

## Climate catastrophe getting closer, warn scientists

AFP, Paris

The world faces a growing risk of "abrupt and irreversible climate shifts" as fallout from global warming hits faster than expected, according to research by international scientists released yesterday.

Global surface and ocean temperatures, sea levels, extreme climate events, and the retreat of Arctic sea ice have all significantly picked up more pace than experts predicted only a couple of years ago, they said.

The stark warning comes less than six months before an international conference aiming to seal a treaty to save the planet from the worst ravages of global warming.

A 36-page document summarised more than 1,400 studies presented at a climate conference in March in Copenhagen, where a United Nations meeting will be held in December to hammer out a successor to the Kyoto Protocol. Kyoto expires in 2012.

The report said greenhouse gas emissions and other climate indicators are at or near the upper boundaries forecast by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose 2007 report has been the scientific benchmark for the troubled UN talks.

There is also new evidence that the planet itself has begun to contribute to global warming through fall out from human activity.

Huge stores of gases such as methane -- an even more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide -- trapped for millennia in the Arctic permafrost may be starting to leak

### Road mishap

At least 20 vehicles including four double-deckers in the area, locals said.

The boy was identified as Nobi Hossain, 8, son of Madina Begum of Monipur. Nobi was a student of class I at a primary school in Monipur area.

As the news of death spread several hundred locals including garment workers took to the street and barricaded the road from Shewrapara to Mirpur-10 Round Square on Begum Rokeya Sarani road.

Witnesses said Nobi was crushed under the wheels of a double-decker at around 8:45pm while crossing the road at the Mirpur 10 Round Square. He was on his way to his mother who works at Al-Hera Hospital as a fourth-class employee.

Officer-in-charge Nazim Uddin of Mirpur Police Station said following the accident, agitated locals took to the street and damaged vehicles.

SI Ataur Rahman of the police station said they detained the double-decker while its driver managed to flee the scene.

## Crackdown

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A total of 70 encroachers were identified along the Gabtoli and Amin Bazar banks of the river.

The list includes 44 encroachers on the Gabtoli bank to the south of the bridge, 23 to the north and three on the Amin Bazar bank. Most of them erected concrete and makeshift structures on the Turag.

"The encroachers have occupied a total of 7.5 acres foreshore of the river including four acres to the south of the bridge and three and a half acres to the north," said Saiful Islam.

BIWTA leased out the river foreshore temporarily on daily basis under the Open Space Charge (OSC) to the traders at a rate of Tk3 per square metre, said officials.

It also issues yearly basis license to the traders on the open shore at a rate of Tk800 per decimal, they added.

"Of the 70 encroachers BIWTA issued licenses to 24 sand traders to run their business," said a BIWTA official seeking anonymity.

In most cases, these traders gobbled up the river foreshore and encroached upon the river.

"We have not rented out the flood plain or issued any license to sand traders for its use since last January," said Senior Deputy Director Golam Kabir of Dhaka River Port.

The stretch of the Turag from Basila to Ashulia is under the Dhaka River Port.

BIWTA went into a contract

into the atmosphere, speeding up the warming process.

The natural capacity of the oceans and forests to absorb CO2 created by the burning of fossil fuels has also been compromised, research has shown.

The new report, written and reviewed by many of the scientists who compiled the IPCC document, calls on policy makers to take urgent steps to keep average global temperatures from increasing more than two degrees Centigrade (3.6 degree Fahrenheit), compared to pre-industrial levels.

"Rapid, sustained, and effective mitigation ... is required to avoid 'dangerous climate change' regardless of how it is defined," it said.

"Temperature rises above 2 C will be difficult for contemporary societies to cope with, and are likely to cause major societal and environmental disruptions through the rest of the century and beyond."

### Export option

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Non-Resident Bangladeshi Experts on Coal Mining in Bangladesh.

The four-day group work, which began on June 15, was organised by the energy ministry and Petrobangla, the state body mandated to oversee production, transmission and marketing of gas, oil and other mineral resources.

In the draft, the expatriates' team suggested securing energy security for 20 years, provided the GDP growth would hover around 8 percent a year.

M Khalequzzaman, one of the specialists, said that while sketching out the policy, they focused on energy security, institutional and legal framework, resource mobilisation, environment, health and safety issues, and resettlement and rehabilitation of those who would be affected.

Alongside its own coffers, he noted, the government should count on stock markets, public-private partnerships, banks and security bonds for funds.

