

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 30.7 L 26.0	H 28.4 L 25.6	H 29.3 L 25.2	H 32.8 L 26.3	H 30.0 L 26.0	H 29.0 L 25.8	H 28.0 L 25.5	H 27.5 L 25.5

Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country till 6:00pm today, said Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:50pm and rises tomorrow at 05:12am.

Govt against under-18 marriages

Claims Meher Afroz
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government does not want persons under the age of 18 to get married, said State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki yesterday. The state minister, however, requested consideration if a child becomes pregnant before marriage. She was speaking at the launching ceremony of Image (Initiatives for Married Adolescent Girls' Empowerment), a Dutch-government funded project that will be carried out in three unions of Gaibandha, Nilfamari and Kurigram. The program was held at Gulshan's Spectra Convention Centre. Later, Chumki told BBC Bangla that the minimum marriageable age for girls will remain at 18, but a new clause will be added to tackle the social problems of unwanted pregnancy.

BOALKHALI OIL SPILL: Bapa demands removal of rail minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday demanded that the government remove the railways minister and some officials of the ministry for their "indifference that caused a train derailment in Boalkhali which spilled oil into a canal." Dr Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bapa, also demanded punishment for the officials of the ministry responsible for the accident. He was addressing a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity organised demanding a stop to river and sea pollution caused by oil spillage and evaluation of bridges on railway and highway. On June 19, a train carrying furnace oil derailed and three of its wagons fell into a canal when a bridge gave away in Khitabchar of Boalkhali.

Don't block Fakhru's release

BNP urges govt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday urged the government not to block the release of party acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir from prison. The BNP leader was supposed to walk out of jail after the High Court bailed him in three arson and vandalism cases on June 18, but the government filed three petitions with the Supreme Court on June 21 seeking a stay on the bail. Hearings of the petitions are scheduled for tomorrow. Addressing a press conference at the Nayapaltan headquarters, BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon alleged, "While BNP leaders and activists are showing respect to the country's law by attending court, the government is using law to harass them."



People buy iftar items from a stall on the capital's Bailey Road, where numerous shops have been selling an array of non-traditional items for quite a few years now with the number of customers increasing. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bailey Road of capital a rising iftar market

HELEMUL ALAM

Bailey Road in the capital has become one of the most popular spots to buy iftar items from due to the variety of food items it offers. Not as old as the market in Chawkbazar that sells iftar items out in the open, iftar market on Bailey Road offers different food items in shops. Many believe Bailey Road was the pioneer of selling iftar items in shops, which makes it easier for customers to choose and buy food products. Mohammad Alam came all the way from Narayanganj to buy food from Bailey Road for iftar. Although the trip was long and exhausting, he believes it was worth it for the iftar items the place offers. "I bought reshmi kebab, beef kebab and doi bora for iftar as these are my family's favourite," he said. Jesmin Rashid came from Banani to buy mutton roast, chicken roast and chicken curry from Bailey Road. Like Alam and Jesmin, hundreds of buyers from different parts of Dhaka and its outskirts defy traffic congestion and other obstacles to come to Bailey Road to buy their iftar. "I was the first person to begin selling iftar items in a proper store," said Sharfuddin, proprietor of Capital Iftar Bazar on Bailey Road. He opened his shop around 30 years back selling only a few items, including jilapi, singara and nimakpara. "Now we sell around 100 items, including reshmi kebab, beef kebab, tani kebab, grill chicken, lamb roast, kima parata and sata parata," he said. Ilias Sharif, manager of Skylark, spoke about the unique food items they offer, including chicken finger sticks. A kitchen staff of Red Court, Md Haydar, said their special items include custard, dai burinda and chicken balls.

Safe Eid trips promised

Host of decisions taken at meeting of govt officials, transport owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like previous years, the government and transport operators came up with similar decisions yesterday to ensure safe and hassle-free journey of people ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. However, experiences suggest such decisions were rarely implemented in the past. The measures include stopping the operation of unfit and outdated vehicles, removing roadside kitchen markets, punishing fare overcharges, setting up mobile toilets on highways, stopping extortion and crimes on highways, and haphazard parking. The problems that the authorities plan to address are likely get worse when the rush will begin in a couple of days. The Eid is likely to be celebrated on July 18 or 19. Several ministers, top government officials, law enforcers, transport

operators, rights activists and other stakeholders discussed a detailed course of action at a meeting at Biam Foundation in the capital, organised by the road transport and bridges ministry. The authorities also decided to keep the country's all gas stations open around the clock from July 10 to 19 and suspend the operation of trucks, covered vans, and lorries for three days before Eid and three days after it. Helicopters, wreckers and ambulances will be kept ready to aid rescue operations in case of accidents. A central control room will be set up to monitor the entire traffic management system. Anybody can call the control room's phone no. 9113133 and 01966622019. Additional law enforcers will be deployed at different bus and launch terminals. Road Transport and Bridges

