

GLOBAL UPDATE

694
New cases in 24hrs

15,59,452
Total cases

27,614
Deaths

15,20,296
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,826,062
Deaths

236,355,046
Total cases

Dhaka worst-affected in world by urban heat

Says study unveiled by The Guardian

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is the worst-affected city in the world by deadly urban heat, according to a study published by The Guardian yesterday.

Between 1983 and 2016, during which the city's population rose dramatically, Bangladesh's capital experienced an increase of 575 million person-days (the cumulative population exposed to cumulative heat in a given year for a particular place) of extreme heat, the study said.

Other cities that underwent rapid population growth include Shanghai and Guangzhou in China, Yangon in Myanmar, Bangkok in Thailand and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, the Guardian quoted the study as saying.

According to the study, exposure to deadly urban heat has tripled since the 1980s, and now affects nearly a quarter of the world's population.

Scientists put the worrying trend down to the combination of rising temperatures and growing numbers of people living in urban areas, and warned of its potentially fatal impact.

In recent decades, hundreds of millions of people have moved from rural areas to cities, which are now home to more than half the world's

population. Amid surfaces such as concrete and asphalt – which trap and concentrate heat – and little vegetation, temperatures are generally higher in urban areas.

"This has broad effects," said Cascade Tuoholske, the lead author of the study published in the journal PNAS and a postdoctoral researcher at Columbia University's Earth Institute.

"It increases morbidity and mortality. It impacts people's ability to work, and results in lower economic output. It exacerbates pre-existing health conditions."

The study used infrared satellite imagery and maximum daily heat and humidity readings from more than 13,000 cities from 1983 to 2016 to determine the number of people exposed to days in a year that exceeded 30C (86F) on the wet-bulb globe temperature scale (which takes into account the multiplier effect of high humidity) in an area. They matched the findings with the cities' populations over the same period.

The study found that the number of person-days soared from 40 billion a year in 1983 to 119 billion in 2016, representing a threefold increase. In 2016, 1.7 billion people were subjected to extreme heat on multiple days.



An artist puts the finishing touches to an idol of Hindu Goddess Durga at Dhormoshoba Temple at Khulna city's Picture Palace intersection yesterday. The largest religious festival of the Hindus will be celebrated from next week at 1,003 temples in Khulna district, including 132 in the city. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Delayed by 100 months

FROM PAGE 1

Cost escalations and delays in development projects are common in the country and the prime minister expressed discontent over the issue on several occasions in the past.

More than 300 projects sought time extension last fiscal year. Even yesterday, nine project proposals were placed before the Ecneec meeting and five of them were for time and cost revisions.

But action has hardly been taken against anyone for project delays and cost escalations, said officials concerned and transport experts.

"The prime minister told us that no one would be spared. They will face action even if they have gone into retirement," Nasima Begum, member (socio economic infrastructure division) of the planning commission, told reporters after the meeting, which was presided over by the PM.

Talking to The Daily Star later in the day, Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet's civil engineering department said, "I am very happy that the prime minister has given such a directive. No one has been held accountable for project delays and cost escalations as yet."

He pointed out that poor feasibility study is the root cause of challenges faced during project implementation. So those responsible for such poor study must be held accountable, he said.

The practice of changing project directors must be stopped as well. It is because the practice prevents the authorities from holding project directors accountable for project delays and cost escalations.

Besides, officials in ministries or other supervising bodies must not take any benefit from any project. Because if they take the benefit, they will not be able to take action against those responsible for project delays and cost escalations, said Prof Shamsul.

THE MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL
The government had approved the project to build Kushtia Medical College and Hospital between January 2012 and December 2014 at a cost of Tk 275.44 crore.

But no feasibility test was carried out before the project was approved. Even the land for the project was not selected at that time, according to an in-depth report of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) released in June last year.

Changes in the work scope and rate schedule, inclusion of new work and completion of incomplete work were cited as reasons for the second revision of the project, said officials concerned. The original deadline was extended till 2016 in two phases, without increasing

the project costs. But when the project went through the first revision in 2018, the cost rose to Tk 611.08 crore and December 2019 was set as the deadline.

The project had seen only 34 percent physical progress till 2019 when the second revision was submitted, which had remained pending for more than one year leading to obstacles in project implementation.

"Mismanagement was found from the outset," read the IMED report.

The report also mentioned that bamboo and wood was being used, instead of steel, for the construction of a building. On January 17, 2019, a portion of that building caved in, killing one worker and injuring 10 others.

In its report, IMED mentioned 25 weak points in project implementation. The medical college has been admitting 50 students every year since 2012. Its academic activities have been ongoing in some buildings in the absence of medical equipment.

No equipment could be procured as the construction work was not complete, said officials.

