

WEATHER FORECAST

| YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES | DHAKA | MYMENSINGH | CHITTAGONG | SYLHET | RAJSHAHI | RANGPUR | KHULNA | BARISAL | COX'S BAZAR |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| H 25.2 L 15.4 | H 26.4 L 14.0 | H 25.5 L 14.8 | H 27.3 L 13.0 | H 24.4 L 11.0 | H 24.7 L 12.8 | H 24.6 L 13.2 | H 25.5 L 12.5 | H 27.4 L 17.2 | |

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Night and day temperatures may rise slightly, says Met Office. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:47pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am.** Country's highest temperature 29.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Teknaf and lowest 08.0 in Sreemangal.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Sunset on a mudflat, Nijhum Dwip.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Nijhum Dreams

Five days after returning from Nijhum Dwip, what I remember most is the quality of the light. Intensified by the reflection of the sea and water everywhere but diluted by the ever-present moisture and fog, thick or thin, it had its own dreamlike quality, illuminating close objects crystal clear and larger than life while sending far away objects even farther, blurred by the haze.

I also remember the audacity of her people. Having to struggle against the elements, their sun-burned, leathery faces told so many stories: of the storms they had faced, of the intense heat of the summer and the drenching of the monsoon, of braving the sea every day in their small boats to set up their nets and then waiting patiently for their catch.

I remember the dependence on the tide, which, like clockwork twice a day, governed the lives of people here. The tide dictated when you can arrive and when you can leave. If you embark a boat while the tide is receding you have to move quickly to avoid being stuck on the mud. And those boats looking funny parked on the sand? They are waiting for the tide to take them home.

I remember the intense smell of small prawns in Namar Bazar, piles of them drying in the sun on platforms right in the middle of the street. The same prawns, served sautéed with onions at the *jhupri* restaurant where we ate our meals, were delicious like nothing else we had eaten.

I remember the trees. The gorgeous mangrove keora trees, forests of them towering 40 feet or higher, bottoms neatly pruned to the height that a deer can reach to eat the leaves standing on its hind legs. And juvenile ones, perhaps only ten feet tall, growing in

the middle of ponds and *dobas* like self-contained islands with their own mangrove roots shooting up in a circle around them. And not a jackfruit tree in sight because they cannot survive submersion.

I remember the mud, so fine, the colour of rust and ash. This is the silt carried hundreds of miles from higher lands by the mighty rivers of the delta that accumulated under the ocean before raising its mighty head. It sits peacefully at last, while birds play in it and crabs run busy errands. But it did not welcome my feet which sunk in it, and it stuck to me as I tried to wash it off.

I remember the firewood store, with *lakri* neatly laid out in rows of a tall shelf with square boxes, and the fish net store, which had a hundred intricate items related to fishing and fishing nets. Smart storekeepers always know the priority of their customers.

I remember the hotel, Nijhum Resort, clean and welcoming, with a hard-working and friendly staff. Ritz-Carlton, eat your heart out.

I remember the birds, of course. The black and white flocks of pied avocets with scuttling about with their head in the mud, the Indian skimmers with orange-red beaks with a long lower mandible to catch fish while skimming the water, and the myriads of waders in the mudflats.

Nijhum Dwip in the Bay of Bengal is a remote southern outpost of Bangladesh. The char emerged from the ocean in the 1950s. Bangladeshis have settled it slowly but steadily, with about 30,000 people inhabiting its 22 square miles.

Can you re-visit dreams? I sure plan to return to Nijhum Dwip.

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Man burns wife with acid 'out of mistrust'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman of Tangail who suffered burns in a recent acid attack allegedly carried out by her husband "out of mistrust" has demanded justice for the crime.

Sharmin Akhter, 25, is being treated at the Burn & Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

She said that after the attack, her husband, Mazam Mia, 30, tried to establish that "a thief threw the acid" on her, at Basail of Tangail in the early hours of January 26.

Mazam, a street vendor, was arrested the next day.

