

Dhaka's air still 'very unhealthy'

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka yesterday yet again ranked first among cities with the worst air quality, in the Air Quality Index (AQI). The Bangladeshi capital had an AQI score of 202 at 8:13 am -- which is classified as "very unhealthy". Thailand's Chiang Mai and China's Shenyang occupied the second and third positions with AQI scores of 192 and 165 respectively.

The AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, informs people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

When the AQI value is between 201 and 300, the entire population is likely to be affected, according to the index. In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2 and Ozone (O3).

The Department of Environment has also set national ambient air quality standards for these pollutants.

Heavy air pollution has contributed to Dhaka being one of the least livable cities in the world, but following the nationwide shutdown to prevent widespread transmission of the novel coronavirus, the air quality had shown signs of improvement. At 7:30am on March 29, it had an AQI score of 91, far lower than its usual score.

ATTACK OVER LAND

Youth killed, 3 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A youth was killed and three were injured in an attack by rivals following a dispute over land in Patuakhali yesterday.

Hasan Pada (28) was declared dead at Patuakhali General Hospital, said police.

Following the incident at Boro Bighai village in Sadar upazila, police arrested one named Salam Ghazi.

The injured -- Farid Pada (50), Sohad Pada (30) and Russell Pada (25) -- were undergoing treatment at the hospital.

RAJSHAHI ZOO Starved dogs kill mother deer, 3 fawns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A pack of stray dogs, presumably starved due to the shutdown, yesterday killed and ate three fawns and their mother deer at Rajshahi zoo.

Five dogs entered the deer shed through a damaged barrier, and killed three fawns at daybreak, said Samar Kumar Paul, executive magistrate of Rajshahi City Corporation, that oversees the zoo.

The dogs later killed the mother deer, he said, and ate them, before zoo staff drove them away, he said.

"Stray dogs (of the city) have been starved," he said, adding that the dogs used to get food from local restaurants and now the restaurants are closed due to coronavirus pandemic.

The remains of the deer were buried inside the shed, he said, terming it "an accident."

Paul said they sought explanation from the zoo officials about the incident.

The zoo had a total of 75 deer with 15 fawns that were born in a period of last three months.

Skipping meals to survive

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Rajshahi City Corporation has no data on slum dwellers, and one of their survey activities on slums has been paused due to the outbreak. Corporation officials, however, think the number of families in those slums has increased in recent years.

Living in tiny shanties equipped with poor hygiene facilities, slum dwellers are at a high risk of contracting coronavirus. Sadly, practising social distancing is almost impossible, the dwellers said.

Right now, they are more worried about managing their meals than the pandemic.

After visiting Bhadra slum on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent saw Manjila Begum preparing drumstick for cooking her curry at lunchtime.

"We have nothing for lunch; the drumstick is for dinner," she said while talking to others who were huddled up there.

"I'm afraid of the coronavirus, and I have heard about keeping distance," Manjila said. "But tell me, how will we maintain distance in these cramped spaces?"

Md Khalil said he lives with his seven family members in a 70 square feet shanty.

"We can do nothing. We just wear masks to be as safe as possible."

From a distance, Golapi was seen sitting at her grocery and tea shop, despite authorities calling for keeping shops shut.

"I close the shop when they [authorities] come to raid the area, and open it back up when they go away," she said. "I have no other way to live."

Authorities have raided her shop at least five times since the shutdown, but she had not seen anyone visiting the slum with relief materials till Wednesday.

She said her income slumped from Tk 500 to Tk 100 per day. "Whatever I get is still helpful for managing essentials."

During the visit by this correspondent, some youths brought a dish full of 120 lunch packets. Before they could even start distribution, around 30 slum dwellers snatched them away.

"Most of these people are starving. Distributing food among them is tough," Rakibul Hasan, one of the youths said.

Uncertainty looms over

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According to a DSHE official, there are about 90 lakh students currently enrolled in sixth to tenth grades in schools across the country.

Rajuk Uttora Model College principal Brig Gen Kazi Showkat Alam said that education and preparation of students are being hampered.

"Coronavirus is an evolving situation. We are yet to take a concrete decision regarding exams. We will decide when the exam date is near," he said.

DSHE Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk said that if the situation remains the same and school shutdown continues, they have to think about alternatives regarding exams.

"We can think about giving the exam through TV education programme or online, if needed," he added.

On March 22, the government postponed HSC and equivalent examinations scheduled for April 1 due to fears over spread of coronavirus.

