

No traditional brick kiln after September

Hasan Mahmud tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No traditional brick kiln will be allowed to operate after September this year as they cause a huge environment pollution by emitting carbon, Environment and Forests Minister Hasan Mahmud told parliament yesterday.

"All traditional brick kilns will have to use environment-friendly technology like "Zigzag" or "Hoffman system" which emits less carbon," the minister said replying to law-makers' queries.

Information available shows there are over 6,000 brick kilns in the country and most of them use old technology emitting 8.75 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Hasan Mahmud said considering the alarming situation, the government has planned to reduce annual emission of carbon from brick kilns by 50 per cent through replacing all traditional brick kilns with environmental-friendly ones.

"We will take stern action if owners of traditional brick kilns fail to transform their brick kilns into modern ones," he said.

He said existing brick kilns with century-old technology now use coal with high level of sulphur and firewood causing serious air pollution.

"But a kiln with modern technology can help reduce the pollution level," he went on.

About the protection of the Sundarbans, he said, encouraging social forestation has significantly reduced felling of trees by thieves.

"Not a single tree was felled by thieves in the last one or two years in the Sundarbans," he added.

UN Peacekeepers Day observed

BSS, Dhaka

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe yesterday to honour the 120,000 peacekeepers, including 10,293 Bangladeshis, the highest number among the blue helmets.

Now 8,199 personnel from the country's armed forces and 2,094 from police are deployed in 13 UN peacekeeping missions, out of 17 existing missions.

This year, the United Nations is marking the day by highlighting the global partnerships that help sustain UN peace-keeping and make it the success that it is. The day was introduced by the General Assembly in 2002.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion conveying their best wishes to the peacekeepers.

They reaffirmed the commitment of Bangladesh to the activities of the United Nations to maintain global peace and stability.

The day's programme began through "peacekeepers run" in the morning from Tejgaon Old Airport to South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni inaugurated the event organised by Bangladesh Air Force under the coordination of Armed Forces Division.

A reception for the family members of peace martyrs and injured peacekeepers was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) in the afternoon.

President Zillur Rahman spoke as the chief guest at the function.


Chief of Army Staff General M Abdul Mubeen and UN Resident Coordinator Neal Walker also spoke at the event.

Commandant of Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) Brigadier General M Anisuzzaman Bhuiyan and Director General of UN desk of Foreign Ministry Sadia Muna Tasneem made a joint presentation on various features of Bangladesh peacekeepers.

Cabinet members, chiefs of Navy and Air Force, inspector general of police, diplomats and high civil and military officials were present.

During the function, the president handed over rewards to family members of five martyrs and 15 wounded peacekeepers who sustained injury for peace in foreign soil.

Later, Zillur Rahman inaugurated an exhibition on various activities of the Bangladeshi personnel in the UN peace-keeping missions. The exhibition remained open to all from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.



WEATHER TODAY

Heat wave may continue

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the regions of Tangail, Faridpur, Dinajpur, Feni, Maizidcot, Patuakhilai and it may continue, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The highest maximum temperature is likely to be 37-38 degree Celsius and lowest minimum temperature may be 24-25 degree Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:41pm and rises tomorrow at 5:11am.

Country's highest temperature 38.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 25.5 degrees at Dinajpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.6	28.0	65	56
Chittagong	33.0	27.0	75	77
Rajshahi	38.5	28.0	80	62
Rangpur	35.6	26.0	87	65
Khulna	36.8	28.0	78	66
Barisal	36.4	26.5	78	62



Six trees were cut off on Road 8 beside the Dhanmondi Club playground in the capital. The club authorities carried out the act in the name of widening the club's entrance gate. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Make best use of climate funds

UK minister Alistair Burt urges Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting British Foreign Office Minister for South Asia Alistair Burt yesterday urged Bangladesh to make the best use of available funds to fight climate change.

"We are very conscious about tracking the money wherever it goes. We have greater transparency. It's good for society," he said during an interaction with teachers and students of Brac University in the capital.

The private university organised a dialogue on UK-Bangladesh relations and challenges.

The British minister said climate change was one of the biggest threats to the wellbeing of people, and Bangladesh's geographical location made it particularly vulnerable to flooding on one hand and water shortage on the other.

The UK is a close partner of Bangladesh in international forums in funding and helping the country on climate change, he added.

At present, the UK is supporting the construction of 56 multi-purpose cyclone shelters in Bangladesh and helping over 15 million Bangladeshis get better prepared for floods.

Burt said his country had been working tirelessly to cut carbon emissions worldwide and pressing for a legally binding agreement in 2015. "We want to help all the countries to do their bit to make growth green."

Asked if the climate-induced migrants should be provided with compensation by high carbon emitters through relocating them to those countries, the minister said the situation should not lead to mass migration of climate refugees.

