

Millions at fire, earthquake risks

Warn experts

UNB, Dhaka

Violation of building code and defiance of safety rules during construction of high-rises have exposed around 18 million people in and around the capital to fire and earthquake risks, according to experts.

Dhaka, one of the most densely-populated cities in the world, has witnessed a number of devastating fires in recent months and years.

Urban experts say the recent fire incidents at Chawkbazar, Banani's FR Tower and Gulshan DNCC kitchen market show how the lack of safety measures is putting people's lives at risk.

Talking to the news agency, noted construction and earthquake expert Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, urban expert Prof Nazrul Islam, architect and urban planner Iqbal Habib and Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansari of Buet's Civil Engineering department attributed the rise in fire incidents to unplanned urbanisation, violation of building code, carelessness, increased use of gas cylinders and lack of supervision by authorities concerned.

They suggested taking immediate initiatives to ensure safety compliance of city buildings.

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REASONS BEHIND RISE IN FIRE INCIDENTS

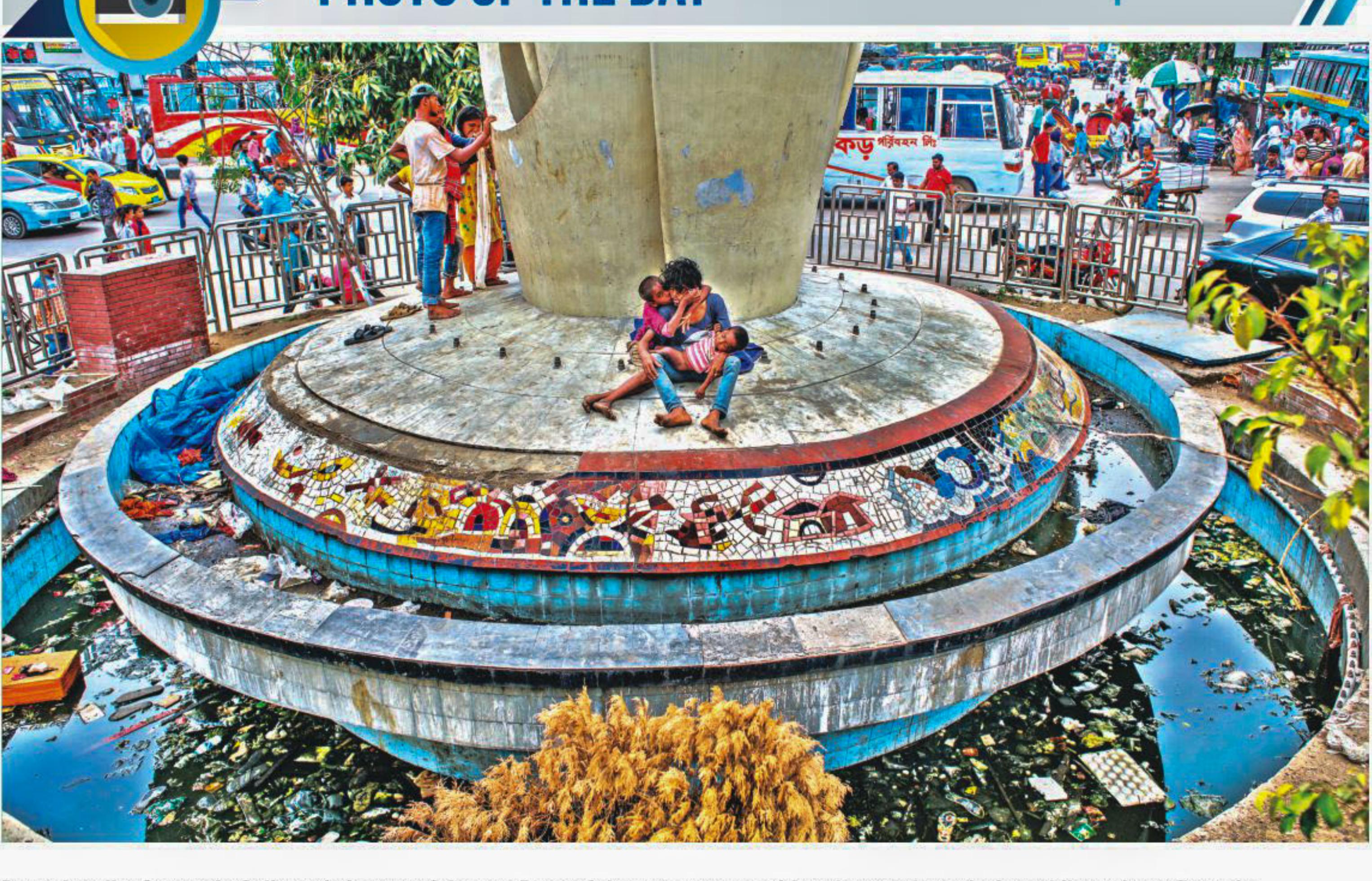
- Unplanned urbanisation
- Violation of building code
- Increasing use of gas cylinders
- Lack of supervision by authorities

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensuring buildings' safety compliance
- Forming fire safety committee
- Retrofit or remove risky buildings
- Implementing building code

PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



Bangabandhu Square in Gulistan is in an awful state. Parts of the structure are either damaged or missing while garbage floats in accumulated rainwater. The place is often occupied by homeless people, who just like the monument, remain neglected. The photo was taken yesterday.

