

WEATHER FORECAST

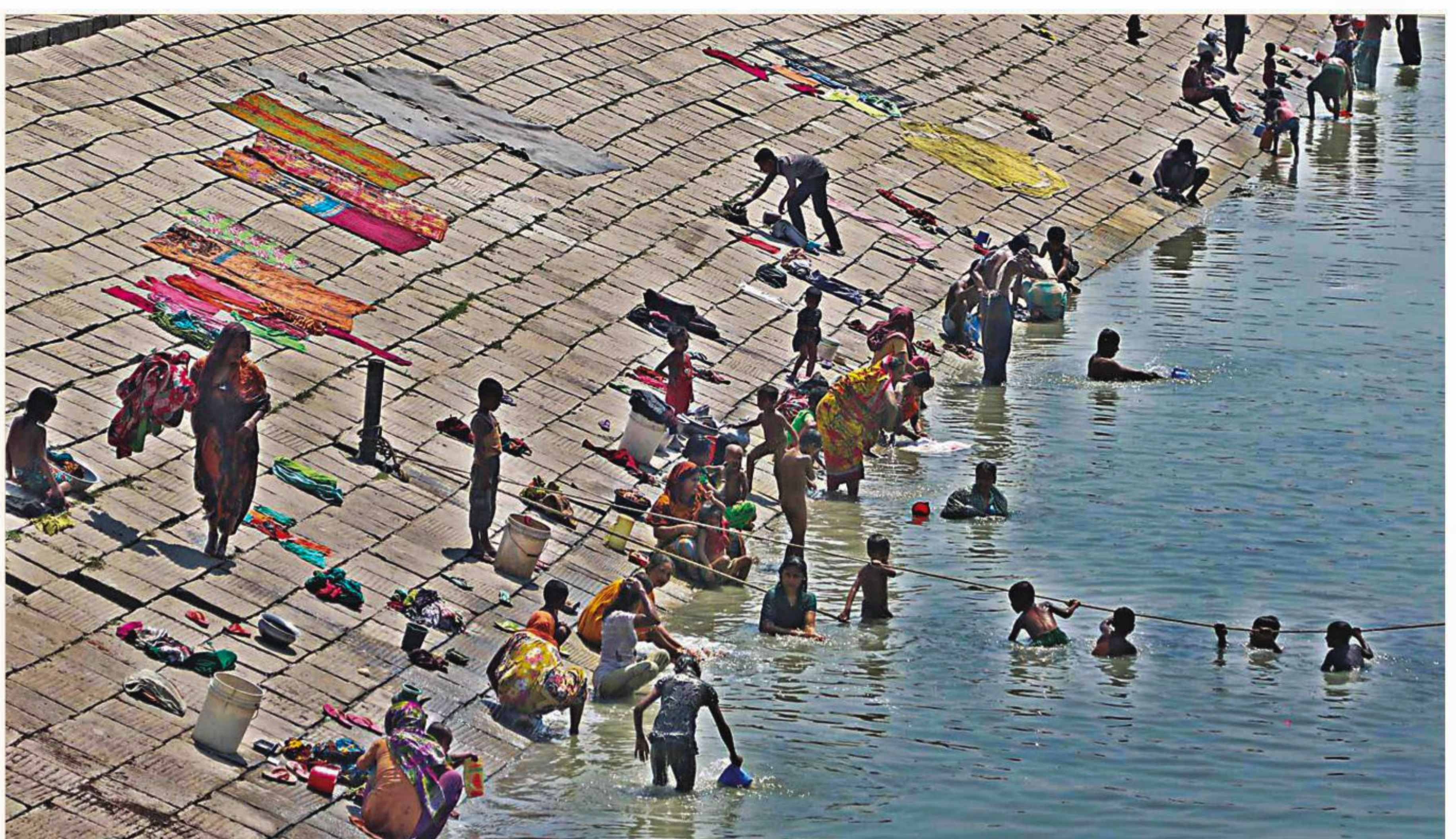
| YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES | DHAKA | CHITTAGONG | SYLHET | RAJSHAHI | KHULNA | BARISAL | RANGPUR | COX'S BAZAR |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | H 33.6 L 25.0 | H 33.7 L 23.2 | H 34.5 L 21.8 | H 35.8 L 22.9 | H 34.8 L 23.6 | H 33.0 L 22.8 | H 28.4 L 21.8 | H 32.0 L 23.0 |

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Noakhali, Comilla, Pabna and Bogra till 6:00pm today. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:13pm and rises tomorrow at 05:22am.