Over a million students are expected to sit for the HSC and equivalent examinations.

Teachers of English medium schools in the capital said usually final exams of different classes other than O-level and A-level exams take place in between May and June, and the current situation has cast a shadow on the exams.

Yasmeen Habib, vice principal of Sunnydale, said the syllabi of different classes were almost completed. "We're sending work and links to lectures to students via email, aiming to complete the syllabus".

"We have not so far deferred exam dates, but it is in our consideration," she added.

English medium teachers said all O- and A-level exams for May-June under all boards have been cancelled, following the UK government's announcement that UK schools, colleges and higher education providers will close down.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics officials say there are 78,700 students at 146 registered English medium schools in the country.

However, sources said there are about 350-400 such schools in the country, and many are not registered.

Their struggle is double

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seek alms...I think we have to take special care of them," he added.

Nazma Ara Begum Popy, general secretary of Women Impelling with Disabilities for Empowerment, said, "Persons with disabilities, in some areas across the country where they have good connection with the administration, are getting relief during the crisis. We have also heard allegations that some are being deprived in some areas."

"The government should give special

focus to us. Local administration can easily get the list of persons with disability form the Department of Social Services, and give aid to the impoverished ones," Popy, who is visually impaired, added.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon said apart from directly providing aid to poor people, they have introduced an on-call service where persons with disabilities can call for aid.

"We will supply food and necessities to their houses," he said yesterday, adding the on-call service will start within a day or two.

Pandemic may cause

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the first dip since a 1.4% reduction after the 2008 financial crisis.

"I wouldn't be shocked to see a 5% or more drop in carbon dioxide emissions this year, something not seen since the end of World War Two," Jackson, a professor of Earth system science at Stanford University in California, told Reuters in an email.

"Neither the fall of the Soviet Union nor the various oil or savings and loan crises of the past 50 years are likely to have affected emissions the way this crisis is," he said.

The prediction -- among a range of new forecasts being produced by climate researchers -- represents a tiny sliver of good news in the midst of crisis: Climate scientists had warned world governments that global emissions must start dropping by 2020 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

But the improvements are for all the wrong reasons, tied to a world-shaking global health emergency that has infected more than a million people -- while shuttering factories, grounding airlines and forcing hundreds of millions of people to stay at home to slow the contagion.

Experts warn that without structural change, the emissions declines caused by coronavirus could be short-

lived and have little impact on the concentrations of carbon dioxide that have accumulated in the atmosphere over decades.

"This drop is not due to structural changes so as soon as confinement ends, I expect the emissions will go back close to where they were," said Corinne Le Queré, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia in eastern England.

After world greenhouse gas emissions dipped in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis, they shot back up a whopping 5.1% in the recovery, according to Jackson.

The pattern of a swift rebound has already begun to play out in China, where emissions fell by an estimated 25% as the country closed factories and put in place strict measures on people's movement to contain the coronavirus earlier this year, but have since returned to a normal range.

That kind of resilience underscores the magnitude of the economic transformation that would be needed to meet the goals of an international deal brokered in Paris in 2015 to try to avert the most catastrophic climate change scenarios.

A UN report published in November found that emissions would have to start falling by an

average of 7.6% per year to give the world a viable chance of limiting the rise in average global temperatures to 1.5C, the most ambitious Paris goal.

"I don't see any way that this is good news except for proving that humans drive greenhouse gas emissions," said Kristopher Karnauskas, associate professor at the Department of Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder.

With the world dependent for fossil fuels for 80% of its energy, emissions forecasts are often based on projections for global economic growth.

With governments launching gigantic stimulus packages to stop their economies collapsing, investors are now watching to see how far the United States, and China, the European Union, Japan and others embrace lower-emission energy sources.

"Our estimates indicate that the pandemic's climate silver lining is vanishingly thin," said Seaver Wang, a climate and energy analyst at the institute.

"It's as if we went back in time and emitted the same amount we were a few years ago -- which was already too much. In the grand scheme of things, it really makes no difference."

US recognises Bangladesh

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do not come down within seven days.

The prime minister wants to know why it is that the prices are high although commodities are available in the market. Addressing a huge public meeting in Mymensingh, Bangabandhu says that the government has allowed the traders to continue trade but he will not allow them to exploit the people.

Stating that India will supply Bangladesh an additional two and a half lakh tonnes of food grains besides her earlier commitment of five lakh tons, the prime minister says that he is making arrangements for food grains from Soviet Union, Japan and other countries.

