

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 30.0 L 26.6

MYMENSINGH H 28.2 L 24.8

CHITTAGONG H 30.0 L 25.9

SYLHET H 26.8 L 25.6

RAJSHAHI H 30.5 L 25.6

RANGPUR H 27.5 L 26.0

KHULNA H 32.5 L 28.0

BARISAL H 31.5 L 25.2

COX'S BAZAR H 29.5 L 25.5

Rain accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country, says Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:34pm and rises tomorrow at 5:33am.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Bounties of nature are endless

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Respecting Nature

I recently met Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, a writer of American-Indian heritage, and learned about her work. A professor of botany and environmental science at the State University of New York, she is an award-winning nature writer with expertise on moss (briology). With clarity and wisdom, she blends Western scientific discipline with traditional Native American thought.

Robin's teachings about the relationship between people and nature are in the context of America. But I found parallels with many issues we face today in Bangladesh, such as sustainable agriculture, deforestation, habitat loss for birds and wildlife, and balancing development with environmental protection.

It is impossible to summarise all of Robin's thoughts in this short essay. Instead, let me focus on one aspect of her philosophy: the grammar of how humans relate to non-human life.

Robin points out that in English, the word "it" is the pronoun for all things in nature. In other words, nature is treated as an object. This objectification, she argues, leads to moral exclusion - that is, we feel no ethical obligation towards nature - and precludes us from respecting nature.

Use of "it", the inanimate pronoun is thus a precursor to our view of land as property to be farmed, mined or built upon, and trees, fruits, birds, cattle, fish, etc. as resources to be harvested and exploited.

Perhaps it is easiest to demonstrate the effect of "it" with a counterexample. If you saw your mother cooking in the kitchen, would you ever say, "It is making soup?" No! You would accord her more respect.

In Robin's native Potawatomi language and thought, most things in nature are treated as animate beings, as subjects, not objects. "Birds, bugs and berries are spoken of with the same respectful grammar as humans are," she says. This respect and gratitude towards all things in nature brings

them into moral inclusion.

In today's world, the relationship between humans and nature remains one-way and very broken, with possible catastrophic consequences for humanity. Instead of being thankful to the earth for providing everything, we accelerate our exploitation of nature. Robin argues we must return the favour, starting with respect and gratitude. This, in turn, can lead to reciprocity, for example, by rejuvenating broken ecosystems, or reintroducing plants or animals that we have extirpated from our land.

But this process starts in the mind, with language. Instead of using "it", Robin proposes we use a new pronoun, "ki" (plural: "kin") to address things in nature. It is derived from a Potawatomi word for "a being of the earth". Adoption of this pronoun will strengthen our kinship with the earth, she says.

A deeply personal experience during my formative years taught me to respect nature. During the Liberation War of 1971, my family escaped from approaching Pakistani soldiers to our ancestral home in the remote village of Shilghat. There, we found protection in a world that was, until then, unknown to this city boy. Living on basic food grown on the land, feasting on jackfruits, lychees and mangoes from village trees and playing in the fields, streams and rivers I learned how the earth provides quietly and ceaselessly.

The forests, jungles and rural areas of Bangladesh - including Sundarban - gave shelter and protection to many Freedom Fighters while they carried out their guerrilla warfare during our Liberation War.

Four and a half decades later, on the verge of shaking off the yokes of poverty, it is all the more important for our nation to remember and respect the relationship we have with this earth.

www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram

AL's remarks on SC verdict contemptuous

Says Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the ruling Awami League is furious after release of the full verdict that declared the 16th amendment to the constitution illegal.

"Their (AL leaders) remarks are blatant, indecent and tantamount to contempt of court," Fakhru said while addressing a programme at the party's Nayapalton office in Dhaka.

Referring to Food Minister Qamrul Islam's demand for the chief

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

100 illegal water plants being run in port city

Says survey; BSTI officials' lax monitoring blamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

Around 100 private water bottling plants are being operated illegally in Chittagong city for around five years, according to a survey of Chittagong Drinking Water Owners' Association.

Inaction, lax monitoring and alleged corruption by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) officials are blamed for such a situation.

There are around 130 such plants in the city; of them, nearly 30 have BSTI approval, said the association president Faisal Abdullah Adnan, citing the survey conducted early this year.

On the other hand, Chittagong Drinking Water Manufacturers' Association founding president ASM Ismail Khan estimated the

total number of water plant as nearly 200.

According to a BSTI list, a total of 64 water plants are in the city; of them, 25 are legal while the rest illegal.

One such plant, RM Pure Drinking Water, has been operating in Middle Halishahar since 2009 illegally. But it was found that the company used the BSTI logo on its water bottles.

In March 2014, Dew Drop Pure Drinking Water in North Halishahar was fined Tk 50,000 as it was being operated without BSTI approval.

Both the companies are on the BSTI list of illegal water plants.

Several owners said they were allowed to run their water plants after paying a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Legalising factories worries nat'l committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect the Sundarbans yesterday expressed concern at the government decision to permit operation of factories in the ecologically critical area of the forest.

In a statement, the committee said the initiative would damage the forest as many of the factories are much more polluter and harmful to the largest mangrove forest in the world.

It urged the government to reconsider the "anti-environment" decision.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



DISRESPECTFUL! It's a football match on the footsteps of the Central Shaheed Minar! There is apparently no effective mechanism in place to bar visitors from violating the solemnity of such a memorial for the nation's language martyrs. The authorities completed their duty by placing several signs forbidding littering and the use of shoes there. It is time such memorials of national importance are protected and maintained by one powerful national authority. The photo was taken yesterday.



Obituary

CITY DESK

Rezaul Alam Mintu, a freedom fighter, died on Wednesday at Paksey of Ishwardi in Pabna. He was 73.

He left behind his wife, three daughters and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death, says a press release.

Rezaul Alam was given a guard of honour in Ishwardi followed by his namaz-e-janaza at 11:00am yesterday.

Later, he was buried in Pakshy Railway graveyard.

REMARKS ON WAGE BOARD Apologise or resign

Journos tell Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists at a protest rally yesterday demanded that Finance Minister AMA Muhith immediately withdraw his recent remarks over their pay.

They also sought an "unconditional apology" for his comments and demanded his resignation from the cabinet; otherwise they would wage a tougher movement.

The rally was organised by a faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The journalists further demanded formation of the ninth wage board by August 15. They announced a fresh demonstration on August 16 if the government fails to meet the demand.

The finance minister on Wednesday said the salaries and allowances given in five categories in the newspaper industry were higher than that of the government employees.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Water lilies not just brighten any liquid landscape, for many it's a means of survival. They grow in abundance in water bodies during monsoon. People collect and sell these beautiful aquatic plants, a popular vegetable item, in bundles of 10 to 15 stems. The photo was taken in the capital's Uttara Sector-5 on Thursday.

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