

## Winter late

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Some city residents are commenting on social media about this unusual weather condition.

However, parts of the country, especially the northern region, are colder than Dhaka.

Officials at the Met Office said a cyclone recently formed in the Bay of Bengal which later moved towards the Arabian Sea. The cyclone drove the Siberian wind, which causes winter in the region, to the higher surface in the atmosphere. The region includes Dhaka, New Delhi and Kashmir.

Yesterday, the minimum temperature in Dhaka was 18.5 degree Celsius. The country's lowest temperature was recorded in Tentulia at 11.5 degree Celsius.

According to the Met Office, this season's winter temperature is unusually high not only in Dhaka, but in the entire region. The temperature would fall gradually and the winter would set in soon.

Dense fog in rivers has been disrupting ferry and cargo services across the country at night, but the temperature is still higher than usual.

This year, the country's average December temperature is around three degree Celsius higher than the previous years.

The average maximum temperature of this month is 21.45 degree Celsius against 18.25 in 2015, 18.25 in 2014 and 16.75 degree Celsius in 2012.

The average minimum temperature of this month is 15.02 degree Celsius against 10.02 in 2015 and 10.09 degree Celsius in 2014.

## She called

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Maynul, who is codenamed as Musa, forced her to follow him, he alleged. The last time Trisha visited her parents' house was in April. Maynul was also with her. They stayed for a few days there.

Trisha then told her parents that she would go abroad with her husband. She said Maynul would sell his land and with the money, she would apply for a passport. Her parents asked her to let them know before they start so that they could go to airport to see them off.

A week after they left the Saipara village home, Trisha told her mother over phone that their passports and visas were ready and that they were leaving the country in two hours.

"We'll not be available on phone for many days. Don't worry, we'll call you later," Nazma quoted her daughter as saying.

She asked Trisha what they did with their household goods and she replied they sold those to a man at Tk 17,000.

"Since then, their phones were switched off and we had no contacts," Nazma said. The distraught mother felt sick as she could not contact her daughter.

"I cannot sleep since she surrendered," she said. She also claimed that Trisha was innocent. "Maynul compelled her to follow him."

Trisha has a twin sister named Nisha Moni. She also has a brother named Nishan. She married Maynul in 2014 when she was an SSC examinee.

"We did not realise that they were getting involved in militancy. We started suspecting them after the Gulshan café attack," said Nisha, an HSC student.

She claimed that Maynul had good relations with Maj Zahid, his wife and two children and they lived at the same building in the capital's Uttara.

After the Gulshan café attack, Nisha and her mother went to Dhaka looking for Trisha and her family.

## Delhi okays Ken-Betwa river-linking project

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The "last" hurdle for India's ambitious Ken-Betwa river-linking project has been cleared with the wildlife board giving its green signal, the government announced yesterday.

Bangladesh has voiced concern over the impact of the river-linking project in eastern India and on the flow of water in the common rivers concerned to the lower riparian country. India has in the past repeatedly assured Bangladesh that it would not do anything that would harm the lower riparian country.

Indian Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti said in Delhi that her ministry has received wildlife clearance for the multi-crore rupee project, first such initiative aimed at linking inter-state rivers in the country. However, it awaits forest and environment approvals.

## Publisher banned

FROM PAGE 16  
for condemning Manik's arrest in a TV talk show and demanding his release at a rally organised by his friends at Shahbagh.

"Now, the authorities of the Bangla Academy are trying to instigate fundamentalists against me," he alleged.

He said Bangla Academy did not issue any notice before making the decision, and he came to know about it yesterday when his manager went to the academy to collect an application form for the book stall in the fair, scheduled to begin on February 1.

Robin said he would have to incur huge losses. Besides, the progressive readers would be deprived of their desired books.

"I think that it is an attack on freedom of expression," he said. The incumbent director general [of Bangla Academy] attempted to shut down his book stall in 2009 too, he alleged.

Asked about Robin's allegations, Bangla Academy DG Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan said Robin protested at the academy's decision to shut down Ba-Dwip Prakashan's stall.

Instead of talking to the authorities concerned, Robin demonstrated against the decision, said the DG, adding that he could not do that taking part in the book fair as a publisher.

"The decision was made against

"The NITI Aayog [earlier Planning Commission] had earlier recommended funding pattern for the project as per Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme. I've requested the Aayog that the funding pattern has to be 90:10 [centre: state sharing pattern] or 100 percent [centrally-funded]."

"The moment the funding pattern is decided, the project will be launched," she said.

The minister did not specify by when the funding pattern would be finalised for the river-linking project.

The Ken-Betwa inter-linking project is the first of the several other projects of linking major rivers across India.

The project is expected to irrigate 6.35 lakh hectares of land at an estimated cost of Rs 9,393 crore in drought-prone Bundelkhand region covering parts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh states.

Shrabon Prokashani for breaching the code of conduct of the book fair, not for any personal vengeance," he told The Daily Star last night.

