

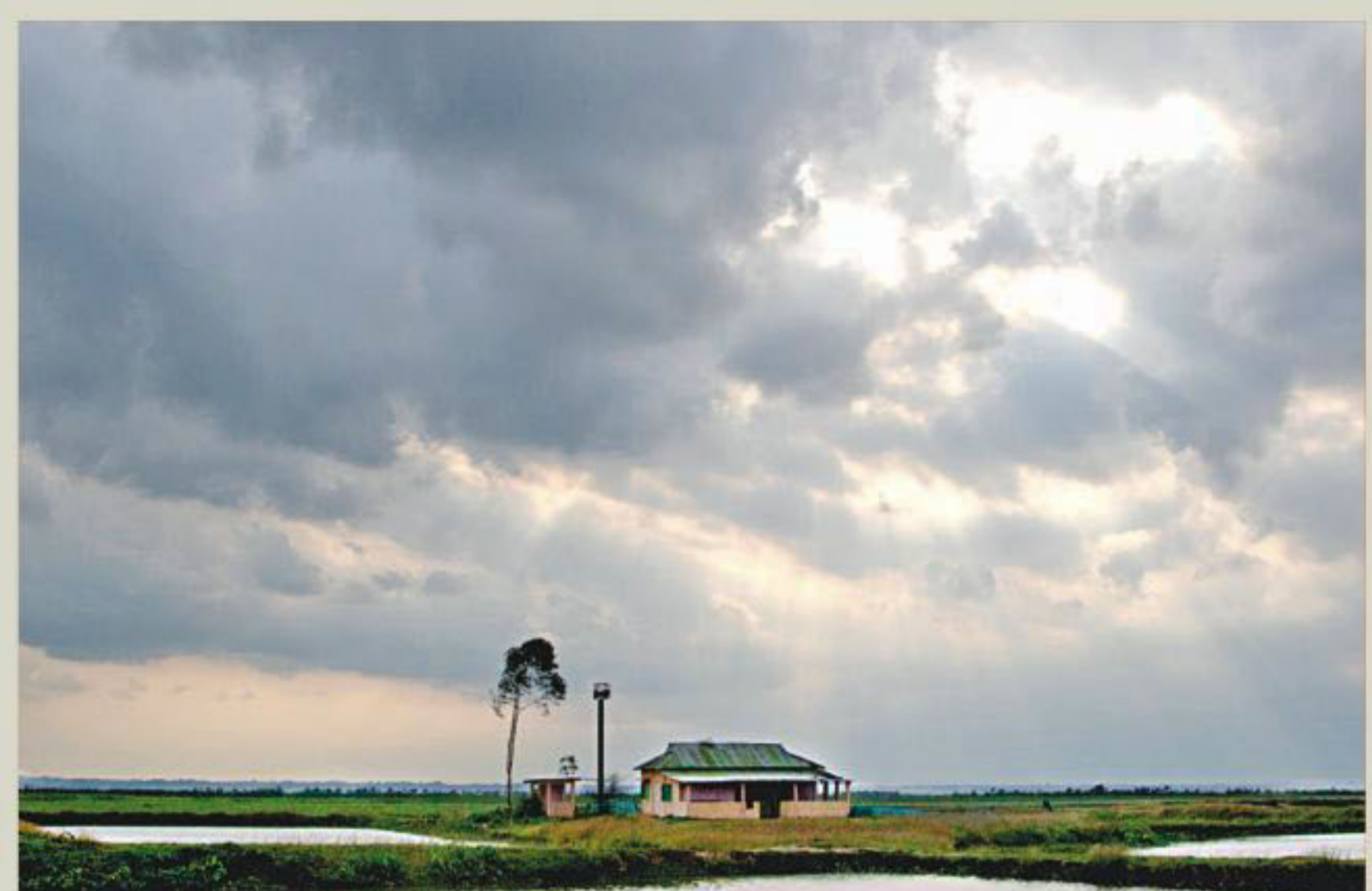
WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 28.8 L 24.0	CHITTAGONG H 29.0 L 24.4	SYLHET H 29.5 L 22.2	RAJSHAHI H 33.5 L 24.1	KHULNA H 29.2 L 24.5	BARISAL H 27.2 L 24.6	RANGPUR H 31.8 L 21.5	COX'S BAZAR H 29.2 L 24.2
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Thunder showers would likely occur at most places in Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions with heavy falls at places in Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in the next 24 hours. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:37pm and rises tomorrow at 05:13am. Yesterday's highest temperature 33.5 degree Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi and lowest 21.5 degree in Rangpur.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Clouds over Hail Haor. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Summer in the Haor

"Take care of your camera because it will rain soon," the boy gathering dried hay near the freshly harvested paddy field warned me.