Bangabandhu further says that he wants to build a village-oriented economy. He says cooperatives and

cottage industries will be set up to attain this objective.

\$560MN UN AID FOR RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan declares in Dhaka today that the UN has fixed a target of 560 million dollars as assistance to the resettlement of refugees in Bangladesh.

CYCLONE LASHES DHAKA CITY

A cyclone with a wind velocity ranging from 70 to 100 mph lashes Dhaka city and adjoining areas for about ninety minutes today evening, leaving in its wake a harrowing tale of devastation, deaths and sorrow. Coming three days after the Mymensingh tornado where Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has visited today to see for himself

the devastations caused by it, Dhaka people are caught unawares by another storm which, according to first-hand reports, left behind at least four children killed and over a hundred people injured.

MONEY SAVED FROM TIFFIN DONATED TO RELIEF FUND

A German school-going student, Otton Reutter, has contributed an amount of 20 marks to the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Reutter saved the money from his tiffin and pocket expense with a view to donating the amount to the relief fund as a token of sympathy for the war-ravaged people of Bangladesh.

SOURCES: April 5, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

Google to publish user

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No "personally identifiable information," such as an individual's location, contacts or movements, will be made available, the post said.

The reports will also employ a statistical technique that adds "artificial noise" to raw data, making it harder for users to be identified.

From China to Singapore to Israel, governments have ordered

electronic monitoring of their citizens' movements in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, which has infected more than a million people and killed over 50,000 worldwide.

In Europe and the United States, technology firms have begun sharing "anonymised" smartphone data to better track the outbreak.

Even privacy-loving Germany is considering using a smartphone app

to help manage the spread of the disease.

But activists say authoritarian regimes are using the coronavirus as a pretext to suppress independent speech and increase surveillance.

In liberal democracies, others fear widespread data harvesting and intrusion could bring lasting harm to privacy and digital rights.

TODAY MARKS THE 24TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF Late Salahuddin Ahmad (May 6, 1926-April 4, 1996)

Your memory has not dimmed, your presence felt evermore.....May Allah (SW) grant you Jannatul Ferdous and rest your soul in eternal peace.

We humbly request all our relatives, friends and acquaintances to remember late Salahuddin Ahmad in their prayers.

Wife, children and grandchildren

Berthing of vessels

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got berth on March 30 was scheduled to leave the port on Thursday but later delayed its departure for a day.

Another vessel -- MV Delaware Trader -- got berth on Wednesday and was supposed to leave today morning but the authorities of the ship were yet to confirm the departure date as at least 20 reefer container could not be discharged from it until yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, at least 11 vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage of the port for getting berths at the port jetties until yesterday.

The number of imported goods-laden containers reached at 43,767 TEUs (twenty equivalent units) until yesterday morning whereas the designated space for such containers can accommodate only 37,620 TEUs.

The scenario is similar at the yards designated to reefer containers used for perishable goods like fruits, onion, garlic, ginger, fish and others.

As of yesterday, a total of 2,932 TEUs reefer containers were lying at the port yards against the port's capacity of only 1,620 TEUs.

Mahbubul Alam, president of Port Users' Forum, said although the port remained open round the clock, other offices that provide importers and CNF agents with necessary documents -- radiation clearance, quarantine clearance and others -- to release consignments remained closed.

As a result, the people related to the port could not function properly.

He also demanded waiver of different additional charges taken by the port, shipping agents and off docks to assist the importers.

Contacted, Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Md Omar Faruk said the government was considering waiver of port's store rents only for the consignments arrived and be taken away during the shutdown period.

Around 2,500 Bangladeshis

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allow transit arrangements for foreign nationals who are stranded in the country during the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

"Indian Ministry of External Affairs is helping. There won't be a problem for those stranded there. The Bangladesh government took measures for money transfer to them from their relatives so that they don't have problems for house rent, food and visas," the official said.

Of the 2,500 stranded Bangladeshis,

more than 1,000 are students, mostly in Punjab, Hyderabad and Delhi. They are staying in hostels and have no problem, the official also said.

India began a 21-day nationwide lockdown from March 25 to stop the spread of coronavirus. No foreign national or Indian expatriates can fly to India during this time. Domestic flights and interstate transport systems have also been suspended. The Indian government is also discouraging international travel from India.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry in a statement said that the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi is maintaining contact with the stranded Bangladeshis via telephone, hotline and ensuring their welfare.

"Our missions in India are taking care of them if they face financial or other problems," the statement said.