Minister Obaidul Quader said, "The homebound people will not face any trouble on highways. But it cannot be guaranteed that there won't be any traffic jam." Addressing the meeting, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq requested the bus and truck owners to stop haphazard parking. In response, the bus operators called upon the mayor to ensure proper management of the city's bus terminals and set up more terminals. Transport workers' leader Osman Ali urged the government to stop extortion on highways and ferry ghats. In response, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said leaseholders of ferry terminals were mainly responsible for extortion there. So, leasing of some terminals will be cancelled by July 1, he said. Railway Minister Mazibul Hoque also attended the meeting.

Country may reach 6 out of 8 MDGs by year-end

Says Brac's new executive director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh may reach about five to six goals out of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the end of 2015, the deadline for achieving the targets, said Muhammad Musa, newly appointed executive director of Brac, yesterday. He mentioned poverty alleviation, decreased infant mortality rate, and increased primary school enrolment as some of Bangladesh's achievements. He was addressing a programme at Brac Centre in the capital, which launched the organisation's annual report. Referring to statistics of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2010, Musa said poverty rate came down to 31.5 percent from 56 in the last two decades due to continued efforts of the government and development organisations like Brac. He further said that according to statistics

of the government, the poverty rate now has come down to 26 percent. However, Musa said there were still some challenges left to improve lives of the ultra-poor, adding that their lives needed to be improved for the country to become a middle-income one by 2021. The Brac executive director said percentage of primary enrolment was 97 percent. Emphasising that the young generation is an asset to the nation if employment opportunities for them can be ensured, Musa said around 20 percent of the young generation remain unemployed and underemployed. He said Brac works to create jobs for the young generation. Replying to a query about the fate of farmers, Mahabub Hossain, an advisor to Brac, said farmers are ensuring good production, but they are not getting their due profit due to the government's flawed implementation policy.

DSCC denies official entry to office defying High Court order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) denied the project director of Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover access to his office for the third consecutive day yesterday, although the High Court stayed his transfer and release orders issued early this month. Md Ashiqur Rahman, the project director, also superintendent engineer in charge of DSCC's traffic department, first went to his office on Sunday but found it locked, and the situation remained unchanged over next two days. "I spent three consecutive office days at the chief engineer and additional chief engineer's rooms," he said yesterday. Ashiq was transferred to Gazipur City Corporation and released from his two official positions on June 8, reportedly for issuing a letter to the flyover's operator that the DSCC mayor should be allowed to use the flyover toll-free. He had issued the letter on May 26 on the instructions of the mayor, Sayeed Khokon. Ashiq later went to the court, which on June 18 stayed the transfer and instant release orders for six months. "It is the duty of the corporation's secretary and chief executive

Latif Siddique gets bail in 10 more cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to former minister Abdul Latif Siddique in more 10 cases filed for hurting people's religious sentiment. The court also stayed proceedings of the cases for six months and issued separate rules asking the government to explain as to why those proceedings should not be scrapped. The court came up with the orders and rules after hearing separate petitions moved by Latif challenging the legality of those cases. Among the 28 cases Latif was implicated in, now, the former minister has bail pending in 11.



One of the four factories, which were fined for producing vermicelli in unhygienic environments in the capital's Ashrafabad area yesterday. A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion said the factory even made the product from moulded remains of dough, inset, an allegation the factory authorities denied. The court also seized vermicelli from three other factories in Kamrangir Char, one of which was also sealed.

PHOTO: AMIRAN HOSSAIN

BANGLADESH IN WIKILEAKS

Rifat Munim

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BLAST CASE AGAINST ALAL

Court withdraws arrest warrant hours after issuance

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hours after issuance of arrest warrant against Jubo Dal President Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, a Dhaka court yesterday withdrew its order upon a reconsideration petition submitted by his lawyer in a bomb blast case. Earlier in the day, Metropolitan Magistrate Md Aminul Haque rejected a time petition and cancelled bail and issued an arrest warrant against Alal as he was absent from court for the 10th consecutive date.

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