



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

|               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| DHAKA         | MYMENSINGH    | CHITTAGONG    | SYLHET        | RAJSHAHI      | RANGPUR       | KHULNA        | BARISAL       | COX'S BAZAR   |
| H 34.0 L 27.8 | H 31.7 L 27.5 | H 31.0 L 25.6 | H 28.6 L 25.5 | H 34.8 L 25.3 | H 31.8 L 26.6 | H 34.0 L 27.5 | H 32.5 L 26.6 | H 31.0 L 25.2 |

Light to moderate rain/thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna divisions and at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:08pm and rises tomorrow at 05:43am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Once Dhaka was adorned with several hundred ponds. Like canals, only a handful exist now. But they are also in death throes due to negligence of the authorities concerned. Although, according to the Playground, Open Space, Park and Natural Water Body Protection Act 2000, filling up of any water body including pond is illegal, it's going on unabated. The Daily Star found 63 ponds in the maps of undivided Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in its 28 wards out of 90. A survey for the map was carried out between 2003 and 2011. But many of the water bodies were filled up before the period and also even after the survey. We are publishing the twenty third report of the series today covering the then DCC ward 8.

PART 23



Left, This filled-up portion of the around 5-bigha pond at Mirpur's Shah Ali Majar will become a makeshift market soon. Right, once the residential area used to be a pond. PHOTOS: HELEMUL ALAM

# The lost oases



HELEMUL ALAM

Not so long ago, Mirpur was peppered with ponds. There used to be 10 reservoirs in the area of which three are still alive while the rest have disappeared completely over the years due to construction of concrete and semi-concrete structures. Among the ponds, only four were identified in the base maps of Dhaka City Corporation. The rest were either filled up earlier or overlooked by the city corporation. TWO PONDS IN SHAH ALI MAJAR According to legend, the two ponds at Shah Ali Majar were dug up around six hundred years ago. But one of the ponds is now on the verge of extinction due to negligence of the shrine authorities.

Almost half of the pond, located on the western side, has already been filled up as the shrine authorities are planning to construct a market there. The pond is around five bighas. Shafiqul Islam, a shrine official, said they have filled it up partially for constructing a makeshift market. "Its water became polluted that's why we decided to fill it up." The shrine is around 600 years old and the reservoirs are there since then, he said. Compared to the pond on the western side, the other reservoir in front of the shrine is in a better condition. But it is also in need of care as the water has become polluted. Hundreds of people use its water for ablutions. Morshed Alam, manager in-charge of the shrine, said they have a plan to renovate the around one-bigha pond. "We will construct a ghatla (staircase) in it so that people can use it properly. We will try to implement the plan as soon as possible." About the other pond, he said they filled it up partially but the rest is being

used for fish cultivation. Russel, a shrine staff, said the water of the ponds used to be clean. They even drank water from those. "But the pond in front of the shrine is polluted now as people use it excessively and continue to throw waste in it." Mohammad Kamal, a local, said many floating people sleep on the shrine premises and bathe in the pond. The 35-year-old said he has been using the pond since he was a child. "Bathing was not allowed before, as many used the water for drinking." The water became polluted around 15 years back, he added. POND AT SHINEPURI RESIDENTIAL AREA A portion of the Shinepuri residential area in Mirpur used to be a reservoir around 20 years back. It was filled up in 1996 and three multi-storey buildings were built there. Makbul Hossain, a resident of the area, said the pond was mostly used by the staff of a mosquito net factory located beside it. It was surrounded by various trees such as

mango and coconut. Shamsu Bhuiyan, caretaker of the residential area, said the pond was under the ownership of the factory. The entire area was around 11 bighas. Shamsu, who was also a caretaker of the factory, said one Selim Chowdhury was the owner of the property. His son later sold it. Around 204 families live there in nine multi-storey buildings. The buildings -- B1, B2 and a part of B3 -- were constructed after filling up the pond, he said. POND AT MUKTIJODDHA COMPLEX There used to be a pond inside the Muktiyoddha Complex on Chiriakhana Road in Mirpur. It has been filled up completely and several makeshift structures were built on it. Around 350 families of freedom fighters received the plots in 1991, said Mohammad Jahidul Islam, son of a freedom fighter. Jahid said the complex is on around 72 acres of land. The pond used to be around 3.5 acres. Around 100 tin-shed structures were built after filling up the pond. He

alleged that those were constructed by the persons who received the plots. TWO PONDS IN BOTANICAL GARDEN There are two ponds inside the National Botanical Garden -- Lotus Pond and Lily Pond. Both of the ponds were there since the establishment of the garden in 1961. Sayedur Rahman, its director, said the lotus at the pond grows in Chiatra (12th month of the Bangla calendar) and Baishakh (first month). Mojibur Rahman, forester of the botanical garden, said the Lotus Pond is around 1.4 acres and the Lily Pond around 1.38 acres. The ponds are being maintained by the authorities on a regular basis. Mojibur said they have already taken initiatives for renovating the ponds. "We will start the work in this fiscal. After the work, the beauty of the ponds will also enhance." There are two types of lotus in the ponds -- white and pink, he said. The garden has around 1,010 varieties of trees. (Edited by HASAN MEER)