HC halts DU pond filling for 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC), on Monday, imposed an injunction for six months on the filling up of a century-old pond at Shivbari Staff Quarter on the Dhaka University campus in the capital.

The court also issued a rule upon the government and the DU authorities to explain in two weeks why the decision of filling up the pond should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim gave the order and the rule following a writ petition filed by Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Manzill filed the petition on Monday as public interest litigation on the basis of a report published on The Daily Star on May 21 under the headline "DU plans filling of century-old pond."

According to the report, the university authorities were planning to fill up a major portion of the pond to construct a multi-storied residential building for DU fourth class employees, defying the environmental law.

The petition prayed to the court to direct the authorities to cancel its decision to fill up the pond to protect the environment.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia sits with the audience while attending as chief guest a party discussion at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh auditorium in the capital yesterday on the occasion of 31st death anniversary of the party's founder late president Ziaur Rahman.

PHOTO: BNP

UPCOMING BUDGET

Allocation for Harijans, Dalits urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dalit and Harijan communities yesterday demanded budgetary allocations in different sectors to be set aside in this year's budget for the downtrodden communities.

The communities urged the government to ensure special quotas and budgetary allocation in education and job sectors, as the communities are lagging behind due to lack of proper education system.

They made their demands at a view-exchange programme held at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad

(BHOP) organised the event in association with human rights bodies Manusher Jonno Foundation and Friends Association for Integrated Revolution (Fair).

Budgetary allocation for accommodation was also demanded as speakers said children are lacking an optimal environment for studying.

"Although we are unaccepted in mainstream society, it cannot function without us" said Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of BHOP.

Dalit and Harijan communities make up around one crore of the entire population, she added.

Among speakers, Goutam Das,

hailing from Satkhira, claimed a Dalit child was beaten up and hospitalised in April for not cleaning the dishes at school for her headmistress.

At this, Secretary to the Social Welfare Ministry Ranjit Kumar Biswas requested Goutam to file the complaint to him in writing. The secretary vowed to take stern actions by writing to his counterpart at the education ministry.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendro, Mohon Robi Das, the first ever Dalit youth to study at Dhaka University, spoke among others.

AMINBAZAR KILLING

Arrested two youths on 4-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed two more youths on a four-day remand for their alleged involvement in the killing of six students by a mob in Aminbazar on the outskirts of the capital in July last year.

Mohammad Rana and Mohammad Rashed were arrested on Monday at Baradeshi village, the scene of the occurrence, for their alleged involvement in the killing.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Wasim Sheikh placed Rana and Rashed on remand after Sirajul Haque, CID SP and investigation officer of the case, produced them before it with a 10-day remand prayer.

In the yesterday's forwarding report, the IO said they were present at the place of occurrence during the incident and also took part in the killing.

Abdul Hamid and Abdul Malek, two other accused of the killing case, had earlier given confession statement before a magistrate admitting their link to the killings, the report said.

Police so far have arrested eight others in the case.

Tipu Sultan of Tejgaon College, Towhidur Rahman Palash, Kamruzzaman Kanto and Ibrahim Khalil of Mirpur Bangla College, Shams Rahim Shamam of Maple Leaf International School and Sitaf Jabi Munif of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology were beaten to death on July 18 last year, on the night of Shab-e-Barat, when they went to Bardeshi village.

Their friend Al Amin, who was with them at that time, is the lone survivor of the incident.

On the next day, Abdul Malek, a sand trader of Aminbazar, filed a robbery case accusing the seven victims.

On the same day, Savar police filed a murder case against 500 to 600 unnamed people of Bardeshi village.

RIVER POLLUTION

Taiwanese factory fined Tk 39 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a Taiwanese-owned dyeing factory Tk 39 lakh in Bhaluka of Mymensingh on the charge of polluting the river Khiro.

Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, director of DoE, handed down the penalty, said a press release.

The Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) of the factory, Shepherd Yarn Ltd, was faulty and connected to a bypass drain to let the toxic liquid flow into the river, said Munir.

He said the factory had so far released 12 crore litres of untreated liquid waste with lethal chemical into the river, destroying much of its fish resources, aquatic life and biodiversity.

An examination of the factory's effluent at DoE laboratory revealed that the contents of dissolved oxygen was nil, he said, adding that such effluents were deadly for natural environment and could cause cancer if they penetrated the human body through the food chain.

Winston Kao, chairman of the factory, pleaded for exemption of the penalty on his being a foreign entrepreneur though he said that environment laws in Taiwan were very stringent and penalty was much higher for causing pollution there, said Munir.

"In reply, I said that the environment laws in Bangladesh are stringent too and one has to abide by them rigorously," he told The Daily Star. "We welcome foreign investment, not pollution."

The factory owner gave an undertaking that he would rectify the treatment plant's fault as soon as possible, Munir said.