


HEAVY RAIN LIKELY



WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:47pm and rises tomorrow at 5:11am.

Country's highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Srimangal and lowest 23.3 degrees at Sylhet.

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

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage			Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening		Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	27.5	74	76	Khulna	30.6	25.5	83	95
Chittagong	32.4	26.3	75	77	Barisal	31.6	26.4	79	76
Rajshahi	33.8	26.5	80	87	Sylhet	34.7	23.3	93	64
Rangpur	33.7	28.0	73	62	Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.0	71	77

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Dr. Shamim and two hibiscus. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Happiness is Hibiscus

Its beauty is loved all over the world. In my childhood Sylhet, this large, bright-red flower brightened many courtyard gardens. Hibiscus, known as *Joba* in Bangla, is a family of flowers with over 300 species. The most common one we see here is *hibiscus rosa-chinensis*. Although its exact origin is unknown, hibiscus probably originates in China, hence the "chinensis."

Some years ago, I saw dozens of multi-coloured hibiscus growing in the lawn of doctors Mariam Faruqui Shati and Shamim Ahmed. Shati is a gynaecologist and Shamim is a public health and nutrition expert; their two daughters are grown-up. In their current home, hibiscus plants are grown in planters. Recently, I visited with Shamim to talk about their hobby.

"Why are the two of you attracted to hibiscus?" I asked him.

"There are many things to like about this flower. Foremost for me is the brilliance of its colours. It blooms year-round. We also appreciate that it is easy to grow and maintain," he said.

Then he added, "Shati, my wife, has a soft corner for this flower, and we both enjoy nurturing the plant."

"How long have you enjoyed gardening and growing hibiscus?" I asked.

"We have grown hibiscus for 15-20 years, ever since we discovered our common interest in it. I have gardened much longer," he replied.

The couple collects hibiscus from far and wide at every opportunity. Shamim explains that hibiscus is easy to propagate. Snip off a cutting and plant it - soon it will become a flowering plant, growing up to six feet tall.

The flower appears in many Bangla poems and songs, but what about outside Bengal? I asked Shamim about its place in different cultures.

"While it is a part of Kali Puja here, hibiscus is also prized in many other countries that I have visited. For example, in some Pacific Islands, visitors are greeted with garlands of hibiscus. In other islands, it is used as an icon of courtship: eligible young women often wear a single hibiscus behind their ear in social functions. In the Philippines, I saw families using hibiscus plants to build fences separating their house from their neighbour's. It is the national flower of Malaysia, South Korea and Haiti," he said.

If that were not enough, the petals of hibiscus are made into a tea and drunk hot or cold. It is refreshing with a tart taste and contains vitamin C.

It was time to look at the flowers, so we stepped outside.

The plants were arranged in a long row of about fifty planters. Over a dozen flowers were blooming, including orange, pink, red and yellow hibiscus. The flowers were in various sizes, from a petit pink to a large orange flower six inches in diameter. Some were *jhumka joba*, a variation which has cascaded sets of petals organized like a chandelier. A pretty sight indeed!

"You should try growing them," said Shamim as I walked from planter to planter, admiring the flowers. When I bid goodbye, I knew that one day I will surely grow my own hibiscus plants.

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Jamaat, Shibir intimidate Rajshahi voters

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and ANWAR ALI, from Rajshahi

Incidents of intimidation took place in Jamaat-Shibir dominated areas of Rajshahi City Corporation yesterday, sending a sense of insecurity among voters, especially Hindus.

Around 10-12 Jamaat-Shibir activists threatened 30 Hindu women with dire consequences in Mirjapur Madhyapara area if BNP-Jamaat backed mayoral candidate Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul is defeated in the area.

"If pineapple (symbol of Bulbul) is lost, we will see you later," one of the women told The Daily Star quoting a Shibir activist.

"We will be around Islamia College centre at Binodpur to check if you are voting for pineapple," another Shibir man was quoted by her.

The Jamaat-Shibir men intercepted them when they were returning from Hindu Moitree Shingha Temple at Mirjapur around 12:30pm after Jamai Shasti prayer.

Separately, some unidentified men went to Budpara area early yesterday and commanded the cleaners to vote for pineapple.

Anil Kumar Saha, a Hindu leader of Budpara, said fear gripped many voters after the incident.

Mirjapur Madhyapara and Budpara, which fall under ward no. 30, are infested with Jamaat and Shibir cadres. The election office identified 10 voting centres in ward no. 29, 27 and 26 as risky. The three wards are stronghold of Jamaat-Shibir.

Officer-in-Charge of Motihar Police Station Ashit Kumar Ghosh said, "Sensing possible intimidation of Hindus, we are patrolling their residential areas frequently."

A foolproof security measure has been taken for today's poll. Apart from 1,760 police and 1,918 Ansar members, 42 teams comprising 450 Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel will patrol outside the voting centres. Six platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) are already working as the striking force. Another 19 teams, each led by an executive magistrate, will also guard the voting centres in the 30 wards.

Three persons, including Awami League-backed AHM Khairuzzaman Liton and independent runner Habibur Rahman, are contesting for the mayor post, 155 for 30 general councillor posts, and 66 women for 10 reserved councillor posts for female.

The election office set up 871 booths in 137 voting centres.

Jica always stood by Bangladesh Says Gowher Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi yesterday said Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) had greatly contributed to the development of Bangladesh and hoped that it would continue to do so.

Praising the Jica volunteers at the celebration of "Jica Volunteer 40th Anniversary in Bangladesh" at a hotel in the capital, he said the country had gone through good times and bad times in the last 40 years, and in these years, Jica stood by Bangladesh.

