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Hard to get fresh air

Dhaka air contaminated with heavy metals, pollutant particles

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

If you are in Dhaka city, think twice before drawing a deep breath.

The city’s air is contaminated with not only heavy metals like lead, chromium, cadmium, nickel, arsenic, manganese and copper but also with other poisonous particles, show studies.

The presence of pollutant particles in the air even on a normal day, except for those in the rainy season, is more than three to four times the desirable limit.

The level of air pollution in Dhaka is so alarming that the city is often ranked among the most polluted ones in the world. Against this backdrop, the country observes the World Environment Day tomorrow.

The level of pollutants is higher in the city than other parts of the country, and it gets worse with the advent of winter, said officials of the Department of Environment (DoE).

Brick kilns, faulty vehicles, dust from roads and construction sites, and toxic fumes from industries are the sources of air pollution.

Bangladesh National Ambient Air Quality Standard guidelines say the presence of particulate matters (PM) 10 in the air should remain within 150 microgram per cubic metre (mg/m3) within 24 hours and that of PM2.5 within 65 mg/m3.

In January this year, the average concentration level of PM10 was 104-401 mg/m3 and that of PM2.5 was 87-229 mg/m3 in the capital, according to the DoE, which

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Workers extract stones from Shah Arefin Tila in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila. This illegal practice has continued unabated for years in the hillock, turning it into a mining site. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

74 YABA GODFATHERS, DEALERS

ACC starts enquiry into their wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched a probe into the wealth of 74 “drug peddlers” in Cox’s Bazar.

The commission yesterday asked its officials concerned to initiate the enquiries.

“In March, we received a letter from the home ministry asking us to carry out an enquiry into the wealth of 101 drug peddlers,” said an ACC official requesting anonymity.

Of the 101, the ACC was already probing the wealth sources of 26. Another suspect named in the list was killed in “a gunfight”, he said.

On March 3, the superintendent of police in Cox’s Bazar, in a letter to the Police Headquarters, requested that the wealth of the individuals named in the drug peddlers’ list be probed by agencies like ACC, Criminal Investigation Department, and National Board of Revenue.

The drug peddlers named in the list surrendered to police on February 16 and agreed to cooperate with the authorities investigating their wealth, reads the letter.

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HOMEMAKERS’ CONTRIBUTIONS UNNOTICED, UNSUNG, UNPAID

PROMITI PROVA CHOWDHURY

Kazi Fatima Sharmin (not her real name) has to wake up at 7:00am every day to make breakfast for her husband.

And before going to bed around midnight, the 31-year-old housewife, on an average, completes at least 17 different household chores, from cooking and mopping floors to cleaning toilets.

Still, all this hard work goes unnoticed by her other family members. “It really hurts when even my husband says that I don’t do anything at all. The numerous things I do every day means absolutely nothing to him,” said Sharmin, while struggling to hold back her tears.

No recognition, no respect and no payment. That’s precisely the story of the many Sharmins who toil day and night in households across Bangladesh.

According to UN women expert Shahra Razavi, such unpaid care work is the kind of work that people do to take care of each other and build up each other’s capabilities. The main characteristic of unpaid work is that it is not directly remunerated.

“One universal fact seems to be that in nearly all human societies, it is often upon women this kind of work falls. It’s highly feminised. The unequal distribution highly penalises women,” says Shahra in a video released by UN Women in 2017.

“Taking on the bulk of this work often carries a penalty in terms of not being able to have a full-time job with a decent wage, not being able to accumulate a pension, the benefits that come from formal sector employment. The penalties are many even though the benefits to the society are huge.”

Take the case of Mahbuba Sultana Shampa, who had to sacrifice her career for raising her child.

When her daughter was born, she saw no option but to take a break

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3 killed as police car veers off road

7 more killed in 4 dists

STAR REPORT

Three garment workers were killed as a police pickup ploughed into pedestrians before falling into a ditch in Cumilla’s Chaudhagram yesterday afternoon.

Seven others were killed in other crashes in four districts.

The accidents left 29 injured, including four policemen in the pickup.

In Chaudhagram, Nasima, 35, Kajol, 32, and Tanjina Sharmin, 30, who worked at Dragon Garments Ltd, died as the pickup of Police Bureau of Investigation drove into a crowd at Miabazar on Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Police said the driver of the PBI vehicle, which was going towards Dhaka from Feni, apparently lost control of the vehicle

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Meet Ai-Da The world’s first AI robot artist



MAIL ONLINE

A humanoid AI robot is set to open its own exhibition of artwork in Oxford, drawn independently using a robotic arm and an inbuilt camera.

The robot, called Ai-Da after the mathematician Ada Lovelace, is said to be the first ultra-realistic robot capable of drawing people from life using her eye and a pencil in her hand, according to its creators.

Ai-Da’s solo exhibition Unsecured Futures, which opens at Oxford University from June 12, will showcase a selection of the robot’s work, developed using AI processes and algorithms at the university.

The artwork will include drawing, painting, sculpture and video art, exploring the boundaries

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Trump meets British queen

Advises on how to handle Brexit debate, slates London mayor

AFP, London

US President Donald Trump met Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace yesterday after he kicked off his state visit to Britain by branding the London mayor a “loser” and weighing in on the Brexit debate.

With the sound of a 41-gun royal salute ringing across the lawn from nearby Green Park, the queen welcomed Trump and his wife Melania before they were treated to a military guard of honour.

The monarch later hosted a private lunch for the couple and showed them the royal art collection, ahead of a glittering state banquet in the evening.

But the day began with controversy as, even before his plane touched down, the president lambasted London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who has been highly critical of the red carpet welcome.

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Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II (R) shakes hands with US President Donald Trump during a welcome ceremony at Buckingham Palace in central London yesterday, on the first day of the US president and First Lady’s three-day state visit to the UK.

PHOTO: AFP

ATROCITIES ON ROHINGYAS

OIC for suing Myanmar at ICJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Organisation of Islamic Conference has called for launching the case of Myanmar’s human rights violations against the Rohingyas at the International Court of Justice.

The 14th Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah on Friday stressed the need for international, independent, and transparent investigation into the human rights violations, including sexual violence and aggression against children, and holding accountable those responsible for the brutal acts.

Addressing the conference, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought help from the OIC in establishing justice for the Rohingyas and ensuring their repatriation.

Some 750,000 Rohingyas have fled brutal military atrocities in Myanmar’s Rakhine state since August 2017. More than 300,000 others had taken shelter in Bangladesh escaping previous waves of violence -- altogether posing immense economic, environmental and diplomatic challenges for Bangladesh.

Myanmar military is accused of burning Rohingya villages and killing and raping Rohingya women -- allegations that rights groups say amount to genocide.

Rohingyas say the conditions in Rakhine are not conducive for their return and that there is no guarantee of citizenship and safety.

Meanwhile, escalation of violence in Rakhine in recent months has further complicated the situation, with the Myanmar military fighting Arakan Army, a Rakhine Buddhist rebel group.

OIC JOINT COMMUNIQUE

In a joint communique, the OIC urged its ad hoc Ministerial Committee, led by Gambia, to take immediate measures

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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 4

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 3-45	12-45	5-00	6-47	8-00
JAMAA 3-55	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN JUNE SEHRI IFTAR

29	4	6:47
30	5	3:39 6:47