



A fisherman weaves a fishing net in Bheduria village of Barishal Sadar upazila a couple of days ago. Fishermen in the area are passing idle time as a 65-day ban on fishing in the Bay of Bengal has been in force since May 20.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Hard to get fresh air

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measures the air quality under its Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project.

The density of airborne particulate matter started decreasing in the following months.

In April, the average concentration level of PM10 was 49-222 mg/m3 and that of PM2.5 was 28-78 mg/m3 in the city.

"The level of air pollution round the year remains higher than the standard level. But it worsens during the dry season," Ziaul Haque, director of Air Quality at the DoE, told The Daily Star.

Rain plays a great role in cleaning dust in the air. Since the volume of rainfall decreases in the winter, pollution level in the air goes up, he added.

Both particulate matters 10 and 2.5 cause serious health hazards. The PM10 is usually present in smoke from burning of wood and can go deep into the cardiovascular system.

The PM2.5 generally arises from burning of fossil fuels and has a strong association with circulatory diseases. Due to its tiny size, PM2.5 can penetrate deep into the human respiratory system, causing a wide range of short and long-term health effects.

Indoor and outdoor air pollution led to 1.23 lakh deaths in Bangladesh in 2017, according to the State of Global Air 2019 report published recently by US-based organisation Health Effects Institute and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation.

It said air pollution was the fifth

highest mortality risk factor globally.

Experts say these particulate matters may cause bronchial and kidney diseases and even lung cancer. A significant number of city dwellers suffer from respiratory diseases and asthma in the winter every year.

According to the DoE and the World Bank, brick kilns are responsible for 56 percent of air pollution in the country.

The government enacted a law last year to make these kilns environment-friendly, but a recent report indicated that of the 7,772 brick kilns across the country, 2,123 are yet to adopt the required modern and environment-friendly technology.

"The major sources of outdoor air pollution in Bangladesh are brick kilns and development activities, especially construction work," said Ziaul.

A group of researchers led by Prof Abdus Salam of Dhaka University's Chemistry department carried out a study on air pollution in different parts of the city early this year.

For the study, markets and streets were chosen in five areas of the city -- Uttara, Mirpur, Chawkbazar, Badda and Malibagh.

It was found that both indoor and outdoor pollution in those five places are almost the same and the level of air pollution was three to five times the limit set by the World Health Organisation.

During the same period, the group carried out another study at six locations to determine the health risks of air pollution.

The locations are Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University, a construction site in Bashundhara,

traffic intersection point at Bijoy Sarani, a food factory in Baridhara, a residential block in Banani, and Gulshan Park.

The study found that the level of air pollution was higher in the morning than that at any other time of the day as a large number of vehicles ply the roads at that time.

Vehicle emission and construction work as well as industrial emission contribute mostly to particulate pollution at the TSC, Kuratoli, Bijoy Sarani, Baridhara, Banani and Gulshan, it said.

WAY OUT
"First of all, we have to control the source [of air pollution]," said Prof Salam.

Since construction sites are one of the major sources, it should be well managed. Besides, open burning of garbage should be stopped and traffic has to be controlled, he said.

Salam suggested using high quality fossil fuel, planting more trees and having more waterbodies in the city.

Ziaul said the government has taken various measures to reduce air pollution. It also amended the brick kiln act to encourage use of blocks.

"We have drafted the clean air act which will allow us to take steps to check air pollution at construction sites."

On faulty vehicles, the DoE official said they have already written to the authorities concerned to prevent vehicles aged above 20 years from plying the roads.

"We also wrote to cement and iron rolling factories to take steps to reduce air pollution," Ziaul said.

UNNOTICED, UNSUNG, UNPAID

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from work. Her husband is a lawyer and there was no one else in her family to take care of the baby.

"Initially, I used to carry my child to an NGO where I worked, but my colleagues seemed annoyed. That's why I resigned," said Shampa, who had chosen to work in the development sector despite passing the bar examination.

Shampa said she received several job offers later, but had to turn all them down as her responsibilities would involve field visits.

"I am a complete homemaker now," she said, adding she spends most of her time cooking and taking care of her daughter.

