


YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 26.8 L 16.4

CHITTAGONG
H 27.0 L 16.7

SYLHET
H 28.0 L 15.4

RAJSHAHI
H 25.8 L 10.0

KHULNA
H 25.7 L 14.8

BARISAL
H 26.5 L 14.0

RANGPUR
H 28.2 L 14.2

COX'S BAZAR
H 28.0 L 18.7

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during mid-night till morning. Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:14pm and rises tomorrow at 06:35am.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Leopold advocated the right of all life on the land to exist.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Aldo Leopold's World

“There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot.”

So begins *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, a classic American book by Aldo Leopold (1887-1948). The book has month-by-month observations on nature, birds, trees, ecology and land use in a 120-acre abandoned farm that Leopold and his family reclaimed and rebuilt in Wisconsin. Leopold was many things: zoologist, botanist, farmer, hunter, woodcutter, ornithologist, poet, writer and father. But he is best known as a prime force behind the wildlife conservation and wilderness movement in the United States.

Leopold's main philosophy was this: the notion that land is a commodity belonging to people is incompatible with conservation and leads to its abuse. When we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. His “land ethic” says that the land and the full spectrum of its inhabitants have the right to exist without regard to its immediate economic value.

Profound thoughts aside, for me his charming *Almanac* dazzles with its poetic and witty observations about nature.

For example, in the February chapter he describes cutting down an oak tree with his saw. Slicing through the trunk, his saw moves backward in time through the tree's life while he makes observations, some historical, others imagined, about the years of its life. Thus, for example, 1908 was marked by a giant forest fire in the region whereas in 1907, a wandering lynx, “looking in the wrong direction for the promised land”, entered a farm where its life promptly ended.

Much of the magic of the book derives from the way Leopold attributes human qualities to birds,

animals, trees - even the wind. Thus, during a flood, birds and mammals accept rising waters with “philosophical detachment.” A “mouse-engineer” that had built a maze of tunnels under the winter snow becomes impatient when the snow melts and cannot wait until nightfall to inspect the damage to his creation, allowing a hawk to snatch him when he leaves the safety of his maze. Even omnivorous rabbits in his farm turn epicurean in their taste, preferring to nibble on hand-planted saplings over wild ones.

But Leopold was also a scientist and details of his experiments enrich the book. He kept meticulous records of the species of wildflowers blooming in his farm. He placed bands on small birds called chickadees and tracked them over several years to learn their lifecycle. He discovered the social reasons behind flocking behaviour of geese.

There is a recent, ironic footnote to Leopold's land ethic. One reason that his farm was difficult as an economic enterprise (and he was able to reclaim it in the first place) was because it was in a sandy region of Wisconsin. The sand imparted little economic value to the land in Leopold's day. However, in recent years, hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” has become an important tool in the extraction of oil and gas, and it turns out that Wisconsin sand is particularly useful for fracking. Thus, oil and gas companies have bought up millions of tons of sand from the “sand counties” of Wisconsin, often turning debt-ridden farmers into overnight millionaires.

For many years, the *Almanac* has been one of my favourite books. It helps me become a better observer of nature, ask the right questions and, most of all, appreciate wild things.

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Barisal youth jailed for stalking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A mobile court on Thursday sentenced a youth to six months' imprisonment for stalking a female student of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barisal city.

The convict Tanvir, 21, of New Circular Road in the city had been stalking the girl for three years, said Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Awlad Hossain.

Locals caught Tanvir in the New Circular Road area when he was stalking the girl on Thursday and handed him over to police.

Later, the executive magistrate of the court Lutfunnessa Khanam jailed him for six months on Thursday night.

Father of the girl said he filed a case accusing Tanvir as he used to stalk his daughter. Tanvir was a drug addict, the father claimed.

Thousands suffer from acute drinking water crisis in Patiya

Residents of four villages tell public hearing in Ctg; allege some factories continue to extract groundwater, dump waste despite HC ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 40,000 residents of four villages in Patiya upazila of Chittagong are suffering from severe drinking water shortage as some factories continue to extract groundwater from the area disregarding a high court ban, locals alleged at a public hearing.

