



CHECKING UNFIT, OUTDATED VEHICLES Govt failure lets air pollution rise



- Number of vehicles having no fitness clearance growing
- Govt backtracked on capping economic life of commercial vehicles
- BRTA does not have mechanism to test emissions of vehicles
- Number of CNG-run vehicles are decreasing

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

As residents of Dhaka city remain exposed to high levels of air pollution, some government actions are worsening the problem and putting people's lives at risk. When the government in August backtracked on the decision to cap the life of commercial vehicles, it basically allowed tens of thousands of decades-old vehicles to be on roads with engines that cause more pollution, experts say. Old vehicles and the ones with faulty

engines are the main polluters of air in the city, says Prof Abdus Salam, who teaches chemistry at Dhaka University. Besides, the authorities do not have the tools to check a vehicle's emissions, experts say. CNG (compressed natural gas) is cleaner than diesel and petrol. But the number of vehicles using CNG is falling due to its rising prices and a lack of incentive for choosing cleaner energy, say transport sector insiders.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

UNITY COUNCIL DEMO 'BCL, Jubo League men' swoop on protesters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Leaders and members of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council yesterday came under attack, allegedly by Jubo League and Chhatra League men, in Cumilla city's Nazrul Avenue area. The incident took place around 11:30am when the council brought out a procession protesting local lawmaker AKM Bahauddin Bahar's "disrespectful" remarks about Durga Puja. Council leaders claimed that at least three people were injured in the attack. They alleged that the attackers are supporters of the MP from Cumilla-6. Taposh Bakshi, general secretary of the council's Cumilla district unit, said

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Veteran batter Mushfiqur Rahim plays a rising delivery through the off-side during Bangladesh's World Cup fixture against New Zealand at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



'Where do we go?' Gazans ask after 24-hour evacuation ultimatum; countries urge Israel to hold off ground assault

AGENCIES

Israel yesterday issued a 24-hour ultimatum to around 1.1 million Gazans living in the north of the Palestinian territory to move to the south. With Israel expected to launch a ground offensive, Gaza looks set to become the stage for a deadly, gruelling and very long military operation. While thousands of panicked Gazans came out on the streets to head towards the Egypt border in the south, most of the 1.1 million refused to leave. For them, there is simply nowhere to go. "Where to go?" asked Umm Hossam, a resident of Gaza City. "How long will the strikes and death last? We have no homes left, every area of Gaza is under threat,"

- Ground attack on Gaza would be unacceptable: Putin
- US must 'control' Israel to avert regional war: Iran
- Israeli fire kills 9 in West Bank
- Evacuation order death sentence for patients: WHO
- More than 423,000 people displaced in Gaza: UN

said the 29-year-old, her face streaked with tears. "We call on Arab countries to protect us. Where are the Arabs? Enough! Enough!" she cried. The majority of 2.5 million Gazans

have been boxed into the small territory under a strict air, land and sea blockade imposed by Israel since 2006. After gunmen from Hamas -- which has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007 -- stormed across the border into Israel on Saturday, killing more than 1,300 people, Israel has imposed a "complete siege" on Gaza, cutting off all water, electricity and food supplies. Israel has responded with the most intensive air strikes of its 75-year conflict with the Palestinians. Gaza authorities say 1,799 people have been killed, including 580 children. In the occupied West Bank, at least nine Palestinians were killed yesterday by Israeli fire during protests supporting Gaza, taking the toll there to 44 since Saturday, the health ministry said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Shakib injury scare in heavy defeat

AFP, Chennai

Bangladesh were potentially handed a double blow on Friday as the Tigers saw skipper Shakib Al Hasan walk off the field with an injury in their heavy eight-wicket defeat against New Zealand at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday. Shakib strained his left quad while batting and could not field till the end of the game. He was taken for a scan. "Shakib has gone for a scan. So, we will know more [about it] after that," said Bangladesh batter Najmul Hossain Shanto on Shakib's injury during the post-match presentation ceremony. Meanwhile, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson marked his return to the World Cup with an undefeated 78 but the Kiwi captain also saw his involvement

in the game cut short due to an injury. Chasing 246 to win, Williamson, playing his first ODI since January after being sidelined due to a knee injury, had reached his 43rd fifty in the format off 81 balls. He moved on to 78 with eight fours and a six when he had to call it quits after a throw from the deep rapped him painfully on the glove. But New Zealand comfortably wrapped up their third win with 43 balls to spare. Williamson had put on a second-wicket stand of 80 with opener Devon Conway (45) and then 108 with Daryl Mitchell who scored an unbeaten 89. Earlier, Mushfiqur Rahim top-scored for the Tigers with a 75-ball 66 to lead Bangladesh to 245-9 while veteran Black Caps fast bowler Trent Boult claimed a 200th one-day international wicket.



Let the drums roll

KHALID HOSSAIN

As the much-anticipated World Cup clash between



India and Pakistan unfolds in Ahmedabad today, cricket fans, regardless of their allegiances, are poised to savour every sumptuous bit of action. No other cricketing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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