

# "Asian Brown Cloud" speeding melt of Himalaya glaciers

AFP, California

The haze of pollution that blankets southern Asia is accelerating the loss of Himalayan glaciers, bequeathing an incalculable bill to China, India and other countries whose rivers flow from this source, scientists warned yesterday.

In a study released by the British journal Nature, the investigators say the so-called Asian Brown Cloud is as much to blame as greenhouse gases for the warming observed in the Himalayas over the past half century. Rapid melting among the 46,000

glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau, the third-largest ice mass on the planet, is already causing downstream flooding late summer. But long-term worries focus more on the danger of drought, as the glaciers shrink.

The new report triggered an appeal from UN Environment Programme (UNEP) chief Achim Steiner, who urged the international community "to ever greater action" on tackling climate change.

Researchers led by Veerabhadran Ramanathan, a professor of atmospheric sciences at Scripps Institution

of Oceanography in California, used an innovative technique to explore the Asian Brown Cloud.

The plume sprawls across South Asia, parts of Southeast Asia and the northern Indian Ocean, spewed from tailpipes, factory chimneys and power plants, forests or fields that are being burned for agriculture, and wood and dung which are burned for fuel.

Emissions of carbon gases are known to be the big drivers of global warming, but the role of particulate pollution, such as brown clouds, is unclear.

Particulates, also called aerosols, cool the land or sea beneath them because they filter out sunlight, a process known as global dimming.

But what they do to the air around them has been poorly researched.

Some aerosols absorb sunlight and thus warm the atmosphere locally, while others reflect and scatter the light.

Ramanathan's team used three unmanned aircraft of the type often used as for observation work by the military and police, but this time fitted them with 15 instruments to monitor temperature, clouds, humidity and aerosols.

Launched from the Maldives island of Hanimadhoo, the remote-controlled craft carried out 18 missions in March 2006, flying in a vertical stack over the Indian Ocean.

The planes flew simultaneously through the Brown Cloud at heights of 500 metres (1,625 feet), 1,500 metres (4,875 feet) and 3,000 metres (9,750 feet).

They discovered that the cloud boosted the effect of solar heating on the air around it by nearly 50 percent. This was because its particles are soot, which is black and thus absorbs sunlight.

The researchers then crunched data from greenhouse gases and from the brown clouds in a US computer model for climate change.

The simulation estimated that, since 1950, South Asia's atmosphere has warmed by 0.25 degrees Celsius (0.5 degrees Fahrenheit) per decade at altitudes ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 metres (6,500 to 16,500 feet) above sea level -- precisely the height where thousands of Himalayan glaciers are located.

As much as half of this warming can be attributed to the effects of brown clouds, Ramanathan told AFP by phone from the Himalayas, where he was setting up a glacier monitoring station.

"It is frightening, but I also look at the positive side, because it shows a way out of the conundrum," said Ramanathan.

Roughly 60 percent of the soot in South Asia comes from biofuel cooking and biomass burning, which could be eased by helping the rural poor get bottled gas or solar cookers, he explained.

Ramanathan's data has been validated with measurements taken on the ground at Hanimadhoo and in space by the NASA Earth-monitoring satellite CALIPSO.

UNEP's Steiner said the Asian Brown Cloud and greenhouse gases were linked by a common dependence on carbon fuels.

