

RAIN LIKELY

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately 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 6:40pm and rises tomorrow at 5:29am.**

Country's highest temperature 36.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.5 degrees at Rangamati. 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	33.4	27.2	77	60	Khulna	35.5	26.5	77	89
Chittagong	31.7	26.2	82	80	Barisal	32.5	26.5	76	76
Rajshahi	36.6	26.0	73	64	Sylhet	33.5	26.7	80	73
Rangpur	34.0	27.2	83	66	Cox's Bazar	31.0	25.5	80	89



Ratargul. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Ratargul

Ratargul is a forest in Gowainghat upazila near Sylhet town. It is special because it is a freshwater swamp forest whose trees are inundated by water, particularly during the monsoon. To get there from Sylhet, I started out towards the airport and turned right towards Salutikar Bazar. About twenty kilometres from Ambarkhana point, I reached a junction called Motorghat Bazaar. Here I took a steep right turn into a narrow but paved road. Travelling another eight or ten kilometres I reached the village of Eorattee. Looking north from Eorattee, beyond the green fields and the wide river, I could see the blue Khasi Hills in India, clouds parked at the top. The villagers here grow rice and various vegetables; they also raise ducks which bring a decent livelihood. Fishermen, a group distinct from the villagers, ply the various waterways in their small rowboats. The road through Eorattee – about a kilometre – took me to the river ghat. This road is unpaved and it is best to walk. Green rice fields on both sides are dotted with farmer's houses. I passed a temple and a mazar sitting next to each other. Reaching the river, I embarked an engine boat – arranged ahead of time – to take me into the forest. After travelling on the wide river for a few minutes, the boat took a right turn into a smaller channel. Approaching the forest I noticed the water body is dotted with solitary trees. The trees in Ratargul are mostly koros, jarul, borun and hijol, submerged in water that may be up to twenty feet

deep during monsoon. There are also smaller plants, particularly in shallow water and along the banks; vines and creepers cover most of them. In dense areas of the forest, the boat must navigate its way through tree trunks. The tree canopy covered me in these places. The twisted branches jutting from the water and reaching skyward create a surreal vista. Emerging from underneath the canopy, I travelled on open water dotted by individual trees until the next group of trees. The water was muddy and turgid, though I was told it swells more during flood years. From high up, I heard several birds calling, including the sweet whistle of a black-hooded oriole, but could not see them. Birds love showing off during spring when looking for a mate; during the rainy season they remain hidden. At about 500 acres, this forest is much smaller than Sundarban, but has its own charm. The water is highest during the rains and recedes during winter and spring. The best time to visit is June-September when the water levels are high and boats can easily maneuver in the water. Returning from Eorattee, I continued on the Gowainghat road and explore pretty spots along the way. However one needs to be careful of the stone-carrying trucks which travel on these roads. Numerous stone-related businesses were also evident, including several crushing facilities. Ratargul, administered by the Forest Department, has recently attained popularity as a tourist destination. It is an unusual and beautiful place to visit. www.facebook.com/tangents.ikabir

