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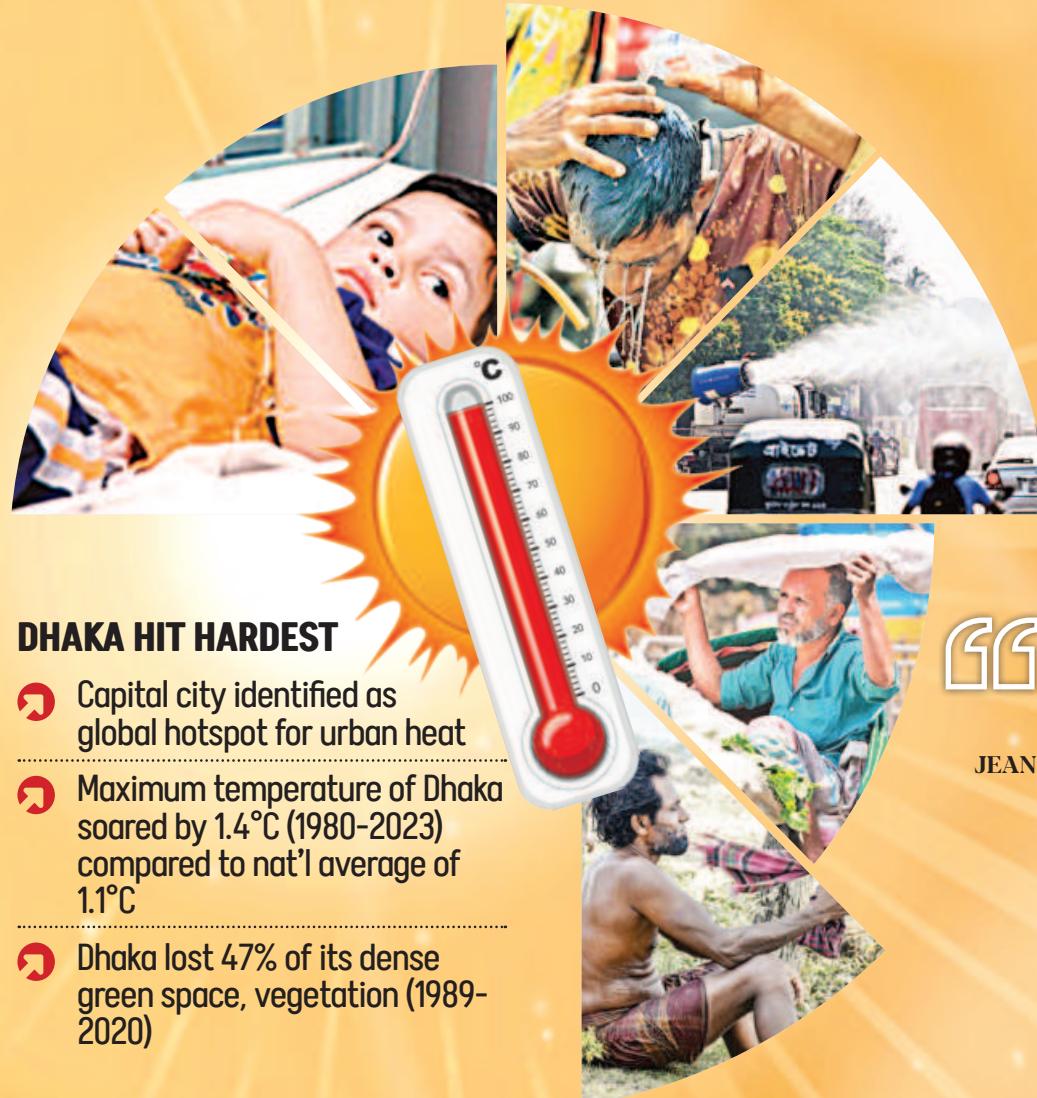
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EXTREME HEAT TOLL

