

Air more toxic than ever

Reveals CPD report



PM (particulate matter) is the sum of all solid and liquid particles suspended in air, many of which are hazardous. This complex mixture includes both organic and inorganic particles, such as dust, pollen, soot, smoke, and toxic gases.

- Air pollution now more lethal due to increase in PM 2.5
- PM 2.5 increased 23pc in last 24 years
- Air pollution is 15 times higher than WHO guideline
- Air quality worsened in last 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air quality of Bangladesh is now more deadly than before as concentration of Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) saw a rise by 11.8 percent in the past 24 years from 1995 to 2019, reveals a study.

Particulate matter is the sum of all solid and liquid particles suspended in air, many of which are hazardous. This complex mixture includes both organic and inorganic particles, such as dust, pollen, soot, smoke, and toxic gases.

The accumulation of PM 2.5 rose to 63.4 microgram per cubic meter from 51.6 microgram per meter during this time, the secondary data analysis shows.

As per Bangladesh National Air Quality Standard, the safe level of concentration of PM 2.5 is 15 microgram per meter, while its 50 micrograms for PM 10.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) came up with the report after analysing secondary information as part of their broader research titled “CPD Green City Initiative” in a press conference yesterday.

Syed Yusuf Sadaat, research fellow of CPD who compiled the secondary data, informed that since 1995, PM 2.5 increased by an overwhelming margin in the last 24 years, while the fastest rise was seen since 2015.



“PM 2.5 was found to be 70.7 microgram per cubic meter in 2015. Four years down the line, it was calculated to be 80.4 microgram per cubic meter,” he said, adding that PM 10 also saw an increase from 126.5 microgram per cubic meter to 145.6 microgram per cubic meter during the same period.

Brick Kilns, vehicles, coal-fired plants and construction materials are the main sources of air pollution, the analysis added.

As per World Bank data, around 200,000 people die in Bangladesh from air pollution related diseases every year. According to WHO, air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year.

BNP chair's adviser Sabih Uddin dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson's advisory council member and former secretary Sabih Uddin Ahmed died yesterday at a hospital in the capital. He was 76.

Sabih Uddin, who had been undergoing treatment at United Hospital after suffering a brain stroke, breathed his last around 7:35am, BNP media cell member Sayrul Kabir Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was suffering from brain stroke since 2017 and became inactive in politics. Sayrul said Sabih Uddin's janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Esha prayers today and then he will be buried in Banani graveyard.

Sabih Uddin completed his graduation in economics at Dhaka University and joined the Pakistan Civil Service. After independence, he served as the information officer at different ministries.

He served as the private secretary to then prime minister Khaleda Zia in 1991. Later he returned to the information cadre.

In 2001, Sabih Uddin Ahmed joined the environment ministry as secretary. Later, he was

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Climate cost to get TOO COSTLY

Could reach 4pc of country's GDP by 2050, projects WB report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If carbon dioxide emissions continue unabated throughout the 21st century, the costs from riverine flood damages and decreased agricultural and worker productivity due to the temperature increase will go up to 4 percent of the country's GDP per year by 2050, according to a new report by the World Bank.

Currently, (2023) the cost is about 0.5 percent of GDP per year.

If the emissions start declining by approximately 2045 and remain fairly constant for the next 50 years, then the cost can be capped at 2 percent.

“Economic loss from flooding is anticipated to be severe,” said the report, titled “Bangladesh Country Climate and Development Report”, released by the WB yesterday.

Current heat stress patterns are set to increase in severity, and extreme rainfall events are also likely to increase in magnitude.

“Rainfall volume during extremely wet

days and the frequency with which rainfalls occur are set to substantially increase,” said the report. “This is especially the case in the northern divisions that are already facing the most severe precipitation events,” it added.

“Areas with a historical pattern of a large number of consecutive dry days each year -- mainly the western divisions -- will experience further increases in short-term dry episodes,” said the report.

The annual cost of environmental health effects was estimated to be Tk 4.4 trillion in 2019, equivalent to 17.3 percent of the GDP, as calculated by the WB.

“Most of the population is exposed to high ambient concentrations of PM2.5, which contains Black Carbon. Higher drinking water salinity from rising sea levels will increase the prevalence of diarrhoea and cardiovascular diseases,” said the report.

The World Bank estimated that up until 2030, Bangladesh will have to invest a minimum of

\$32.5 billion and a maximum of \$143.7 billion in climate finance. This is between 3.28 and 7 percent of the GDP.

“Reaching these ambitious targets is challenging, with substantial reforms required to overcome longstanding domestic and foreign investment constraints,” said the report.

“The banking sector's capacity to provide financing and price risks is constrained by weak corporate and regulatory governance, related party lending and weak credit underwriting capacity, contributing to weak asset quality,” the report mentioned.

“Access to foreign borrowing is limited by a high level of foreign exchange restrictions.”

The WB report also said the government's flagship climate action plan -- Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 -- needs to be prioritised and financed.