I looked at him in disbelief. I was in the middle of Hail Haor in Moulvi Bazar, walking through a rice paddy looking for some birds I had spotted from the road. The afternoon sky was a clear blue with white puffy clouds. The sun was hot but a breeze blew from the southwest, making the heat bearable. But rain? There was no sign of it.

I had driven into the Haor earlier that May afternoon. This large open land, slightly below sea level, submerges during monsoon. But the rest of the year it is mostly farmland, grazing fields and fisheries. During winter, it is a haven for birds and draws many birders including myself. However, today my expectations were different. I wanted to experience the Haor during summer, just before the rains engulfed it.

Two things struck me immediately upon arriving at the Haor: the green and the clear air. Fresh rains had injected new life to the vegetation. Grass grew tall in many places, weeds such as Dhol Kolmi spread rambunctiously, leaves dripping green, and even the chopped stalks of rice were green. The air, which during winter always carries some haze, was crystal clear. You could see for miles in any direction.

I saw the flock of small birds playing in a distant paddyfield within minutes of entering the area. They flew in unison like an undulating wave of sparkling stars shining against the green and yellow background. Eventually they settled on a spot in a rice paddy about 200 metres from me, flitting about

busily. Alighting, I set out on foot to get closer. The dry caked mud of winter was replaced by soggy ground and I had to step carefully. Just as I was wondering how to negotiate the next thin *ail* through the muddy field, luck favoured me as the flock landed on a clump of *Dhol Kolmi* closer to me. I was able to get a few photographs before it took off, this flock of *babui*, baya weaver, well-known for constructing intricate nests.

Back in the car, we soon hit a rough patch on the dirt road. From here I walked, observing that the lakes, *beels* and ponds, which had receded in winter and invited shorebirds, were now filled to the brim. Plenty of domestic ducks, geese and swans swam in the waters, but the wild ducks and shorebirds of winter were gone.

Walking past some fisheries, I headed west towards low-lying patches, unsure of what I was looking for. A mongoose saw me and scurried away. Several kids stopped me to inform me it was too late for the birds, come back next winter.

The lotus pond surprised me. It was hidden behind weeds and tall grass. The delicate pink flowers had just started blooming. I was looking at the flowers through the viewfinder when I noticed a subtle change in the light. Looking up, I saw dark clouds had moved in from nowhere. Within a minute the weather had changed. Fortunately the wind blew hard keeping the rain away. I made my way to the car and started back.

Although the clouds threatened and postured, rain did not materialise. Just before sunset the sun broke through enveloping Hail Haor in its golden glow.

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PM vows to bring hidden killers to book

BSS, Sofia, Bulgaria

Reiterating her government's steadfast commitment to ensuring proper security for all irrespective of religion, caste and creed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed to bring the perpetrators of recent secret killings to the justice.

"Whatever some isolated incidents are taking place are pre-planned, and those are being staged to foil the trial of war criminal in fact. But, we have already started arresting the perpetrators of such heinous murders and they must be brought to justice," she said.

Hasina said this when a delegation of expatriate Bangladeshis living in Bulgaria called on her at Hotel Marinela Sofia Thursday evening.

After the meeting, the prime minister's deputy press secretary Nazrul Islam briefed reporters.

Responding to the thanks extended by the expatriate Bangladeshis for holding the trial of war criminals, the prime minister said, "We have already executed the verdicts"



PROPOSED POWER PLANT IN GONDAMARA Villages wear deserted look for raids

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, back from Banshkhali

The houses are mostly shut from inside. The males are hardly seen anywhere. The villages seem deserted.

That is the situation prevailing in Gondamara union now, where the government wants to set up a coal-fired power plant but faced huge opposition from the local people.

Tension has been hanging over the villages of the union under Banshkhali upazila since Monday when police started rounding up people accused in different cases, particularly those sued for assaulting police during the April 4 clash between opponents of the power plant and law enforcers. Four people were killed and dozens injured.

After the clash, over 3,000 people were sued in three cases -- two for the murders and the other for assaulting police.

Nurul Amin, a local resident, said police detained his 17-year-old sick son, along with three others, on Tuesday when he was going to the upazila sadar to see a doctor.

"My ill son was released in the wee hours the next day following hectic efforts by some influential people," he said.

One of the four, Abdus Salam, is still in police custody.

