

SWELTERING IN STUFFY METROPOLIS



A bird quenching thirst from a faulty tap in sweltering heat near Zia International Airport.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Afternoon rain and Kalbaishakhi fails to bring a sigh of relief in the city. Sweltering heat and intense humidity in the air has made life miserable during the past few days.

According to the met office highest temperature in the city was 35 degree Celsius yesterday.

"The temperature is not that high still the heat seem unbearable because of the severe humidity in the air," said Ayesha Khatun, a meteorologist from the Agargaon met office.

"Scattered rain all over the country and

intense heat after that is increasing the humidity," she added.

Yesterday the humidity in the air was 60 percent.

Rickshaw pullers, day labourers and others involved in manual labour are the worst sufferers having to work under the scorching sun in this extreme weather.

Street side sherbet sellers are making extra bucks in this weather as low-income workers crowd near their stalls to quench thirst. Green coconut and watermelon sell also increased during the past few days.

Amidst the scorching sun, traffic jam and heated concrete slabs adds to public suffering.

DCC's garbage trade pollutes air, land and water

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Unscrupulous conservancy employees are dumping rubbish to fill up low-lying land along the flood protection embankment, causing serious air, land and water pollution in the area.

Throughout the embankment from Amin Bazar to Babu Bazar, where thousands of households are situated, the environment has become unbearable with stench emitted by piles of rubbish and pollution caused due to the illegal dumping.

Local people said that DCC's drivers and workers who are everyday engaged in collecting and dumping rubbish 'sell' the garbage to plot owners who choose the cheapest way of filling up their sites by rubbish.

"For each truck of rubbish dumped for filling up a low-lying plot the driver gets TK 50 while the workers share the remaining TK 50," said Wadud Mia a day labourer in Rayer Bazar area who also works part time with DCC garbage trucks.

"If the plot owner fills up the plot with sand it would cost him over Tk 1,000 per truck load of sand," Wadud added.

Field level DCC officials, who are responsible for monitoring



DCC's garbage trade: Polluting air, land and water.

collection and dumping of rubbish, said that they are unable to track down the culprits. But at around 6-30 am yesterday this correspondent found several trucks dumping rubbish on a plot near Kamrangirchar. Another truck was found near Basila road dumping rubbish.

DCC now has two designated dumping sites in the city. One is at Amin Bazar where about 30 percent of total rubbish collected is dumped. The remaining 70 percent rubbish is dumped at

Mutwail. The city generates over 4,000 metric tons of rubbish every day and the DCC, with severe constraints in transports and manpower, is able to remove only 30 percent of the rubbish.

The Chief Conservancy Officer of the DCC Commander MR Chowdhury said that they are concerned about the problem of dumping rubbish indiscriminately.

"We are trying to catch the culprits and we will take exemplary action against these people," Chowdhury said.

SPIRALLING PRICES OF ESSENTIALS

The problem lies elsewhere, say traders

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

The interim government's various initiatives including the planned import of several food items to control price hike of daily essentials would have little impact on the current market, alleged wholesale vendors.

In a bid to control the skyrocketing price of essential goods Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the authority responsible for keeping the price of essential under check, urged the government to import vital food items like different pulses, onion and oil along with other essentials to ease the current market situation.

Talking with several wholesale and retail vendors at the Karwan Bazar chicken market, one of the biggest wholesale kitchen markets of the city, revealed that the proposed policy of importing goods is overrated and would not be as effective as the authorities think.

Wholesale traders alleged that there is no deficiency in the supply of essentials domestically and the problem lies somewhere else.

"I was surprised to know that the government is planning to import more goods as there is scarcely any shortage of sup-



plies," said Joinal Uddin, a wholesaler of vegetable items at Karwan Bazar.

"We sell aubergines at a wholesale price of around Tk 6 to the retailers, and surprisingly enough, we read in the newspapers that the same aubergine is sold at a retail price of around Tk 16 to Tk 20 to the consumers. So,

obviously the problem lies some where else," he added.

According to Abdul Matin, chairman if Karwan Bazar Kachabazar Arat Malik Samity, the only thing the government can do that can effectively improve the whole situation in the long run would be to slash the price of fertilisers.

"Importing essential items may ease things for a short while, but they should take more tangible measures in the long run. Decreasing price of fertilisers should be an effective step under the current circumstances," said Matin.

"Currently there is a huge scarcity of fertilisers and the

farmers actually have to purchase fertilisers at a price if around Tk 700 to Tk 800 for each sack," he added.

While the government seems to be in a dilemma on how to keep the price of essentials under check, the current status of market price of daily essentials have been fluctuating lately, said vendors.

Talking to several traders revealed that retail price of items such as aubergine, cucumber and tomato came down today while price of rest of the goods seem to be unaffected.

"Compared to the past few days the price of vegetables has somewhat dwindled today as import of vegetables have been good lately," said Mosaddeque Hossain, a trader from Karwan Bazar.