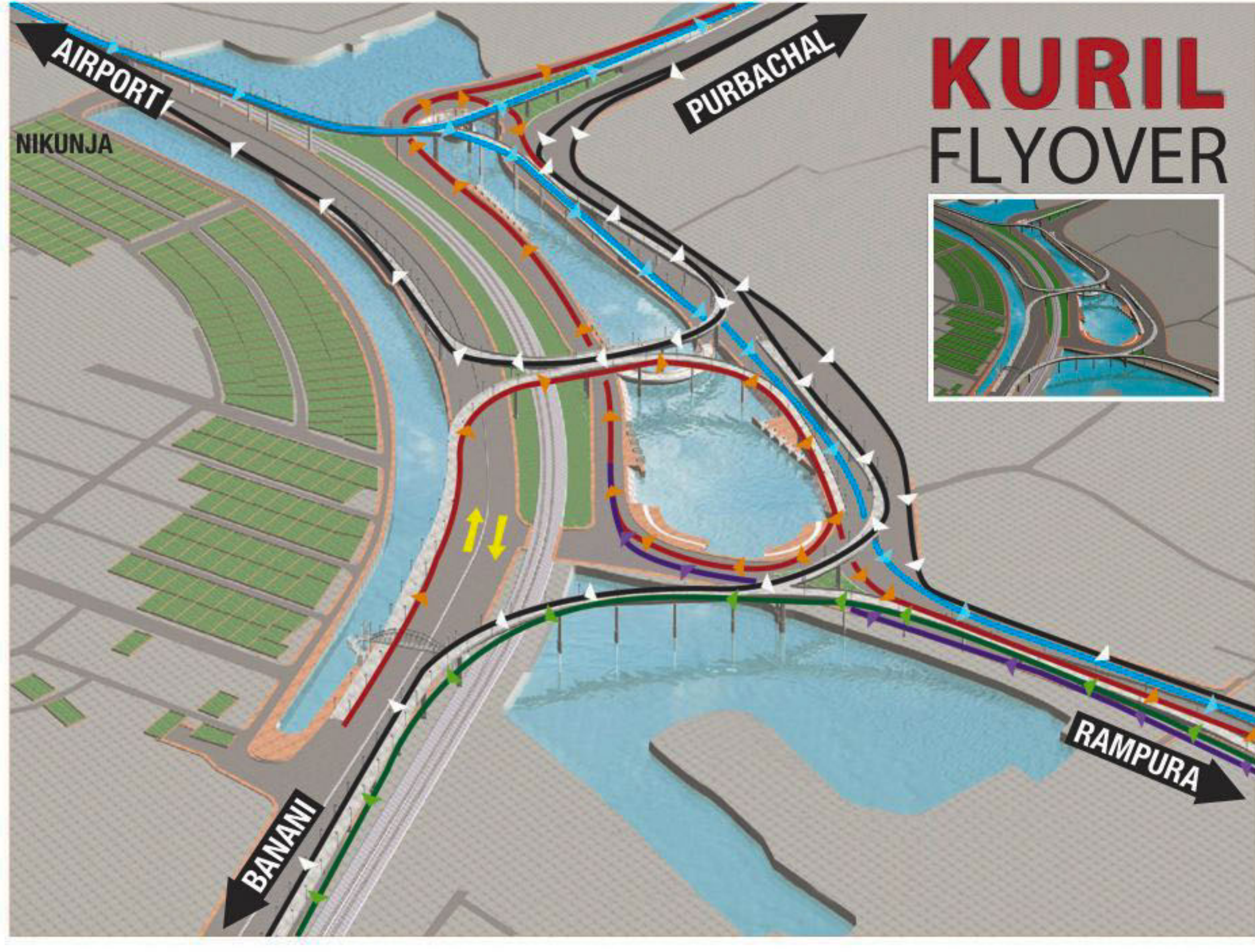
Kuril Flyover opens tomorrow

HELEMUL ALAM
The much-talked-about 3.1-kilometre Kuril Flyover will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tomorrow with hopes that traffic congestion in adjoining areas will be reduced to a great extent. The 8.9 metre wide and 14.6 metre high flyover comprises four sections providing uninterrupted connection among Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Nikunja, Banani, Rampura and Purbachal areas. According to a Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) estimate of 2007, around 1,57,000 vehicles coming from the five aforementioned areas crosses the Kuril intersection every day. At present, a level crossing at the intersection closes 98 times every day, halting traffic for a total of eight hours and creating around one-kilometre long tailbacks in the five directions, said a Rajuk assistant engineer. Preferring anonymity, he said the flyover would help in the uninterrupted movement of traffic, saving valuable time and fuel of commuters. By 2015, around 3,59,520 vehicles would be using the flyover every day, he added. Project Builders Limited, and China Major Bridge Engineering Corporation jointly built the flyover at a cost of Tk 306 crore, provided by Rajuk. The present government approved the project, initially estimated to cost Tk 153 crore, in March 2010 and it was scheduled to be opened to traffic in December 2012. The opening was deferred two more times, in March and June, while the costs doubled which Rajuk blame on frequent hartals and failure to acquire land on time. The flyover's foundation stone was laid by a former caretaker government chief adviser, Fakhruddin Ahmed, on December 17, 2008.

