



Some of the 408 brick kilns in Chittagong, most of which continue to pollute the air and are yet to comply with an order to replace by June 2014 fixed chimneys with those which are cost-effective, more efficient and environment-friendly. The photo was taken in Kattali area recently.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

# Most Ctg kilns still using high emission technology

Owners lament frequent change in standards, compliance to which is very costly

MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

In the last five years, the brick kiln owners in Chittagong were given two extensions of the deadline to convert to green technologies from the high emission fixed-chimney firing method but it has yielded little results so far.

Out of the total 408 kilns in the district, 321 are still running with the old technology and thus causing pollution at a higher rate, which could have been easily curbed through the use of zigzag, hybrid Hoffman, vertical shaft, and tunnel technologies.

Except for the tunnel method, each of the remaining three technologies generates less carbon dioxide, black carbon, and carbon monoxide.

Experts say toxic emissions interrupt photosynthesis, the way trees generate food for themselves, and cause respiratory diseases and even cancer.

Although unlicensed operation is punishable by a jail sentence of up to one year or a fine of up to Tk 1 lakh or both and confiscation of all equipment and goods like machines, fired bricks, mud, the owners are reluctant.

For them, the current rules are unre-

alistic.

Abdul Malek, president of Greater Chittagong District Brick Manufacturers and Kiln Owners Association, said there was actually no place to set up a brick kiln in Bangladesh under the current law because it prohibited installation of a kiln within 1km of a residential neighbourhood, school, agricultural land, garden, forest, marshland, city corporation, municipality, and upazila headquarters.

"So, even if we convert to modern technologies, the authority can still get us for operations in prohibited areas," he said.

He demanded that the government allot a special zone for brick kilns and then ask for conversion. "Then it will be easier for us."

Faridul Alam, president of Lohagara Upazila Brick Kiln Owners Association, said, "They asked us to convert all 'drum chimney' kilns for its pollution to '120 feet fixed-chimney' kilns in 2007-2008. And we complied." But within a few years, they are asking to convert to technologies like zigzag, he added.

"Who knows they will not be asking us again to go for a more modern technology after we convert each kiln, spending 60 to

### EMISSIONS (G/KG OF FIRED BRICKS)

TECHNOLOGY	CO2	BLACK CARBON	CO
Fixed Chimney	131	0.13	2.0
Zigzag	105	0.01	0.29
Vertical Shaft	70.5	0.001	1.84
Tunnel	166.3	Negligible	3.31
Hybrid Hoffman	100	NA	NA

SOURCE: GREENTECH KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS, NEW DELHI

70 lakh taka."

Another problem, he said, is unavailability of skilled technicians who can maintain and fix these modern kilns. "However, we are still converting the kilns gradually, and currently 14 kilns out of the total 47 in my area are using the zigzag technology."

According to the Department of Environment (DoE), 345 brick kilns have applied for the environment clearance certificate since 2010, and of them, 43 got it.

DoE Director of Chittagong Mokbul Hossain said they were not renewing the certificate of the kilns that were not converted.

He, however, said the district administration was the licensing authority, so it had the major responsibility to take action against illegal kilns.

Asked, Deputy Commissioner Mesbah Uddin said that in the last four months till March, mobile courts realised a fine of Tk 30 lakh, damaged some kilns, and jailed some staff.

It is not easy to destroy such a big number of illegal kilns because of shortages of manpower and logistic supports, he said.

The DC informed that the drives were going on.

Talking about the concerns of owners, Edris Ali, associate professor of Hazi Muhammad Mohsin College and vice president of Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, said five years was enough time to switch to new technologies.

The DoE issued a circular in September 2010 asking to modernise all the fixed chimney kilns by September 2012. The deadline was first extended till March 31, 2013 and then again till June 2014.

Brick kilns operate for seven months from October to May.