Nurul said, "What was my ill son's fault? Why are they harassing the innocent villagers?"

The residents of Gondamara strongly oppose the installation of the 1,224MW coal-based power plant in 650 acres of land because they fear it would displace them, have immense environmental impacts, and hurt their livelihoods.

They demonstrated on several occasions and threatened to resist the move.



Basabo Balurmath in the capital is under a severe threat as the government has already started constructing a boundary wall to turn a portion of the field into a school and a college, depriving the citizens of the joy of an open space. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Another oasis under threat

Govt set to turn portion of Basabo Balurmath into school, college; locals oppose

HELEMUL ALAM

Open fields and greeneries are essential for the wellbeing and safety of any urban community and a healthier physical environment.

So how many parks does Dhaka city need? According to rules, it should be 92, one for each ward. But we have only 54, with several of them having ceased to exist and many threatened.

When it is transparent that there is a huge scarcity of open space and playground, a move is going on to turn a portion of Basabo Balurmath (playground) to a school and a college violating rules.

The initiative under an education ministry project on the field was taken in 2011 and now the ministry has started to construct a boundary.

"I always bring my students here to play cricket," said Kamrul Islam, a teacher of JK Coaching Centre of the area, who along with 15-20 teenagers visits the place every other week. "The place gets quite crowded on a Friday, so we come here on weekdays," he said.

Mubasshar Hussein, vice president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said according to the original plan of Public Works Department (PWD), the place was clearly demarcated as a park but it is now turning into a school and college which is totally unnecessary as huge numbers of educational institutes are there.

Shawpon Chandra Paul, project director of constructing the school and college, said they are constructing the institutions for providing educational facilities to the low income people.

Though there were private educational institutes in the area, there is a scarcity of government schools and colleges, he added.

He said the entrance of the field, which they had cleared earlier to construct the part of the institutions, were being occupied again and shops and other structures have been constructed. Why they (those who are against the project) are not taking initiatives to keep those place open, he asked.

Amirul Islam, deputy project director, said they received three acres of land from Deputy Commissioner's office following all due procedures on July 25, 2011, of which they are implementing their project on two acres.

He said they have left one acre (though they



Without wearing enough protection gears, two men work on a high-voltage transformer installation on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital yesterday. Electricians often die from electrocution in such circumstances but their safety issue remains unaddressed. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

14 trafficking victims return home today

Says Bangladesh envoy in KL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen Bangladeshi trafficking victims, who were rescued by the Malaysian authorities from the Andaman Sea in May last year, will return home this afternoon.

A flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying them is scheduled to land at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 5:30pm, according to Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

The 14 are Nurul Amin, Abdul Aziz, Syed Alam, Mannan, Aziz, Shahadat Hossen, Aiyaz and Saiful Islam of Cox's Bazar, Alim Hossen and Nazir Molla of Jhenidah, Abdul Karim and Abul Hossain of Chittagong, and Naim and Akram of Narsingdi, Begum Shahida Sultana, first secretary at the Labour Wing of the high commission, confirmed The Daily Star on Thursday.

With these 14, the total number of the returnees from Malaysia now stands at 670, she said, adding that 82 more would return shortly.

"We are sending back the rescued migrants, whose nationality verification was confirmed. We will send back the remaining ones soon," added Shahida.

The embassy official said the government was bearing all the repatriation expenses.

A total of 716 Bangladeshi migrants were rescued from Malaysia's Langkawi Island on May 11, and some others were rescued later.

Earlier, over 4,000 Bangladeshis were rescued in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar between May and June last year.

Of them, more than 3,000 have returned home from those countries since last June. And several thousand victims are still missing.

Malaysia, the largest labour receiving country in the Southeast Asia, is a major destination for job seekers of South Asia and adjacent regions.



Members of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council, in a symbolic protest, hold their ear in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday as Shyamal Kanti Bhakta, headmaster of a Narayanganj school, was made to squat holding his ears in public by local Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Salim Osman on May 13. PHOTO: STAR

Ministers castigate Salim Osman for his act, remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protest continued all over the country against Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Salim Osman for humiliating Narayanganj school headmaster Shyamal Kanti Bhakta.

Several ministers also castigated Salim for the heinous act and also for his audacious comments made at the Thursday's press conference, where he refused to apologise for his actions.

The teacher was beaten up by a mob and then forced to squat holding his ears by Salim Osman for allegedly demeaning religion -- an allegation found untrue in a government probe.

"You are an MP. But, you don't know how to keep the dignity of one. Showing your finger, you uttered that you won't seek