Mohammad Mohsin, secretary of the energy ministry, said they would discuss the suggestions at the secretary-level committee to include those in the government's draft coal policy.

"The government wants a coal policy as soon as possible. However, I cannot give you an exact time by which the proposed policy would be finalised," he told reporters.

Muktadir Ali, acting chairman of Petrobangla, said he has already recommended export of 2 lakh tonnes of coal produced at the Barakuria coal mine.

Among others, Toufiq-e-Elahee Chowdhury, power and energy adviser to the prime minister, was present at the press conference.

### JS discussion

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domestic product (GDP).

MK Alamgir, who heads the parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings, said the proposed budget for the next FY contains 'inconsistencies'.

The main opposition BNP is boycotting parliament proceedings for 'not rearranging respectfully' front row seats for legislators from the party.

AL lawmakers, who took part in the budget discussion yesterday, urged the finance minister to take budgetary measures so that the party's electoral pledges, especially on power sector, can be materialised.

A number of them differed on the finance minister's proposals for high slab tax on private cars, air-conditioners, tax on power generation equipment, low rate of tax for whitening black money, less allocation for the disabled and tax on importing newsprint.

They proposed formation of economic intelligence unit to deal with militancy, and narcotics, and increasing the tax rate for money whitening to 25 percent from the proposed 10 percent.

Participants in the discussion include advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, Nazma Akhtar, Khaledur Rahman Tito and Enamul Haque.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry yesterday placed in the House its report on scrutiny of the public money and budget management bill. It recommended passing the bill.

As per the government decision, the daylight saving measure begins this year from June 19 and ends on October 1, when the clock is to be set an hour back. From next year on, the clock would be set an hour forward on April 1 and set an hour back on October 1.

Even though the government had little time to launch awareness campaigns, it held

meetings with chambers of commerce leaders, banks, schools, and other institutions, including the media, seeking their cooperation in this regard. Some campaigns and publicity programmes have been run through media.

"The success of daylight savings depends on how people adjust to new routines and get rid of habits. Initially some might feel uncomfortable. But if other nations can implement such measures, so can we," said a BNP official.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) in a circular announced that the bank's half-an-hour lunch and prayer break would be moved to 2:00pm from the present 1:00pm.

The court and office timings of the Supreme Court and its subordinate courts have been rescheduled for implementing the government decision to advance the clock.

According to a release, the High Court hours effective from June 19 will be 10:30am to 4:15pm with a 45-minute break from 2:15pm while its office hours will be 9:45am to 5:00pm with a half-an-hour break at 2:30pm.

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As most of the schools are closed due to summer vacation, children would have some time to adjust to the new times for waking up and going to sleep.

Now that one is found to have not complied with the provision in the last general election, action must be taken against him, Suranjit said.

## Clock goes 1-hr

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membership for concealing information while seeking candidacy for the December 29 parliamentary polls.

Earlier, at a press briefing at the Media Centre of the Jatiya Sangsads, Suranjit said submitting false information in affidavit is immoral and against election laws.

Chairman of the standing committee on the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, he also said, "Salauddin Quader Chowdhury had submitted the information to the Election Commission, which will now have to decide whether to make him vacate his seat.

"The electoral laws provide for the commission to take necessary steps if anyone is found to have furnished incorrect information."

A provision in the Representation of the People Order requires parliamentary aspirants to submit eight-point personal information along with candidacy applications. It was included in the RPO in line with the High Court's directives and every body must abide by it, he continued.

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## 14 BDR

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It said as Saiful's condition deteriorated yesterday, he was taken to CMCH in the morning. He died at 1:20pm.

Saiful, son of Shamsuddin Munshi, hailed from Mymensingh.

## Rahmatullah

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In an interview with The Daily Star, Rahmatullah, former director (transport) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), said once Bangladesh becomes a part of this network of roads, it would be connected to countries to its east and west.

Another official said government agencies and departments are not doing their parts. "We have to reduce the number of small vehicles like cars, CNG-driven auto-rickshaws, and minibuses, and replace them with large double-decker buses as an immediate measure to ease the traffic congestion," Additional Executive Director of Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB) SM Saleh Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

He suggested a thorough change in bus routes. "Presently, bus routes are assigned haphazardly without any scientific study, which is a major reason for the chaotic situation on roads," he said adding, "A study is being carried out on the matter."

On policy change, the railway DG said the past Awami League government in 2001 took an initiative for metro rails, but the successive BNP-led alliance government scrapped it.

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