



WORLD AIR QUALITY REPORT 2020

Bangladesh most polluted

Dhaka remains 2nd worst capital

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Air quality of Bangladesh was the worst in the world, while its capital Dhaka was the second most air polluted city in 2020, said a global report.

"South Asia remained the most polluted region of the world with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sharing 42 of the 50 most polluted cities worldwide," shows new data from IQAir's global air quality data platform in its World Air Quality Report 2020.

The report published yesterday said the average annual PM 2.5 concentrations in Bangladesh was 77.1 microgrammes per cubic metre (mcg/m3) of air, which is seven times above WHO exposure recommendation.

Researchers from IQAir -- a global air quality information and Swiss-based tech company -- analysed pollution data from 106 countries, specifically measuring PM

2.5, a microscopic pollutant that can cause serious health risks.

"An estimated 13-22 percent of deaths in this region are linked to the health effects of air pollution exposure, with associated estimated costs equating to 7.4 percent of the region's GDP," the report said.

Experts said Bangladesh has ranked top of the worst polluted countries since 2018 and this result showed that the situation did not improve in recent years.

"Basically, we did not see any concrete steps that can help reduce the air pollution. Even if there are some steps taken by the government to improve the air quality, it seems that the steps are not enough," Prof Abdus Salam, of Dhaka University's Chemistry department, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Salam, who is an air quality expert, said due to the pandemic, transport-related air

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a floral wreath before the portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu museum on Dhanmondi Road-32 yesterday on the occasion of the Father of the Nation's birthday.

PHOTO: PID

UN team on Bhasan Char to inspect facilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 18-member UN delegation reached Bhasan Char yesterday on a three-day visit to take a first-hand view of the housing facility for 100,000 Rohingyas.

Facilitated by the Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations' visit to Bhasan Char is taking place from March 17 to 20, said Mostafa Mohammad Sazzad Hossain, assistant communications officer at UNHCR Bangladesh.

The three-day visit would bring together experts from UN agencies engaged in the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh, he told The Daily Star.

"The visit will look at the current situation and

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ASTRAZENECA JABS

WHO endorses continuation of vaccination

Says experts still reviewing safety data

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization said yesterday its experts were still reviewing safety data on the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine following concerns around blood clots but recommended that injection programmes continue.

While millions of doses of the vaccine have been administered, small numbers of people have developed blood clots, prompting countries including the EU's three largest nations -- Germany, France and Italy -- to suspend injections.

"The WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety is carefully assessing the latest available safety data," the UN health agency said in a statement.

"At this time, WHO considers that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh its risks and recommends that vaccinations continue."

It said that once the committee had completed its review, the WHO would immediately communicate its findings.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Operation searchlight inked

MARCH 18, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

PREPARING 'MILITARY SOLUTION'

On the morning of March, 18, 1971, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, then general officer commanding of 14 Division in East Pakistan, and Major General Rao Farman Ali, then military adviser to the governor of East Pakistan, assembled at the former's office to work on the plan for military action, the infamous Operation Searchlight. Khadim asked his wife to keep his Bengali ADC busy and away from his office. "I did not want to arouse his suspicions about Farman working with me in my office the whole morning as it was a very unusual get-together in that environment," writes Khadim in his memoir. The two generals agreed on broad details and decided to write their respective pieces: Farman was to supervise the operations of the Dhaka garrison while Khadim was responsible for the rest of the



province. They met again at the Command House on the same evening. The plan was presented before the top generals and it was passed without any discussion except the deception involving the president. The deception plan was overruled as President Yahya had his own plan -- to flee from Dhaka prior to the military action. [Khadim Hussain Raja, A Stranger in My Own Country: East Pakistan (1969-1971), UPL, 2012, 71] MUJIB REJECTS PROBE BODY Bangabandhu today rejected the commission of enquiry set up by the martial law authority "to go into the circumstances which led to the calling of the army in aid of civil power in various parts of East Pakistan

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Bangladesh, the Maldives to sign 4 deals today

PORIMOL PALMA

The Bangladesh-Maldives bilateral relationship is set to see a boost as the two South Asian countries are going to sign at least four MoUs on trade, tourism, fisheries, and health today.

The MoUs are likely to be signed in a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih at the Prime Minister's Office.

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning to attend the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and the golden jubilee of independence.

His wife, First Lady Madam Fazna Ahmed, is accompanying him.

Besides, a delegation of 27, including Maldives Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid and Economic Development Minister

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First baby born with Covid antibodies



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A healthcare worker in Florida has given birth to a baby with Covid antibodies - the first known case of this happening after a person was vaccinated.

