

RAIN LIKELY



Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy to very heavy falls are also

likely at places over Rangpur, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions, Met Office said. Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:50pm and rises tomorrow at 5:15am.

Country's highest temperature 33.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.0 degrees at Teknaf. 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 30.4	26.5	87	94	Khulna 32.4	28.2	83	92
Chittagong 28.0	25.5	93	95	Barisal 31.2	26.5	86	96
Rajshahi 32.6	26.3	97	83	Sylhet 32.1	25.7	88	97
Rangpur 29.2	26.0	97	88	Cox's Bazar 27.3	25.0	80	96

Rain brings relief in Dhaka life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The city dwellers got a huge respite from the searing heat, which was sweeping across the capital for the last couple of weeks, with the start of rainfall yesterday morning. The Met office in Dhaka recorded 9mm rainfall in nine hours till 3:00pm yesterday. An official said heavy rainfall was occurring all throughout the country. The precipitation will continue for the next few days for active monsoon, he added. He said the level of highest temperature, which stood at 33 degrees Celsius in Dhaka on Thursday, came down to 30.4 degrees Celsius yesterday. Breathing a sigh of relief, Monir Hossain, a resident of Gendaria, said it was tormenting for the last couple of days to come out home in the daytime due to high temperature.



People wade through almost knee-deep water on the road in front of the capital's Shantinagar Bazar, which was submerged due to rain since yesterday morning. The rain brings a relief from scorching heat as well as miseries for the residents of the city, which is plagued with a poor drainage system.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

VAT applicable on SIM card sale: Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile telecom operators will have to pay value added tax (VAT) on the sale of SIM cards, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith. The levy would not supplant the Tk 300 SIM card tax already in place but rather work in conjunction with it, he told a meeting in the finance ministry on Thursday over resolving disputes over taxation issues. The meeting was attended by officials of National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) chairman. Muhith also said the NBR chairman was yet to receive a High Court order which directed the tax administrator to resolve issues with the mobile telecom operators concerning taxation of SIM card replacement sales. The NBR last year claimed Tk 3,100 crore as tax from SIM cards replaced by Grameenphone, Banglalink, Robi and Airtel over the rationale that the operators resold the SIM cards instead of replacing them, which the operators categorically deny. Muhith also said the country was lagging way behind due to the unavailability of 3G services while other countries had already started providing 4G services. Various disputes between the mobile telecom operators and the government, including the one over 15 percent VAT on 2G spectrum, were holding back the initiation of the 3G service, he said. He hoped that all pending court issues would be resolved before the 3G auction, scheduled for September 2. Muhith also said all taxes paid by the mobile telecom operators would be considered as "allowable expense". This option will help lower a bit the amount paid as corporate tax as the SIM card tax can be showed as expenditure, a Grameenphone official told The Daily Star. Grameenphone had also requested him to end the issues concerning Grameen Bank Inquiry Commission before the 3G auction, added Muhith.

Two BCL men hacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League of Sylhet Engineering College unit were hacked by unidentified men in Sylhet city's Baluchar-Arambag area yesterday. Sourav Hasan Himel, general secretary, and Nirmal Pal, organising secretary, of the college unit BCL were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. They suffered injuries in the legs and hands. BCL leaders accused Islami Chhatra Shibir activists for the assault. Himel and Nirmal, both third year honours students of computer science and engineering, were waylaid by men on three motor-bikes when the two were on their way in a rickshaw to appear in an examination at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. The attackers landed blows on them with machetes and hurried away.

Take action against river encroachers

Bapa urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday demanded that the government take legal action against river encroachers to bring the culprits to justice. They also urged the government to evict all illegal infrastructures built on the banks of rivers. They were addressing a press conference organised by Bapa at Dhaka Reporters Unity on findings of a report on Savar's Bangshi river. The leaders threatened of holding social agitation programmes across the country against river encroachers if the government fails to free the rivers under threat. Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the government must clarify whether they want to take stern action against the encroachers or not. "The encroachers of the rivers must be brought under trial as they are committing crimes against the environment, state and humanity," he added. Bapa Secretary General Abdul Matin said the government must complete the demarcation of the Bangshi river to save it from the clutches of encroachers. Influential industrialists, political party leaders and sand traders have already grabbed the Bangshi, which has become very narrow, he added. He urged the government to save the rivers following the guidelines of the High Court. Ataur Rahman, president of Savar River and Environment Protection Parishad, said it was impossible to term Bangladesh as a country of rivers as the rivers were dying in the hands of encroachers.

WB approves \$400m for embankment protection

CITY DESK

The World Bank has approved \$375 million in concessionary financing and \$25 million in grant to Bangladesh to increase the resilience of the coastal population to climate change induced flooding and other natural disasters. "Coastal Embankment Improvement Project" will upgrade the country's embankment system by increasing the area protected in polders from tidal flooding and frequent storm surges in six coastal districts, a press release said on Thursday. The project will rehabilitate 17 polders in Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Barguna, Patuakhali and Pirojpur. The rehabilitated polders would provide direct protection to the 7.6 lakh people living within the polder boundaries, said the release, adding that around 8.5 million people living in these six districts would also benefit through agricultural development, employment and food security. "Adaptation to increased risks from climate-induced weather events is essential for development in Bangladesh," said Johannes Zutt, WB's country director for Bangladesh and Nepal. "The project takes account of climate change induced sea level rise and increase in the intensity and frequency of tidal surges and floods while designing and climate-proofing the polders." The coastal zone spans over 580km of coastline in Bangladesh where 28 percent of the country's population reside. The credits from the International Development Association (IDA), the WB's concessionary arm, have 40 years to maturity with a 10-year grace period and carry a service charge of 0.75 percent.

TUMPA MURDER Alleged killer arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police arrested one Atiqul Islam, who allegedly killed a three-year-old girl after abduction, at Bhergajalia village in Galachipa upazila of Patuakhali on Thursday night. Tk 40,000 was also seized from Atiqul's possession, which he took from the victim's family as ransom, said Galachipa police. The kid Tumpa, daughter of Humayun Pada and Nupur Begum of Bhergajalia village, went missing on June 22. Police said Tumpa's parents were garment workers living in Dhaka and Tumpa lived with her grandmother Rasheda Begum at Bhergajalia. On June 22, Rasheda, along with her granddaughter, went to her ancestral house at Nimerhawla. There she visited a neighbour when Tumpa was sleeping. On return Rasheda couldn't find Tumpa. Police recovered her body on the night of June 25 from beside Rasheda's ancestral house.

AL men fell 20 roadside trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least 20 large roadside trees were cut down allegedly by ruling Awami League men at six villages of Lalmonirhat district's three upazilas yesterday. They also assaulted four villagers who protested the illegal felling of the trees at Panbari village in Patgram upazila, said locals. Seeking anonymity, officials at the district council, which owns the roadside trees, said the timber trees were worth at least Tk 5 lakh. They include four mahogany trees at Panabri village and two rain trees at Patgram-Jagotbar village of Patgram upazila, eight mahogany trees at Tongbhanga village and two trees at Nowdabash village of Hatibandha upazila, and three mahogany trees at Mohishkhocha village and a rain tree at Kamlabari village of Aditmari upazila.

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