"Yesterday cucumber was about Tk 13 per kg which came down to Tk 10 today, the price of aubergine also went down as it is being sold at Tk 10 today which was Tk 12 yesterday," he added.

Broiler chickens at the chicken market were being sold at Tk 100 per kg and layer chickens at Tk 85 per kg. At the fish market lobsters were being sold at Tk 800 to 900 per kg while the wholesale price

was Tk 750 to 780.

According to rice traders, prices of miniket and najirshail are Tk 30 and Tk 26 respectively.

According to Joinal Hossain, a rice trader the government should take steps to give subsidy and allow licensed shops to purchase rice directly from the governmental warehouses.

According to Abdul Matin, chairman of Karwan Bazar Kachabazar Arat Malik Samity the major explanation behind the gradual decrease in the amount of market goods is directly related to the shortage of cultivable land.

"The housing companies have filled thousands of bighas of lands in the city outskirts, which have cut down our supplies of vegetables and other food items by almost half as they used to be one of our major sources," said Matin.

"TV and newspapers say that the price increases are directly related to transport, fuel and other costs but these costs will always be there as to sell the goods you actually have to transport them to the consumers. So the government should try and take steps to decrease the price of tangential items such as fertilisers, seeds and such", he added.

Underpass in shabby state

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Authorities' sheer negligence has put the Karwan Bazar underpass in a woeful state as poor maintenance from the concerned authorities continues to taint the underpass premises.

Situated near the Sonargaon intersection of the capital city, this underpass represents not only the small number of modern underpasses situated within the city, but also the irregularities of the authorities that taint pedestrian thoroughfares throughout the city.

Poor lighting facilities, dirty walls along with grubby floors that are missing numerous marble slabs, broken staircases and a leaking overhead sewerage line evidently reflect the authorities indifference towards its maintenance.

Thousands of pedestrians

Poor lighting facilities, dirty walls along with grubby floors that are missing numerous marble slabs, broken staircases and a leaking overhead sewerage line evidently reflect the authorities indifference towards its maintenance

including porters from the Karwan Bazar wholesale markets use this underpass everyday risking injuries due to broken and worn out stairs along with the missing marble slabs.

This correspondent found a porter carrying a bulky basket on

his head slip on the stairs and fell ten feet down the steps, breaking his ribs and injuring his left leg. The on duty security official told this correspondent that similar accidents occur frequently in the underpass.

Things get only worse for the women and elderly people who

are compelled to use the underpass not only risking injuries, they have to contend with the nuisance of the poorly preserved facilities as well.

Littered with all sorts of garbage along with the water dipping from the overhead sewerage lines, the floors of the underpass always tend to remain dirty.

Although two sweepers have been engaged by the DCC to keep the facilities clean, their presence is barely illustrated by the filthy state of the underpass.

According to sources, the sweepers do their mopping jobs only once a day. They said that, the sheer number of people using the underpass marks the underpass as a vital element in the region's pedestrian movement, making this pedestrian thoroughfare an important candidate for constant maintenance.



Pedestrians risk injuries in the Karwan Bazar underpass.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"The army respects the free press and takes its suggestions very seriously and often acts on them"

-- Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed
Army Chief
Told newspaper editors at a meeting at his office, on Wednesday.
Source: The Daily Star

"You cannot pick people from the streets to make them election commissioners as was done before"

-- ATM Shamsul Huda
Chief Election Commissioner
Said at a roundtable discussion titled 'Immediate Action Plan for Election Commission' organised by Prothom Alo at Hotel Sheraton, on Thursday.
Source: The Daily Star

"There is nothing called family dynasty in BNP"

-- Khaleda Zia
BNP Chairperson
Told reporters after meeting with Patricia A Butenis at Hotel Sheraton, on Friday. Source: Prothom Alo

"Their stand against corruption at first -- we supported that, but where is that stand now? There are so many corrupt people moving around"

-- Sheikh Hasina
Awami League Chief
Said in an interview with Indian TV channel CNN/IBN.
Source: The Daily Star

"I ask the people to forgive me. I consciously or unconsciously patronised the corruption of Mamun and his associates"

-- Tarique Rahman
Senior Joint Secretary of BNP
Said in a written statement given to the intelligence agency on March 12 following his arrest on March 8. Source: The Daily Star

"I read in newspapers about the killings by Bangla Bhai's people in Bagmara in 2004 ... Now I am trying to contemplate whether there is any difference between the actions of Bangla Bhai and Rab [Rapid Action Battalion]"

-- Piarul Islam Manjur
A college teacher and brother of Quamrul Islam Majnu, who was allegedly tortured to death by Rab
Told reporters in front of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital morgue, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"I think the country's politics is still transparent and dynamic"

-- Abdul Jalil
Awami League General Secretary
Told reporters at his office, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"There may be unemployed men in the country but there is no unemployed woman"

-- Sultana Kamal
Former adviser of caretaker government
Said at a workshop on the contribution of women in workforce, on Sunday. Source: Prothom Alo

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