In a case that experts say could have significant implications for efforts to fight the pandemic, it was reported that the woman, had been vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine when she was 36 weeks pregnant.

She gave birth three weeks, in January, a blood sample was taken from the baby girl, and a DNA test was performed.

"We tested the baby's cord to see if the antibodies in the mother passed to the baby which is something, we see happen with other vaccines given during pregnancy," Palm Beach pediatrician Dr Paul Gilbert told Florida's WPBF.

"To our knowledge, this was the first in the

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Highest new Covid cases in 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate reported 1,865 fresh cases of novel coronavirus infection in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, the highest in last three months.

On December 15, at least 18,77 cases were reported in the country.

Experts assumed that the recent spike in transmission was likely linked to the spread of new strains of novel coronavirus and people not

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 18

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:00 12:45 4:30 6:14 7:45
JAMAAT 5:35 1:15 4:45 6:18 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Relatives of Hashem Khan cry at Chattogram Medical College Hospital after he was stabbed to death following a clash between two groups at Agrabad of the city yesterday during the celebrations of the Father of the Nation's birthday. The clash began over blocking a street for a celebration programme. Police held one suspect in this connection. The suspect allegedly confessed that he had stabbed Hashem.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

UN sounds alarm on S Asia child deaths

Blames drastic cuts in availability of essential health services across countries, including Bangladesh

AFP, New Delhi

The coronavirus pandemic may have indirectly contributed to around 228,000 additional child deaths in 2020, 11,000 maternal fatalities and 3.5 million unwanted pregnancies in South Asia, the UN said in a report yesterday.

The study commissioned by Unicef blamed "drastic cuts in the availability and use of essential public health services" because of the pandemic across India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, home to 1.8 billion people.

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CRACKDOWN IN MYANMAR

Buddhist group condemns junta

UN investigators seek evidence of criminal orders by military

REUTERS

Myanmar's most powerful Buddhist monks' association called on the junta to end violence against protesters and accused an "armed minority" of torture and killing innocent civilians since last month's coup, media said yesterday.

In its most forthright condemnation of the military's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations, the

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মুজিব চিরন্তন

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের
জন্মশতবার্ষিকী ও স্বাধীনতার সুবর্ণজয়ন্তী
উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষ্যে অনুষ্ঠানমালা
স্থান: জাতীয় প্যারেড স্কয়ার
১৮ই মার্চ ২০২১, বৃহস্পতিবার
থিম (Theme): মহাকালের তর্জনী

সময়	কর্মসূচি
বিকাল ৫.১৫	মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও আবহ সংগীত (থিম সং ভিডিও প্রদর্শন) স্বাগত সম্ভাষণ ও সঞ্চালনা (বাস্তবায়ন কমিটির পক্ষে) মহাকালের তর্জনীভিত্তিক অডিও ভিডিও প্রদর্শনী থিমভিত্তিক আলোচনা: ড. আলমগীর মোহাম্মদ সিরাজুদ্দিন সম্মানিত অতিথির ধারণকৃত বক্তব্য: কথোড়িয়ার মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী হুসেন আলোচনা পর্ব সমাপ্তি
সন্ধ্যা ৬.০০	
সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান	
সময়	কর্মসূচি
সন্ধ্যা ৬.৩০	বন্ধু রাষ্ট্রের সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠানের ধারণকৃত ভিডিও পরিবেশনা (ভিয়েতনাম) মুজিব চিরন্তন থিমের ওপর টাইটেল এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও থিমের ওপর একটি সিজি এ্যানিমেশন ভিডিও পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-১ ঐতিহাসিক ৭ই মার্চের ভাষণের সাথে অর্কেস্ট্রা মিউজিক উপস্থাপনা (পটের গানের মাধ্যমে) পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-২ বিভিন্ন সময়ে বঙ্গবন্ধুকে নিয়ে রচিত গানের পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৩ বঙ্গবন্ধুর ৭ই মার্চের ভাষণের ওপর ভিত্তি করে লাইট ও সাউন্ড শো পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৪ দুই প্রজন্মের শিল্পীদের মেলবন্ধনে মিশ্র মিউজিক পরিবেশনা পটের গানের মাধ্যমে উপস্থাপনা-৫ অনুষ্ঠানের সমাপ্তি
রাত ৮.০০	

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্মশতবার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন জাতীয় বাস্তবায়ন কমিটি