3 youths held in hospital after being shot by cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Three young men who were shot with rubber bullets while dodging a police check-post on a motorcycle were arrested within an hour or so at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on Saturday evening. Police filed a case with Rajpara Police Station accusing Abdus Sobur Subho, 26, Habibullah Khan Parvez, 20, and Sarwar Hossain Tushar, 22, of "obstructing government work and driving recklessly". Students of Rajshahi College, Rajshahi University and Northern University respectively, they identified themselves as Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, a claim refuted by Rajshahi city unit BCL President Rocky Kumar Ghosh, who visited the three at the hospital. With bruises on the right leg, they got admitted with



As there is no arrangement for supplying water to their slum, the dwellers bathe in the river Karnaphuli at Firingibazar in Chittagong city. They also use the water of the river for household works, including washing clothes. The photo was taken on Tuesday. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

CCC Polls EC not playing due role in making level playing field

SHUJAN secretary tells Ctg press confce STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Election Commission is not playing its due role so far in making a level playing field for all candidates of Chittagong City Corporation polls, said Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN), yesterday. He said the EC was not taking actions against those who were violating the electoral laws. Political parties are declaring backing candidates although these are non-partisan local government polls while many aspirants are refraining from contesting upon orders from the party leaders, he said. "But the EC is not taking any effective step against it." Badiul was replying to reporters' queries at a press conference organised by SHUJAN in Chittagong Press Club demanding free, fair and peaceful CCC polls. The EC had issued show cause notices on some of the candidates for violating the code of conduct, he said, adding that it was not enough. Advocate Akhter Kabir Chowdhury, SHUJAN Chittagong chapter secretary, reading out a written statement, said many aspirants were campaigning well before the stipulated time. Prof Sikander Khan, president of SHUJAN of the chapter, also spoke.

FOOD ADULTERATION

Nasim blames negligence of sanitary inspectors

Addressing One Health Bangladesh Conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Skipping their due role in curbing food adulteration and contamination, sanitary inspectors are "busy doing other things" but enjoying their salaries, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim told a conference in the capital yesterday. "There was a time when we found sanitary inspectors checking food quality in marketplaces. Now they are not seen there," he said.

There are around 600 sanitary inspectors, key staff for food inspection and law enforcement under the Institute of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. "We have many laws, tough laws, but they have no implementation," Nasim said, exerting his grievance over a sheer lack of coordination among the health, food and agriculture ministries. "On the question of food adulteration, I pass the blame on to the food

To watch the video of Health Minister Mohammed Nasim's speech, scan this QR code with your smartphone

TO USE QR CODE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, INSTALL FREE QR READER SOFTWARE LIKE "1-NIGMA BARCODE SCANNER" FROM GOOGLE PLAYSTORE OR APPLE STORE. TURN ON THE SOFTWARE AND HOLD THE PHONE CAMERA OVER THE QR CODE TO GET THE VIDEO LINK.

EXCESSIVE USE OF CHEMICALS IN FARMING Lack of campaigns, poor monitoring reasons

Speakers tell Bela discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Excessive use of chemicals and pesticides in farming and gardens is the result of poor campaigning and monitoring by the authorities, said speakers at a discussion in Rajshahi yesterday. The Rajshahi chapter of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) organised the discussion on "Use of pesticides, chemical fertilisers: its impacts and responsibilities" at a restaurant in the city. The speakers put forward 12 recommendations to reduce the use of chemicals,

including intensive campaigns and control of sale of chemicals. Reading the keynote paper, Rajshahi University Prof Mostafizur Rahman said 94 percent of farmers use various harmful pesticides for their crops without proper knowledge. Mokhles Ali, a mango grower and trader, said he suffered losses last year due to the intensive campaign against formalin use. He added that no official advised him on use of chemicals in growing mangoes. Attending the discussion as the chief guest, SEE PAGE 5 COL 8

Wife again says Manna being denied treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna's wife yesterday reiterated that her husband was being denied treatment by the jail authorities for his "high blood pressure, acute back pain and heart diseases" despite their repeated calls to ensure it. "Without completing my husband's treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the authority brought him back to Dhaka Central Jail on March 18," Meher Nigar told a press conference in her Gulshan residence in the capital. Manna is yet to undergo an MRI scan for his back pain as advised by DMCH doctors. The jail authority is citing an "excuse that the only MRI machine at the hospital is out of order", she said. With Manna's lawyer and their teenage daughter Nilom Manna by her side, Meher urged the government to pass necessary instructions on the jail authority to ensure Manna's treatment.

