

BNP wants 'congenial atmosphere' in JS

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee member Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday hinted that the opposition might return to parliament as part of their movement strategy.

"The government has made parliament dysfunctional. We are actively considering on going back to parliament. The issue is being discussed at the party level," he said.

Addressing a discussion organised by Sangskritik Ganotrantik Jote in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, he, however, said the government must ensure a congenial atmosphere so that the opposition could return to the House.

The discussion was on restoration of the caretaker government system.

The 15th session of the 9th parliament began on Wednesday amid boycott by the opposition BNP and its allies, including Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

The opposition have stayed away since walking out of parliament on March 29, the last sitting of the parliament's 12th session, after joining on March 18, ending a third round of boycott.

Through their March 18 return, the opposition deputies avoided losing their memberships in parliament on grounds of remaining absent for 90 consecutive sittings.

Under Article 67 (1) (b) of the constitution, a member of parliament shall vacate his seat if he is absent from parliament, without leave of parliament, for 90 consecutive sittings.

Moudud said the government was pushing the country towards a "civil war" by creating crisis and anarchy in a planned way.

"We want to tell Awami League that you will not benefit by doing this. The Awami League will be badly affected and vanished politically if another 1/11 is created.

"We will force the government to meet our demand within three months with strong action programmes. The programmes will gradually be harsher," he said.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will come up with fresh programmes at the BNP-led 18-party's November 28 grand rally in the capital, he added.

The opposition lawmakers opted for boycotting the House in phases. First, they started to keep away from House proceedings in June 2009 and continued the boycott till February 2010. They returned to parliament on February 10, 2010.

A fresh boycott began in June 2010 and it did not end until March 16, 2011. They then stormed out of parliament on March 24 and returned to the House on March 18 this year.



36th anniversary of Bhasani's death today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today is the 36th death anniversary of the self-educated, rural-based political firebrand Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani.

Born in Sirajganj in 1880, he dedicated his political career to safeguarding the rights and interests of the peasantry and the labouring classes.

Bhasani died in 1976.

Different organisations will place wreaths at his grave in Santosh of Tangail. Maulana Bhasani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Bhasani Academy, Bhasani Research Centre, Bhasani Foundation and other organisations have organised events at Santosh.

The programmes include milad mahfil, discussion, seminar, feeding of destitute, and photo exhibition.

Bhasani Foundation has organised a five-day Bhasani Mela on the MBSTU campus from November 13-17.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia gave separate messages paying their rich tributes to Maulana Bhasani, reports BSS.

Bamboo structures, erected to hold a fair marking Victory Day, which is around one month away, occupy Chittagong Outer Stadium of the port city. Different fairs are being held there on a regular basis, depriving locals from playing games at the stadium. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Brac to build 400 boat schools by 2014

METRO DESK

In association with a foreign initiative, Brac will build 400 boat schools for disadvantaged children in the remote flood plains of Bangladesh by 2014.

Educate A Child (EAC) is an initiative, recently launched by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the wife of the Emir of Qatar.

EAC will also provide funds for operation of Brac's 2,000 slum schools in urban areas. The announcement came at the World Innovation Summit on Education held in Doha, Qatar, on November 13-15, says a press release.

Brac Founder and Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed and senior officials Asif Saleh and Dr Sufiul Islam were invited to the summit.

On October 22, Sheikha Moza inaugurated a Brac boat school in Sunamganj and said the "floating school" was an innovative solution in the country's marshlands where flood and poverty made normal schooling almost impossible.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day international exposition on voice and data carrier businesses began in the capital yesterday to help share ideas on new concepts, innovations and opportunities in the fast-growing telecommunications industry.

The "South Asian Carriers Meet" exposition is the first of its kind in this region for telecom carriers, interconnect exchange, sub-sea and terrestrial cable operators, and data service providers.

About 285 delegates from 22 countries, including the UK, the USA, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the UAE, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Nepal and Bangladesh, are taking part in the event.

Posts and Telecommunications

International telecom exposition begins

Minister Shahara Khatun inaugurated the event at a city hotel.

With a population of 160 million, Bangladesh is a major source of migrant labour forces around the world, making the country the fourth largest emerging telecoms market with rising demand for voice, data related products and services.

Speaking at the event, Sunil Kanti Bose, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, said the event would offer opportunities for exchanging ideas, exploring business opportunities and creating a global network.

Shahara Khatun said the government is going ahead with its plan to award licences for 3G technology.

Windmill Advertising Ltd organised the event.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

A Tale of Two Treasures

In January this year, I went on a guided tour of Sundarban and became so enchanted with the place that I returned in February. Bangladeshis are justifiably proud of this mangrove reserve forest. But as I learned more about Sundarban, I became curious about how this treasure compares to beautiful places elsewhere.