In January this year, when the second revision was placed before the Ecneec for approval, the prime minister directed the authorities concerned to investigate the delay and cost hike, instead of giving go-ahead to the revised proposal.

A top official of the planning ministry, who is aware about the investigation, said the probe committee found project work "inconsistent with the planning discipline" and held both the health department and public works department responsible for it.

"It is the responsibility of the ministries concerned to find out the responsible persons and take action against them," the official told The Daily Star, wishing not to be named.

He said although the project was approved in 2012 when the rate schedule of 2011 was available, the project cost was estimated following the rate schedule of 2008.

As a result, when the project authorities went to implement the project, they fall short of money, and curtailed work scope, he said.

Till 2016, the deadline of the project was changed twice but no one felt it necessary to change the rate schedule, he said.

After yesterday's meeting, Planning Minister MA Mannan said people, even local lawmakers, expressed discontent over the long delay.

The IMED secretary has already visited the project site and submitted a report, which has already been placed before the prime minister, he said.

"The prime minister asked us to take action against the real culprits," he said.

Nasima Begum said the prime minister asked them to take action as per the recommendations of the probe report.

Other persons, whose names appeared in the probe report, have already gone into retirement.

"Action can be taken against them [retired persons] under the PDR [Public Demands Recovery] Act if money is involved," she said.

OTHER DELAYED PROJECTS

Ecneec yesterday also approved the second revision of a project for the construction of the Khulna-Mongla port rail line.

The project to construct the 64.75-kilometre-long rail line was taken in December 2010. The work was supposed to be completed within three years.

But the project's physical work did not kick off even six years after the approval. In the meantime, the cost rose to Tk 3,801 crore – 120 percent higher than the original estimates.

The delays did not end here.

The project authorities sought another 459.27 crore and a one-and-a-half-year extension of the project's previous deadline in June this year. As of August, the project witnessed 86.72 percent progress.

Another project got approval yesterday in Sayedabad Water Treatment Project (Phase-3).

The original cost of the project was Tk 4597.36 crore and it was supposed to be implemented between July 2015 and June 2020. Now the cost would be Tk 7515.02 and the deadline June 2025.

Mamun-Al-Rashid, member (physical infrastructure division) of the planning commission, said the project witnessed only 2.4 percent physical progress in the last seven years.

Complexities over funding by development partners and land acquisition mainly caused the delay, he said.

Revision proposal on two other projects and proposal on four new projects also got approval yesterday.

The prime minister also directed the authorities concerned to take strict measures so that industries set up on the river banks cannot dispose their untreated waste into the rivers and thus cause water pollution.

She also directed to use money from the foreign currency reserve if the authorities failed to manage funds from development partners.

[Our Kushtia Correspondent Amanur Aman contributed to this report]

Iran urges UN to condemn Karaj nuke site 'sabotage'

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday urged the UN atomic agency to clearly condemn a "sabotage" attack on a nuclear facility west of Tehran that it has accused arch-foe Israel of carrying out.

Tehran said on June 23 that it had thwarted the attack on the building belonging to its own nuclear agency near Karaj, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the capital.

At the time, it did not identify the nature of the attack, with state television saying only that "saboteurs failed to carry out their plan".

Jatiya Party hits

FROM PAGE 1

After the news spread inside the party, some senior leaders held a meeting with the party Co-chairman Kazi Firoz Rashid on Monday.

They expressed outrage over the move to appoint Patwari as the secretary general, a JP leader present at the meeting told The Daily Star yesterday.

Referring to remain anonymous, the JP leader said senior leaders at the meeting spoke in favour of appointing one of them to the post of secretary general.

JP Co-chairmen ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Moshir Rahman Ranga, Mujibul Haque Chonnu, Syed Abu Hossain Babla, Additional Secretary General (Khulna) Shahidur Rahman, Presidium Member Shaiful Islam, and Advisory Council Member Zahurul Alam were among those present at the meeting.

"Many senior leaders came to my office after news spread that Shameem Haider Patwari may be made secretary general of the party. They expressed their disappointment and anger," Firoz Rashid told different media outlets on Monday.

"Shameem Haider Patwari has been in Jatiya Party politics for two or three years. If he is made secretary general, the senior leaders will not accept him," a senior JP leader, wishing not to be named, told The Daily Star.

According to party sources, two former secretaries general Ruhul Amin Hawlader and Moshir Rahman Ranga, Syed Abu Hossain Babla, lawmaker from Dhaka-4 (Shyampur-Demra), Additional Secretary General Shahidur Rahman and Shameem Haider Patwari are interested in becoming the secretary general of the main opposition.

JP Chairman GM Quader told different media outlets on Monday that the post of secretary general is an administrative post in the party and according to the JP's constitution, it is below the post of chief patron and co-chairman of the party.