Victim's brother Danis Mia told The Daily Star recently that when Sharmin was sleeping with her two children around 12:30am, suddenly she felt a fire burning her face, neck and chest.

After waking up, Sharmin saw her husband with a small container, who was running outside, shouting at the "thief", he said quoting his sister. She was taken to Basail Upazila Health Complex and then to DMCH.

Danis said the couple got married seven years ago, but the relationship was not going well as her husband was "attracted to other

women", and he often spent the night outside.

He also alleged that two years back Sharmin was forced to take poison following a feud over her husband's "affair".

Recently Sharmin asked her husband to bring some anti-allergy medicine. But when she took the medicine on January 25 evening, she fell into a deep sleep, Danis claimed.

Nurul Islam Khan, officer-in-charge of Basail Police Station, said police first arrested Mazam on January 27, following a case filed over the incident by victim's father.

After primary investigation, police later arrested Mazam's aide Musa Mia, 40, an auto-rickshaw driver, who was asked to throw acid on Sharmin in exchange for Tk 46,000, said Shaymal Kumar Dutta, investigation officer of the case.

Both the arrestees confessed to throwing acid on her, at a Tangail court on January 29, he added. Quoting the arrestees, the investigation officer said Mazam mistrusted his wife suspecting that she was having an extra-martial affair with a relative.

Denying the allegation, Sharmin demanded stern punishment for the culprits, while talking to this correspondent at DMCH.

Physicians protest SSC question on 'greedy doctor'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two associations of physicians yesterday strongly condemned a question of the SSC examination which portrays a "greedy doctor".

Bangladesh Medical Association and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip) demanded that the persons involved in preparing the question be punished within three days.

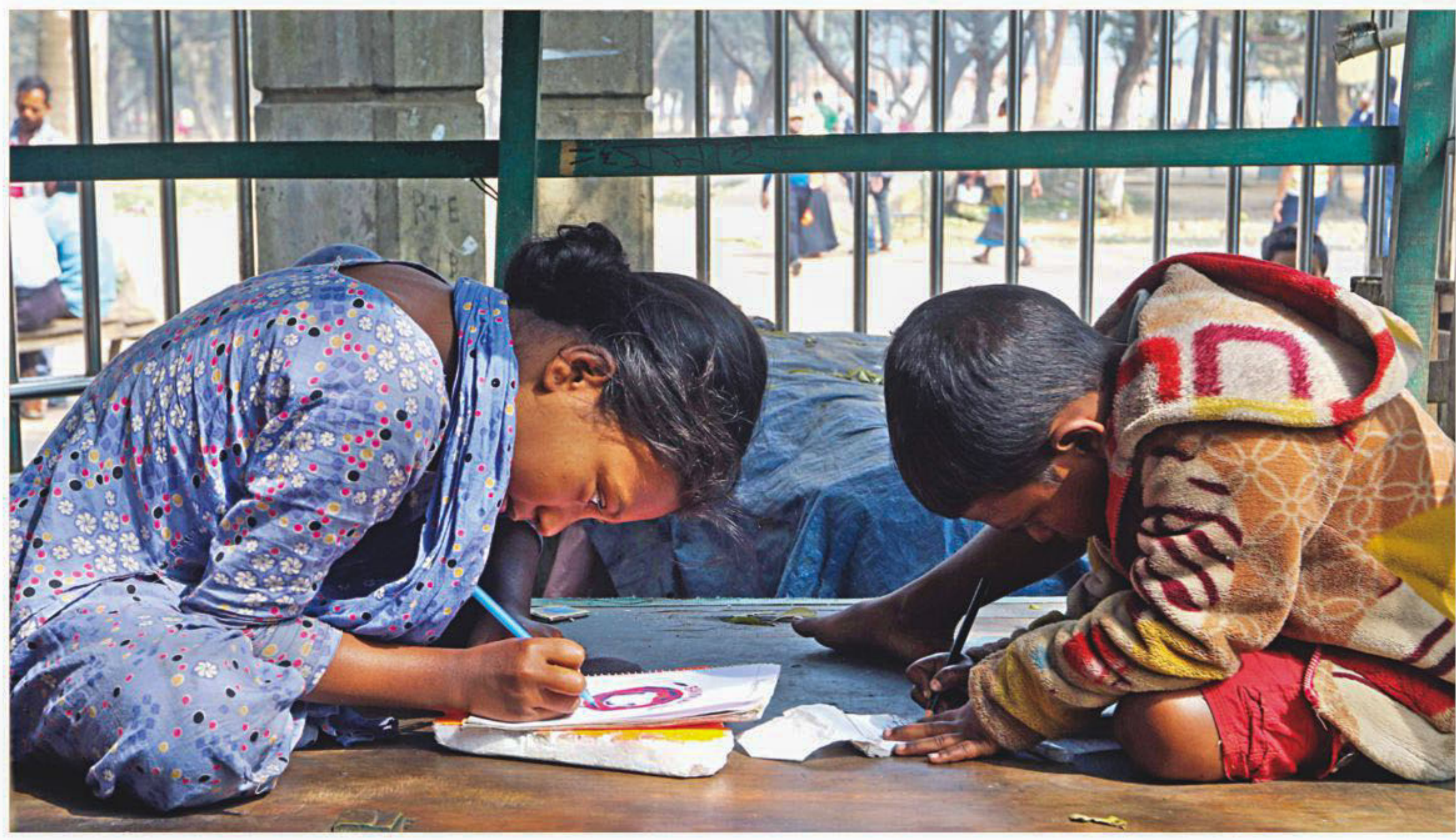
A question of the Bangla (Paper-I) reads that Mr Zahed is a greedy doctor, who always runs after money while his friend Mr Sagir spends his money for the social welfare and he believes a huge amount of wealth is not required to lead a good life.

