

# Air pollution is an existential threat for us. We must act.



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AHMAD KAMRUZZAMAN MAJUMDER

EVERY year, the Economist Intelligence Unit publishes a list of liveable cities in the world, where Dhaka is inevitably placed near the bottom. Air pollution is one of the major reasons ruining Dhaka’s prospect as a liveable city. It is also one of the issues we’ve struggled to deal with for a long time. So, what makes Dhaka’s air so polluted?

According to the Department of Environment, brick kilns are responsible for 58 percent of Dhaka’s air pollution. Another major source of pollution is dust from continuous road digging as well as unplanned and uncoordinated construction works. Throughout the year, roads are dug in different parts of the city, which often remain in that state for extended periods of time. This is exacerbated by the many construction projects that are underway. Old, obsolete vehicles producing black fumes as well as heavy traffic jams across the city are equally responsible for its poor air quality. Indoor air pollution, particularly through the use of wood or coal stoves in slum areas, has also been identified as a health threat.

If we look at the bigger picture, we will understand that what’s happening in Dhaka is not unique; other major cities and districts are also susceptible to the air pollution. According to the Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Study (CAPS), the highest level of pollution has been observed in Gazipur district, followed by Dhaka and Narayanganj. Only 10 districts across Bangladesh have good air quality, while 36 districts have moderate levels of air pollution and 18 districts have high levels of air pollution.

After CAPS analysed the US Embassy AirNow data from 2017 to 2021, it

has been found that the average air pollution increased by 9.8 percent in 2021, compared to 2020. It has been also found that, in the last six years in Dhaka, residents got only 38 days of good air. For 510 days, they got moderate air, alongside 577 days of sensitive air (which is harmful for people with respiratory issues, children and pregnant women). During the same period, there were 443 days of unhealthy air, 385 days of very unhealthy air, and 37 days of extremely unhealthy or hazardous air.

On November 15, 2019, the High Court issued a directive asking the two city corporations of Dhaka to spray water over different roads twice a day and to cordon off construction sites. Again, on February 15, 2022, the HC directed the authorities concerned to identify and make a list of the main activities responsible for air pollution across the country. The HC also asked the authorities to prepare a time-bound mitigation plan to install Continuous Air Monitoring Stations (CAMS) in appropriate places, introduce a system to save people from exposure to unhealthy air, and also asked them to develop an action plan about switching to substitutes for baked bricks and to submit a report to the HC within four months. We don’t know what the government did in response, but it surely wasn’t enough to reduce air pollution.

We need to understand that to effectively control air pollution, everyone, from individuals to institutions, has to work together in an inclusive, scientific, and coordinated manner. The importance of awareness cannot be overestimated. We have entered an era when facemasks should be used not just for protection from the coronavirus, but from poor air as well. Babies, elderly people, sick people and pregnant women need to be especially careful.

Water-spraying in the streets at least twice a day, in the morning and the afternoon, should be a regular practice. The city corporations can also ask building owners to spray water on the streets in front of their respective



ILLUSTRATION: FAHIM ANZOOM RUMMAN

buildings every day. In order to avoid wasting water, they could reuse the water expelled by air conditioners (AC) for this purpose. More than three lakh ACs are used in Dhaka city. An AC with the capacity of a ton produces at least three litres of water every two to three hours as a by-product.

Additionally, all construction sites should be fenced off and construction materials should be covered during transportation. Vehicles without fitness must be removed from the streets. Since traffic jam is a major source of air pollution, we must find innovative ways

to control it and reduce the number of automobiles plying our streets. Also, air pollution forecasting should be introduced, and suction trucks can be used to collect dust from the roads.

In addition, construction works need to be better coordinated and better timed (for example, allowing work only at night in the busiest of areas). A service company may be allowed to dig as many roads at once as they can in two or three days. Moreover, advanced technologies have to be used in the brick kilns. As an alternative to baked bricks, the use of blocks can be gradually increased. And, the Clean Air Act 2019 must be enacted as soon as possible.

Among other things that we can do are: further developing the public transport system and limiting the use of private vehicles; developing a proper waste management system including using “incinerators” so that energy can be generated from waste; considering artificial rain in the dry season, especially where the air is particularly hazardous; ensuring the use of renewable fuels; ensuring proper management of electronic products and car batteries; and planting lots of trees across the city.

People should be encouraged to do roof-gardening. The annual budget allocation of the Ministry of Environment needs to be increased to create environmental awareness. An environmental officer has to be appointed in every upazila, and to ensure this, the position of an environmental cadre can be included in the Public Service Commission. Above all, arranging more information-based programmes on air pollution in various media can further raise public awareness of the issue as well as create pressure on the competent authorities to act properly.