- ➊ Bangladesh ranks 2nd in exposure to high temperatures
- ➋ Country lost estimated 250m work days in 2024
- ➌ Estimated economic losses up to \$1.78b

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

- ➊ Heat exhaustion highest among working population (36 to 65 years)
- ➋ 6% reported cough in summer; 3.3% in winter
- ➌ Diarrhoea reported by 4.4% in summer; 1.8% in winter
- ➍ Depression reported by 20% in summer; 16.2% in winter
- ➎ Anxiety reported by 10% in summer; 8.3% in winter

**DHAKA HIT HARDEST**

- ➊ Capital city identified as global hotspot for urban heat
- ➋ Maximum temperature of Dhaka soared by 1.4°C (1980-2023) compared to nat'l average of 1.1°C
- ➌ Dhaka lost 47% of its dense green space, vegetation (1989-2020)

Dhaka edges closer to boiling point

City's heat index 65% higher than national average, WB warns in first report on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rising temperatures in Bangladesh are driving a surge in heat-related illnesses, resulting in 250 million lost workdays and an economic cost of up to \$1.78 billion in 2024, according to a World Bank study released yesterday.

Since 1980, Bangladesh's maximum

to the environment, forest and climate change ministry, said the findings provided vital scientific validation. "Now we need to spell out concrete measures for each agency to act on."

As temperatures rise, Bangladeshis face growing health problems -- persistent cough, heat exhaustion, diarrhoea, depression, and anxiety -- according to the report, the first of its kind focusing entirely on Bangladesh.

The study, titled *An Unsustainable Life: The Impact of Heat on Health and the Economy of Bangladesh*, analysed temperature and humidity data from 1976 to 2023, alongside two rounds of household surveys covering more than 16,000 people between January and June last year.

"Extreme heat is not just a seasonal inconvenience. Its impact is far-reaching. As we see in Bangladesh, the rising temperature is affecting our health and productivity, and the country's prosperity."

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JEAN PESME, division director for Bangladesh and Bhutan at the World Bank

temperature has risen by 1.1°C, while the "feels like" temperature has jumped by 4.5°C. The country now ranks second globally for exposure to extreme heat.

During the same period, Dhaka's maximum temperature rose by 1.4°C, making the capital one of the world's most significant urban heat hotspots.

Speaking at the report's launch at a city hotel, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser

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When water becomes poison

Women bear brunt as Satkhira's salinity crosses WHO limit

TANGLA TASnim

Forty-five-year-old Shefali Bibi of Datinakhal village in Satkhira's Shyamnagar spends her mornings pulling fishing nets and collecting grass from a nearby pond. Constantly exposed to its saline water, which she also uses for bathing and household chores, she now suffers from a full body rash.

"I have no other option. I can't sleep at night from the itching. I try not to drink more than a glass of water even when I am thirsty. This shortage of water and the salinity are killing us day by day," she said.

Three years ago, Shefali underwent a uterine operation. Since then, she has been battling fatigue, vertigo, and loss of appetite -- conditions her doctors link to water quality.

The nearest source of drinking water is around three kilometres from her home. High salinity has made river and groundwater unusable, forcing families to rely on stored rainwater or travel long distances. A few water filters exist in the area, but women like Shefali spend hours queuing to collect water.

Hundreds of women face the same ordeal, often resorting to saline river water that worsens health



- ➊ Coastal salinity hits 20 million, women and children most affected
- ➋ Satkhira's water is up to 30x saltier than WHO's safe limit
- ➌ Women walk kilometres daily for water, losing time and risking harm
- ➍ Freshwater zones in the southwest may shrink by over 90%

problems.

Shefali's daughter-in-law Rina suffers from a waterborne skin disease, the infections so severe they nearly caused tissue to rot -- treatment far beyond the family's means.

Masuma, another resident, walks nearly two kilometres each day for drinking water, losing hours she could have spent earning.

Rising salinity in Bangladesh's southwest has become one of the gravest public health threats, and its impact falls hardest on women.

