

WEATHER
FORECASTYESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURESDHAKA
H 33.6 | L 23.6CHITTAGONG
H 34.4 | L 23.4SYLHET
H 33.1 | L 22.0RAJSHAHI
H 32.3 | L 21.2KHULNA
H 33.5 | L 23.0BARISAL
H 33.4 | L 23.2RANGPUR
H 32.5 | L 22.0COX'S BAZAR
H 33.5 | L 23.5

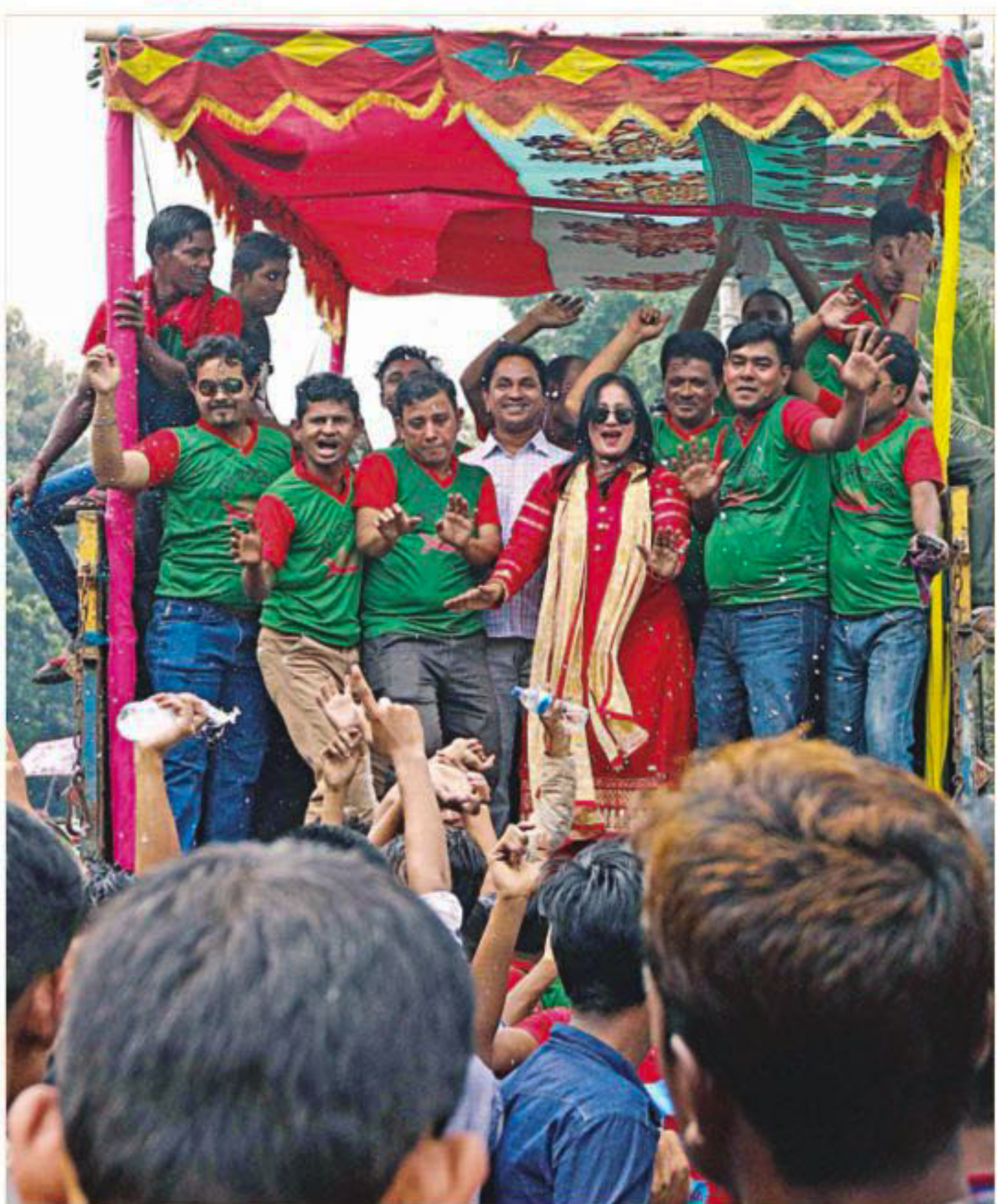
Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may fall slightly over the country, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:26pm and rises tomorrow at 6:00am. Country's highest temperature 35.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Chandpur and lowest 18.0 in Tentulia.



GRAND COUNCIL

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina releases a pigeon to inaugurate the 20th national council of the party, at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday, while the party general secretary, Syed Ashrafur Islam, looks on, *centre*. The occasion takes the look of a national festival, with waves of people converging at the park reveling, from across the country. Foreign guests were also invited to the grand event. The council is expected to elect a new committee of the party today.

PHOTOS: STAR, PID, BSS

Tortured 6-yr-old flees
employer's house

Now in police protection

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A tortured six-year-old domestic help was rescued from Comilla's Chitora Eidgah area yesterday.

The victim is Eva, daughter of Nuru Mia, whose address could not be known immediately.

Residents of the area said she used to work at one Mahbubur Rahman's house, near Kaliazuri Mazar.

Quoting Eva, police said Mahbubur's wife Poly used to torture her for trivial matters and often beat her with hot cooking utensils. They also kept her locked in a room whenever they went out, said police.