Nilom remained silent, sheer frustration and disappointment apparent on her face. At another press conference on March 19, Meher said Manna's condition has been deteriorating due to physical and mental torture following his arrest. Family members claim some plain-clothes men, introducing themselves as Detective Branch (DB) officials, picked Manna up from the capital's Banani on February 24 around 3:30am. Police officials said it was over 20 hours later that Rapid Action Battalion arrested and handed him over to DB in a case filed with Gulshan Police Station for "trying to instigate revolt by the armed forces". The arrest came a day after his phone conversations with BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka and an unnamed person surfaced in the media after being leaked. In one conversation, Manna was heard talking to Khoka about strengthening the anti-government movement, among other issues.

Plan Int'l condemns attack on Lalmonirhat officials Seeks trial of perpetrators

CITY DESK

Plan International Bangladesh yesterday expressed outrage about the attack on its officials in Lalmonirhat on Wednesday and demanded that the perpetrators be brought to book. Four staff, including Programme Unit Manager Mahfuzar Rahman, were assaulted by a gang of criminals in the Hatibandha upazila unit office of the development agency. The furniture and documents of the office were also damaged, says a press release. SEE PAGE 5 COL 7



Men armed with bamboo poles enter a polling centre in Lady Protima Mitra Girls High School in Chandpur yesterday as supporters of two councillor candidates clashed inside during elections to the municipality, suspending voting there for one and a half hours. PHOTO: ALAM PALASH



Bangladesh Meat Businesspersons' Association forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday in protest against the price hike of meat due to shutdowns, and "overzealous strictness of Indian Border Security Force (BSF)" during importing of cattle from the country. PHOTO: STAR

Gender equality must for democracy

International conference told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To build a truly democratic nation, it is necessary to create a society free from gender discrimination and recognise that gender issues include diverse topics ranging from discrimination against those of the third gender and inequality faced by women of differing religions and ethnicities, speakers told an international conference's closing yesterday. The three-day "Gender Diversity and Development" was organised by Dhaka University's women and gender studies department with Chairperson Tania Haque chairing the discussions. "You just cannot talk about women in general. There are different kinds of women and the problems faced by a poor woman and a rich woman or by women belonging to various ethnic groups are different," said eminent political scientist

Prof Rounaq Jahan. The women and children affairs ministry, Unicef Bangladesh, USAID Bangladesh, Care Bangladesh, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), and Gender and Water Alliance and the Gender and Water Programme Bangladesh (GWAPB) sponsored the conference on the DU campus. Over 400 participants from 10 countries including Bangladesh attended the programme where 76 papers related to gender were presented. Prof Saskia E Wieringa of the University of Amsterdam, Chandni Joshi, founder president of Patan Jayettes in Nepal, and Associate Prof Amrita Chachhi of Erasmus University in the Netherlands also presented their keynote papers. "Without understanding gender diversity, it is very difficult to bring

UC Berkeley first opens Bangladesh Studies centre today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new centre for Bangladesh Studies opens officially at the University of California, Berkeley, in the United States, today. Launching ceremony of the Subir & Malini Chowdhury Centre for Bangladesh Studies, first of its kind outside Bangladesh, will be held on the campus with Chancellor Nicholas Dirks presiding over the programme, according to the UC Berkeley. Improving garment-industry safety, designing apps to solve social problems and collecting data on antibiotic-resistant bacteria found on fruits and vegetables are among the research projects made possible by the centre. Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, considered the world's largest NGO in terms of number of employees and people served, will be the featured speaker at the inauguration and will deliver a talk after the ceremony on Bangladesh's quiet revolution, said a press release of the university. SEE PAGE 5 COL 6