of physically punishing students. They pointed out examples of punishments that brought fatal results.

Of them was a student who committed suicide, unable to face the humiliation after being spanked 63 times by his teacher, while another was slapped with such force that he lost his sense of hearing.

There were other stories of broken hands, teeth and torn earlobes. They urged the print media to earmark these teachers for exemplary punishment.

He said that he issued a circular to schools to avoid physical punishment, but will take time to implement a new law to stop such acts.

Three types of topics were discussed: general, child related and star marked. The recommendations of past four sessions that were not implemented were star marked topics.

State Minister for Education, AKM Ehsanul Haque Milon, chief guest of the programme, said that each year Tk 3 crore is allotted for library books and Tk 35,000 is given to each institute to buy books. "I am glad that the members of parliament have addressed the real life problems," the minister said.

He said that he issued a circular to schools to avoid physical punishment, but will take time to implement a new law to stop such acts.



Child MPs from all over the country expressing their views at the session in the presence of State Minister for Education, last Sunday.

But being children did not stop them from speaking the truth about the existing system.

And it took place on the last day of the two-day conference of the National Child Parliament (CP) session 2006 which ended on Monday, May 29. This was the fifth session of CP.

Physical punishment on students at learning places dominated the discussions.

Positive punishments like cleaning classrooms, after-school detention and similar punishments were proposed.

On the second day 'good quality education' was discussed where members from 64 districts participated in the discussion of the overall plight of education across the country.

They spoke of the corrupt teacher-recruitment system. One girl, brave to say that her father, a member of a school committee took Tk 55,000 as a bribe to recruit a teacher.

Students said there were 34

Such outbursts clearly spoke of why students have lost respect for teachers, while one member said that teachers are 'addicted' to punishing students.

The speaker was very strict with the parliamentarians but very adept at conducting the debate.

Other topics discussed were: lack of sports and entertainment, private coaching business, distortion of history, lack of free text books and a library, free text books till class nine, teachers' indifference in taking class, preventing mental and physical torture, and spelling mistakes in text books.

While Shariful Islam Talukdar was the speaker, Sayeedur Rahman and Nargis Akhtar were deputy speakers.

CP is a symbolic structure where children can deliver speeches and speak up to discuss their needs and problems, technically and financially supported by Save the Children, Australia.

DCC's dispensaries are not charitable anymore

IMRUL HASAN

Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) charitable dispensaries have ceased to provide treatment to the city's poor because of short supplies in medicine, in addition to negligence and less or no attention paid by the authorities, DCC sources said.

Of the corporation's 20 charitable dispensaries including four homeopathic ones, seven have

been unofficially closed for years, while the ones in operation are facing an acute shortage of medicines, a crisis that has been going on for the last six months.

Mahbuba Begum, who came with her ailing three-year-old to the Tejgaon dispensary, said all she received was a prescription.

Doctors of the different dispensaries said they were not satisfied with the services provided by these dispensaries.

at all," she said.

Johora Khatun, a 21-year-old, who had been suffering from fever for the last few days and was brought to the Mohakhali dispensary by her mother met with the same result. "We had to return empty-handed," said the mother.

Doctors of the different dispensaries said they were not satisfied with the services provided by these dispensaries.

"These centres have been running without almost 90 percent medicines for primary treatment," said a pharmacist of Hazaribagh dispensary, adding that it was sad to see the plight of these patients, too poor to buy medicines on their own, returning empty-handed in the last six months due to lack of supplies.

Nurul Islam, pharmacist at the Topkhana Road dispensary said that patient numbers have drastically decreased because of the medicine crisis.

When inquiries were made, an assistant doctor of Farashganj Homeopathic Hospital said that they had received some medicines two years back and are running the centres with that stock of supplies.

"The condition of the dispensary is terrible and needs immediate repairs and renovation," he said.

Pharmacists of other dispensaries too expressed the same views and concern about the condition of these centres.

A DCC source on the other hand said that the corporation provides little money and the allocation is much less than the amount projected in the budget. He commented on the carelessness of doctors at these centres.

"Most doctors appointed to the dispensaries are appointed after 10 years of part-time work, and even so are on duty only one day in a week instead of the required three or more days," he added.

The DCC would take action against negligent doctors not found on duty, Azizul Haque said.

"We will ask the zones to investigate the matter shortly," he added.

Many of them were victims of physical punishment.

"We find the manner of punishment very humiliating. Sometimes are heads are shaved under the table. We crave for teachers' love, not anger," said Bithi.

Students said there were 34



The DCC charitable dispensary at Mohakhali is unable to function efficiently due to shortage of medicines and medical equipment.