

**RAIN LIKELY**

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

Met Office said. Day and night temperature may fall slightly over the country. **The sun sets in the capital today at 6:38pm and rises tomorrow at 5:31am.** Country's highest temperature 33.0 degree

Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi, Sayedpur, Kutubdia and Srimangal and lowest 24.6 degrees at Srimangal. 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	28.0	25.5	91	85	Khulna	31.6	25.5	100	98
Chittagong	30.5	26.0	92	83	Barisal	28.4	24.8	93	96
Rajshahi	33.0	26.3	83	77	Sylhet	32.2	24.9	85	93
Rangpur	31.6	25.5	85	77	Cox's Bazar	32.6	24.8	90	83

**NEWS IN brief**

**Hindu idol torched in Gazipur**

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Unidentified miscreants set fire to an idol in a half-century-old temple of the Hindus at Chapair village in Kaliakoir upazila of Gazipur early yesterday. The worshipers in the temple said the clothes on the idol and different parts of the statue were burnt. They demanded punishment for the attackers. Kaliakoir Police Station Officer-in-Charge Omar Faruk said they were investigating the incident.

**Kallyanpur slum dwellers get Eid gifts**

CITY DESK

Human Aid Bangladesh distributed Eid-ul-Fitr gifts among the underprivileged people in Kallyanpur slum of the capital on Monday afternoon. The people stood in a long queue to receive clothes and other accessories for Eid. The organisation also distributed sugar, milk powder and packets of vermicelli among 1,000 families.

**Worker falls to death in capital**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker died yesterday after falling from the roof of a five-storey building in the capital's Hazaribagh. Abul Kashem, 60, who was working on the roof to construct a new floor at the building, suddenly slipped and fell onto the roof of an adjacent one-storey building, said Md Syed, a sub-inspector of Hazaribagh Police Station. He was rushed to Dhaka Medcial College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

**Kidnapped boy rescued, one held**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police rescued a kidnapped child from a house at Purohitpara in Mymensingh Sadar upazila early yesterday and arrested a man in the area in this regard in the morning. Sakib, 2, had been picked up Monday morning from Ghoshbag in Ashulia, on the outskirts of the capital. Mymensingh police arrested Bachchu, 25, and handed him over to Ashulia police.



Illegal pillars, meant to house billboards, erected by breaking down a newly constructed road divider on a road being upgraded to four lanes in Pathantuli area of Chittagong city. Inset, some of the pillars already have billboards with contact numbers for those who wish to put up ads there. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

**Illegal billboards encroach on six expanding Ctg roads**

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Ctg

While six Chittagong city roads are being developed and expanded to four lanes, numerous illegal pillars, some already bearing billboards, have sprung up on their road dividers and beside footpaths.

Spaced around 40 yards apart, 20 such pillars were found to have been erected by breaking down a newly constructed road divider on one of the roads, from Kadamtali intersection to Chaumohoni Road, in Pathantuli area.

A similar scenario prevails on the remaining roads -- from Dewanhat to Alankar, Chawkbazar Oli Khan Mosque to Bahaddarhat, Chawkbazar intersection to Gani Bakery, Oxygen intersection to Kuaish, and Bahaddarhat intersection to Kalurghat.

The locals sacrificed some land for the expansion, but in vain, as the hoardings were an eyesore, Jannatul Ferdous Popy, a ward councillor of Pathantuli area, told The Daily Star recently.

The billboards were illegally erected, said Abul Mansur, chief inspector of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), the sole authority to permit erection of billboards.

The responsibility of maintaining the

roads during the development, being conducted by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) since April 2010, lies on CDA. "We recently sent a letter to the CDA chairman to remove these illegal billboards," he added.

CDA directed the billboard owners, through a newspaper notice on June 4, to remove the structures by June 15. Afterwards, no further step was taken, said CDA sources.

CDA Chairman Abdus Salm said some advertisement firms installed the billboards at night.

CDA intended to start removing the structures from last week but did not, considering people's sufferings as heavy machinery required for the removal would be blocking the roads, he said. CDA would start the drive after Ramadan, he added.

The Daily Star called up some contact numbers on the billboards. Most of the people that did pick up declined to name the firm owning the billboard.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Billboard Owners Association President Farid Mahmud claimed that the billboard owners were no member of the association and that they would help remove the billboards.

**RANA PLAZA VICTIMS Workers' organisation demands specific compensations**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of National Garment Workers Federation yesterday demanded that the families of workers killed in Rana Plaza tragedy should be given Tk 28 lakh each for their "loss of earning" while the injured workers should get Tk 5 lakh each.

Most families of the dead have not received any forms of necessary assistance let alone proper compensation, they added.

They said these while distributing sari, rice, sugar and vermicelli to 111 affected people of Rana Plaza tragedy, outside the office of Workers' Party of Bangladesh in the capital.

The party President Rashed Khan Menon said the assistance provided from the prime minister's fund as well as the the contributions made by different organisations were not enough.

He said the 30 buyers, who used to purchase clothes from the five garment industries housed at Rana Plaza, BGMEA, and the government should take steps to compensate the affected workers immediately.

At least 1,132 people were killed and 2,438 injured in Rana Plaza collapse in Savar on April 24.