Talking about campaigns for recognition of unpaid care work, UN expert Shahra said one misconception was that the campaigns sought wages for homemakers. This is absolutely not the case.

"To really value this work, I think what is really important is to appreciate its significance. This work is what makes the society and economy run. In many ways this kind of work can be seen as the solid foundation on which official industries, services, economies, schools and universities sit on. Without this kind of work, it would be very difficult to think of a society that can function," Shahra is seen saying in the video.

Ferdous Ara Rumee, secretariat coordinator of the National Committee on Rural Women's Day Celebrations, said, "No one is asking for payments as a remedy to lessen the burden on women. Rather, the focus is on the four Rs: recognition, redistribution, reduction, and representation. The unpaid care work must be acknowledged as labour. There is no way to avoid it but these works can be fairly shared with the male members. Community and state

can take a greater share by providing public services e.g. quality day care centres. In this way, the burden can be reduced from women's shoulders and they might save some time to engage in other productive works."

Rumee shed light on the numerous activities that rural women take on in farming, fisheries and livestock.

"A labourer has to be paid at least Tk 400 and one meal a day. So in villages, farmers use their wives for numerous tasks related to agriculture, but those are unpaid. Women's labour is seen as means to reduce crop production cost," she said.

Besides, aid group Oxfam reveals that in Bangladesh, women's ownership of land is five times less than that of a man though women perform 17 out of 22 activities required for rice production.

Women experts said unpaid care work should be captured in the GDP (gross domestic product). But sadly, that is yet to happen in Bangladesh.

"Women's unpaid care work is recognised in the sustainable development goals, but little has been done in practical terms to give it a concrete shape," says Banasree Mitra, who has been leading the campaign "Equality through Dignity" of Manusher Jonno Foundation since 2012. The campaign aims to highlight the contributions of women in families, societies and state."

"Just because the household works are not remunerated, a woman cannot be looked down upon. In a research done in association with Centre for Policy Dialogue, we found that if these works were monetised, they would have been around 76 percent of the GDP in fiscal 2013-14," Mitra said.

"So we are pressing the government to include the household works in the GDP," the gender specialist said.

Mitra added: "Take RMG workers for example. Clearly they are playing

a huge role in the macro economy. But is a female RMG worker leading a dignified life? Is she safe at her workplace and home? Is she respected in her family? She is earning money but she is not being able to spend that money according to her will. She does not have any decision-making power. So she is not leading a dignified life despite having financial independence. That is why we are saying that we want to reach equality but through dignity."

Meet Ai-Da

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between AI, technology and organic life.

"Pioneering a new AI art movement, we are excited to present Ai-Da, the first professional humanoid artist, who creates her own art, as well as being a performance artist," said Aidan Meller, Ai-Da's brainchild and gallery owner.

"As an AI robot, her artwork uses AI processes and algorithms. The work engages us to think about AI and technological uses and abuses in the world today."

Engineers in Leeds developed the robotic hand used by Ai-Da, which follows a number of stages and AI algorithms, calculating a virtual path based on what it sees in front of it and interpreting co-ordinates to create the piece of art.

"We are looking forward to the conversation Ai-Da sparks in audiences," said Lucy Seal, researcher and curator for the project.

"A measure of her artistic potential and success will be the discussion she inspires. Engaging people so we feel empowered to re-imagine our attitudes to organic life and our futures is a major aim of the project."

Body of a film crew member recovered in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

The body of a worker of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) was recovered from Sugandha river in Barishal yesterday.

The dead was identified as Saddam Hossain, 22, who worked as a shooting assistant at BFDC.

Saddam was travelling to his ancestral home in Otr of Barishal's Babuganj upazila on Thursday to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. He had boarded the launch "Farhan-10" at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal in Dhaka, police said quoting his family.

Saddam's brother-in-law Mainul Hossain said Saddam had called him on Thursday night and said that he was being attacked by a dope gang on the launch.

"He [Mainul] could hear noises [of the attack] but the phone line was cut and the number could not be reached afterwards," Dibakar Chandra Kar, officer-in-charge at Babuganj Police Station, said quoting Mainul.

