



DHAKA'S TOXIC AIR High levels of cancer-causing elements found

LEAD | ARSENIC | CADMIUM | COBALT

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The concentration of cancer-causing arsenic, lead and cadmium in Dhaka air is almost double the permissible limit set by the World Health Organization, a new study has found. Informal lead-acid battery and e-waste recycling industries, brick kilns contribute to higher concentration of the chemical elements, the study said. It also detected high concentration of cobalt, another element that can cause cancer, in the city's air.

Informal lead-acid battery and e-waste recycling industries, brick kilns contribute to the higher concentrations of chemical elements in Dhaka

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

"Dhaka is the only site where the combined carcinogenic risk exceeds the benchmark for both adults and children," says the study conducted in 27 different locations across the world



Traders encroach on the Dhaleshwari and keep huge piles of sand close to the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Expressway in Charkondolia of Keraniganj upazila, significantly narrowing the river there. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

JAMUNA RIVER Train to roll into new rail bridge in Dec

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway is going to get a big boost as Bangabandhu Railway Bridge over the Jamuna is likely to be opened in December this year.

The 4.8km long bridge, which would be the largest dedicated rail bridge of the country, is now fully visible as installation of all 49 spans were completed last month.

"Eighty-four percent work of the Tk 16,918.59 crore project has been done, and we hope to open the bridge in late December this year," Project Director Al Fatah Md Masudur told The Daily Star on Thursday.

He said they were now setting up tracks on the bridge and 50 percent of the work was done. Besides, installing signalling system and constructing platforms and buildings at two stations on the east and west sides of Bangabandhu bridge were in progress.

Besides, a gas pipeline on the bridge is being installed. "We hope all these works will be finished by early December," he added.

The dual-gauge double-track bridge is being built some 300 metres upstream of the Bangabandhu bridge, which has a single rail line.

Japan is funding 72 percent of the cost as soft loans. Two Japanese joint-venture firms are carrying out the main work of the project taken in 2016.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

UNGA backs Palestinian bid for membership

Recommends UNSC to 'reconsider the matter favourably'; US, Israel oppose the move

REUTERS, United Nations

The United Nations General Assembly yesterday backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognising it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council "reconsider

the matter favourably."

The vote by the 193-member General Assembly was a global survey of support for the Palestinian bid to become a full UN member -- a move that would effectively recognise a Palestinian state -- after the United States vetoed it in the

UN Security Council last month.

The assembly adopted a resolution yesterday with 143 votes in favour and nine against -- including the US and Israel -- while 25 countries abstained. It does not give the Palestinians full UN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Country to see another spell of heatwave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) predicts a spell of mild to moderate heatwave in the second half of May after the current pre-monsoon rains subside.

"We expect the heatwave to begin around May 16," said Bazlur Rashid, a meteorologist at BMD. "However, it will be milder than the severe heatwave we experienced in April."

The BMD considers temperatures above 36 degrees Celsius for at least two consecutive days as heatwaves.

Temperatures between 38 and 39.9 degrees Celsius are considered as moderate heatwaves while temperatures between 36 and 37.9 degrees Celsius are considered as mild heatwaves.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

'City tolls' now an easy way of extortion

DIPAN NANDY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Having driven his truck all the way from Chattogram, Kashem Mia reached Swamibagh around 1:00am on March 27, when a group of young men appeared on the road and waved desperately.

To Kashem, it appeared that the men needed help.

He stopped the truck and ended up paying Tk 70 "toll".

The men gave Kashem a receipt bearing the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) logo, and the truck started moving again.

However, there are no leases handed out by the DSCC to collect tolls from trucks in this particular area. In fact, trucks that enter the capital after 9:00pm have to leave by

6:00am the following day. The DSCC can only charge parking fees, and that too at two specific locations.

"Extortion in the name of collecting city tolls is a regular practice. If we do not pay the money, they beat us with rods and sticks," Kashem told these correspondents, who were present at the spot.

At least 60 cases were filed over illegal toll collection in 2023, say sources in police.

The correspondents witnessed similar instances of extortion at Kajla intersection, Gulistan, Tikatuli, Demra staff quarters, Kaptan Bazar, and Dolairpar, during a visit in the first week of April.

Hundreds of trucks and pick-up trucks cross these areas daily, and groups such as those seen in Swamibagh collect huge sums from the vehicles. This racket springs into

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

COMPLIMENTS

Mr. Mohammed Ayub Khan FCA, Managing Director of Debonair Group, was honored as a Commercially Important Person (CIP) by the Government of Bangladesh in 2022 for his remarkable contributions to the National Economy through exports in the Readymade Garments (RMG) sector.

On behalf of all the directors, officers, and employees of Debonair Family, we congratulate him on this significant achievement.

DEBONAIR GROUP



Pedestrians hurry across the rail lines as a train approaches near the Airport Railway Station in the capital yesterday. One tripping over could result in life-altering injuries or even death.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

প্রজ্ঞাপন নং- ২৬.০০.০০০০.১০৩.৪৮.০১৩.২২.৫৭, তারিখ : ২রা এপ্রিল, ২০২৪ ইং বাংলাদেশে বেসরকারি খাতে শিল্প স্থাপন, পণ্য উৎপাদন, কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টি এবং রপ্তানি আয় বৃদ্ধিসহ দেশের অর্থনীতিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রাখার স্বীকৃতিস্বরূপ একাধারে ৬ষ্ঠ বারের মতো সিআইপি পদক পেলেন **প্রমি এগ্রো ফুডস্ লিঃ** এর সম্মানিত চেয়ারম্যান ও ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক **জনাব মোঃ এনামুল হাসান খান** (সিআইপি)। **সিআইপি (রপ্তানি)** ২০২২ পদক তুলে দিচ্ছেন গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় বাণিজ্য প্রতিমন্ত্রী **জনাব আহসানুল ইসলাম টিটু**, এমপি।

প্রমি এগ্রো ফুডস্ লিঃ এর সকল কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীর পক্ষ থেকে **প্রাণঢালা শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।**