Chawkbazar fire took away livelihoods and sole earners

Victim families demand financial assistance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of Chawkbazar fire victims yesterday demanded adequate financial assistance as well as education and medical expenses for children of the victims.

They also demanded government jobs for family members of the victims as per their qualification.

The family members formed a human chain under the banner of "Danger Free Roads and Safe Homes" in front of Jatiya Press Club to press home their 11-point demand.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the persons behind the

fire must be punished.

Saying that many victim families have plunged into tough times, losing the sole earners, she said steps should be taken to ease their woes.

Rizwana demanded trial of the organisations whose negligence was responsible for the fire.

Little Sanin, in her father Sumon's lap, joined the human chain. She still is not aware that her mother Shila was one of the victims of the devastating fire.

Talking to this correspondent, she said, "I came here to see my mother."

Nahida Rahman lost her husband Anwar Hossain, owner of Haider Medico and the sole earner of the family, to the fire.

Uncertainty looms over the upbringing of her two children, as all the savings were invested in mobile banking service at the shop and medicines worth around Tk 12 lakh -- all burnt to ashes.

"We were a solvent family but we have nothing now... I have to constantly worry how I will raise my kids," she said, urging for financial assistance from the government.

The family said they have received only Tk 20,000 so far for Anwar's burial.

"My four-year-old daughter still thinks her father is in the hospital, and he'll come home once we have the money to buy medicine," Nahida said.

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Crisis in CHT should be resolved for nat'l interest

Speakers say at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights and political situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is worsening and conscious citizens of the country should pay due attention to resolve the hill people's problems, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said solutions to the troubles affecting hill people is also linked to overall progress of the country.

Jatiya Mukti Council arranged the discussion on "Present Political Situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts" at Jatiya Press Club.

Monti Chakma, general secretary of Hill Women Federation, said hill people faced obstacles from government agencies responsible for maintaining law and order whenever they tried to demonstrate on rights issues.

A "neo masked group" has emerged in the region and it was involved in the recent killings of hill people, she alleged, adding, "proper investigation is needed to find out about their patrons".

Socialist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Comrade Khalequzzaman said rights violation incidents in the hill districts are not isolated. The ruling class had a role in creating divisions among people there, he said.

The country could have been more enriched through adding values of different ethnic communities to the mainstream cultural practices, he added.

Shunayan Chakma, general secretary of Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Hill Students Council, said situation in the hills started to deteriorate in November 2017 -- following the emergence of a local group.

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Due to reckless driving of heavy vehicles, a part of boundary wall and metal frame on the road underneath Mayor Hanif flyover has become badly damaged. The photo was taken in Sayedabad area on Thursday.

Post-Brexit UK will look for fast-growing South Asian economies

British high commissioner says about new partnerships

UNB, Dhaka

Describing Bangladesh as a developing giant on world stage, British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson has said the UK wants a stronger political partnership with the South Asian nation.

The high commissioner was speaking at a city hotel on Thursday.

He said the two countries can work

together to tackle global challenges.

"We're keen to broaden the UK-Bangladesh relationship, building on Bangladesh's economic success story," the high commissioner said.

Dickson said Britain will be looking for the fast-growing economies of South Asia, including Bangladesh, for new partnerships after Brexit.

He pointed out that a more balanced UK-Bangladesh trade relationship will be

a good thing for both sides.

The high commissioner said the UK and Bangladesh can work together at the UN and within the Commonwealth on issues such as climate change, and support open and free international trade.

Cosmos Foundation organised "Bangladesh-UK Relations: Prognosis for the Future" symposium at Six Seasons Hotel

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The multiple benefits of GREEN CHILLI



All Bengalis are familiar with the phrase, "Tok, jhal, mishti" (sour, spicy, sweet). This is a flavour combination sent from the heavens. While this flavour combination is present in other cuisines as well, our deep-rooted relationship with spices through the ages has led us to our fondness for the evergreen green chilli. Whether it is to add a dash of spice to different bhortas or make spicy mouthwatering pickles with mango and garlic infused in mustard oil, the possibilities of the green chilli are endless. It adds a refreshing flavour to any dish and provides just the right amount of spice needed for a delectable food experience.

Green chillies are not just loved for the spice they add to dishes but also because they are good for our immunity and overall fitness. Capsaicin present in green chilli stimulates smooth blood flow in the nose and helps to combat cold and sinus related issues. When consumed, they release heat that works as an effective painkiller.