Shamsuzzaman also refuted the allegation of instigating fundamentalists against Robin.

Bangla Academy Director Jalal said there was no provision for serving notices upon the publisher whilst making such decisions.

Bangla Academy's decision was being heavily criticised in social media.

Meanwhile, a group of writers, artists and cultural activists yesterday announced that they would stage a demonstration in front of Bangla Academy at 3:30pm today, protesting at the academy's decision.

Established in 1998, Shrabon Publications is mainly known for publishing books on political issues. Upon invitation of the German government, it took part in the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest trade fair for books, three times, from 2007 to 2009, Robin said.

The executive council also decided not to allocate stalls for Rongin Ful, Oikya and Nil Pori publications for the next book fair for "selling pirated books" during the last book fair and Ba-Dwip Prakashan for "publishing a controversial book", Jalal said.

## Hamid says

FROM PAGE 1  
meeting with Hamid at Bangabhaban.

At the hour-long talks with a 12-member JSD delegation led by its President Hasanul Haq Inu, Hamid appreciated the party's proposal to enact such a law, said Shirin, a lawmaker from the JSD.

The tenure of the EC led by Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad will expire in February next year.

It is possible to enact the law before the period of the present EC ends if all political parties can reach a consensus in this regard, the JSD lawmaker said.

"The president supported our proposal in principle terming it a good suggestion," Shirin said, adding that it is the jurisdiction of the president to decide who he would talk to on the enactment of the law.

About the dialogue, she said the party submitted a seven-point proposal to Hamid, suggesting how the EC should be strengthened.

"We have given highest importance to making a law in line with the country's supreme charter on the formation of election commission. We think the law will strengthen the country's electoral system."

The JSD also recommended constituting EC with dignitaries who believe

in the spirit of the country's Liberation War.

A search committee should be formed with judges, one each from the Appellate Division and the High Court, and individuals in different constitutional posts. It will seek names for the posts of chief election commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners from political, social and civil organisations and registered voters, according to the proposal.

The committee will then select three people against the post of CEC and 12 people against four election commissioner posts.

The names of the 15 selected would be sent to the president who will pick candidates for appointment. At least one election commissioner will be female. Before the appointments, the president will make public those names, the JSD said in its proposal.

In a press release issued by the president's office, Hamid expressed the hope that a strong EC would be made possible through sharing of opinions by political parties during talks with him.

President Hamid earlier held dialogues with the BNP, Jatiya Party, Liberal Democratic Party and Krishok Sramik Janata League on EC formation. He is scheduled to sit with the Workers Party this afternoon.

## 97 IS militants

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What began as a rapid push into the city in early November has turned into a block-by-block war, with IS inflicting high casualty rates on advancing Iraqis.

The military campaign has forced nearly 100,000 people to flee Mosul since the Iraqi operation against IS began.

Aid organizations say they fear the fighting could result in the displacement of more than a million people. A number of groups are helping families displaced by the war.

The government has encouraged civilians in Mosul -- where a million or more people may still live -- to stay in their homes if possible.

## 11kg gold bars

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the smuggling of the consignment.

Gold was previously smuggled into the country in most cases from Dubai, Malaysia and Singapore, a customs official said. But in recent times, several consignments came from Oman and Qatar, and were seized at airports, which means smugglers have changed their routes.

## City for one

FROM PAGE 16  
and the surrounding desert, Olivier documented the ghost town and its partially complete architectural marvels.

Entitled "A Failed Utopia" his stunning -- if oddly surreal -- collection of images focus on the city's ambitious developments, rather than its "empty streets."

"I was just keen to take my time, and walk through different districts, and almost in a catalogue way, find as many interesting structures as possible," he says of covering parts of the 355-square-kilometer (137 square mile) sprawl.

"There's the super-modern edgy Ordos Museum [by MAD Architects], the more boring, modern Chinese residential blocks, unfinished projects from Ordos 100 [a project by Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron and Chinese artist Ai Weiwei to invite 100 architects from 27 countries to design for Ordos] as well as the influence of Soviet-style architecture," explains Olivier.

"This mix is only really possible in China because it's the only country that is both communist and has the money and power to attract so many architects from abroad."

Though Olivier admits the story has been covered in the news media, he feels that the ghost town tag overlooks the reality of the city's continued expansion.

"Foreigners consider the city to be abandoned. Chinese consider the city to be still developing," he explains.

"A lot of the early news reports focus on it being a failed, weird place -- but it's also a huge accomplishment and people there are not necessarily unhappy, there is a huge sense of hope. You have to respect that on a certain level."

## No tax on CO2 emissions in China's new law

AFP, Beijing

China has passed a law that levies taxes on pollution, but ignores carbon dioxide, one of the major contributors to global warming, according to the web site of the country's highest legislative body.