## RURAL BANGLADESH Indoor air pollution causing lung diseases: Expert

BSS, Dhaka Indoor air pollution caused by the use of unhygienic fuels in kitchens without proper ventilation has been billed as one of the prime reasons for high prevalence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in rural Bangladesh. "Our rural women usually cook indoor using an open-fire traditional cooking stove at a small kitchen with biomass fuel, like wood, cow dung and charcoal, without or insufficient ventilation that expose them hugely to COPD," Dr Shamim Ahmed, an associate professor of Pulmonology Department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), told the news agency. Referring to a study on "Indoor Biomass Fuel Smoke Exposure as a Risk factor for COPD for Women of Rural Bangladesh", he said, one in five rural women was suffering from COPD in a stage of life for neglecting health issues. The study, published in a medical journal of "Chattagram Maa-O-Shishu Hospital Medical College" last year, was carried out among 250 women over 40 years of age through random sampling. "Though smoking is the most common cause of COPD all over the world, air pollution is playing a similar role in Bangladesh causing COPD," Dr Ahmed said. The physician suggested using kerosene stoves for cooking at a properly ventilated kitchen to avoid suffering from COPD. "Side by side, we should avoid use of tobacco, exposure to occupational dusts and chemicals and frequent lower respiratory infections during childhood to be freed from the disease," he said.



With an estimated 2,90,000 Rohingyas entering Bangladesh from Myanmar in last few weeks and amid an international outcry over atrocities against them, The Daily Star organised a roundtable yesterday at its office in the capital. Former diplomats, security experts, academics and professionals recommended proactive diplomatic efforts in resolving the crisis. The speakers also urged the government to raise the issue of human rights violation and genocide in Myanmar to the international community. Their other recommendations include formulating a full-fledged policy on Rohingya, sending envoys to India and China to present Bangladesh's case, stopping the atrocities and preventing terrorist activities within Bangladesh. Story on page 1. PHOTO: STAR

## Mayor Annisul Huq's health is stable

Says his wife in Facebook status brushing aside rumour STAFF CORRESPONDENT The physical condition of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Annisul Huq is improving as he can breathe on his own after taking off the ventilator, said his wife yesterday. Most of his organs are functioning normally, and the doctors are happy with his physical stability and hope that he may recover by next week, Rubana Huq said in a status on Facebook. She wrote the status following a rumour about the mayor in different social media. "My day has been about waking up to gossips and rumours about my husband. It's so sad to have people breaking out with breaking news without speaking to any of us here," said Rubana. "...I am hoping Anis will get only better and better every day. As of today, he is off ventilator and breathing on his own. He has been making eye contact with his doctor and blinking with everything that we convey to him," she said. "Doctor just told me that they are happy with stability, and they are hoping that we should know more about his recovery process by next week," she said. The DNCC mayor has been suffering from neurological problem (dizziness and a lack of balance) for the last several months. He was admitted to the neurology hospital in London on August 13, and then he was diagnosed with cerebral vasculitis at the hospital.



## Exploitation: Rohingya man

FROM PAGE 3 them. Ali used to lead an apparently well-off life back in Mongdu district of Rakhine State in Myanmar. But when all hell broke loose, he had to flee along with his large 16-member family. All he could manage to bring with him were only two of his cattle, some clothes, some utensils and a little money. The family walked for four

Unfortunately, the perilous journey took a heavy toll on the poor cows. One died upon arrival and the other fell so sick that the family tearfully left her at the entry of Shahporir Dwip. Even if the cows were healthy, Ali would probably face exploitation by local traders and touts and be forced to sell them at an unimaginably low price.

## Families kept in wait, still

FROM PAGE 4 they have asked for extra bones. Initially, nine of the bodies could not be identified. Through the DNA profiling, four of those were identified, they added. Rupali Begum, wife of one of the victim Masum, said, "It has been a year, we are yet to get any result." Nurunnahar, wife of another victim

contacted, Ahmed Ferdous of CID's DNA lab said they have given DNA test reports of some of the bodies. "Some of the bones were burnt badly. It's not possible to conduct tests with those." "We've sought for more bones from police. Upon getting those, we will be able to complete the profiling by this month," Ferdous said yesterday.

## The Knowledge Machine

FROM PAGE 3 The history of printing in Bangla dates back to 1778, according to a brochure provided by the museum. Besides the treadle machine, the exhibition is showcasing among many items, relics of printed materials, metal frames and Bangla type made of various metals such as lead, zinc and brass. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition, Faizul Latif Chowdhury, director general of the national museum, said the exhibition is an effort to conceive the contemporary civilisation and reorientation of centuries-old printing techniques. They located an operational letterpress in Bhurungamari of Kurigram, he also said. Senior Secretary of Finance Ministry Hedayet Ullah Al Mamun said letterpress has historic and revolutionary significance. The invention of letterpress helped disseminate knowledge among those who were historically denied of education by the then rulers, he added. Journalist and writer Abul Momen said flourishing of printing press helped transform people's thoughts into knowledge and it created culture consciousness among the common people. Columnist Muhammad Jahangir, writer Ali Imam and national museum trustee board president artist Hashem Khan also spoke at the ceremony. The exhibition will remain open during museum hours every day.

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