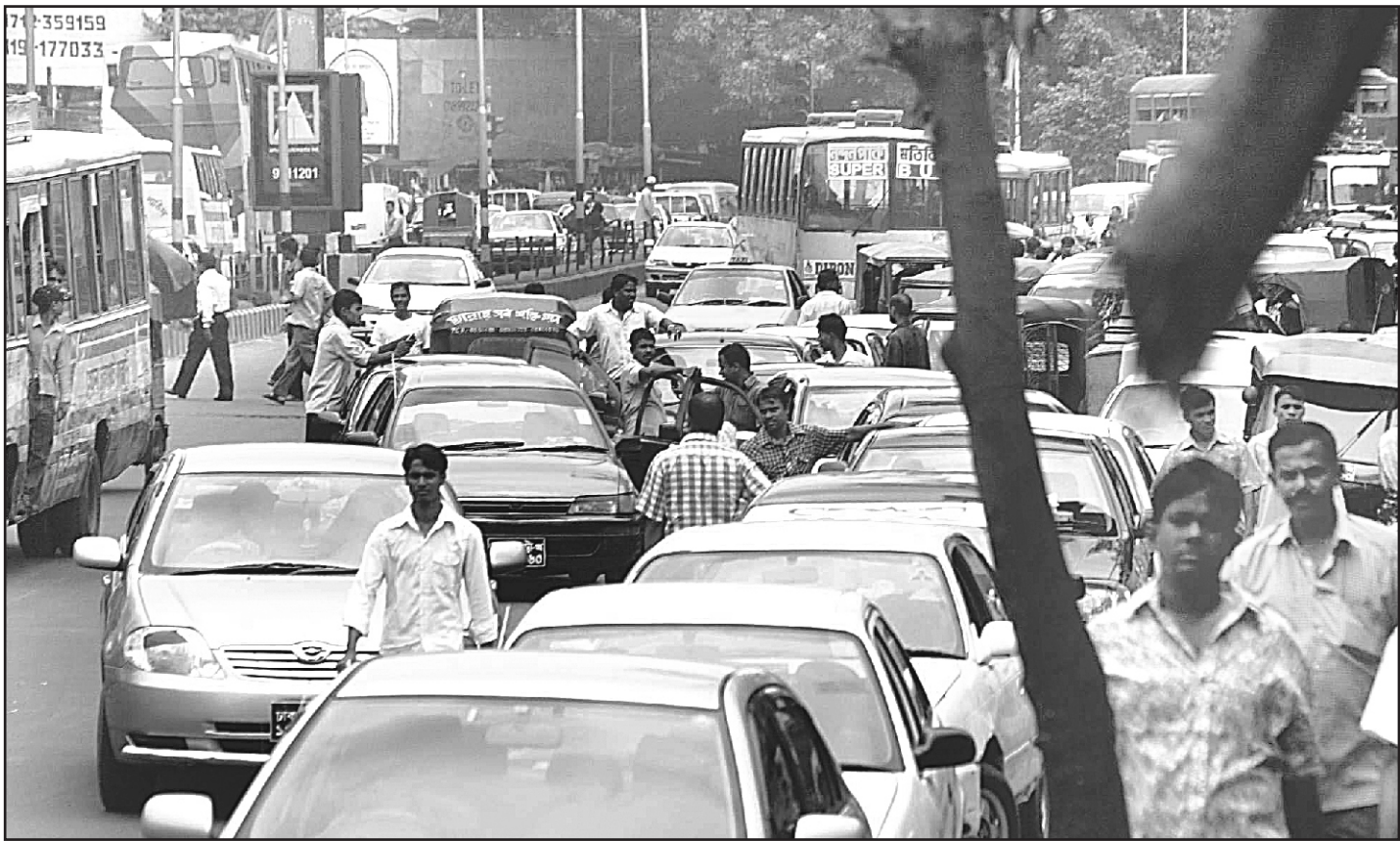


PHOTO: STAR

Parking of cars and other vehicles in front of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University at Shahbagh in the city adds to traffic congestion in the area. The picture was taken yesterday.

## Indian flood death toll rises to 1000

AFP, New Delhi

Dozens of people were killed yesterday across South Asia as surging flood waters caused by heavy monsoon rains forced millions from their homes.

Twenty-eight people drowned and 12 others were missing when a boat carrying rescue workers and evacuees in sodden northern India split apart, the Press Trust of India reported, bringing the nationwide death toll from the deluge to nearly 1,000, according to officials and local reports.

In eastern India, villagers clutching meagre belongings fled their dwellings as soldiers helped in rescue efforts. Some perched on rooftops while others scrambled up trees to get out of the way of rushing flood waters.

## Security, border

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The two sides will follow up an announcement made through a joint statement during Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon's Dhaka visit in June on sharing sensitive security 'information' between the two countries.

Degree and nature of such an arrangement will be discussed during the talks, foreign ministry sources said.

Both the sides are also likely to share intelligence on 'cross-border crimes' in line with the commitment to 'enhance security cooperation', sources added.

Dhaka will also look to raise a number of old irritants such as implementation of the 1974 land agreement, border fencing by India, alleged 'push-in' of Bangla-speaking Indian nationals, cross-border smuggling and continuing firefights between the BDR and India's Border Security Force (BSF).

The meeting is likely to iron out differences regarding the Dhaka-Kolkata train service, which has been delayed due to Indian reservations about security arrangements at the border and in Bangladesh territory.

Bangladesh shares 4,200 km common border with India, which is the longest border shared by either of the countries with another neighbour.

Only 6.5 kilometres remain unresolved along the common border. There are 92 Bangladeshi enclaves on the Indian side while 106 Indian enclaves are in Bangladesh territory.