Yesterday around 5:00pm, she managed to run away and was rescued by one Faruk Chowdhury. "I found her on the street, crying. She had burn-marks on her arms. So, I informed the police right away," he said.

The couple is absconding, said Abdul Rob, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Thana, adding, Eva, who is in their protection now, has been admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Road crashes kill 4

CITY DESK

Four people, including a nine-year-old boy, were killed and eight others injured in road crashes in three districts yesterday and on Friday.

In Jamalpur, the nine-year-old boy was killed and two others were injured critically when a log-laden truck carrying them plunged into a roadside pond as the driver lost control over the vehicle in Bashuria village under Sarishabari upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Asif, son of Helal Uddin of Sherpur. He along with the two injured were traveling on the truck, said police.

In Chapainawabganj, Rustom Ali, 60, of Choitannypur village was killed and six people were injured when a three-wheeler collided head-on with an auto-rickshaw on Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid land port highway in Bakultala area of Shibganj upazila yesterday.

In Kishoreganj, Khokon Miah, 50, of Shatlamia village of Pakundia was killed as a bus rammed his bicycle at Pakundia upazila headquarters on Friday night. He died on the spot.

Rajshahi city overrun by
RU admission seekers

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

If you are heading to Rajshahi city for the admission tests for the honours programme of Rajshahi University (RU) under 2016-17 session and have no acquaintances there, you are likely to face serious accommodation problem.

Most residential hotels, rest houses and private dormitories in the city have stopped taking reservations two weeks ago.

Around 1.79 lakh admission seekers and their guardians are expected to swarm the city from today as the four-day tests begin tomorrow, said university sources.

The city has at least 50 residential hotels, which cannot accommodate more than 2,000, said Khondoker Hasan, general secretary of Residential Hotel Owners' Association.

"I could not even accommodate some of my old customers," said Hasan, also a hotel owner. He said his hotel rooms were booked within the first week of announcement for the tests early this month.

Different government and non-government offices have 20 guest houses with a capacity for around 150 people, which are already reserved by former and existing government officials, said Faisal Haque, an assistant commissioner of the district administration.

Students of about 1,600 private dormitories, with capacity for housing 50,000, usually share seats with close ones during the tests, said Rajshahi City Corporation acting Mayor Nijamul Azim. "Many residents also accommodate guests. I have arranged housing for eight persons at my home."

Zinat Parvin, a student of RU, who lived in the city's Vinodpur area, said, "Three of us share a room, still we have taken in four admission seekers."

"I feel bad for those who are accommodating me, but I have no other option," said Joya Akther, an admission seeker from Thakurgaon, living as a guest at a mess near the university.

Seeking anonymity, a city corporation official said before they had directed the mosque and madrasas to accommodate the students during the exams. Since there was no elected mayor at present, no one is working towards any solution, he claimed.

RU Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan said some admission seekers would stay at the university's residential halls. "...but hall students must remain responsible for their guests," he said, adding, the university has 17 halls, six for female students, with a capacity of 8,000 students.

In previous years, many admission seekers had to spend nights under the open sky, at bus terminals or railway station, said Jamat Khan, general secretary of Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad.

He said some of the hotel owners have increased the rents; those usually available at Tk 250 are Tk 1,000 and Tk 500 ones have gone up to Tk 1,500. "Even with the hike, there's no room," he added.

"We had appealed to the authorities concerned to close the schools and colleges during the tests so admission seekers can live there, but to no avail," he said.

He said an inhumane situation is created every year when students come to the city for the exams, and female students and guardians are the worst sufferers. The parishad urged the authorities concerned to stay sympathetic to the guests, he said.

[A RU correspondent contributed to the report]

Chinese CPC
team meets
Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-member Chinese delegation from International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) called on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office last evening.

The delegation, led by Zheng Xiaosong, vice minister of the International Department of the CPC, is attending Awami League's 20th national council.

The meeting started around 5:15pm and lasted about an hour, Sayrul Kabir Khan, a staff member of the BNP chairperson's media wing, told The Daily Star.

Several BNP leaders accompanied Khaleda during the meeting, he also said.

Neither of the sides briefed reporters following the conclusion of the meeting.

Meeting sources said BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Khaleda's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabih Uddin Ahmed attended the meeting.

The BNP chief thanked the Chinese delegation for visiting Bangladesh. The two sides also placed emphasis on strengthening ties and increasing communication between the friendly nations, added the sources.

Four of a family
hurt in Dhaka fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four of a family suffered severe burns in a fire believed to be originated from accumulated gas in their Jurain house in the capital early yesterday.

Azad Fakir, 42, his wife Jesmin Begum, 32, a garment worker, their son Rony Fakir, 13, and niece Sharmin Begum, 20, with burns ranging from 38 to 60 percent in different parts including respiratory tracts, are undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said hospital sources.

The fire also left one of their neighbours Sohana, three-and-a-half-year-old, injured. She sustained 10 percent burns as she was standing near the house in Postogola area.

Azad, a worker of a local silver factory, said a fire engulfed his tin-shed house entirely moments after he lit a cigarette inside it. He did smell the gas odour at night but did not bother to pay attention to it.

Fire service officials said their primary investigation suggested that the fire originated as accumulated gas came in contact with flame.

Preferring anonymity, a police official of Kadamtoli Police Station, said while visiting the spot he noticed several leaks in the gas pipeline in the nearby area.

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