Senior representative of Jica's Dhaka office Akio Okamura said Jica would lend support for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's aims to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country.

Offering gratitude to the volunteers, PM's Education Adviser Prof Alauddin Ahmed said, "I pay my respect as you left your beloved family and friends and faced all hindrances for the welfare of this country."

The first batch of Jica volunteers arrived in Bangladesh in 1973. Since then 1,171 volunteers have worked in different sectors including agriculture, ICT, and environmental education of Bangladesh.

Road crashes kill seven

CITY DESK

Seven people were killed and 17 others injured in separate road accidents in the country on Thursday and yesterday.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports, two people were killed and 15 others injured when a bus of Shyamolima Paribahan collided head-on with a truck at Baniarchhara in Chakaria upazila yesterday.

The dead are the bus driver Oli Ahmed, 36, and the truck driver Jamal Hossain, 42. The injured passengers were admitted to different hospitals in Chakaria and Chittagong.

Meanwhile, Abu Bakar Siddik, 9, son of Mohibullah, died when a truck ran him over in Kalghar Bazar Station area of Ramu upazila.

Our Jessore correspondent adds, a couple was killed when a truck rammed their motorbike at Palbari in Jessore town yesterday. The victims are Abdul Karim, 40, and his wife Salma Begum, 32, of Jessore town.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports, Robiul Mia, 9, son of Abu Sayed Mia, died after a bus hit him at Kharera village in Kasba upazila on Thursday.

A Gazipur correspondent reports, an unidentified person was killed and two others were injured as two pick-up vans collided head-on at Hotapara in Gazipur Sadar upazila yesterday.

2 jailed for child marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A mobile court sentenced two persons, including the groom, to 15 days jail for arranging a child marriage at Dhubni village in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat on Thursday night.

The convicts are the groom Shafiqul Islam, 24, and his elder brother Safiyar Rahman, 28, of Baraipara village in the upazila.

Executive Magistrate Sarowar Hossain jailed the duo at the wedding ceremony of the 12-year-old girl. The bride was a class VI student of Goyeb Uddin Girls' High School.

Earlier, representatives of local NGO "Anchol" informed the matter to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

However, sensing presence of the court, the girl's parents and other family members managed to flee.

ASK wants civil society reps in selection committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a rights organisation, yesterday urged the Jatiya Sangsad Speaker to include representatives from civil society and human rights organisations in the selection committee for recruiting the chairman and members of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The tenure of the present chairman and members of NHRC will end on June 21.

Upon the recommendation of the seven-member selection committee headed by the JS Speaker, President Abdul Hamid will give appointment to the commission's posts.

In a statement signed by its Executive Director Sultana Kamal, the ASK also suggested that the tenure of NHRC's chairman and members be extended as existing three years' tenure was not enough to play effective role in protecting human rights. Referring to the "Paris Principle" as an international standard for forming human rights institution, the ASK expressed its dissatisfaction over the existing process of selecting and recruiting NHRC's chairman and members.

CPB demands arrest of perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Women Cell of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), at a human chain before the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanded immediate arrest of the culprits who raped and forcefully converted a 13-year-old girl to Islam.

Incidents of repression on women, especially those belonging to minority communities, are rising as the perpetrators are going unpunished in most cases, said CPB Central Committee Member Advocate Maksuda Akhter.

With the parliamentary election nearing, leading political parties are capitalising on religious sentiments, another reason behind the rise, she added.

The Hindu girl was abducted on her way home from school in Tongi on April 6 and, while being detained in Konabari of Cox's Bazar's Chakaria upazila for 55 days, was raped and converted to Islam.

Law enforcers rescued the girl on May 30 but could not arrest anybody so far in this connection.



The Department of Public Administration of Dhaka University brings out a celebratory procession on the campus yesterday, marking 40 years into the department's establishment.

Seven children drown in 5 districts

CITY DESK

Seven children drowned in separate incidents across the country on Thursday and yesterday.

Our Manikganj correspondent reports, two cousins drowned in a pond at Ichhail in Shivalaya upazila of Manikganj yesterday.

The dead are Ripon, 3, son of Selim Mia, and Abdullah, 5, son of Firoz Mia.

Our Pabna correspondent reports, two children drowned while bathing in a pond near Srikhola in Ullahpara municipality of Sirajganj yesterday.

The dead, Mim, 5, daughter of Sanwar Hossain, and Sadia, 7, were cousins.

Meanwhile, in Pabna, Mridul, 6, son of Sadir Hossain, died after he fell into a pond while playing on the bank at Bhoibanipur in Bhangura upazila on Thursday.

Our Bogra correspondent adds, Arafat Hossain, 2, son of Meherul Islam, drowned while taking a bath in a pond at Talpukur in Nandigram municipality of Bogra district on Thursday.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds, Arman, 8, son of Md Eskandar, drowned in a pond near his house at Sheikhpara in Raozan upazila of Chittagong on Thursday.

WAR CRIMES VERDICT VIOLENCE Bangladeshis in Australia worried


STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Australian Bangladeshi Community has expressed deep concern about the ongoing violence and atrocities committed by the anti-liberation forces linked to the verdicts of the trials of crimes against humanity.

It is also worried over "the rise of radical forces in Bangladesh" and said Hefajat-e Islam's 13-point demand was potentially pushing Bangladesh into the dark era, said a press release.

The community leaders met Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr at his Sydney office yesterday, and sought Australia's help for completing the war crimes trial. Selima Begum, Abdul Jalil Prabit Maitra, Shirajul Haque, Samir Sarkar and Abu Tariq of the Bangladeshi Community in Sydney attended the meeting.

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* প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে

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