## ROW OVER MOVE TO NEW BUILDING OF JU 8 hunger striking students of CSE, geology depts become sick

JU CORRESPONDENT

Eight students of the computer science and engineering (CSE) department and geological sciences department of Jahangirnagar University who have been observing fast-unto-death were hospitalised yesterday.

Six students and a teacher, as representatives of the CSE department, have been observing fast-unto-death since Saturday protesting a decision of the university to transfer the environmental sciences department into their building. Ten students of the geological sciences department, also housed in the building, had started observing the fast yesterday.

Besides, all 26 teachers of the two departments have submitted resignation letters as a sign of protest.

The two departments have also announced boycotting all academic activities for an indefinite period.

The university last Thursday decided to move the environmental sciences department into the building which houses the other two departments.

The environmental sciences department has been demonstrating throughout April demanding the transfer.

Meanwhile, the university authorities have scheduled a meeting with the three departments for today to solve the problem.

## NEWS IN brief

### PM opens 4 power generation, 2 transmission projects

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated four power generation and two transmission projects through videoconferencing from Gono Bhaban.

The power generation projects are the furnace oil-fired 52.20MW Natore plant, 102MW Gagnagar plant in Narayanganj, 52.50MW Kathpatti plant in Munshiganj and gas-fired 108MW Ghorashal plant in Narsingdi.

The transmission projects are 54km long 400KV transmission line from Meghnaghat to Aminbazar of Savar and 132/33KV transmission substation at Lalbagh in the capital.

### Youth's body found in roadside ditch of Dhamrai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police recovered the body of an unidentified youth, aged around 30, from Jadobpur area of Dhamrai, outside the capital, yesterday.

Locals informed police after noticing the body in a roadside ditch in the morning. Later, the body was handed over to the local union parishod chairman without an autopsy, said police.

Police suspected that the youth was mentally challenged and killed in a road accident.

### Barisal Reporters Unity brings out a procession from Ashwini Kumar Hall in the city on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

## World Press Freedom Day observed at RU, Barisal

CITY DESK

Rajshahi University Journalist Association (Ruja) and Barisal Reporters Unity yesterday observed World Press Freedom Day.

Ruja brought out a procession on the campus celebrating this year's theme "Let Journalism Thrive! Towards better reporting, gender equality and media safety in the digital age" and held a seminar at the university's deans' complex, reports our RU

correspondent.

Speakers urged the authorities concerned for ensuring freedom of the media for the right practice of democracy.

Barisal Reporters Unity brought out a procession and held a discussion in Barisal city where participants demanded immediate implementation of the 8th wage board for journalists working outside Dhaka, and their security, adds our Barisal correspondent.

# 1.33 lakh families on shoals achieve hygienic sanitation

BSS, Rangpur

Over 1.33 lakh char (shoal) households have achieved hygienic sanitation and pure drinking water facilities to improve their health status reducing water-borne diseases in the remote char areas of 10 northwestern districts.

The success has been achieved by the extremely poor families with assistance of the comprehensive chars livelihoods programme (CLP)

in the hardly reachable riverine char islands on the Brahmaputra basin since 2004.

As a result of achieving sanitation and pure drinking water facilities, health index of the char people, who already won over extreme poverty with the CLP assistance, has marked a significant improvement with reduction in the neonatal, maternal and child deaths.

Under the programme, 1.33 lakh targeted extremely poor households

in Kurigram, Bogra, Gaibandha, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Pabna and Tangail are enjoying sanitation and pure drinking water facilities now.

The UKAid through the Department for International Development, the Australian government through the Australian Agency for International Development, and the Bangladesh government are funding the CLP's implementation.

Livelihoods Coordinator of CLP Dr

Mahbub Alam told the news agency that the multi-dimensional CLP activities were being implemented by the local partner NGOs in the riverine char islands to achieve the goals.

Head of Programme Coordination of RDRS Bangladesh, one of the CLP implementing organisations, Monjusree Saha said the char people lacked minimum sanitation facilities even a decade ago basically sheltering sick mothers, kids and a bleak future.



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