**BGMEA president's remarks condemned**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens and rights activists in a statement yesterday condemned BGMEA President Atiqul Islam's claims that the Rana Plaza tragedy was "an act of God" and it was "beyond the owners' control".

Terming his claims shameless and audacious, they demanded that Atiqul withdraw what he said.

"His claims prove that Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has sided with the murderous owners," it said. The citizens and activists also demanded that proper compensations should be given to all workers and families affected by the building collapse.

Professor Emeritus of Dhaka University Serajul Islam Choudhury; theatre personality Mamunur Rashid; columnists Syed Abul Moksd and Rahnuma Ahmed; rights activist Khushi Kabir; professors Nasima Akter Hossain and Anu Mohammad, among others, signed the statement.

In another statement, Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati (BGSS) also refuted Atiqul Islam's claims. "BGMEA is attempting to conceal the owners' crimes and trying to clear itself of the liabilities of killing thousands of workers," the statement added.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Discussion**  
Sangbidhanik Odhikar Forum will hold a discussion on caretaker government; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

**Meeting**  
Bangabandhu Academy will organise a meeting protesting conspiracies against the government; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

With Eid-ul-Fitr right around the corner, labourers employed by Dhaka South City Corporation set up a structure to cover with tarpaulin the National Eidgah, where the Eid prayers will be held, in the capital yesterday.

**Boat people to Australia to be settled in Nauru**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asylum seekers travelling to Australia by boat without visas will be settled in Nauru if they are found to be in need.

The two countries recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect, said a press release of the Australian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and President of Nauru Baron Waqa signed the MoU on August 3.

Earlier, Australia made a similar arrangement with Papua New Guinea (PNG) on July 19, known as the Regional Settlement Arrangement, to allow the asylum seekers to be settled in PNG.

Australia would only expect reserved numbers of asylum seekers to ever be involved in settlement in Nauru, and they would be family groups and unaccompanied minors.

Australia has taken these measures to stop the influx of asylum seekers being cheated by the smugglers to travel to Australia by boat without visas.

**SREEPUR MUNICIPALITY POLLS AL decides to back Anisur Rahman**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Sreepur upazila unit of Awami League in a meeting yesterday decided to back mayoral candidate Anisur Rahman, president of Gazipur unit Sramik League, in the upcoming polls to the Sreepur municipality.

Respecting the party's decision, four other mayoral aspirants also decided to support Anisur Rahman in the election.

The meeting was held at the office of the upazila unit of AL.

Meanwhile, after learning of the party's decision, local Awami League activist Ahsan Ullah told The Daily Star that he will now contest the election from Nagorik Committee.

Samsul Alam Pradhan, general secretary of upazila unit of Awami League, Abdul Khayer, vice president of Bangladesh Krishak League, and Rafikul Islam Akand, general secretary of upazila unit of Jubo League, among others, were present at the meeting.

The election to the Sreepur municipality is scheduled for September 8.

**Mealy bug threatens papaya production**

HELEMUL ALAM

The papaya mealy bug, a native of Central America, is threatening to wreak havoc in papaya cultivation in many areas of Bangladesh and causing huge economic losses to farmers.

The granule-sized pest, believed to have arrived in 2008 via imports feed on the sap, which eventually leads to the plant's death. Its other hosts include crops like guava, ber, custard apple, eggplant and okra.

The bug's high fertility rate resulted in heavy infestation in many papaya cultivation areas, especially in Gazipur and Narsingdi according to a Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) survey conducted between 2008 and 2010.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics recorded a drop in papaya production in five regions -- Dhaka, Khagrachhari, Jessore, Kushtia and Bogra -- between 2007-08 and 2011-12 fiscals.

The biggest drop was counted in Kushtia, from 17,806 to 12,419 tonnes, followed by Dhaka, from 15,492 to 13,339 tonnes.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Syed Nurul Alam, chief scientific officer and head of entomology division of BARI, blames this drop, among other factors, mainly on this non-indigenous pest.

One farmer in Magura says he stopped cultivating papaya three years ago after incurring a loss of around Tk 50,000 from attacks of this potentially devastating pest. "I spent around Tk 1 lakh on one acre of land. But most of the yield went bad," he said.

Shorif Shawdhin, executive director of ECF, an agro-based non-government organisation (NGO) of Magura's Shibrapur, said around 15 percent of 365 farmers affiliated with the NGO had stopped cultivating papaya in the last three years after



A papaya tree infested with papaya mealy bug.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

suffering losses from attacks by the non-native pest.

He said insecticides were usually environmentally questionable and there was none in the locals market that could effectively take out this alien invasive species.

This was contradicted by Nazmul Ahsan, pesticide regulation officer of plant protection wing of the Department of Agricultural Extension.

He said there was an insecticide of malathion group but farmers were not following the four Rs (right time, right dose, right application and right equipment).

Shorif Shawdhin informed that there was also a biological control method though a parasitoid, *Acerophagus Papayae*, was found in Mexico.

They were preparing to import the insect, said Syed Nurul Alam, adding that heavy rains also provide temporary relief.

The pest spread to the Caribbeans and South America in the 1990s. Since then it has been accidentally introduced to some islands in the Pacific region. The pest was found in Indonesia (Java) and India (Tamil Nadu) in 2008, he said.