PHOTO: STAR

Chairman of Etcetera Bangladesh Pvt Ltd Yasmeen Murshed inaugurates a corner for 'Anyamela', a local ethnic wear, at ETC at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

## Myanmar reports fresh bird flu outbreak

AFP, Yangon

Military-ruled Myanmar has detected its second outbreak of bird flu in less than a month, this time on a poultry farm in the central region of Bago, health officials said yesterday.

Lab tests on Tuesday confirmed the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus in dead chickens at a poultry farm in Bago, about 145 kilometres (90 miles) northwest of Myanmar's main city Yangon, said Kyaw San, an official at the government's livestock department.

About seven dead chickens were found Saturday at a farm in Letpandan township, he said.

Health officials are slaughtering about 3,800 chickens at the farm to prevent the virus from spreading, he added.

## Book festival begins in city

DU CORRESPONDENT

A ten-day book festival organised by Oitihya Publication House began at the Public Library at Shahbagh in the city yesterday.

The festival offers a special discount ranging from 25 to 60 percent.

On the occasion, Oitihya is also going to publish a number of books of eminent poets and writers, including poet Shamsur Rahman and Al Mahmud.

A good number of book lovers visited the festival on the opening day, organisers said.

The festival will remain open from 10:00am to 8:30pm daily up to August 10.

## UGC members

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to the education ministry. Prof Tareque will send his resignation letter today, sources at the UGC said.

"The adviser told us that the ministry will sack us if we don't agree to resign. After the meeting Mahbub and I sent our resignation letters to the ministry through UGC Secretary Mohammed Mufakker. Tareque will probably send his resignation letter tomorrow," Prof Sultan told The Daily Star yesterday evening over phone.

Education Secretary M Montazul Islam made phone calls on July 30 to four UGC members Prof Faisal Islam Farruqui, Mahbub, Sultan and Tareque who had been appointed during the BNP-Jamaat coalition government, and asked them to resign.

Prof Farruqui, who was former vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University (RU), resigned on Tuesday.

However, three other members Mahbub, Sultan and Tareque strongly protested the government request and said they would not resign until they were informed about the reason.

Prof Tareque yesterday refused to make any comment about his position.

Another UGC member, Ehsanul Hoque, who was also appointed by the BNP-Jamaat coalition government, has not been asked to resign.

## 2 Ctg restaurants fined

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court in the port city yesterday fined two restaurants in Agrabad area Tk 5.28 lakh and arrested two staffs for pilfering Wasa water and evading taxes.

The court, led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, found that Agrabad Hawaii Hotel was pilfering water from a Wasa line directly by using a motor and evading tax.

Shangri-La Chinese Restaurant of the same area was also found pilfering and lifting Wasa water without having any reserve tank.

The court detained two staffs of the restaurants, seized the motors and realised Tk 5.28 lakh in fines.

The same court in another drive realised Tk 10000 from Mohammad Shamsul Alam, ward commissioner of Ward No 12 of Chittagong City Corporation, for illegally supplying

Wasa water and misusing it in the port city's Saraipara area.

The court also realised an arrear of Tk 2.10 lakh from New Millennium Fashion and Amin Jute Mill on the same ground.

A team of Wasa engineers assisted the mobile court during the drives.

Meanwhile, members of Bangladesh Coast Guard in a drive at the estuary of the river Shankha under Anwara upazila seized 120 sacks of urea fertiliser and four boats worth around Tk 15 lakh which were taking preparations for smuggling yesterday afternoon.

However, the smugglers managed to flee, sources said.

In another drive at a beach near Akmal Ali Road under Patenga Police Station, Coast Guard recovered a rope of a ship worth around Tk 7.5 lakh that was stolen from a foreign vessel recently.