“Although the majority of the top 20 ranked projects

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Five more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died while 873 were admitted to different hospitals in the last 24 hours till yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the total number of dengue cases rose to 38,024.

So far, 141 people have died of dengue this year.

Meanwhile, a total of 34,299 patients have already been released from hospitals while 3,584 are still undergoing treatment.

PRAYER TIMING
NOVEMBER 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:55	12:45	4:00	5:30	7:15
JAMAT 5:30	1:15	4:15	5:34	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Early flood warning can save lives

Speakers tell Practical Action Bangladesh, Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An effective early warning system for floods in the country is essential to save lives and reduce loss and damage, participants at a roundtable discussion said yesterday.

They said easily understandable warning messages could help vulnerable groups to take preventive measures, stressing the use of digital mediums such as app-based platforms and digital weatherboards at union digital centres.

Besides, they emphasised the involvement of community people in disseminating warning messages.

Practical Action Bangladesh and The Daily Star jointly organised the roundtable on “Effectiveness of Flood Early Warning System in Building Climate Resilience” at The Daily



Star Centre in the capital.

The participants said while Bangladesh has achieved success in an effective early warning system for cyclones, challenges remain in establishing such a mechanism for floods.

At present, flood forecasting and warning in Bangladesh are generated by Bangladesh Meteorological Department and

Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre under Bangladesh Water Development Board and disseminated in coordination with the Disaster Management department through multiple channels.

Addressing the event, Prof Towhida Rashid, chair of the meteorology department at Dhaka University, said early

warning messages should be based on forecasts and hence, the forecast system needs to be improved.

Due to climate change, the intensity and frequency of natural disasters have increased, she said, suggesting identifying flood risk zones by using advanced technology.

Shawkat Ara Begum, country director of Practical Action Bangladesh, said Bangladesh has been a disaster-prone country while the impact of climate change made people even more vulnerable in terms of such calamities.

Addressing as chief guest, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman said a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the Disaster Management Ministry and Melbourne University and

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Police have nothing to do with politics

New DMP chief tells first press briefing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly-appointed Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq yesterday said police have nothing to do with politics.

“Political parties will do politics. We do not have any headache about it [politics],” he said in his first press briefing at DMP media centre, two days after he took the charges.



The commissioner said, “Our work is to deal with law and order situation.”

“All political parties, except for the banned ones, will hold political rallies and processions.”

Police will help political parties until they get involved in criminal offences including torching and vandalising vehicles on the streets, he added.

The DMP chief also said Dhaka was not developed in a planned way and several mega projects are underway in the capital, which are the reasons behind the traffic jam.

He said he will work to reduce traffic jam in line with the experience, which he gained while working as additional commissioner of the traffic department in DMP earlier.

Besides, work will be done to prevent illegal parking on roads, he said. Responding to another question over controlling drug abuse, the DMP Commissioner said it cannot be stopped by simply stopping the supply; as long as there is a demand. He also stressed the need for controlling cybercrimes on a priority basis.

JP backtracks on decision, joins JS session

No assurance from Speaker yet on making GM Quader opposition leader, say sources

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party yesterday backtracked from its tougher stance to boycott parliament demanding that Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury makes JP Chairman GM Quader the leader of the opposition, dropping Raushan Ershad from the post.

JP said they joined the parliament session following the Speaker's assurance to make Quader the opposition leader.

However, sources at the Speaker's office said the Speaker did not give any assurance to the party in this regard.

The main opposition in parliament retreated from its position less than 24 hours since it announced to boycott parliament.

The main opposition in parliament retreated from its position less than 24 hours since it announced to boycott parliament.

JP Parliamentary Party (JPPP) on Sunday afternoon during a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban came up with the decision as the Speaker is yet to take any decision in this regard.

GM Quader is currently serving as the deputy leader of the opposition.

A top JP top leader told The Daily Star that the Speaker yesterday talked to GM Quader over the phone and assured him of settling the issue.

Meanwhile, JP also softened its tone as the JP faction loyal to the party's chief patron Raushan on Sunday night deferred its earlier declared programme to hold JP's 10th council on November 26.

Sources close to Raushan said the government higher-ups who were supporting the pro-Raushan faction against GM Quader, retracted from their stance due to the pro-Quader faction's tougher stance to boycott parliament.

AL higher-ups have allegedly been backing

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Ensure safety, at construction sites: High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said safety and security of people must be ensured at all the construction sites across the country.

“All concerned should remain cautious, and adequate necessary measures must be taken in order to avert any tragic and unwarranted accident like that of the collapse of a box girder of BRTA Gazipur Airport Project, which caused deaths of five people (on August 15).”

“The victims were rescued after a long time, which is alarming,” the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Ahmed Sohail said during hearing on a rule issued on August 17 following a writ petition.

The court said accidents may take place while a construction project is running, but adequate preventive measures must be taken and rescue operations must be conducted quickly to avoid the loss and damage, if any accident occurs there.

The HC bench made the comments after Road Transport and Highways Division placed a compliance report before it through its lawyers. The bench fixed November 8 for further hearing.