"I don't understand why the co-chairmen of the party are so greedy for this position."

Party sources said Shameem has drawn attention for his active participation and knowledgeable speeches inside and outside parliament on various issues.

"Young voters may be attracted to Jatiya Party if he is made the secretary general. The party's image may also improve as he is a clean-image politician," said a JP presidium member.

Considering these aspects, the JP high-ups are thinking of making him secretary general, the JP leader said wishing not to be named.

GM Quader said according to Article 20/1 (1) A of the party's constitution, the chairman has the power to appoint anyone to the post of secretary general.

Judges ignoring

FROM PAGE 1

The HC imposed conditions on Mou in granting her bail in the case, saying the accused petitioner (Mou) must not, in future, engage in possessing or dealing in yaba and foreign liquor.

She must make herself available to the investigation as and when required, and during investigation of trial, she cannot tamper with the prosecution evidence by pressuring the witnesses, the HC said.

The HC judges also said accused Mou must cooperate in the trial sincerely without seeking any adjournment and she must not indulge in any criminal activity after being released on bail.

The breach of any condition will be a ground for cancelling her bail, the full text said.

Detectives on August 1 arrested Mou from her Mohammadpur home and seized 750 yaba pills and 12 bottles of foreign liquor from there.

On August 2, Metropolitan Magistrate Ashke Imam placed her on a remand for three days; on August 6, Metropolitan Magistrate Satyabrata Sikder placed her on remand for four days; and on August 10, Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sufyan Md Noman placed her on a two-day remand in the case filed against her with Mohammadpur Police Station.

On September 2, the HC bench sought explanation from two metropolitan magistrates Debrata Biswas and Atikul Islam, for placing actress Pori Moni on remand in multiple phases in a narcotics case.

The bench on September 15 expressed discontent at their explanations, saying that Debrata Biswas and Atikul Islam had "undermined" the HC. The bench on September 29 ordered the metropolitan magistrates to give further explanations to it by October 24.

Philippines' Duterte to prepare defence against ICC probe

AFP, Manila

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has said he will prepare his defence against an International Criminal Court probe into his deadly drug war, after previously insisting he would not cooperate.

ICC judges authorised in September a full-blown investigation into Duterte's anti-narcotics campaign, which rights groups estimate has killed tens of thousands of people, saying it resembled an illegitimate and systematic attack on civilians.

"I will prepare for my defence in the ICC," Duterte said in a pre-recorded speech released Monday, in his first public comments on the probe.

"Just stick to the facts because there are records of it. I am not threatening you – just don't cheat me on the evidence," Duterte said in the speech, which came two days after he declared he would retire from politics.

Duterte has repeatedly attacked the world's only permanent war crimes court and insisted it has no jurisdiction in the Philippines.

The authoritarian firebrand pulled Manila out of the ICC after it launched a preliminary probe, but the Hague-based court says it has jurisdiction over crimes committed while the Philippines was still a member.

Duterte has repeatedly said there is no official campaign to illegally kill addicts and dealers, but his speeches have included incitements to violence and he previously told police to kill drug suspects if their lives were in danger.

Duterte said in the Monday speech he would protect officers carrying out the war on drugs "as long as you obey the law".

"It's on me, not on you," Duterte said.

"I will answer for it and if someone should go to prison, I will be the one to go to prison."

Three Philippine policemen were sentenced in 2018 to decades in prison for murdering a teenager during an

anti-narcotics sweep, the first and only conviction so far against officers carrying out Duterte's war on drugs.

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said Sunday a review of 52 anti-drug operations carried out by police had identified around 154 officers for "possible criminal liability".

The cases will be further investigated and criminal charges filed "if warranted by the evidence", Guevarra said.

Carlos Conde, Human Rights Watch senior researcher for the Philippines, said Duterte sounded like "a really scared man".

"He knows he will be held accountable and the ICC presents the best opportunity for that to happen," Conde told AFP.

"He's scared of an ICC conviction and, perhaps worse, losing... face (with) police officers who followed his murderous orders but are now realising that they, too, are accountable."

Duterte, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a second term as president, declared in August he would run for the vice-presidency.

But in a surprise announcement Saturday, he said he would retire – which was met with deep scepticism among analysts.

Duterte made a similar announcement in September 2015, saying he "will retire from public life for good", only to declare his presidential bid two months later.

Duterte has not named a successor, but indicated his daughter Sara would run alongside his longtime aide Senator Christopher Go.

Analysts say she would likely protect Duterte from criminal charges in the Philippines, and ICC prosecutors.

So far, she has denied plans to run for president.