In a press release, BMA president Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and secretary general Ehteshamul Haque Chowdhury said the question left a negative impression about the dignified profession on the tender young minds.

The persons involved should be forced to seek a public apology; otherwise the doctors will be compelled to take "any measure" to defend dignity of the profession, they said.

Separately, Swachip president M Iqbal Arslan and secretary general MA Aziz said in their statement that it was a stigma for the nation that false, fabricated, and misleading information was given to the young generation.

They drew attention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and requested action against those involved.



They are just two street children, deprived and neglected. They do not have expensive drawing pencils, paper or instruments, but they have curious minds to translate their ideas into shapes on ragged paper. The two were caught sitting on an abandoned rickshaw van near the main entrance to the Amar Ekushey book fair ground at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Book fair abuzz with children's chatter

MAHDI AL MUHTASIM



Arshiya Roy was having too much of a good time to pay heed to her mother.

The two and a half-year-old was busy moving around a platform setup under a banyan tree at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

The platform, Shishu Chhattar, has been dedicated to children there for the month-long Amar Ekushey book fair, where they can play and learn at the same time.

Posters consisting pictures of vegetables and healthy food items were laid down, along with Bangla alphabets, which children had to identify and were given stickers and cards as gifts.

"Both my husband and I work," said Arshiya's mother Apama Roy, a banker, while keeping an eye on her daughter. "It's a very appreciable arrangement as the kids will get a chance to learn while enjoying," she said.

Arshiya, meanwhile, screamed with joy as she won a sticker for identifying different fruits.

The fair ground was abuzz with chattering children enjoying the Shishu Prohor or Children's Hours.

The young readers not only got to buy their favourite books but also were enthralled to see favourite characters of TV show Sisimpur's Halum, Ikri and Tuktuki roaming around the premises.

"I love watching Sisimpur on TV and so I bought several story and comic books," said Samina Akhter Mim, a playground student.

While Ahadul Islam, a preschooler, was flipping the pages of a picture book "Sundarboney Banbhajan" (Picnic at the Sundarbans) published by Sesame Workshop, the publisher's staff were busy helping the children with fun-filled activities.

