

DRY WEATHER LIKELY

WEATHER TODAY

Unb, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may fall slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over

the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:14pm and rises tomorrow at 6:33am.

Country's highest temperature 29.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar

and lowest 10.6 degree Celsius at Sreemangal.

The highest and lowest temperatures 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	26.4	13.4	61	68	Khulna	27.2	13.6	96	71
Chittagong	25.2	18.5	88	68	Barisal	27.0	12.5	87	79
Rajshahi	26.4	10.8	93	77	Sylhet	25.5	14.2	89	84
Rangpur	24.5	12.5	94	86	Cox's Bazar	29.5	16.5	74	54

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Little Grebe and Chick. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Little Grebe

Early last month I decided to make a foray into Baikka Beel. The beel, part of Hail Haor, is a no-fishing-allowed swamp in Moulvi Bazar that attracts winter birds. It was still too early for most migratory birds, but the scenery was spectacular.

The left turn heading to Baikka Beel comes about halfway between Srimongol and Moulvi Bazar. Turning off the main road, it is another ten kilometres of which the last six are unpaved. Because of the late rains, the unpaved road was in atrocious condition. So I decided to walk the last few kilometres to the beel.

Both sides of the road are lined with ponds long and short, fat and thin, the home of many fisheries. After I had walked half a kilometre, I could see something moving among the aquatic plants floating on the pond to my left. It looked like a duck, but as soon as I got closer, it dived.

I decided to wait and see. Sure enough, a small ducklike bird surfaced, and, seeing (or sensing) me, it immediately dived. This time it emerged much farther.

After some more hide-and-seek – or is that dive-and-seek? – I was able to get some photographs. There were two birds, one being colourful, the other a messy gray and white. They were small and dumpy-shaped with a blunt, fluffy rear end.

I asked a local boy about them: was it the duckling of some domesticated bird? No, I was told, it was a wild bird. It was too early for winter ducks to have arrived, so I was puzzled.

Back in Dhaka, I searched my bird guidebooks without success. So I sent off a photograph to noted bird expert

Enam Ul Haque, asking him what kind of a duckling it was. "It is not a duckling, it is a Little Grebe," came the prompt reply.

Indeed, what I had seen were a Little Grebe (pronounced "greb") and its chick. These water birds, known in Bangla as "choto duburi" (small diver), are uncommon but occur all over Bangladesh. Little Grebes are part of the Grebe family, which includes 21 other species worldwide. They are aquatic birds and hunt underwater.

Since that first time, I have seen several more Little Grebes in the Hail Haor area. Interestingly, I never saw them fly. Whenever threatened, they simply dive, although once I saw them skim across the water in a playful manner.

Little Grebes live on aquatic insects, fish, frogs, tadpoles and small crustaceans. They are relatively social; I have seen them in small groups. They breed between April and October, nesting on floating vegetation at the edge of the water.

Grebes are not hunted for meat because of the bad taste, but they were once hunted in Western Europe for their white belly skin which was used in women's attire. In Bangladesh, the main threat to the Little Grebe – like other wild birds – is from habitat destruction.

Grebes have the unusual habit of eating feathers. One theory says these feathers line the stomach to prevent damage from fish bones; others think the feathers form a buffer inside the stomach against parasites – a mystery among many other mysteries in the world of birds.

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Eminent citizens urge EC to suspend polls schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday urged the Election Commission to suspend the schedule for holding the parliamentary polls slated for January 5 saying that otherwise it would be "one-sided" and "unacceptable".

The next election without the main opposition can not be acceptable and the EC should suspend the schedule for the sake of holding a free, fair and credible election, they added.

Their opinions came at a dialogue on the existing political crisis held in the capital's Cirdap auditorium. The programme was organised by some eminent citizens including renowned lawyers, academicians and former caretaker government advisers.

Setting a slogan "Nation demands peace" they put emphasis on overcoming the ongoing crisis centring the next election and ending violence in the name of political agitations.

Noted jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said the

duty of the EC was to arrange a fair election and create a favourable environment for all political parties.

"If the Election Commission apprehends that they are unable to hold a free, fair and credible election, they obviously have the right to declare this before the nation," he observed.

The EC could declare this within its legal framework and there would be no controversy, Malik said, adding that there must be equal facilities for all parties for electioneering.

Former adviser to a caretaker government and also noted jurist AF Hasan Ariff said the EC must ensure that all state machineries function properly for holding a fair and credible election.

"As all constitutional institutions have been politicised and destroyed systematically, we are to witness a crisis centring election at the end of every five years," Ariff observed.

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People from all walks of life make V-sign hand gestures at a rally organised by Gonojagoron Mancha in the capital's Shahbagh yesterday marking the execution of war crimes convict Abdul Quader Mollah. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

QUADER MOLLAH'S EXECUTION US urges political parties to shun violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

After execution of war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah, the United States has strongly urged all the political parties in Bangladesh to exercise restraint and refrain from violence.

"...we are aware that his execution took place on Thursday, and I think would underscore a few points--that now is a very sensitive moment in Bangladesh, and that we strongly urge all parties to exercise restraint, to refrain from violence--I think that's a very key point--and

Jamaat strikes terror to foil war crimes trial

Gonojagoron Mancha rally told

DU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and pro-Jamaat student organisation Islami Chhatra Shibir are carrying out vandalism and burning people alive to foil the ongoing war crimes trial, speakers told a rally yesterday.

So the government should ban Jamaat to rid the country of all anti-liberation forces, they said.

Gonojagoron Mancha organised the rally in the capital's Shahbagh demanding immediate execution of verdicts passed by the International Crimes Tribunals.

GHULAM AZAM VERDICT SC seeks concise appeal statements by Jan 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the state lawyers and defence lawyers of convicted war criminal Ghulam Azam to submit by January 21 concise statements against each other's appeals over the Jamaat-e-Islami chief's 90-year jail term.

Concise statements contain case background and particular argument points for supporting the appeals.

The defence appealed on August 5 for overturning Ghulam's conviction while the government appealed on August 12 seeking death penalty. On July 15, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 jailed Ghulam for crimes committed during the Liberation War.

Accused found dead in CID headquarters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An accused was found dead in the custody of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters at the capital's Malibagh yesterday.

The deceased was Abdul Aziz, 32, son of Mohammad Ali of Ghior in Manikganj.

Aziz was found hanging from the grille with his lungi around 6:30am, said Paltan Police Station Sub-inspector Morshed Alam.

Dhaka Medical College morgue sources said the deceased "committed suicide" but the body bore injury marks in the shoulder, hands and legs.

However, Ashrafur Islam, special superintendent of CID, said, "The

RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE

Skeletal remains found in debris

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Several skeletal remains, including a skull, an identity card and a mobile phone were discovered in the Rana Plaza rubbles in Savar yesterday.

Four street boys between the ages of 10 and 12 came across the stuff while scavenging in the debris of the collapsed building. Police collected those after being informed by locals.

Witnesses presume that the remains belong to two victims of the April 24 collapse, which killed at least 1,134 people and wounded and maimed several hundred.

The boys, Akter, Babu, Ziahd and Sagar, saw the skull first in the rubbles some 10-12 feet high on the north-eastern side of the site where Rana Plaza once stood, said police.

Later, they found 20-25 bones of different body parts



These skeletal remains found in Rana Plaza debris in Savar yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

within a periphery of 50 feet, and also discovered a pant which they pulled out to find a wallet with the ID card inside.

The ID card shows the name of Obaidul, a sewing assistant at the New Wave Bottoms garment factory, which was housed on the second floor of the nine-storey building.

As the news spread, relatives of the missing victims thronged the site but none of them were from the family of Obaidul.

Shahin Sheikh, sub-inspector of Savar Model Police Station, said, "If the SIM card still works, we'll try to contact the family of the victim through using it. Otherwise, we'll send the remains for DNA examinations to know their identities."

According to the army, which conducted the rescue drive, 159 victims are still unidentified or missing.

NEWSINbrief

BR chief controller suspended

UNB, Dhaka

Chief controller of Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka M Zahirul Haque has been suspended for providing false and fabricated information to the media about the country's rail communications.

As per the directives of Railways Minister Mujibul Haque, the railway authorities suspended him, said a press release.

"Despite normal rail communications in the country, Zahirul provided false information that misled people about train services. So, he has been suspended," the release added.

NU cancels winter vacation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The National University authorities yesterday cancelled the four-day winter vacation from December 22 to December 26 for admission tests and other emergency activities, said a press note of the public relations department.

Hefajat postpones demonstration, tomorrow's hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Citing "safety concerns for the masses amidst the prevailing political situation", Hefajat-e Islam postponed for an indefinite period a demonstration scheduled after Juma prayers yesterday and a hartal called for tomorrow in Chittagong district.

The demonstration and hartal were declared protesting refusal by police to let the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation hold a two-day Islamic congregation at the Jamiatul Falah Mosque grounds in Chittagong city from Thursday, Hefajat sources told The Daily Star.

Girl 'commits suicide' in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A girl allegedly committed suicide after an argument with her father over a watch at Manikdehi village in Chuadanga sadar upazila on Thursday night.

The victim is Jenshe, 17, daughter of Nazrul Islam. Quoting the victim's family members, police said Jenshe asked her father to repair her watch, but her father refused saying he will buy her a new watch next month.

The two argued over this and Jenshe locked herself in her bedroom. Later, her family found her hanging from the ceiling of her bedroom, they said.

Death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the 24th death anniversary of Dr Kali Krishna Majumder, a drama artist of the then undivided Bengal's Tripura, an anti-British movement activist and a dentist of Chandpur town.

On this day in 1989, he died in Chandpur, aged 78, says a press release.

On the occasion, prayer meetings have been arranged in the capital's Siddheshwari Kali temple and Chandpur town Kali temple.

Majumder's family members have requested all to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.



MASS PROCESSION
Bangladesh Rukhe Darao will bring out a mass procession demanding a stop to communal violence; Starting venue: Central Shaheed Minar; Time: 10:30am.

DISCUSSION
Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will hold a discussion marking Martyred Intellectuals' Day; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

CULTURAL FUNCTION
Bangla Academy will start a two-day programme, including cultural function, on the occasion of Martyred Intellectuals' Day; Venue: The academy; Time: 8:00am.

ROUNDTABLE
ADD International, Bangladesh will hold a roundtable on "Implementation of Disabilities Rights & Protection Act 2013"; Venue: Azimur Rahman Conference Hall, ADD International; Time: 10:30am.

SEMINAR
Korean embassy in Dhaka will arrange "Korea-Bangladesh CSR Seminar 2013"; Venue: Hotel Lakeshore; Time: 9:30am.

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