Surveys have shown Sara Duterte, boxing great Manny Pacquiao and celebrity mayor Francisco Domagoso are the front runners, along with the son and namesake of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

We'll open fire to stop arms

FROM PAGE 1

MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

Momen said two lakh Rohingya came to Bangladesh in 1982 and they were repatriated through negotiations. "In 1992, another 2.53 lakh Rohingyas arrived and 2.36 lakh of them returned while others were taken away by UNHCR [relocated from Bangladesh]. This time [the last influx since August 2017] the number is bigger – 11 lakh."

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statement delivered on Monday, he said, "We are talking about repatriation. But several international agencies are talking of long-term rehabilitation. There has been no conflict in Rakhine for the last four years; yet they [agencies] do not speak about repatriation. All they [agencies] talk about is keeping them in good conditions and about their human rights here."

"They [agencies] are raising absurd demands like giving Rohingyas the right to buy land, giving them employment opportunities and proper schooling. But these are not

acceptable. Their [agencies'] intention is that if they [Rohingyas] stay here, their [agencies'] jobs will be there for an extended period. They are receiving a lot of money from around the world, and we don't know how that money is being spent," the minister said.

Regarding the recent murder of Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah in a Cox's Bazar camp, Momen said he was an educated man and his only goal was to return home.

"He used to say they have no future here and must go back home [Myanmar] for a better future. It's sad that he was killed. We want to investigate the incident to identify the killers and they must be punished."

Speaking to journalists at a press conference at the Gono Bhavan on Monday, PM Hasina said keeping Rohingyas in Bangladesh has apparently become a business for some organisations.

"I'm very sorry to say it seems that keeping Rohingyas has become a business to some organisations. If they [Rohingya] are not here, they [NGO officials] will lose jobs," she said.

Offshore links found in IPL teams

FROM PAGE 1

Express, whose latest in the series exposed the offshore links to the origins of the two IPL teams.

Internal documents of Panamanian corporate services firm Aleman, Cordero, Galindo & Lee Trust (BVI) or Alcolag, which set up entities in the British Virgin Islands, establish the ownership of the IPL franchisees either wholly or partly with Indians who are British citizens and are related to Lalit Modi, the architect of the money-spinning cricket tournament.

The documents reveal the links of Gaurav Burman, a fifth-generation scion of Dabur's Burman family and husband of Lalit Modi's stepdaughter Karima, with the Kings XI Punjab franchisee, reports The Indian Express.

And also that of Indian businessman in Nigeria, Suresh Chellaram, whose wife Kavita is the sister of Lalit Modi's late wife Minal, with the Rajasthan Royals franchisee.

It was not just the investment by offshore entities in franchisees that raised eyebrows after the IPL was founded in 2008.

It was a larger tussle between the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Modi who had suddenly emerged as a parallel power centre and was allegedly routing investments into these franchisees through people

close to him.

Burman, according to Alcolag documents, had lent \$2 million to Bantree International, a British Virgin Island company, for the "purpose of making a shareholder loan" to its Mauritian subsidiary Colway Investments.

Colway, in turn, was a shareholder in KPH Dream Cricket, the owners of Kings XI Punjab.

Financial statements of KPH Dream Cricket for 2008-09 submitted to the Registrar of Companies showed that Colway held 4,47,700 shares (acquired at a premium of Rs 104.27 each for a total consideration of Rs 5.11 crore) in the franchisee, reports The Indian Express.

Contacted by The Indian Express, Burman denied any wrongdoing.

"Everything to do with KPH Kings XI was thoroughly investigated by the BCCI and the Enforcement Directorate. The BCCI had actually terminated our franchise. We went to court and won that case. Our franchise was restored," he said.

Alcolag documents also reveal that Chellaram was the sole shareholder in Tresco International, a British Virgin Islands company, which in turn held 44.15 per cent in EM Sporting Holdings, a Mauritian company, the owner of Royal Multisport.

Royal Multisport is the owner of Rajasthan Royals.

The latest financial statements for Royal Multisport for the year ending March 31, 2020 show that EM Sporting Holdings is the company's holding entity with near 100 percent shareholding, reports The Indian Express.

The Alcolag documents show that the ultimate beneficiary owners (UBOs) of Tresco were Chellaram's wife Kavita, son Aditya and daughter Amisha.

Contacted by The Indian Express, he confirmed that his wife and two children were the shareholders of Tresco when it was active.

"Tresco transferred its interest in the Rajasthan Royals prior to being wound up. Tresco made all relevant filings and disclosures in all relevant jurisdictions until its winding up," he said.

The UBOs – Burman and the three Chellaram family members – of the two offshore entities Bantree and Tresco respectively are British citizens.

Burman's UK address, the country's land registry shows, is a freehold property owned by Elephant Services, another British Virgin Islands company, since March 15, 2010. He is the UBO of Elephant Services, according to Alcolag records.