If we make a serious effort to prevent air pollution, we can leave behind a liveable city for the next generation. This will of course increase people’s average life expectancy, but more importantly, it will guarantee healthier living for us all.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Filth on the roads

I was really embarrassed to read my uncle’s post on social media, where he wrote that his trip to Bangladesh was a great one but he didn’t like the state of the drainage system and the roads of some cities. It made me feel bad thinking of the impression a foreigner must have about my country.


We can’t always blame the authorities because it is our lack of consciousness which also causes pollution. We don’t think twice before throwing a wrapper into an open drain. In Dinajpur, there are places where people have left their

houses due to the failed drainage system. Dirty water and filth come out of those drains and flow into the roads. As a result, the roads are damaged and unusable. The auto-rickshaw drivers also don’t want to cross those roads. Therefore, better disposal systems should be put into place, and we should also be careful about what to dispose of and where—or else we will cause others to always get a bad impression about our beautiful country.

Neha Sabnam, Dinajpur



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EOI Ref. No. RAKUB/HO/ICTD-106/2021-2022/896

Date: 29.03.2022

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)**  
Tenders are hereby invited under the provisions of the Public Procurement Rules-2008 (with latest amendments) for the Selection of Information Security Service Providing Firm for ISO 27001 Consultancy, Implementation and Certification for IT System of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank under the terms and conditions outlined below and detailed in the Tender Document:

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
01. Ministry/Division	Financial Institutions Division.			
02. Agency	Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank.			
03. Procuring entity name	Deputy General Manager (DGM).			
04. Title of Service	ISO 27001 Certification Consultation & Certification for Bank and Cyber Security Capacity Building of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank.			
05. Procuring entity district	Rajshahi.			
06. Expression of Interest for Selection of	Information Security and IT Auditing Service Providing Firm (Time Based).			
07. EOI Ref. No.	RAKUB/HO/ICTD-106/2021-2022/896			
08. Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	29/03/2022			
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>				
09. Procurement sub-method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).			
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>				
10. Budget and source of funds	Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank's own source of funds.			
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>				
11. EOI closing date and time	17/04/2022			
<b>INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT</b>				
12. Brief description of assignment	1. Submit a work plan on the basis of TORs within 10 working days of joining and provide monthly written progress report, in addition to final report. 2. Review of existing network diagram, data flow diagram and perform network segmentation testing as required by ISO. 3. Submission of all testing tools generated logs and test results in raw and processed format in electronic media. ...Detailed in TOR ( <a href="http://www.rakub.org.bd">www.rakub.org.bd</a> )			
13. Experience, resource & delivery capacity required	<b>The following minimum experience, resources &amp; delivery capacity are required:</b> 1. Should have minimum five (05) years overall business experience of the consulting firm. 2. a. Consulting firm must have registered office in Bangladesh. 3. Should have satisfactory experience of providing ISO certification services to at least two (02) organizations (banks/financial institutions) in last five (05) years. ...Detailed in TOR ( <a href="http://www.rakub.org.bd">www.rakub.org.bd</a> )			
14. Other details (if applicable)	No data information will be allowed to be taken outside bank in any form.			
15. Association with foreign firm is	Encouraged.			
<b>Time Frame</b>				
16. Ref. No.	Phasing of services	Location	Indicative start data (month/year)	Indicative completion date (month/year)
17. Onsite Service: ISO 27001 Scope optimization, Capacity Building, Pre Audit and Gap Assessment.	Phase-1	Rajshahi	Duration: 09 weeks	
18. Onsite service: Gap Remediation & Review of ICT related Policies/procedures, etc.	Phase-2	Rajshahi	Duration: 28 weeks	
...Detailed in TOR ( <a href="http://www.rakub.org.bd">www.rakub.org.bd</a> )				
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>				
22. Name of the official inviting EOI	Md. Abul Kalam.			
23. Designation	Deputy General Manager.			
24. Address	ICT Department, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Head Office, 272, Banalata C/A, Airport Road, Rajshahi.			
25. Contact	Tel: 0247-860054, Cell: 01729-282197. E-mail: <a href="mailto:dgmict@rakub.org.bd">dgmict@rakub.org.bd</a>			
Appropriate authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs				
GD-605				
Md. Abul Kalam Deputy General Manager				

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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12 Memorably concise  
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21 Vine parts  
22 Ranges  
23 "Great idea!"  
24 Student  
25 Zesty flavor  
27 Decapitate  
29 Rich cake  
30 Like poe tales  
31 Catcher  
Castro  
32 Get to one's feet  
36 Purpose

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

D E S I R E S A I D  
A V E N U E N I C E  
M A R C E L O R E S  
E D G E S M U L T I  
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