One Rashedul Islam Ridoy was held following a murder case filed by Mainul yesterday, the OC said, adding that police suspected that Ridoy, who is also a resident of Otr, was involved with a dope gang.

Police recovered Saddam's body after it was washed ashore at the South Bhuterdia point of the river on Sunday afternoon.

"The body has been sent to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College for autopsy. It has injury marks on the neck," said OC Dibakar.

Saddam's co-workers, along with television and film artistes, demonstrated at the capital's Moghbazar yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to the killers.

Canada suspends operations at embassy in Venezuela

AFP, Ottawa

Canada announced Sunday it was temporarily shutting its embassy in Venezuela, blaming President Nicolas Maduro for refusing to accredit diplomats critical of his regime.

At the same time, Ottawa is reviewing the status of Maduro envoys to Canada.

Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said in a statement that "the regime has taken steps to limit the ability of foreign embassies to function in Venezuela, particularly those advocating for the restoration of democracy" there.

In January Canada, along with the United States and major Latin American powers, was among the first to recognize Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido's claim to be acting president, beginning a months-long power struggle between him and Maduro.

Soon, Canadian diplomats in Venezuela "will no longer be in a position to obtain diplomatic accreditation under the Maduro regime, and their visas will expire," Freeland said.

"Therefore, we are left with no choice but to temporarily suspend our operations at the Embassy of Canada to Venezuela, effective immediately."

3 killed

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around 5:30pm and ploughed into people waiting for buses.

In Dhamrai, at least four men were killed and 20 others injured when a truck carrying them flipped over on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday evening.

The victims had not been identified yet, said Dipak Saha, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station.

The truck may have lost control while a bus was overtaking it around 7:45pm, the OC said.

The truck was heading for Manikganj, he added.

In Pirojpur, a 40-year-old woman was killed after a motorcycle hit her in Khanakuniary area around 12:00pm, police said.

Shahanara Begum, wife of Siddikur Rahman, was hit by the motorcycle as she was going across a road in front of her house, family members said.

Doctors at Pirojpur District Hospital pronounced her dead when she was taken there, family members said.

In Gazipur, garment worker Jasim Uddin, 38, was killed and five others were injured when a CNG-run three-wheeler was hit by a truck in Meghdubi area.

Jasim was a resident of Moktar Ranigoan area of Nalitabari upazila of

Sherpur.

The victims were in the three-wheeler, said Mohammad Jamil Uddin, sub-inspector of Pubail Police station.

In Munshiganj, a three-wheeler driver was killed when it collided with a CNG-run three-wheeler near Holdia Government High School in Louhajang upazila.

Sekandar Fakir, 40, was a resident of Kharia area of the upazila, said Monir Hossain, OC of Louhajong Police Station.

Our Cumilla, Gazipur, Pirojpur and Munshiganj correspondents contributed to the report.

ACC starts

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"...The drug peddlers who have surrendered have amassed huge wealth through drug business," it added.

The letter also attached profiles of the drug peddlers.

The ACC earlier launched enquiries into the assets of over 200 individuals named in a list of drug traders prepared by the narcotics department in 2017.

But the investigation stumbled as most of the addresses in the list were inaccurate.

6 Ukrainians

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He said when the card was inserted in the ATM, the machine's connection with the bank's server got severed and the suspects just took money out.

This came to light when two foreigners withdrew Tk 3 lakh from a Dutch-Bangla Bank ATM booth in Badda on Friday. But no account was found charged and there was no record in the bank's server of the transaction.

Scrutinising the closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera footage, the bank authorities saw that two foreigners wearing masks, sunglasses, and caps withdrew the money.

The bank then beefed up its security measures at all its ATM booths.

One of the foreigners was detained Saturday night when he was trying to withdraw money this way from the bank's booth in Taltola of Khilgaon. Following his information, police

later detained the other five at a hotel on Panthapath.

According to police, Vitalii Klimchuk, 31, escaped arrest when he learnt about the raid. The immigration police at airports have been alerted about him, police said.

DB sources said the suspects landed in Dhaka together on Thursday and they were supposed to leave for India.

