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Editorial

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Triple jeopardy for environment in brick fields

Adopt safer means to burn bricks

About 8,000 brick fields with half of them having no registration are presently operating in the country and nearly 33 per cent of the fuel used for the kilns derives from trees. Worse still, in some areas such as Cox's Bazar, the ratio of using logs is 100 per cent. As we know it, using logs for baking bricks is a gross violation of environmental laws. While we are not unmindful of the need for attaining self-sufficiency in producing bricks, we are truly worried at the trend of illegal use of logs for this what with its potential threats to environment. Therefore, we recommend immediate intervention on the part of the government to stop all illegal practices in this sector.

Fallout of using logs in this industry is manifold. The first and foremost of them is deforestation since most of the fields collect wood for consumption from forests, thus exposing local communities to various natural disasters and subsequent changes in the ecological balance. The most outdated method of producing bricks results in carbon emission which pollutes the air badly and contributes to global warming. To top it off, many fields use topsoil to mould bricks. This process is turning vast tracts of land sterile.

The present situation calls for an alternative means that is scientific as well as friendly to environment. Hence, we welcome the recently launched United Nations Development Programme that is seeking to introduce an environment-friendly technology known as Hybrid Hoffman Kiln method.

Effective implementation of the project, however, requires financial assistance to set up an institution that will provide training and technical know-how to the brick field owners. Therefore, the government should cooperate with the UNDP to procure more funds and make the alternative method popular to stakeholders.

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