The National People's Congress (NPC) standing committee passed the law, the first to tax polluters, on Sunday, less than a fortnight after a red alert for smog left more than 20 cities in the country's northeast choking under a heavy haze.

Polluters will be charged for contributing to air, water and noise pollution, according to a copy of the legislation on the NPC's official web site.

## Emotional tributes

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the large red-brick mansion on a leafy square in the upmarket Highgate area.

"It was my generation, it's absolutely shocking," said Walkden, who came from nearby Finchley, to the posh neighbourhood adjoining Hampstead Heath.

Michael was found dead on Sunday at his other home in Goring, a village on the River Thames west of London.

"Everybody who's been important to me has been ripped away this year -- David Bowie, Victoria Wood," Walkden said, referring to the late rock legend and a much-loved British comedian who also died in 2016.

She said she often listened while driving to Michael, who shot to fame in the pop duo Wham! with a string of hits including "Last Christmas", "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" and "Careless Whisper".

"He had so many strong songs. I wanted to share some of them on Facebook but how can you stop? There are so many," Walkden said in front of a growing collection of roses and lilies, candles and notes.

"You have been loved, you were loved, you will be loved. We grew up with you and you spoke for us," read one note. Another said: "You are a beautiful soul who shone a bright light in this world".

"Shocked and sad... He was a great talent, person and community member," read a note stuck to a yellow bucket containing a plant of small pink roses.

"HE SHAPED MY LIFE"

One man quietly kissed his hand and

then placed it on a card laid on the pavement outside the house.

Fans since the early 1990s, Michael and Dample Keen, 30 and 32, told AFP they were "shocked".

Mags Sorrell, 60, said she had seen Michael performing in concert around a dozen times.

"On the stage, he looked at his happiest," she said.

"He was not only a singer, he was an artist. He was an amazing songwriter," she said.

Leandros Kalisperas, 39, who said that he like Michael was of a Greek Cypriot background from north London, brought flowers, a candle and a note.

"He shaped my life," he said, wiping away a tear.

Kalisperas remembered first listening to George Michael as a child in his older brother's room.

"For me there was no one else that can take us to that high, joyous place," said Kalisperas, adding that he saw George Michael in concert several times.

"Where do you find such a hero in our community?" he said.

Similar floral tributes were being paid in Goring.

One card, signed "Tracy", said: "Dear George, My heart is broken, you have gone too soon. Thank you for sharing your talent with the world".

Another said simply: "We will miss you".

Michael had been working on a documentary about his life and a new album due to be released next year.

Kalisperas said: "I hope he has left something for us!"

## Ashulia RMG hub abuzz

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would be allowed to give his opinion. The committee would decide about their jobs later," Azad added.

Everything would be done according to the labour law. If any worker was finally sacked, he would be paid termination benefits, the businessman said.

The MD of another factory said he has suspended over 127 workers so far for their alleged involvement in looting, vandalising and altercations.

"I will talk to my lawyers to give the workers termination benefits as soon as possible," the MD told The Daily Star over the phone on condition of anonymity.

The number of suspended workers is more than 1,600, said the MD who has over 12,000 employees in his six units.

Yesterday, many workers were not allowed to enter their workplaces for their alleged involvement in the unrest, according to security guards of some factories.

Workers seemed happy to see their factories reopened.

"I am happy that the factory has reopened after two weeks," said Rahim Akhter, an operator at a garment fac-

tory in Ashulia.

He, however, said their wages should be hiked as prices of essentials and house rent have gone up.

"No untoward incident was reported yesterday at Ashulia. The workers resumed work peacefully and production in the factories was smooth," said Siddiqui Rahman, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Suspension of workers had been an issue of a particular factory, Siddiqui said, adding that the decision to reinstate the workers would be taken by that factory.

Members of law-enforcement agencies were deployed in Ashulia for maintaining law and order, reports a correspondent.

A section of garment workers started boycotting work on December 11 demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 16,000 instead of Tk 5,300.

The authorities of the garment factories later decided to shut down their units in fear of a massive labour unrest and spillover of demonstrations at neighbouring factories.

## Senegal defends its UN Israel settlement vote

AFP, Dakar

Senegal yesterday defended its vote at the UN Security Council to halt Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory, after Israel decided to recall its ambassador to Dakar and to suspend its aid programme.

"Senegal's position must be saluted. The international community hails Senegal's stance, especially the Muslim nations," government spokesman Seydou Gueye said in a statement carried by national television.

"Senegal abided by its diplomatic vision. Since 1975, Senegal has been a member of the (UN) Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights

of the Palestinian People," Gueye said.

Asked about Israel's suspension of all its aid programmes in the west African nation, the spokesman said the government had not yet been officially informed of the decision.

"When it is informed of such a decision, it will issue a response," Gueye said.

He did not comment on Israel's move to recall its ambassador to Dakar.

Senegal, one of the UN Security Council's 10 non-permanent members, re-established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1995.

The landmark UN resolution was passed Friday after the United States abstained.



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