America's oldest national park came to mind. I have spent a few days in Yellowstone, which is a popular park in America's National Park system. Visitors come here for its scenic beauty, geological phenomena and plentiful wildlife.

Sundarban and Yellowstone are very different places. Nonetheless I found it interesting to compare them.

Both places were designated "protected area" by their respective governments within four years of each other: Yellowstone in 1872 and Sundarban in 1876. Yellowstone has an area of 9000 sq km, while Sundarban has about 10000, out of which 6000 falls in Bangladesh.

Today, commercial exploitation such as logging, fishing, or hunting is prohibited in Yellowstone, though that was not so in the early days. However, fishing and collection of forest products such as honey and nipa palm is allowed in Sundarban with government permission, and thousands make their living from this. Still, despite tremendous population pressure, Bangladesh has, by and large, managed to preserve Sundarban.

Neither park is safe from natural disasters. A large wildfire destroyed many of Yellowstone's trees in 1988 and Cyclone Sidr hit Sundarban hard in 2007. However, the resilience of nature has been extraordinary in both places.

About 2.5 million people visit Yellowstone annually. For Sundarban, the number of annual tourists is far lower, probably around ten thousand.

Much of this difference has to do with access and a middle-class with disposable income.

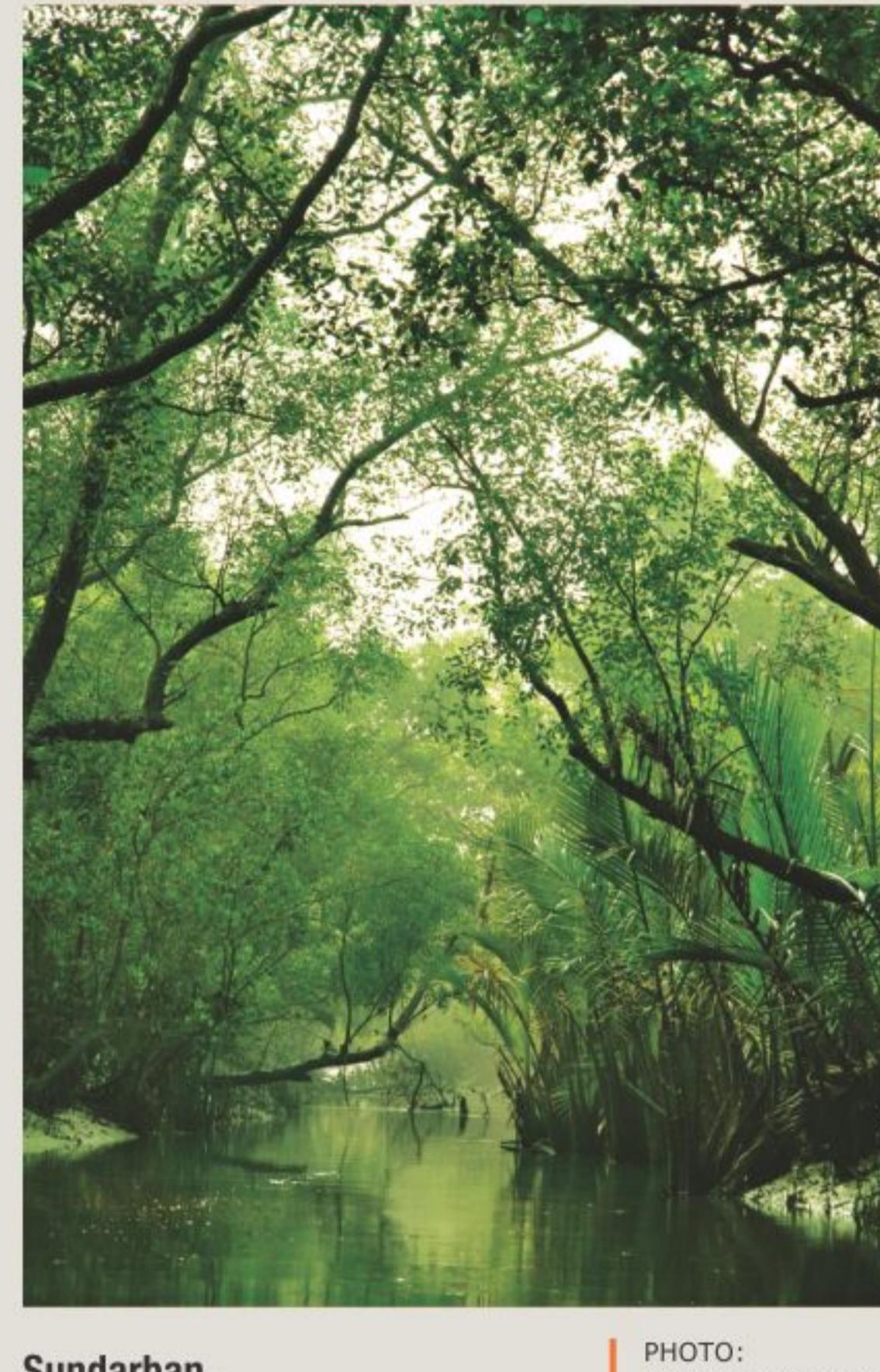
Yellowstone is crisscrossed by a network of roads and you can stay in hotels and campgrounds.