The hearing was organised by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) along with Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) on Thursday.

In the hearing, Mujibur Rahman, a Hulain village resident, read out a written article. He said residents of Hulain, Habilaiddwip, Charkanai and Panchuria are suffering from serious drinking water crisis as most of the 300 tube-wells cannot extract water.

Unplanned industrialisation resulted in mushrooming of industries including Mostafa Paper Products, Ambia Paper Mills, Ambia Dyeing and Knitting Mills,

Hakkani Paper and Pulps Mills, Anwara Paper Mills, Banaful and Co (food products), Banaful Minarel Water, Shah Amanat Dyeing and Knitting in the last 24 years, he said.

They are using large diameter pipes to extract groundwater, resulting in groundwater-level depletion, alleged Mujibur.

Bela filed a writ petition with the High Court in 2015. The court on January 29, 2015 ordered the eight industries to stop extracting ground water and dumping industrial wastes.

Locals alleged only Banaful Mineral Water factory has stopped extracting water, while the others are continuing extracting groundwater and dumping wastes.

On November 26, 2016 the court also ordered the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) to file a report on the current condition. But DPHE has not submitted any report yet, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela.

“We applied to the court to declare the area as a water-stressed one because once declared, the demand of water will be determined through priority...drinking water and household water would get the first precedence,” she said.

“The hearing is not for adjudication but for recording the grievance of people. We invited representatives of the industries, but only one came,” she added.

AHM Mostafa Kamal, deputy general manager of Banaful and Company, termed the crisis a natural phenomenon.

Locals protested his statement instantly.

Chief guest Syeda Sarwar Jahan, additional divisional commissioner of Chittagong, termed it a “manmade” crisis.

Shamshul Huda, executive director of ALRD, presided over the programme, moderated by Syeda Rizwana Hasan in Chittagong District Council Auditorium from 11:00am to 2:30pm.



Around 1,200 bicyclists line up in an 8km queue on the capital's Purbachal highway yesterday in an attempt to set a new record of forming the world's longest single line of moving bicycles on the very day of victory.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

LONGEST LINE OF CYCLISTS

Enthusiasts strive to set world record

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the nation was busy observing Victory Day amid a demonstration of youthful exuberance, a group of enthusiasts yesterday strived to make a record of forming the world's longest single line of moving bicycles on the very day.

Under the banner of BDCyclists, a platform of bicycle riders, around 1,200 bicyclists queued up in a line stretching around 8km on the Purbachal highway in the capital.

Starting from near International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB), they crossed Boalia Bridge over the Turag River and returned to the starting point in a 30-minute ride.

The event's organisers expected to beat the previous record made by 984 cyclists of Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 14 last year.

“We are nearly certain that the new world record has successfully been set as all 1,186 participants maintained the line perfectly,” said Fuad Ahsan Chowdhury, moderator of BDCyclists.

A total 24 stewards and four independent observers inspected the ride and reported to the Guinness World Records authorities right after the event, he added. The results will be published within five or so days, Chowdhury anticipated.

“It is a matter of pride that we will be able to see our country's name in the world record book in the month of victory,” he said.

A participant, Tarique Mohammad, said, “Making a new world record on this very day is another victory for our country, and it became even more special when the cyclists rode together wearing T-shirts resembling our national flag.”

CriticalLink, a voluntary first aid service provider, and BDMotorcyclist, a platform of motorcyclists, supported the event.

20 injured in Khagrachhari BNP-AL clash

UNB, KHAGRACHHARI

At least 20 people, including two policemen, were injured in a clash between local leaders and activists of Awami League and BNP in Khagrachhari town over chanting Victory Day slogans yesterday.

Witnesses said the clash ensued following an altercation between activists of the two parties in front of the district AL office in the morning, when a group of BNP men were returning after placing wreaths at the monuments in the town.

At one stage, the two groups chased each other back-and-forth and hurled bricks at one another, leaving 20 people injured. Later, police brought the situation under control by charging batons and firing blank shots.

Of the injured, local BNP leader MN Absar was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Khagrachhari Additional Police Super Rais Uddin said two policemen were also injured during the clash.

Four listed criminals held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested four listed criminals in Textile Shital Chhaya area under Bayezid Bostami Police Station of Chittagong city early yesterday.

They are Mozammel Hossain Mintu, 30, Shamsul Alam alias Sattar, 30, of Noakhali, Abdur Rahim, 26, of Jessore and Selim Howladar, 26, of Jhalakathi.

Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bayezid Bostami Police Station, said each of the arrestees is an accused in more than one case on different charges including extortion and drug peddling.

Skull, backbone of missing Santal boy found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police recovered the skull and backbone of a six-year-old Santal boy in Charghat upazila of Rajshahi on Thursday, nine days after he and his stepfather went missing.

The boy's mother Arati Rani Paharia identified her son, Deb Kumar Paharia, by the clothes he wore, said Officer-in-Charge of Charghat Police Station Nibaran Chandra Burman.

Deb's body parts were found near a mango tree in the upazila's Nondongachhi Poravita area while his clothes hanging from the tree, added the OC. “Wild animals might have eaten up other parts after the boy was murdered and dumped in the area,” Burman suspected.

Two years ago, Arati left her husband Shambhunath Paharia. Taking Deb with her, she later married one Anil Kumar Paharia of the area. Deb went missing on December 7 when Anil took him out of their home to buy him clothes following an altercation with his wife Arati over family affairs, the OC quoted the victim's family as saying.

Since then, Anil has been missing too while his relatives said he might have gone to India.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two siblings, 12-year-old Sraboni Jaman and eight-year-old Monimuzzaman, have been suffering from Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP) that has developed when they were two years old.

XP is a rare genetic disorder that prevents the body's ability to repair damage caused by ultraviolet (UV) light from sunlight. It can cause severe sunburn, ulcers, skin cancer, and blindness as well as premature death if not diagnosed early and prevented from UV.

Doctors in Bangladesh and India advised the family to protect the kids from ultraviolet light of the sun.

The family's financial condition worsened as they had to sell their properties and use whatever savings they had for medical purposes. As per doctors' advice, they need a house which is totally protected from UV, but it needs a lot of money to construct such a house.

Their father, Tarequzzaman, a small trader in the capital's Uttara, seeks assistances from generous individuals or organisations. His bKash number is 01712263896 and bank account number is 148 103 37520, Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd.

Five wounded in cylinder blast

A CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Five people, including two on-duty cops and an 11-year-old boy, were injured as a gas cylinder exploded in Stadium area of Khagrachhari early yesterday.

Among the injured, the cops -- Md Shahin, Md Ismail, police constables of Khagrachhari police lines -- and Boren Tripura, a government employee, were taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, two others, Tulasi Rani Gosh and Pallob Chowdhury, 11, were sent to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

Witnesses said the incident occurred around 6:20am when Tulasi was pumping gas inside balloons since her husband, a balloon hawker, went to a nearby tea stall.

Shahin and Ismail were deployed at the stadium where a Victory Day parade was about to begin, while Boren came to buy some balloons. Pallob, a resident of the area, was a bystander, said police.

Pro-AL teachers sweep

FROM PAGE 3

vice-president, Shahadath Hossain Azad, joint-secretary, and M Mizanur Rahman, treasurer.

Ruhul KM Saleh, M Kamal Uddin, M Jakariya Rahman, M Alamgir Hossain Bhuiya, M Mahbub Rahman, AHM Aktarul Islam Zillu, Poreh Chandra Barmon, M Mahbul Arefin and M Abdul Mueyed were elected members.

Hatirjheel water taxi service

FROM PAGE 3

Each of the taxis, to be run by Karim Group, has the capacity to carry as many as 30 passengers. And, two more taxis will be added to the fleet.

The minister said they already gave approval for setting up a new police station at Hatirjheel to ensure security in the area, which would soon be inaugurated. Commending the initiative, Asif Ahmed, a private company staff in Sonargaon area, said if maintained properly, the taxis could not only increase transport facilities, but also be used for pleasure trips.

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