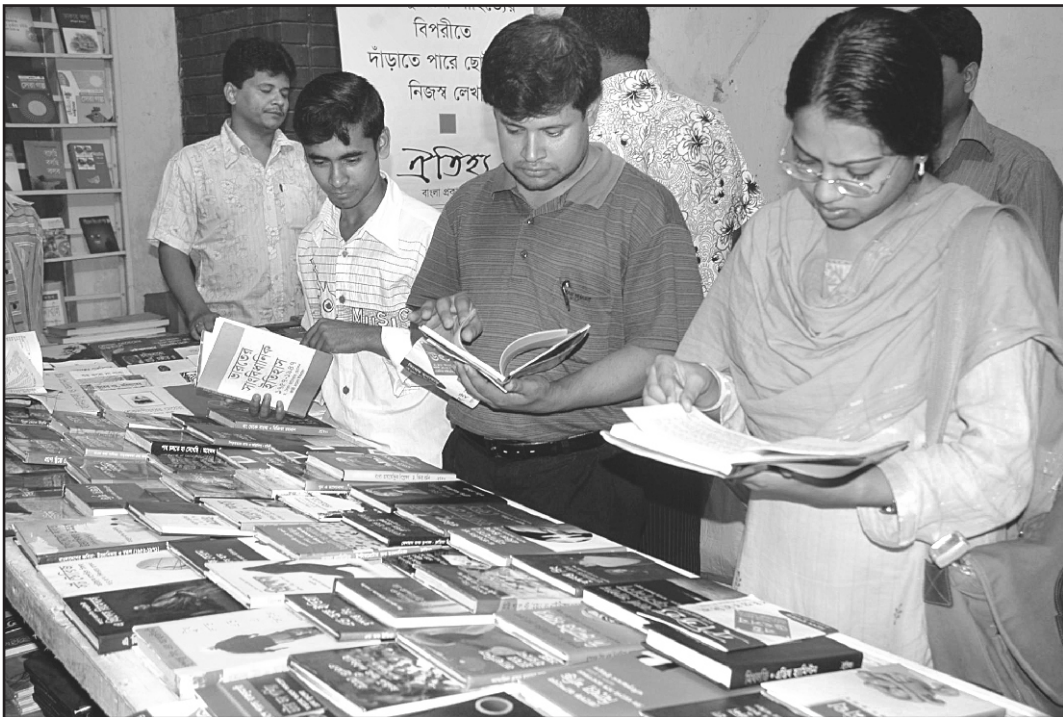


PHOTO: STAR

Visitors flip through books at a book festival organised by Oitihya Publication House at the Public Library at Shahbagh in the city yesterday.

## Business leaders critical of IMF's diktat

FROM PAGE 1

which consequently influences the already soaring prices of essentials, the statement added.

In addition, the cost of doing business will also increase, which will have a direct impact on the economy and much needed employment opportunities for the common people.

"It is quite interesting to note that following meticulous IMF prescription Bangladesh has been experiencing double-digit inflation," the statement said.

The signatories to the statement are: Mahbubur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B), Mir Nasir Hossain, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Latifur Rahman, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI), Hossain Khaled, president of The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), MA Latif, president of (in-charge) Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), Mash

UI Karim, president of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Md Fazlul Hoque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Muhammad A (Rumee) Ali, Vice-chairman of Bangladesh Association of Banks, Abdul Hai Sarker, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Nizamuddin Ahmed, acting chairman of Bangladesh Insurance Association and Kamran T Rahman, president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

The statement said the recent letter of IMF, as reported in the newspapers, to the finance adviser directing further trade liberalisation for growth momentum and urging to strongly resist formation of a "Safeguard Body" is uncalled for and unwarranted.

"The IMF prescription regarding further trade liberalisation is not at all desirable as it could not prove to help

in achieving the desired growth level and alleviate poverty," they said.

"The best examples are Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and the Philippines who have come out of Bretton Wood prescription and we all are aware of the achievements made by them," the statement added.

In comparison to other developing countries, Bangladesh--being an LDC--has substantially liberalised its economy at the cost of hardship of entrepreneurs and common people even though under World Trade Organisation (WTO) umbrella, Bangladesh could avail and follow more domestic support measures, it said.

The statement said during the past two decades or so, a number of Asian countries, through appropriate economic policy measures within the framework of WTO, have achieved remarkable progress transforming themselves from largely agrarian, underdeveloped economies into a dynamic export powerhouse.

"The experience of these high-

performing economies provide many useful lessons for countries like Bangladesh in identifying the right policies and strategies to adopt, while reversing or shunning what have proved to be wrong strategies," it said.

"The business community reiterates their earlier recommendations to effectively support local industries through fiscal and other means including 'Safeguard Measures' like other countries to boost export and create a solid industrial base for long-term benefit of the country and to create employment opportunities," the statement said.

The business community strongly urged the government to come out of the vicious cycle of prescriptions by IMF and similar institutions and follow the already proven development strategies of other developing countries including our Asian neighbours, the statement added.

## Road crashes kill 2

STAR REPORT

At least two people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in Dinajpur and Brahmanbaria yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT from Dinajpur reports: At least one person was killed and eight others were injured critically in a road accident at Ghoraghat upazila under Dinajpur.

The dead was identified as Md Zahurul Haque, 40, son of Tofazzal Haque, village Muzahidpur under Shonatola upazila in Bogra.

