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AIR POLLUTION Govt launches action plan

UNB, Dhaka

The government developed a National Air Quality Management Action Plan for strategic actions to tackle the sources of air pollution, improve air monitoring, and enhance enforcement mechanisms, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.

It provides a roadmap for implementing stringent regulations and promoting cleaner technologies in industries, transportation, and urban development.

The adviser made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest during the launch of the action plan held at the Department of Environment in Dhaka.

She said the action plan is a part of Bangladesh's broader strategy to achieve sustainable environmental targets, with a focus on reducing the alarming levels of pollution that affect both rural and urban areas.

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Dhaka streets experienced severe gridlocks yesterday. However, the situation was further exacerbated due to a rally held by Ulama Mashayekh Bangladesh at the Suhrawardy Udyan. Due to the rally, traffic movement in the surrounding areas was severely disrupted. The photo was taken in the Karwan Bazar area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

COP 29 Civil society for ‘ambitious’ climate action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Climate Justice Alliance-Bangladesh, a coalition of 40 civil society organisations led by the Centre for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), has urged COP 29 to prioritise ambitious climate action, with a focus on the needs of Least Developed Countries.

In a position paper-sharing event titled “COP 29 Position Paper Unpacking and Sharing: Articulating CSOs’ Position Together,” held in Dhaka, the alliance called on COP 29 to adopt a 1.5°C-aligned, ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC-3) with adequate financial and technical support for vulnerable nations. The alliance also demanded a definitive timeline for phasing out fossil fuels, finalising Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and establishing a clear framework for a just transition.

Notable, 1.5°C aligned refers to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a target considered safer for reducing severe climate impacts.

Meanwhile, NDCs are individual countries’ climate action plans that set targets to cut emissions and are updated periodically to be more effective.

Besides, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement focuses on how countries can cooperate on emissions reductions, including through carbon markets and sharing resources.

The alliance’s recommendations included a standardised definition of climate finance, an ambitious

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Harassment of teacher protested in Satkhira

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human chain was formed yesterday in front of the Satkhira Press Club to condemn the alleged harassment of Shampa Goswami, acting headteacher of Kaliganj Mozahar Memorial Secondary School and executive director of the local NGO Prerona.

Speakers highlighted Goswami’s significant contributions to empowering women in remote areas through her work, which has created employment opportunities for 100 individuals and benefited over 10,000 women in the community.

Protesters claimed she is facing harassment due to her status as a religious minority. They said former Jatiyo Party

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LEAD POISONING AMONG CHILDREN Bangladesh ranks 4th globally Study says 35m children affected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh ranks fourth in the world for lead pollution affecting children, according to recent research by Unicef, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), and icddr.b.

As many as 35 million children have hazardous levels of lead in their blood, adds the study.

This data was presented yesterday at a national workshop jointly organised by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Unicef at the BICC auditorium in Dhaka, marking International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.

The event, titled “Stakeholders Workshop on Heavy Metal Source Identification Linked to MICS 2024-25 and Broader Perspective,” aimed to address lead

AT A GLANCE

- Districts surveyed 5
- Affected children 35m
- High lead levels in 100pc of children tested in 4 districts
- Exposure sources are air, water, soil, food, toys

contamination and explore urgent interventions.

Lead was detected in all 980 children tested across Khulna, Tangail, Patuakhali, and Sylhet, as well as in over 500 children in Dhaka. Of these, 40 percent in the four districts and 80 percent in Dhaka exceeded the World Health Organization’s safety threshold of 5 microgrammes per decilitre.

Experts at the workshop

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FB POST ON ISKCON Businessman taken into custody after mob attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police last night took a businessman into safe custody after a mob attacked and vandalised his shop on Hazari Lane in Chattogram over a Facebook post.

The man allegedly made a post in Facebook, criticising ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), a Hindu religious organisation. It sparked anger among the local Hindu community, said police and local sources.

During the operation to rescue the businessman, six officers suffered injuries, as the crowd hurled brick chunks and chemical (used to purify gold) at them.

At least five locals were injured when security

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BDR CARNAGE HC seeks govt explanation for not forming probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to constitute a committee headed by a retired judge of the Appellate Division to find out the real culprits and masterminds behind the BDR carnage.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debashish Roy Chowdhury issued the rule following a petition filed by two Supreme Court lawyers seeking its directive on the government to constitute a national independent committee to find out the criminals.

The court also ordered the home ministry to dispose of an application filed by the petitioners seeking the formation of such a committee in 10 days.

SC lawyers Md Tanvir Ahmed and Biplab Kumar Poddar submitted the petition as a public interest litigation on October 20, also praying to the HC to ask the authorities concerned to declare February 25 as “Shaheed Sena Dibos” as the massacre took place on February 25 and 26 in 2009.

UK medical team arrives to treat injured students

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A UK Emergency Medical Team, funded by the UK government, has arrived in Bangladesh to provide specialised medical treatment to students injured during the July-August 2024 protests.

“This deployment is taking place in response to a formal request for assistance from the Interim Government,” said a statement from the UK High Commission in Bangladesh yesterday.

The team consists of an orthopaedic surgeon, a physiotherapist and rehabilitation expert and a clinical coordinator.

They will be working at National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) from November 5 to 18. The clinical experts of this team have vast experience in treating patients in conflict-affected areas worldwide, the statement said.

Five held with illegal arms, ammunition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A syndicate in Noakhali had been storing various local and foreign weapons, according to a statement from the Police Headquarters (PHQ).

PHQ disclosed the information following the arrest of five suspects by the Noakhali district police early yesterday.

Police also recovered 17 local and foreign firearms, 277 rounds of bullets, and 12kg of hemp during the drive. The firearms include two locally made light guns.

Two pickup vans were also seized by police, said the statement.

The drive was conducted based on information that a criminal gang was trying to store a huge number of arms and ammunition to destabilise the Noakhali district, Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general of the PHQ, told The Daily Star.

Based on the information, the district police set up a checkpoint on the Noakhali-Feni regional highway on Monday night.

At the checkpoint, at around 1:00am early yesterday, police first arrested Anowar Hossain, 26, and recovered 12kg of cannabis from a pickup van.

Then around 1:30am, police stopped another pickup van and found ten locally made firearms hidden inside polythene, Abdullah-Al-Faruk, superintendent of police of Noakhali, told this newspaper.

Police arrested three – Badal Hossain, 21, Md Robin, 28, and Murad Hossain, 22 – from the pickup van.

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Using banned current nets, a man catches fish from a waterbody in the Chamaura Kandi area of Sylhet Sadar upazila yesterday. These gill nets, which traps even the smallest of the fish, are damaging the ecosystems of the waterbodies throughout the country.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR