

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 35.0 | L 26.0

MYMENSINGH H 33.5 | L 24.0

CHITTAGONG H 34.2 | L 27.5

SYLHET H 34.3 | L 23.2

RAJSHAHI H 36.4 | L 24.0

RANGPUR H 33.0 | L 24.2

KHULNA H 36.6 | L 23.5

BARISAL H 36.4 | L 25.0

COX'S BAZAR H 34.7 | L 27.0

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:33 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:17am.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Nijhum Dwip Bicycle

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Bicycle Dreams

I saw this well-kept bicycle at Namar Bazar in Nijhum Dwip earlier this year. It brought back many memories.

I got my first bicycle when I was eight years old, living in Sylhet. Being too short for my feet to reach the pedals, I quickly learned to ride by inserting by leg through the frame and foregoing the comfort of the saddle. But my range was restricted inside our sprawling home. Real freedom came a year later when I was taller and could sit properly on the saddle. We moved to a new house in a newly developed neighbourhood of mostly empty space and narrow paved roads. I could ride freely, like the wind.

Since those days I have felt a special attraction for bicycles. On short notice, without the hassle of petrols, drivers or paperwork, the clumsy looking device became my engine of freedom. There is something inherently gratifying about going fast on my own power, without help from fossil fuels. Then there is the feeling of the wind on my face.

In my teenage years my uncle helped me procure a Russian bicycle with its own "dynamo" for the headlight. I rode this bicycle on Dhaka roads, which, being empty, afforded me speed. However, I did so without my father's approval and a friend, who once saw me speeding on the road from his second floor flat, chided me strongly about my unsafe ways.

As an adult I took up bicycling in California. I was so hooked that I went to a bicycle store and bought two bicycles simultaneously. One was a racer, a Lemond Tourmalet, built lean, tight, and lightweight like a sports car.

I went fast but the rider's bent posture was uncomfortable. The other was a divinely pleasurable Schwinn cruiser with a soft, padded saddle.

Returning to live in Bangladesh several years ago, I brought my bicycles with me and quickly realised why mountain biking is so wonderful in Bangladesh. That's because there are no mountains here.

As anyone who has climbed mountains on bicycles will attest, going uphill on a bicycle is painful. Somehow all the pleasure and advantages of riding a bicycle turn against you. Your lungs burn, your thighs scream, and your entire body rebels against this preposterous proposition. I had this experience some years ago when I encountered the Cardamom Mountains in Cambodia while riding my bicycle from Bangkok to Angkor Wat.

Never again. Give me the delta plains of Bangladesh any day.

In fact there is no end to beautiful bicycle rides in Bangladesh. The trick is to avoid the main roads and bicycle on the smaller pathways. One can go to any village and start riding through the walking trails. Tea gardens also offer bucolic experiences as one can ride for miles through their paths, crossing several plantations. The haors in winter offer endless open areas for bicycling through.

For a number of reasons, these days I have fallen out of bicycling. But every time I see a bicycle that is treasured by its owner, my heart misses a beat.

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Pregnant woman killed 'by husband'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pregnant woman was allegedly killed by her husband following a family feud at Dokhin Goran in the capital's Khilgaon early yesterday.

The deceased Mahmuda Akhter Munni, 26, an eight-month pregnant and mother of two children, got married with Saiful Al Mamun, 35, a garment official nine years ago.

The victim's relatives claimed that the couple used to fight over Mamun's extra-marital affair.

Yesterday around 12:30am, when Mamun wanted to go outside, Munni interrupted him and insisted not to go. A heated conversation sparked between them and Mamun beat her mercilessly, claimed the victim's aunt Jannatul.

Mahmuda's brother, Shahadat, who used to live

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Woman disrobed, beaten over land dispute

Jubo League president, UP member arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Jubo League leader and a union parishad member of Thakurgaon town were arrested on Thursday night for allegedly beating a woman by disrobing her.

The arrestees are Md Rayhan, 35, Jubo League president of Jagannathpur union, and Kedarnath, 52, union parishad member.

The 45-year-old woman filed a case with Thakurgaon Police Station on Wednesday accusing seven to eight persons, including Rayhan and Kedarnath.

The other accused are UP member Maleka Begum, 45, Aiub Ali, 57, Juba League activist Nur Islam, 52, Abdullah, 51, and Anisur Rahman, 45.

According to the case statement, she, a divorcee, recently purchased a piece of land along with a neighbour, 55, a local grocery shop owner.

She claimed that the local UP chairman had his eye on the property for a while.

On May 7, around seven to eight people belonging to the chairman forcibly took her and the neighbour to the union parishad complex around 6:00pm.

They demanded Tk 1 lakh and told them

to hand over the land.

When they refused, the men started beating them with tree branches inside the complex beside the chairman's chamber.

While beating, they also disrobed her, she alleged.

At one stage, she went to the chairman for mercy, but he allegedly ordered the men to continue the beating. She also told the chairman that she was a diabetes patient but they kept on beating her, she claimed.

Later, locals rescued them and took them to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

While talking to this correspondent, the woman said, "The chairman's goons spread rumors that I had an illicit relationship with my neighbour so that he can grab the land."

Protesting the incident, Suchorita Dev, general secretary of the district unit of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, demanded punishment for the perpetrators including the chairman. "We will also form a human chain at Thakurgaon intersection today," she said.

Contacted over the phone, UP Chairman Md Alauddin, said, "I was not involved in the incident. Locals brought the woman to the

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NBR asked to sue ex-UNDP country director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) on Thursday advised NBR to prosecute a former resident representative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh for evading tax and laundering money.

A probe committee of the CIID in its report made the recommendation to the NBR (National Board of Revenue) based on its primary findings that the former UNDP official, Stefan Priesner, has sold his vehicle, procured under duty-free privilege, to a non-privileged person.

The vehicle in question was seized on November 28 in 2016.

However, Elizabeth D Costa, communications adviser to the UNDP, told The Daily Star that Stefan Priesner fully complied with all the laws of Bangladesh pertaining to the sale of the vehicle. He was UNDP

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives a memento from Sheikh Dr Abdullah Bin Mohammed Bin Ibrahim Al Ai-Sheikh, speaker of Majlis Ash-Shura or Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, at her office on Thursday. A Saudi delegation led by the speaker of the Shura Council earlier held a meeting with the Bangladesh premier.

PHOTO: BSS

CITIZENSHIP, REPATRIATION OF ROHINGYAS Dhaka seeks EP assistance

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has requested the European Parliament to help Rohingyas regain their Myanmar citizenship with full rights, responsibilities and dignity.

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Anisul Huq and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam made the call during a meeting with Members of the European Parliament (MEP) in Brussels on Thursday, said a foreign ministry press release yesterday.

Earlier on May 10, at a meeting with European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos in Brussels, the Bangladesh

side referred to gross violations of human rights of Muslim population in Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State and sought a sustained and strong EU support in resolving the Rohingya refugee issue.

Both the sides also discussed and agreed to work closely to combat the scourge of global terrorism and violent extremism.

According to an estimate made by the UN in March this year, more than 75,000 people have fled to Bangladesh from Rakhine since Myanmar's military launched an operation on October 9, 2016.

In 1978, during a major influx of Rohingyas from Myanmar, Bangladesh

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Next budget to be 'best' in my life

Says Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith on Thursday said the upcoming budget for 2017-18 fiscal year will be the "best budget" of his life.

"We will increase the revenue growth up to 30 percent in the upcoming fiscal year," he said while addressing a pre-budget meeting with editors and managing directors or chief executive officers of different

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An aerial view of the Shahbagh area. Commuters heaved a sigh of relief as the capital witnessed less traffic jams on the streets yesterday for Shab-e-Barat holiday. The photo was taken around noon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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