Ghoraghat police quoting locals said the accident occurred when a sand-laden Bogra-bound truck fell into a roadside ditch near Haripara bridge under Ghoraghat upazila as its driver lost control over the steering, leaving nine people injured.

Of the injured, Zahurul succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dinajpur Hospital.

Other injured have been sent to Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogra. Of them, condition of Md Golzal Ali and Irfat Rahman was stated to be critical, doctors at Ghoraghat Health Complex said.

Our correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: One person was killed in a road accident on Madhabpur-Nasirnagar road at Gukarna village under Nasirnagar upazila here yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mukta Rani, 30, of Nasirnagar village of the

district.

Witnesses and police said the accident occurred when a Nasirnagar-bound tempo with 10 passengers from Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj was crossing the Gukarna point.

The tempo turned upside down and fell into a roadside ditch, leaving 10 passenger of the tempo injured.

Of the injured, Mukta Rani, 30, succumbed to her injuries on the way to hospital.

Others were given first aid at Nasirnagar Upazila Health Complex and a local health centre.

The body was sent to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

## Keep prices of essentials stable ahead of Ramadan

Says DG of BDR

Director General of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed has called upon the businessmen to set up 50 fair price outlets in the city to keep the price of essentials stable ahead of the Ramadan, says a BDR press release.

He also urged them to keep the supply of essentials stable in a meeting with the businessmen and importers at the conference room of BDR headquarters on July 31.

BDR held the meeting in a bid to keep the import of rice, lentil, chickpea and edible oil normal by the local importers ahead of the Ramadan.

## Huda, Sigma shown held in extortion case

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ten-day remand prayer.

In the forwarding report, Sub-Inspector (SI) Ali Asgar Khan, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, mentioned that Iqbal needs to be quizzed to recover the extorted amount and know about the whereabouts of his accomplices.

Opposing the prosecution plea, the defence lawyers submitted a petition for bail and cancellation of the remand prayer and said the date when the money was extorted was the regime of a caretaker government.

During that period, there was no scope for committing such offences. They were also involved in business, the lawyers added.

After hearing both the sides, the court rejected the bail petition and placed Iqbal on remand.

The anti-crime taskforce members Tuesday arrested Iqbal from the city's Shegunbagicha area and later he was charged in an extortion case.

In the case four other Awami League and its front organisation leaders were also made accused.

The others are Swechhchasebok League President Bahauddin Nasim, AL Assistant Secretary and former

student leader Shafi Ahmed, and ex-BCL leaders Shah Alam and SM Kamal.

Mirza Oalid, managing director of MRG Ltd, filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station.

In the case statement, the complainant mentioned that the accused forced him to provide them Tk 75 lakh in return for a Tk 4.51 crore tender they were win for him for supplying metres and other equipment to DESA in 2001.

HUDA-SIGMA SHOWN ARRESTED The same court yesterday granted the petition submitted by the IO for showing them arrested in the extortion case filed on July 29.

In the case statement, former BNP leader GM Siraj alleged that Huda and his wife demanded two Maruti cars from him for use by the staff of Khaborer Antorale, a weekly.

They intimidated him into providing a car worth Tk 3.95 lakh during February 23-28, 2003, the complainant alleged. Sigma is the publisher of the weekly.

Meanwhile, the graft case against Huda filed for allocating a piece of railway land illegally to a human rights organisation run by his wife

## Healthcare service providers fined in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A mobile court in different drives at Tongi and its adjacent areas in Gazipur yesterday fined a number of healthcare service providers Tk 3.80 lakh on different charges and sealed off a diagnostic centre and a dental clinic.

The court led by Magistrate Mahmudul Kabir Murad fined Jamuna Diagnostic Centre and Ekota Diagnostic in Cherag Ali area Tk 50,000 each for not having licensed and certified technicians and sealed the former off.

The court also fined Sandhani Diagnostic Tk 75,000 for having date-expired licence.

In a drive in Station road area, the mobile court fined Robin Dental Clinic Tk 20,000 for not having valid licence and sealed off Haq Dental as the owner was not present.

The mobile court also fined Jafar Medical Hall Tk 40,000, City Medicine Corner Tk 25,000, and Abeda Memorial Hospital Tk 40,000 for keeping date-expired medicine.

It also fined Sheba Dental Surgery Tk 5,000, Gazi Dental Clinic Tk 5,000, Nostrum Diagnostic Tk 65,000 and another Tk 5,000 for not having valid licence.

Meanwhile, another court led by Magistrate Kazi Nurunnahar raided different diagnostic centres and realised Tk 1.24 lakh in Joydevpur Intersection area.