Sundarban was, for a long time, virtually inaccessible to the normal tourist because of its unfriendly terrain. Only in the last two decades has commercial tourism by boat become viable.

Incidentally, both places have wooden boardwalks to allow visitors to walk over inhospitable terrain.

How about biodiversity?

Sundarban has 42 species of mammals; Yellowstone has 67 species. Among birds, both



Sundarban.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

preserves have approximately 300 species. Sundarban has 35 varieties of reptiles while Yellowstone has six. Of course, Sundarban boasts the Royal Bengal Tiger; Yellowstone has bears.

Since a third of Sundarban is covered with water, there are many more fish species – about 120 – than Yellowstone, which has 16.

Sundarban has far fewer plant species than Yellowstone (300 vs. 1700 approximately.) The saline water in Sundarban restricts the varieties of plants that can grow.

Yellowstone has historical associations, including President Teddy Roosevelt who fished and hunted here and once went on a solo 18-mile walk. Sundarban, on the other hand, has a rich culture of myths and legends, such as that of Banbibi.

But here is a glaring difference.

If you go to amazon.com and search for books on Yellowstone, over 6000 titles come up. But searching for Sundarban, there are less than one hundred titles (and many of them are arcane and academic.)

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NEWS IN brief

FBCCI polls to be fair: Election board chief

UNB, Dhaka

The election to Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) was always free, fair and credible, and no head of any government in the past had intervened in the election process, the FBCCI election board chairman Prof M Ali Ashraf, MP, said yesterday.

"So far, all the FBCCI polls were held in free, fair and credible manner. There was no intervention from the head of any government in the polls," he told a function apparently rejecting the claim of many who thinks the government is trying to influence the polls.

The country's apex trade body arranged the function in the capital's Sonargaon Hotel to introduce the

Two die from electrocution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people died from electrocution in different incidents in Chittagong yesterday.

In an incident, construction worker Md Ratan, 20, was electrocuted as he came in contact with a live electric wire of a water pump while working at an under construction building near Bhaddarhat Kitchen Market area of Panchlaish Police Station around 11:45am.

Ratan was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where doctors declared him dead, police said.

Meanwhile, Dhonna Das, 50, died from electrocution when he was fixing an electric switch in his house in Sitakunda Upazila of Chittagong around 8:00am yesterday. He died at the CMCH.

Huge quantity of Yaba seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 1.44 lakh pieces of Yaba tablet worth around Tk 4.32 crore at Soagazi in Comilla last evening.

A team of BGB recovered the contraband items after conducting a drive near a CNG filling station on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway around 6:30pm, BGB sources said.

The tablets were smuggled from India to Bangladesh.

Worker falls to death in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker died while a garment worker was injured after falling from buildings in separate incidents in the capital yesterday.

In Dhanmondi, construction worker, Monu Miah, 30, was working on the fifth floor of an under-construction building, when he slipped and fell. He was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, in Kafrul, Chanchal Mollah, 22, fell through an adjacent window to the staircase in the ninth floor of Opex Fashion Ltd. He landed on electric wires first and then fell on the ground.

His right hand is burned and his condition was

DHAKA TODAY

Human chain

Sector Commanders' Forum will form a human chain protesting countrywide Jamaat-Shibir violence; Venue: Curzon Hall of Dhaka University and old High Court area; Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable

The Daily Prothom Alo will arrange a roundtable on child abduction; Venue: Prothom Alo office, Karwan Bazar; Time: 3:00pm.

Human chain

Bangabandhu Parishad will form a human chain protesting terrorism of Jamaat.

human chain in protest against the militancy activities of anti-liberation forces; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Bigyan Lekhak Sangbadik Forum will organise a seminar on Food Security; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

Human chain

Bangladesh Awami Sangskritik Forum will form a human chain protesting terrorism of Jamaat.

WEATHER TODAY

Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain with thundershowers accompanied by temporary or gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Night temperature may rise slightly over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and it may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:12pm and rises tomorrow at 6:15am.

Country's highest temperature 31.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra and lowest 13.3 degrees at Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	30.3	17.8	68	69
Chittagong	29.4	21.6	86	85
Rajshahi	30.4	15.7	63	73
Rangpur	28.8	17.0	59	73
Khulna	30.0	17.3	74	65
Barisal	30.8	17.2	79	87