Yesterday being a weekly holiday, long queues were seen in the afternoon at the Bangla Academy and the Suhrawardy Udyan.

Children were also happy to see writer Anisul Hoque during the Children's Hours.

"Shishu Prohor and Shishu Chhattar are very attractive features of the fair for the kids. The School authorities should bring the students here," Anisul said. "There is no alternative to reading books."

The book fair also attracted enthusiastic preschoolers who are yet to start learn-

Books on fairy tales, ghosts, puzzles, alphabets, and cartoons as well as comic books were in high demand among children.

Shishu Prohor is being held Fridays and Saturdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm during the month of the book fair at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

INT'L LITERARY CONFERENCE

The third day of the literary conference started yesterday with a discussion on Bangla poems at Bangla Academy.

Shyamal Kanti Das, a poet from West Bengal, India, and Prof Masuduzzaman presented keynote speech at the



Children overjoyed seeing characters of TV show Sisimpur at the fair.

ing how to read or write.

Two-year-old Radoa was all smiles as she carried a picture book on fruits and vegetables on one hand while holding her father's finger with the other.

A huge crowd was also seen at the stall of Shilpakala Academy.

Sixth grader Sazid Hossain of St Gregory's High School and College bought a book on general knowledge "Ei Prithibite Manush" while Mubashshira Tabassum, a second grader of Shahid Anwar Girls School, bought a children's newspaper named "Jalpore Pata Nore".

programme presided over by poet Asad Chowdhury.

In the afternoon, writers and litterateurs from China, India and Bangladesh took part in a discussion on Bangla literary non-fiction, presided over by Pabitra Sarkar of India.

Yang We Ming Soma of China sang two songs of Rabindranath Tagore and discussed the Nobel laureate's literary work.

Discussions on "Literatures on the Liberation War" and "Interaction of Literature and Folklore" were held during the last segment of the event.



Dr AR Mallick's anniversary of death today

CITY DESK

Today is the 20th death anniversary of Dr AR Mallick, an eminent educationist and the first technocrat finance minister of the country, says a press release.

On the occasion, a memorial discussion and a milad mahfil will be held at RKB Mallick School and College at his village home in Rajapur of Dhamrai, Dhaka. Food will be distributed among the orphans in Dhaka.

Dr Mallick was professor at the University of Pennsylvania, USA in the early 60s and the founding vice-chancellor of Chittagong University. He was president of the Liberation Council of Intelligentsia in 1971, the first education secretary, the first high commissioner to India. He was also elected chairman of Asian Development Bank.

Dr AR Mallick Lecture Hall was inaugurated at Dhaka University recently. Dr Mallick began his academic and professional career as a lecturer in the department of history in 1941.

His publications include "British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal" and "Amar Jibon Kotha O Bangladesher Mukti Sangram". Bangla Academy has recently published "Dr. AR Mallick Sharak Grontho" comprising articles by renowned personalities from home and abroad, along with 50 commemorative photographs and texts of his speeches.

Two classrooms, 800 students in a school!

UNB, B'baria

Recognised as a model school in 1995, Aliabad Model Government School in Nabinagar upazila of the district has got only two classrooms for its 800 students, forcing many to attend their classes under the open sky.

The school was established in 1939 and got recognition as a model school in 1995 for its good performance.

While the number of students in the lone model school in the upazila has surged to

800 over the years, it still has only two classrooms.

Among 11 classes scheduled each day, nine classes are held under the open sky.

Headteacher of the school Rezaul Karim said, "Attending classes regularly on the school compound under the open sky amid cold in the winter and scorching sun in the summer is also unbearable."

Moreover, educational materials including students' books get damaged due to dust and rain, he added.



Students in front of Sylhet Agricultural University before starting a cleaning drive in the city's Tilagarh Eco Park area yesterday. Pradhikar, an animal rights and environmental organisation of the university, organised the event.

PHOTO: STAR