Participatory Research and Action Network (Praan), a non-profit organisation that works to combat poverty and promote sustainable development through participatory action research, reports that shrinking freshwater sources are pushing saltwater into rivers, ponds, and tube wells, turning once-safe water into a daily health hazard.

Women -- particularly those pregnant or breastfeeding -- are most exposed.

Beyond illness, salinity drives time poverty, lost

'Escaping from death towards death'

Many Palestinians refuse to leave as Gaza City 'burning' from Israeli all-out offensive; 106 killed

AGENCIES

Israel unleashed a long threatened ground assault on Gaza City yesterday, declaring "Gaza is burning" as Palestinians there described the most intense bombardment they had faced in two years of war.

An Israel Defence Forces official said ground troops were moving deeper into the enclave's main city, and that the number of soldiers would rise in the coming days to confront up to 3,000 Hamas combatants the IDF believes are still in the city.

"Gaza is burning," Defence Minister Israel Katz posted on X. "The IDF strikes with an iron fist at the terrorist infrastructure, and IDF soldiers are fighting bravely to create the conditions for the release of the hostages and the defeat of Hamas."

In launching the assault, Israel's government defied European leaders, who threatened sanctions and warnings from even some of Israel's own military commanders that it could be a costly mistake.

US President Donald Trump sided with Israel, telling reporters at the White



UN rights chief demands end to 'carnage', says 'evidence mounting' of 'genocide'

Countries, EU, slam 'reckless and appalling' Israeli move

UN investigators blame Israeli PM, president for genocide

House that Hamas would have "hell to pay" if it used hostages as human shields during the assault.

In the latest expression of international alarm, a United Nations Commission of Inquiry concluded that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza.

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI), which does not speak for the world body, found that "genocide is occurring in Gaza and is continuing to occur", commission chief Navi Pillay told AFP.

"The responsibility lies with the State of Israel."

The investigators said explicit statements by Israeli civilian and military authorities, along with the pattern of Israeli forces' conduct, "indicated that the genocidal acts were committed with intent to destroy... Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as a group".

The report concluded that Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog and former defence minister Yoav Gallant have "incited the commission of genocide".

Israel said it "categorically rejects this distorted and false report" and called for the "immediate abolition" of the COI.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that what is happening in Gaza was horrendous and

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A man carries the body of Palestinian girl Amal Zakot, who was killed in an Israeli strike on a house, in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BNP plans image clean-up before February polls

Countrywide campaign begins next month

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has decided to launch a countrywide campaign in mid-October to improve its public image, counter opposition narratives and reassure voters of its commitment to reforms ahead of the national election scheduled for February.

The campaign aims to build momentum for the election through door-to-door outreach after Durga Puja, to be celebrated from September 29 to October 2.

According to BNP leaders, they will carry out the campaign at the district, upazila, union, and ward levels through meetings, gatherings, and discussions.

The party, which has already prepared a list of possible MP candidates, will soon hold discussions with its allies before making an official announcement.

It is also preparing a draft list of female leaders who can win through direct votes. The party will soon begin preparing its election manifesto based on its 31-point agenda for state reforms.

Furthermore, the party may begin discussing seat sharing with allied political coalitions and parties, including the National Citizen Party (NCP).

These issues were discussed at a meeting of the Standing Committee, the highest policymaking body of the party,

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Jamaat wants PR system at least once

Party delegation tells EU team

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election under the proportional representation system is necessary to address the political parties' tendency to capture polling centres, said Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday.

"At least we want the PR system in the election for once. If it does not work, this system can be discarded in the following polls," Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher told reporters after the meeting with the visiting European parliament members.

Under the traditional system, elections were not held in a free and fair manner in the last 54 years.

"After so many killings and bloodshed, we are not seeing any change in the mindset of the political parties and the biggest examples behind this are the Duchs and Juchs elections."

Taher went on to cite what transpired at the Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union to further his point.

Without mentioning the name of any party, he said: "They participated in these

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