They are a natural source of iron and are thus recommended for people with iron deficiency. They are also considered good for the eyesight.

Green chillies are filled with antibacterial properties and are considered to be good for treating all kinds of skin infections. They also have a number of beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system. Specifically, it prevents formation of blood clots that can lead to heart attack or stroke.

Interestingly enough, capsaicin found in green chillies, although hot in taste, has been shown to lower body temperature by stimulating the cooling centre of the hypothalamus in the brain.

Alomgir, a green chilli farmer from Shahbazpur, Jessore, shares his experiences of growing this vegetable. He shares that the saplings are usually planted two days after irrigating the land.

Inorganic fertilisers, such as, urea

and thiovit are then added in small amounts. When the plant grows further, more fertilisers, such as TSP and potash are added along with urea.

Generally, five to six irrigations are needed. Water should never be allowed to stay in the field beyond six hours as excess water makes way for wilt disease that can completely destroy the crop. Chillies should be harvested when they start turning red. To harvest green chillies, they should be allowed to grow as large as possible till they turn green.

Alomgir, along with many farmers of the area, provides vegetables for Shwapno under the Shuddho project. According to Alomgir, this initiative has helped him adopt the right agricultural practices in growing chillies in terms of learning about how much fertiliser or pesticide should be used. Farmers also have an opportunity to learn about the interval period between pesticide application and harvesting, known as the Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI).

Bengali cuisine would certainly be incomplete without green chillies. Green chillies are filled with different micronutrients that are extremely beneficial for us. With so many benefits on the list, the green chilli is crucial for our wellness and should be incorporated in our meals every now and then.

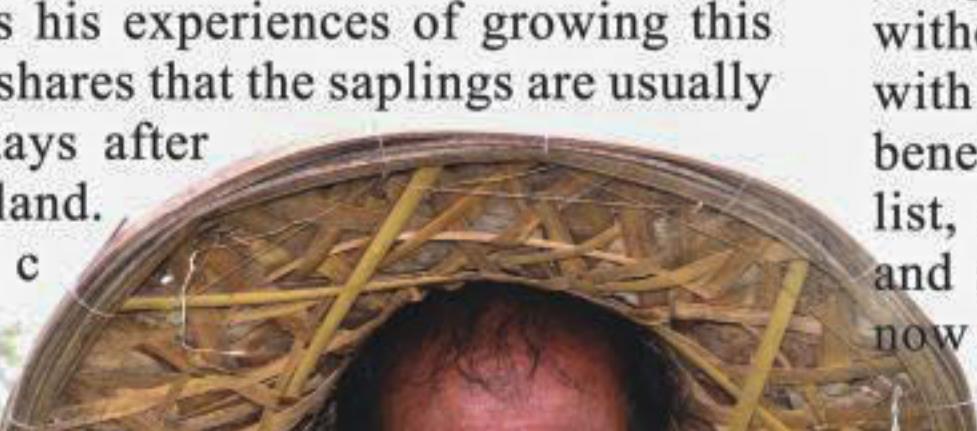


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HI-TECH 13TH BRANCH NOW AT KUALA LUMPUR IN MALAYSIA

HI-TECH 14TH BRANCH NASIRABAD IN CHATTOGRAM GRAND OPENING 6TH APRIL 2019

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DHAKA TODAY

THEATRE

Aurangzeb by Prangonemor

Venue: Mohila Shomiti, Bailey Road

Time: 7pm

WORKSHOP

Kids Time Craft

Venue: Spice Route, Khilgaon, Taltola

Time: 3:30pm

MUSIC SHOW

Embers In Snow: The Gathering

Venue: 3rd Space, Dhanmondi

Time: 6pm

FESTIVAL

Ice-Cream Fest 2019

Organiser: Kwality Ice Cream

Venue: Jamuna Future Park

Time: 11:30am

MEET AND GREET

A morning with the inimitable Asma

Said Khan

Organisers: Bookworm

Bangladesh and Thrive

Venue: North End Coffee Roasters, Dhanmondi

Time: 11am

Dhaka-Rajshahi nonstop train launching on Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to launch a nonstop intercity train service on Dhaka-Rajshahi route from Pahela Baishakh (April 14) -- the first day of Bangla new year, Railways Minister Nurul Islam said yesterday.

Besides, another new train on Rangpur-Dhaka route will be added within a month to prevent schedule delay, he informed reporters at a briefing in Kamalapur Railway Station.

"The prime minister will inaugurate the train service on April 14 marking Pahela Baishakh," the minister said.

The train will start from Rajshahi at 7am and reach Kamalapur Railway Station by 11am. It will leave at 1:30pm and reach Rajshahi at 5:30pm.

This would be the third nonstop train while two others are now plying on the Dhaka-Chittogram route.

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The Daily Star