Mashiur Rahman, head of alternate delivery channel of Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd, filed a case against the seven Ukrainians and other unnamed people with Khilgaon Police Station under the Digital Security Act Sunday night.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director of the bank, told The Daily Star, "They did not use skimming devices to clone cards. They took the money out of the ATM's vault. We have to figure out the technology they used. Forensic experts are working on it."

OIC for suing

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to launch the case at the International Court of Justice on behalf of the 57-member global body.

In March, the OIC foreign ministers agreed on taking Myanmar to the court at the Hague.

The Makkah conference further called for ensuring free and unrestricted access to humanitarian assistance by affected persons and communities and creating conditions conducive for safe, voluntary, and dignified return of the refugees.

Myanmar is fully responsible for the protection of its citizens and it should stop the use of military power in Rakhine immediately, according to

the joint communique posted on the OIC website.

The conference urged Myanmar to take practical, time-bound and concrete steps to restore the citizenship of Rohingyas who were deprived of their nationality, with all associated rights, and to allow and facilitate their safe and dignified return.

The summit reiterated its deep appreciation for the people of Bangladesh and PM Hasina for opening their hearts and borders and supporting the Rohingyas with scarce resources.

It also urged the OIC members to come up generously to share the increasing burden of Bangladesh.

Trump meets

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Trump called the mayor a "stone cold loser", adding: "Kahn reminds me very much of our very dumb and incompetent Mayor of NYC, (Bill) de Blasio, who has also done a terrible job - only half his height".

"In any event, I look forward to being a great friend to the United Kingdom."

BACKING FOR BORIS

Trump's three-day visit comes at a difficult time for Britain, with Prime Minister Theresa May due to step down within weeks over her handling of her country's exit from the European Union.

Trump weighed in on the divisive issue at the weekend, declaring that former foreign minister Boris Johnson would make an "excellent" new premier.

In a round of British newspaper interviews, he also recommended May's successor walk away from talks with Brussels, refuse to pay Britain's agreed divorce bill and leave the EU with no deal.

The UK-US "special relationship" was already under strain over different approaches to Iran, the use of Chinese technology in 5G networks, climate change, and Trump's personal politics.

Labour's Khan has led opposition to Trump's trip, writing a newspaper article on Sunday in which he compared the US leader to European dictators from the 1930s and 1940s.

"Donald Trump is just one of the most egregious examples of a growing global threat," he wrote.

His spokesman called Trump's tweets "childish" and "beneath the president of the United States".

BABY TRUMP BLIMP

Trump's first official visit to Britain last year was also marked by criticism of May's Brexit strategy and there were large protests.

Organisers are hoping for a repeat of the demonstrations this week and will once again fly a bright orange "baby Trump" inflatable.

Amnesty International yesterday unfurled a giant banner on the bridge near the US embassy reading: "Resist

Racism, Resist Cruelty."

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the protests against Trump were "an opportunity to stand in solidarity with those he's attacked in America, around the world and in our own country".

He and other opposition leaders are boycotting the state banquet, along with John Bercow, the speaker of parliament.

Trump also risked causing offence by describing Meghan Markle, the new US wife of the queen's grandson Prince Harry, as "nasty" for her previous criticism of him.

Harry was spotted with the US party at Buckingham Palace, as was Trump's daughter Ivanka, but new mother Markle is believed to have stayed away.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

May and Trump are expected to emphasise the wider benefits of their old alliance when they hold talks with their teams at Downing Street today.

On Wednesday, they will join other world leaders in the English port of Portsmouth to commemorate 75 years since the D-Day landings, which changed the course of World War II.

"Our relationship has underpinned our countries' security and prosperity for many years, and will continue to do so for generations to come," May said ahead of the visit.

May announced her resignation last month after failing to get her Brexit plan through parliament and twice delaying Britain's departure.

She will formally quit as her Conservative party's leader on Friday but will stay on as caretaker prime minister while her successor is chosen.

Three years after the referendum vote to leave the EU, Britain remains divided over its future.

Trump recommended the new government make an abrupt break with the EU if necessary, adding that there was "tremendous potential" for trade with his country.

Causing more potential embarrassment for May, Trump said he might also meet with Johnson and pro-Brexit leader Nigel Farage during his stay.