

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 35.0 L 24.3	H 33.1 L 25.0	H 33.0 L 20.6	H 36.2 L 22.4	H 36.0 L 23.8	H 35.8 L 25.4	H 32.8 L 20.5	H 34.6 L 26.3

Day and night temperatures may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:28pm and rises tomorrow at 05:22am. Country's highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday's in Mongla and lowest 20.5 in Rangpur and Sreemangal.



A raging Jamuna yesterday turns futile the authorities' attempts to save the riverbanks using bags of sand, leaving the locals in Dhunte of Bogra in fear of massive land erosion.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Shahriar Kabir finds recent city polls among fairest in history

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

War crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir yesterday said the March 28 city corporation polls, after the national election of 2008, were one of the most free and fair ones in the country's history.

The mass media highlighted the few incidents of violence that took place during the polls, the acting president of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee told a discussion it organised in the capital's WVA auditorium in observance of the 86th birthday of its founding convener, Jahanara Imam.

The mass media often highlight negative stories to gain popularity, said chief guest Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, stressing, "That is why they showed some minor incidents repeatedly."

The committee's Vice President Prof Muntassir Mamooun said the media covered city corporation elections as if those were national polls, not local government ones. Commenting on BNP's boycott, he said, "The BNP-backed aspirants could have won the election. But they were withdrawn right at the moment of their possibilities." He also maintained that incidents of irregularities were fewer than that in any other polls.

Supreme Court lawyer Manzill Murshid and Nari Progati Sangha Director Rokeya Kabir also spoke.

Don't fund Rampal power plant project

Environmentalists urge international financial institutions from campaign launch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday announced launching a campaign urging international financial institutions to publicly rule out involvement in the coal-fired Rampal power plant, discouraging potential equity investment and asking the government to abandon the project in order to save the Sundarbans.

Indian activists will also be contacted and have been urged to join the movement for the project is being implemented by the Indo-Bangla friendship power company, owned by two national power companies of India and Bangladesh, they said.

The declarations came at a press conference following a two-day conference "Coal Energy in Bangladesh: Impacts on Water

OBSERVATIONS

- Bangladesh's per capita energy consumption among world's lowest
- No coal policy, but dependency on "dirtiest energy source" rising
- Some power projects very harmful
- Rampal plant may cause significant damage to Sundarbans' ecosystem

and Climate" organised in the capital's Brac Centre Inn by Waterkeepers Bangladesh, National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans, and Waterkeeper Alliance.

"So we will continue our movement in Bangladesh in a coordinated way," Anu Muhammad replied to a question, adding that the project's financiers would be getting a "sovereignty guarantee", meaning a government guarantee that all obligations would be satisfied when and if the primary obliger goes into default.

Sharif Jamil of Waterkeepers Bangladesh read out a "Dhaka declaration" which stated that the 1,320MW power plant was capable of causing significant damage to the world's largest

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Chlorination not necessary to make tubewell water safe for drinking

Claims ICDDR,B study

UNB, Dhaka

Although chlorine is widely used to make water clean and safe, an ICDDR,B study suggests that storing and handling water correctly is sufficient for reducing contamination of tubewell water and diarrhoea in children without using chlorine.

A new randomised controlled trial led by ICDDR,B investigators has shown that drinking water drawn from tube-wells is contaminated with faecal pathogens during handling and storing of water at the household, demonstrating that this contamination, which causes waterborne illnesses like diarrhoea, is largely preventable through the consistent practice of safe storage methods.

Water chlorination is the process of adding chlorine or hypochlorite to water. This method is used to kill certain bacteria and other microbes in tap water as chlorine is highly toxic. In particular, chlorination is used to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery and typhoid.

The trial included 1,800 households in a rural area of Bangladesh and these were randomly assigned to one of three groups -- a control group that received no intervention, a safe storage group and a group that was provided with both safe storage and chlorine tablets for treatment of their drinking water.

The groups were then monitored and compared for one year to measure the impact of the different interventions.

Both intervention groups showed a significant reduction in diarrhoea among children under the age of two as reported by caregivers, and an improvement in tested water quality compared to the control group in which households received nothing. But interestingly, the scientists found that there was no real benefit to the addition of chlorine treatment.

Dr Leanne Unicomb, a co-author of the study, said these findings are significant because they imply that rural Bangladeshi households using tubewell water for drinking may only need to purchase and maintain a durable low cost household safe water storage vessel and make a modest behaviour change in order to see a large improvement in safe drinking water.



Members of Gaan Poka perform at a two-day fundraiser organised by the Department of Music of Dhaka University in front of Shoparjito Swadhinata yesterday for victims of the recent earthquake in Nepal.



Three foreigners waving Bangladeshi flags while visiting the country's embassy in Washington on Saturday for an Open House, a daylong programme showcasing its rich culture. Hundreds of foreigners enjoyed the programme organised in collaboration with Cultural Tourism DC, a non-profit organisation.

Air Quality Index for cities in offing

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to introduce a national Air Quality Index (AQI) to identify the level of air pollution in the country's cities.

"We have already sent a draft of the Air Quality Index to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for assessment," Dr M Nasir Uddin, project director of the Department of Environment's Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project, told the news agency.

The AQI is a tool that reports the air quality of any city or country daily. It tells how clean or polluted the air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for public. The AQI focuses on health effects that one might experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air.

Globally, AQI is used as an effective tool

to build public awareness and support for aggressive action for pollution control and bring down daily peak pollution levels.

"Bangladesh is working to launch the index when the air quality in major cities is fast deteriorating in the absence of a national policy to combat the rising pollution," Dr Nasir said.

The DoE is seriously considering launching a national AQI for the country seeing that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the AQI and health alert for public information for his country on April 6 in 2015, according to a senior official of the DoE.

The government with support from the World Bank is implementing the CASE project.

Dr Nasir Uddin, also joint secretary of the environment and forests ministry, said the CASE project is currently releasing AQI daily

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