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পিপলস পূবালী পেনশন স্কীম

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Effective steps soon to curb air pollution

Says environment minister

UNB, Dhaka

Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said the government would take effective steps to control air pollution and protect public health.

"Legal action will be taken against brick kiln owners responsible for air pollution," he said at a meeting in his ministry.

The new environment minister said work would be done maintaining coordination among the relevant ministries and agencies to control air pollution in Dhaka. "Other factors responsible for air pollution will be scientifically controlled."

Saber was chairing the meeting held with the ministry officials and the Department of Environment on the process of issuing environmental clearance.



A car remains parked on a footpath near the capital's Jigatola yesterday morning, obstructing movement for pedestrians. Such scenes have become common in the capital with authorities often turning a blind eye to the menace.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DSCC to go tough on air polluters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation has decided to take stern action against air polluters.

The organisation has already issued an office order in this regard.

According to the signed official order by the Secretary of DSCC, it has been stated that personnel responsible for construction or maintenance activities within the jurisdiction of DSCC, including road excavation, various construction projects, and related development projects, will be individually held accountable for air pollution generated in water bodies.

This includes officials from responsible institutions, as outlined in the directive.

Meanwhile, Dhaka ranked second on the list of cities worldwide with the worst air quality, with an AQI index of 184, yesterday morning.

Dhaka's air was classified as "unhealthy", according to AQI.

India's Delhi and Kolkata, along with Pakistan's Lahore occupied the first, third and fourth spots on the list, with AQI scores of 261, 179 and 171 respectively.

Dhaka has long been grappling with air pollution issues. Its air quality usually turns unhealthy in winter and improves during the monsoon.

As per World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year, mainly due to increased mortality from stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and acute respiratory infections.

'They sold yaba posing as journals'

DNC arrests 6 in separate drives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Under the guise of media correspondents or grocery traders, narcotics dealers are smuggling Yaba and marijuana from neighbouring countries -- Myanmar and India -- to Bangladesh.

To avoid detection by law enforcement, these traffickers employ women as carriers and affix press stickers on vehicles.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) disclosed the findings following the arrest of six persons in two separate operations within the last 48 hours.

During a drive on Sunday evening in the capital's Ramna area, the DNC arrested Ershad Khan, 40, Monir Hossain, 37, and Mintu Mia, 52, and seized 4,400 pieces of yaba from their possession.

The DNC team at first faced resistance when attempting to check a car with a press sticker.

Two of the arrested individuals, Ershad and Mintu, falsely identified themselves as journalists, Md Mehedi Hasan, assistant director of the DNC (north), told The Daily Star.

"As we had specific intelligence, we interrogated, and the arrestees finally admitted to the narcotics trade," he said, adding the arrestees used to deliver yaba.

Mehedi said the arrestees had been smuggling yaba for the last year, and in every consignment, they used to bring in and sell eight to 10,000 pills.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Farming marijuana on 3.5-acre land

Over 30,000kg of the drug destroyed in Khagrachhari



PHOTO: COLLECTED

An aerial view of the vast marijuana farmland in Khagrachhari.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khagrachhari district police claimed to have seized and destroyed the largest-ever haul of marijuana, weighing approximately 30,250 kilogrammes, from the district's Guimara area yesterday.

The district police conducted a special drive in the remote hilly

area and seized the marijuana being cultivated on around 3.5 acres of land, Mukta Dhar, superintendent of police of the district, told The Daily Star yesterday.

She said the drive continued from 7:30am to 2:30pm on the day. However, no one was arrested during the drive.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Expressway to be completed by this year

Says Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday announced that the construction of Dhaka Elevated Expressway is set to be completed by this year.

He made the statement during a press briefing at the Setu Bhaban yesterday.

Quader informed that 50 percent of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway's construction work has already been completed. With traffic flow already operational from the Dhaka airport to Farmgate, the project is progressing swiftly.

Quader also criticised BNP leaders for their "nonsensical" statements.

He emphasised the importance of recognising the government's efforts in national development instead of harbouring envy over the country's prosperity.

Remove illegal structures from roads: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to remove all unauthorised markets, establishments and standing vehicles from the roads and highways across the country to ensure free movements of people and to submit a report to it in three months.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain why their inaction to ensure safe movement of citizens by removing such establishments and vehicles from the roads and highways should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries at the ministries of home; local government, rural development and cooperatives; road transport and bridges; inspector general of police; Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, chief of highway police have been made respondents to the rule which is returnable in four weeks.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Atabullah issued the order and rule following a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer SM Badrul Islam seeking necessary directives.

Petitioner's lawyer Sarwar Hossain said on an average 21 people are reportedly killed and 39 injured in road accidents every day and most of the accidents take place due to unauthorised establishments including markets and standing vehicles on the roads.

One more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more dengue patient died while 30 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths and cases this year rose to eight and 733 respectively, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 196 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, with 92 of them in Dhaka.

Among the total cases, 529 dengue patients have already been released.

Last year, the country witnessed 1,705 dengue-related deaths and a total of 321,179 reported cases.

5,024 killed on roads in 2023

Says BRTA report terming Jatri Kalyan Samity, WHO statistics 'exaggerated', 'unrealistic'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 14 people, on average, were killed per day in road accidents across the country last year, said a government report.

A total of 5,024 people were killed and 7,495 were injured in 5,495 road accidents during this period, according to the report of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Majumder disclosed the information in a press conference at its headquarters in the capital yesterday.

Some 7,837 motor vehicles were involved in these accidents.

Motorcycles ranked the top among these vehicles, causing 22.29 percent of those accidents.

On January 14, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare platform, released a report stating that over 7,902 people were killed in 6,261 road accidents last year.

Majumder termed the report "exaggerated" during yesterday's press conference.

"Confusion has been created among people over their (Jatri Kalyan Samity) report," he said.

On December 13 last year, WHO published a report titled "Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023" that claimed the number of "estimated deaths" in road accidents in Bangladesh was 31,578 in 2021.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



THE COLOURPLAY... Red, yellow, purple, orange -- petals in vibrant colours blossom at the DC park in Sitakunda as Chattogram prepares for its second Phul Utsab (flower festival). The photo was taken from the upazila's Faujdarhat area recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 17

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION