

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 33.1 L 25.8

CHITTAGONG
H 31.4 L 23.2

SYLHET
H 30.9 L 20.2

RAJSHAHI
H 33.7 L 22.1

KHULNA
H 33.8 L 25.0

BARISAL
H 32.4 L 24.2

RANGPUR
H 30.7 L 20.5

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.0 L 22.0

Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:13pm and rises tomorrow at 05:53am. Country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Ishwardi and lowest 19.3 in Teknaf.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKI

Stacks of bamboo lie in wait for customers as far as the eye can see along the Maini river in Khagrachhari district. The pulp from the bamboo species found growing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been in high demand for centuries among paper mills, such as the Karnaphuli Paper Mills in Chittagong. The photo was taken recently.

NEWS IN brief

Abducted Comilla boy rescued in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police rescued a 13-year-old boy, who was kidnapped from Comilla last week for ransom, and arrested a man with whom he was found in Chittagong city last night. Shihab Uddin, a class IX student, was spotted with Mostahid Ahmed, 26, in Fishery Ghat around 9:30pm, said Kotwali police who conducted the rescue efforts. Kotwali police said they were requested and informed of the possible location of the boy by Comilla police. Shihab, the son of a journalist, had gone missing on his way to school in Comilla town on March 21. The kidnappers later demanded Tk 5 lakh from his father for the boy's release, said police.

140 cops off to Sudan peace mission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of 140 police personnel yesterday left Bangladesh to join in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur of Sudan. Superintendent of Police Sarwar Morshed Shamim will head the team, according to a police headquarters press release. At present 1,376 policemen are serving in UN peacekeeping missions in several counties including Congo, South Sudan, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Mali, Liberia and Somalia, it added.

10 BNP-Jamaat men held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested 10 activists of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in Chittagong district in connection with cases filed for conducting subversive activities during recent hartals and blockades. Four were held in Sitakunda upazila and the rest in Lohagara and Satkania upazilas.

Cuta election on April 4

CU CORRESPONDENT

Election to the 11-member executive committee of Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) has been scheduled for April 4. From pro-Awami League yellow panel, Prof Mohammad Abul Mansur of microbiology and Associate Prof Kazi SM Khosrul Alam Quddusi of public administration will contest for the posts of president and general secretary respectively, while Prof Mohammad Shawquatul Meher of marketing studies and Associate Prof Mohammad Saiful Islam of economics will vie for the posts from pro-BNP-Jamaat-e-Islami white panel.

WB to construct 330 new disaster shelters by 2017

BSS, Dhaka
The World Bank will construct at least 330 new cyclone shelters in the cyclone-prone areas of Bangladesh by 2017. Official sources said the WB, under its Emergency 2007 Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project (ECRRP), has already constructed 136 multipurpose disaster shelters that double up as primary schools during non-emergency situations. Apart from this, 65 more new shelters will be completed by June this year, the sources said. Under the project, repairing 260 kilometres of coastal embankment out

of targeted 450 in different areas of the country has been completed. Talking to the news agency today, a high official of Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) said the World Bank has been supporting the government through the ECRRP to restore livelihoods of the people affected by Cyclone Sidr (2007) and Cyclone Aila (2009). The official said the ECRRP has been constructing new cyclone shelters, repairing existing shelters and building shelter access roads in cyclone-prone areas. The LGED official said the project has provided agricultural support to

farmers through the provision of agricultural tools, livestock, fish fingerlings, household silos and hands-on training on the use of such technology. The project is also supporting the preparation of the first phase of a 15-year government programme for disaster risk reduction. To complete the project, the World Bank has so far supported ECRRP with US\$324 million. The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery and Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund have also contributed to the project.

Six DU students hurt in clash with New Market shopkeepers

DU CORRESPONDENT
Six students of Dhaka University were injured in a clash with some shopkeepers following a dispute over buying aprons at New Market yesterday morning. Saem, Shuvro, Imran, Sabbir, Kaosar and Shamim -- all first year students living in Shahidullah Hall -- took treatment from Dhaka Medical College Hospital. At a shop, two students of the Department of Genetics Engineering and Biotechnology wore aprons but refused to buy those due to a "high price", said Proctor Dr AM Amjad. Later, they started arguing with the two to buy those, leading the duo to call their fellows for help, he said. When 22-25 students of the dormitory rushed in, many of the shopkeepers of the market attacked them with sticks, triggering the clash. Afterwards, a proctorial team settled the matter.

Ganges Barrage Project

FROM PAGE 4
He said the Gorai river system with its augmented flow will provide an improved navigational route to and from Mongla, the country's second seaport. Environmental expert Dr Atiq Rahman said the Ganges Barrage is a long-standing project which has been discussed in the last several decades. "Obviously, Bangladesh will benefit from the project but it's necessary to conduct vigorous environmental, social and climate impact assessments before implementation of the project," he said. Official sources said the increased water flow through the Hisna-Mathabhanga, Gorai-Modhumati and Chandana-Barasia systems will reduce environmental degradation in the Ganges dependent area. The surface water salinity will be reduced due to increased upstream water flow. About US\$4 billion is needed to implement the Ganges Barrage Project, but the annual incremental benefit of the project will be Tk 7,340 crore, which means the cost of the barrage project will be returned within five years, they claimed. According to the feasibility study, once the project is implemented, agricultural production in the Ganges dependent area will increase while additional paddy production would be about 26 lakh metric tonnes, minimising the loss of paddy significantly. Additional fish production would be about 2.4 lakh metric tonnes.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cuts a large cake in celebration of the 11th founding anniversary of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at the force's headquarters in the capital. She also inaugurated Rab Battalion Complex and Rab Training School on the occasion. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PMO

Prime minister for two more divs

FROM PAGE 3
marking the 11th founding anniversary of Rab. After the creation of the new divisions, Hasina said, it would be possible for the government to implement its development programme in an easier way. "People will get their services, their security will be ensured, and we'll be able to work

more for economic development," she said. Earlier, on March 4, Hasina told the parliament that the government had a plan to create three new divisions -- Comilla, Mymensingh and Faridpur -- to accelerate the decentralisation process and take government services to the doorsteps of people. On January 26, Cabinet Division

was directed to examine the feasibility of establishing two other administrative divisions -- one in greater Faridpur, and another with greater Comilla and greater Noakhali splitting the Chittagong division. The cabinet also directed the Cabinet Division to take necessary steps for forming a new administrative division in greater Mymensingh.

New citizens' platform urges govt

FROM PAGE 3
He urged the government to execute the war crimes verdicts immediately and publicly. Tarique Rahman, senior vice chairman of BNP, which leads a 20-party alliance that enforced a non-stop countrywide blockade on January 6, has been living in London since 2008. At least 94 people have died in political violence across the country since January 5. Sammilito Nagorik Samaj also urged the government to prosecute the troublemakers under the anti-

terrorism act, take action against any organisation if it patronises militancy or gets involved in militancy in the guise of politicking, and take effective measures to stop terror financing. The convention started with the national anthem and a minute of silence commemorating those killed in the blockade violence. At the end of the programme, Ibrahim Khaled announced a 42-member national committee of the platform with Kholiuzzaman as convener and SCF Joint Secretary General M Hamid as member secretary.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Helal Morshed Khan Bir Bikram, chairman of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Central Command Council; Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rashid, executive director of the Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies; Ashraf Uddin Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Economic Association; and AKMA Hamid, president of the Institute of Diploma Engineers of Bangladesh, among others, spoke at the programme. Nilufar Banu, executive director of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, moderated it.

BCL leader bites RU student

FROM PAGE 3
Himu denied the allegations. The proctor tried settling the

charge of Motihar Police Station, where they had been till yesterday evening.

Bodies formed

FROM PAGE 3
of recommendations coming at a meeting at the deputy commissioner's office on March 16 where members of the dip organising committee were present, one Hindu leader told The Daily Star. It included clearing water hyacinths from the 3.5-kilometre stretch by the Brahmaputra river where the ghats are situated and making it more accessible by boats, added Parimal Chandra Ghosh, vice president, Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Samaj Sangskar Samity. The locals and Hindu leaders demanded identifying and arresting people who spread the rumour to, as they claimed, steal and loot valuables in the confusion. Police officials believe the day being a weekend and a decrease in political violence created a sudden surge of devotees which law enforcers found hard to manage. Around eight to 15 lakh devotees, as per locals, had thronged the site for the annual "Maha Astami Snan" ending at 5:48am yesterday.

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