"The government is committed to bringing back the stranded Bangladeshis in India and other countries once the situation normalises," it added.

Three die after showing

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the dead body to IEDCR for test and the families would be kept in isolation until the test result gets published.

In Sunamganj, the family of a ready-made garments worker who died with coronavirus-like symptoms on Wednesday was kept in isolation in Tahirpur upazila.

Shams Uddin, civil surgeon of Sunamganj, said body of the 22-year-old man was taken to his home. On information, the district administration rushed to the spot, buried the body and kept his family in isolation following IEDCR's directions.

In Bogura, local administration

kept at least three families in isolation as a 45-year-old man got admitted to hospital with coronavirus-like symptoms.

Meanwhile, two patients were undergoing treatment in isolation wards of two hospitals in the port city as they were suffering from fever and coughing.

Seikh Fazle Rabbi, civil surgeon of Chattogram, said samples from their bodies were sent for tests.

In Brahmanbaria, the government officer in Bancharampur upazila who was sent to IEDCR on April 1 as he had flu-like symptoms has been tested negative for coronavirus, said Mohammad Ekram Ullah, civil

surgeon of the district.

In Kushtia, local health officials yesterday collected samples of a navy man, who died on Thursday night with flu-like symptoms to check whether he was infected with Coronavirus, said Anwarul Islam, the district's civil surgeon.

Local administration has locked down the dead's father-in-law's house in Meherpur Sadar upazila where the victim resided for few days before his death, said the civil surgeon.

Our Satkhira, Narayanganj, Sylhet, Kushtia, Chattogram, Bogura, Faridpur and Brahmanbaria correspondents contributed to this report

Pie in the sky

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pizza oven, which we kept extremely secret," Anderson said.

But news of the tasty drop-off proved too hot to handle, and yesterday he was fielding calls from eager reporters -- with one radio station asking if he could deliver to their studio in Perth, over 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) away.

"That's probably a bit out of our range," he said. At the moment, Anderson and his team are only planning to fly to properties within 100 kilometres.

The idea was cooked up as coronavirus travel restrictions bit into the outbreak's peak tourist season, stopping the usual stream of caravans and months of booked-out rooms.

Regional travel in the Northern Territory remains strictly controlled, with large swathes in lockdown over fears for remote indigenous communities who experts warn could be particularly susceptible to an outbreak, due to higher rates of chronic illness.

Relief rice seized

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chairman and recovered the rice.

They did not find Ayat at home as the family said he was on the run.

The UNO said hoarding and trading of VGD rice are prohibited and stern action would be taken in this regard. Naogaon Deputy Commissioner Harun-Or-Rashid told The Daily Star that he was informed of the matter.

Asked, how the AL leader could get a hand of such big amount of rice allocated for the government's social safety net programme, the DC said they would investigate the matter and the culprit would be brought to book.

A case was filed with Ranimagar Police Station in this connection yesterday.

দরপত্র দাখিল ও উন্মুক্তকরণের সময় বৃদ্ধি সংক্রান্ত পুনঃবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এ দপ্তরের জন্য ২ (দুই) টি ব্যাগেজ স্ক্যানিং মেশিন (ডুয়াল ভিউ) ও ০১ (এক) টি কার্গো/ল্যাগেজ স্ক্যানিং মেশিন (ডুয়াল ভিউ) ক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত 'দৈনিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন' ও 'দৈনিক 'দি ডেইলি স্টার' পত্রিকায় বিগত ১২/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখে দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশিত হয়। সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বহির্বিদেশের পাশাপাশি বাংলাদেশেও করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর সংক্রমণের কারণে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার ২৬/০৩/২০২০ খ্রিঃ হতে ০৪/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত সাধারণ ছুটি ঘোষণা করেন। কিন্তু করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) এর পরিস্থিতি স্বাভাবিক না হওয়ায় এই ছুটি ০৫/০৪/২০২০ হতে ০৯/০৪/২০২০ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত হয় এবং এর সাথে যথাক্রমে ১০/০৪/২০২০ ও ১১/০৪/২০২০ তারিখের সাপ্তাহিক ছুটিও সংযুক্ত করা হয়। এ ক্ষেত্রে ০৮/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২৩/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত শিডিউল বিক্রি করা হবে ও ১২/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখের পরিবর্তে আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে এবং আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২০ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১১:৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

গোলাম মোঃ মুনীর
কমিশনার (চঃ দাঃ)

কাস্টমস, এন্ড্রাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, সিলেট।