2,500 trucks of imports stranded in West Bengal

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj
Importers are facing a huge loss as 2,500 truckloads of goods have been stranded in Mahadipur Land Port in West Bengal's Malda district for the past week due to inadequate space in the warehouse at Sonamasjid Land Port in Chapainawabganj where the imports are to be unloaded. The delay is likely to affect the products' quality and destroy the perishable items, said importers. Moreover, the businessmen are additionally paying the transporters Tk 1,000 per truck for a day of delay, which will eventually raise the retail prices of the goods, said Abdul Wahed, president of the Chapainawabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The stranded trucks are laden with onions, food grains, fruits, poultry feed, and stone, said importers. At present, goods from around 280 trucks can be unloaded into the warehouse at Sonamasjid Land Port, located in Shibganj upazila, every day, according to Panama Port Link Limited, the port's private operator. Talking to The Daily Star, Abdul Wahed said its capacity should be increased to store goods of around 1,000 trucks. Against this backdrop, the Malda Merchants Chamber of Commerce of West Bengal has sent a letter dated July 30 to the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) to solve

the problem immediately. It also dispatched the letter to the chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR), chairman of Bangladesh Land Port Authority, deputy commissioner of Chapainawabganj, customs authority, and other high officials, and business bodies of the two countries. In the letter, the Indian business leaders recommended that Indian trucks carrying goods for Bangladesh be allowed to be unloaded at the private warehouses of the Bangladesh importers during this period of the year when import-export activities peak. Abdul Wahed, also an FBCCI director, said the government should make a temporary arrangement so that the stranded trucks could arrive soon. He recommended that the Panama Port Link Limited authorities appoint additional employees and keep the port open from dawn to dusk as per international schedule to solve the problem temporarily. He also urged the higher authorities to allow import-export activities on Friday. Jagannath Kumar Saha, deputy manager (administration) of Panama Port Link Limited, said they had sent a proposal to the NBR for acquiring 20 acres of land to increase the capacity of the warehouse. After getting the letter, Chapainawabganj Deputy Commissioner Sardar Sarafat Ali has asked Shibganj upazila nirbahi officer to take necessary action.



HSC results today

BSS, Dhaka
The results of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations under ten education boards will be published today. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will hand over the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at 10:00am and formally announce the results through a press briefing at his ministry at 1:00pm, said an official press release. Examinees will be able to get their results on the websites of respective centres and mobile phones. A total of 10,12,581 students, appeared in the exams. Of them, 5,35,662 students are male and 4,76,919 are females.

Scrap modified list of vested property

Urge eminent citizens, rights activists
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Eminent citizens and rights activists in a statement yesterday demanded that the government scraps a modified list of vested properties, prepared in violation of a Supreme Court verdict. The SC's Appellate Division verdict of March 23, 1974 nullified the Enemy Property Act, passed by the Pakistan government in 1965 under the pretext of the war with India. Under the act, the property of minorities was declared "enemy property" and Hindus declared "enemy" so that their properties could be seized. The citizens and activists also urged the government to repeal the rules of the "Vested Property Return Act-2001, based on which the list was prepared, which are restricting the return of properties to the original owners and to quickly implement the law. Under the banner, "Vested Property Return Act Implementation National Citizen Combination Cell", they said to have placed the demands on behalf of the country's people. Kamal Lohani, advocates Sultana Kamal, Rana Dasgupta, Subrata Chowdhury, Tobarak Hossain, Khushi Kabir, Barrister Sara Hossain and Dr Abul Barakat, among others, signed the statement.

AL-Jamaat clash in Pabna hurts 30

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna
At least 30 people were injured in a clash between the activists of Awami League and Jamaat-e-Islami over forming an Eidgah committee at Berhawlia in Faridpur upazila of Pabna yesterday. Police and locals said the clash erupted before Juma prayers between the supporters of Jamaat backed Faridpur Union Parishad Chairman Md Robiul Islam Robi and the union's ward no. 5 unit AL President Md Moktar Hossain as both of the groups wanted to take over the leadership of the committee. At a meeting, where the people from the two groups were present on Berhawlia Eidgah premises, Robiul tried to form a new committee by removing pro-AL men that triggered the clash, said Faridpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Faruk Hossain. Muktar had been leading the Eidgah committee for the last one year, he added. People used lethal weapons during the hour-long clash, injuring the 30 from both of the groups. Of the victims, 12 were admitted to different hospitals.

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