

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 34.6 L 27.0

MYMENSINGH H 33.6 L 26.0

CHITTAGONG H 33.0 L 26.5

SYLHET H 31.8 L 25.6

RAJSHAHI H 34.0 L 26.6

RANGPUR H 34.0 L 25.8

KHULNA H 33.6 L 26.5

BARISAL H 34.7 L 26.4

COX'S BAZAR H 33.4 L 26.0

Rain/thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal 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 5:54pm and rises tomorrow at 05:48am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Checkered keelback (Dhora shaap)

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Snake Snippets

It was just after sunset. I was walking at the northern end of the path that runs along Dhaka's Baridhara Lake. This part gets few visitors; now it was empty. In the waning light, a flicker of movement up ahead caught my attention. I discerned one of the feral cats living in the park and was startled to see it had caught a snake by its head. The snake writhed mightily trying to free itself but the cat rapidly dragged it, presumably to a safe place to feed on it. At one point the snake pulled itself free and slithered away, but the cat was faster. Pouncing on the snake's head it reclaimed its prey. The snake struggled weakly as hunter and hunted disappeared into the darkness.

The snake was a checkered keelback, or dhora as it is locally known. Common in Bangladesh, it lives in water and can be seen in many lakes. It is non-venomous but nonetheless hunted and killed in our villages because it eats small fish fry in the fish ponds.

The dhora is among the 76 (or perhaps 77, see below) species of snake recorded in Bangladesh. Some years ago I had the good fortune of watching it, unobserved, while it cavorted freely in the water while looking for food in a small muddy pool. Crouching behind a bush in twilight's dim light, I watched it swim, twisting and turning, darting this way and that whenever it sensed prey. After a few minutes of squatting my thighs gave way and I flinched. It instantly disappeared underwater ending my show, but its graceful moves have stayed with me.

I also clearly remember a very long beige-and-brown snake that had wrapped itself in a large circle around a bush in Sundarban. Its tail dangled next to its head as it enjoyed the winter

sun. Recently this snake, which was originally thought to be a brown vine snake (Ahaetulla nasuta), has since been recognized as a different species (Ahaetulla anomala) by zoologists.

Also in Sundarban, I saw a monocol cobra, identified by a single golden circle behind its head. The black snake had made its home inside the trunk of a large uprooted gewa tree. As several photographers waited, it peeped out a couple of times to see what the commotion was about. Someone pointed out it was about to moult and in considerable pain during the entire process. Indeed, examining the photographs later I saw places where the skin had started to break and peel.

Snakes get a bad rap in our culture: we are all afraid of their venom for good reason and feel wary of their sudden, silent moves. However, with few exceptions, snakes are defensive and will run for their lives when they see humans. Obviously one must exercise caution around them.

The most beautiful description of snakes I found was in Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*. He describes the love dance of a pair of gopher snakes which he watched while hiding. As he watches the exquisite sequence, which includes the snakes intertwining, he makes an inadvertent noise. The embarrassed snakes run away immediately, much like my twilight dhora.

Once I was terrified of snakes but as I have seen and learned more about them, caution and mild fear has replaced my terror. I recognize snakes for being an important part of our biodiversity. But I tread carefully in places which can harbour snakes.

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ROHINGYA CRISIS Efforts on to tackle online propaganda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is stepping up measures to face hate campaigns and propaganda on the social media regarding the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis.

As many as 35 Facebook profiles and pages have so far been identified and the authorities concerned have already shut down three of those. Police say they will bring the propagandists to book after identity confirmation.

Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit's Deputy Commissioner (cyber-crime) Mohammad Alimuzzaman said the move was taken to stop instigation of violence inside Bangladesh.

"Ten Facebook profiles and two pages have been identified in last eight days. We have requested Facebook to shut them off. Until Friday three have been shut off," he told The Daily Star.

According to the CTTC cyber crime unit officials, some of those profiles and pages are being operated from home and the rest

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Mongla Port to get water treatment plant

UNB, Dhaka

The shipping ministry has initiated a move to set up a Surface Water Treatment Plant at the Mongla Port spending Tk 2,533 crore to cope with the massive development activities centring the port.

The ministry has proposed a draft project to this end titled, "Establishing Surface Water Treatment Plant for Mongla Port" and sent the proposal to the Planning Commission for recommendations.

The port authority will implement the proposed project by June 2019 with fund from the national exchequer. A pre-evaluation committee (PEC) meeting on the project was held on August 17.

"The proposed project will soon be placed before the Ecneec for its consideration," said a Planning Commission official.

An official of the ministry said the government has taken an ini-

tiative to implement development works centring the Mongla Port through implementing the Padma Bridge Project, setting up Khulna-Mongla rail link, ensuring gas supply through pipeline, and constructing Khan Jahan Ali Airport, among others.

To deal with such large development activities over the next two years, the port will handle some 1,200 commercial ships every year for which there is a need for ensuring safe drinking water.

"This project has been proposed to meet the demand for safe drinking water of seagoing ships, port offices and residential areas, and to meet the demand of water of various government and private agencies adjacent to the port," the shipping ministry official added.

The ministry official said efforts were also there in the past to meet the water demand at the port, but those proved inadequate with the passage of time.

Teenagers 'post' schoolgirl's obscene photos on Facebook

3 alleged offenders held
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Police arrested three students in Nilphamari on charge of posting indecent photos of a schoolgirl on Facebook a week ago. The arrestees are two tenth graders and an eleventh-grader.

The trio took the girl to a deserted place when she was returning from school, and one of them sexually abused her. The others took photos of the incident and threatened to share those on Internet if she did not comply with them, alleged the victim's father.

Later, one of them, who used to stalk her, repeatedly asked her over phone to meet him. As she refused, they shared the photos on a Facebook page.



Vehicles pass slowly through a narrow stretch of a road in the capital's Paschim Agargaon area. The drivers are forced to slow down while crossing this section of the road (known as 60ft Road) since a building takes a substantial portion of the busy road, which eventually results in traffic congestion. Also, the two top floors almost "roof" a portion of the road, inset. As a result, heavy vehicles cannot pass through it. The photos were taken on Thursday.

PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Five held for DU admission test forgery

DU CORRESPONDENT

Five people, including a Dhaka University student and an admission seeker, have been detained on charge of fraud during the university's "Kha" unit admission test held yesterday.

Shahjahan Ali, an international relations (IR) student, was detained while he was taking the exam in place of a Dhaka College student, Tanshen Miah, in the examination hall of business studies faculty on the campus, said DU Proctor Prof M Amzad Ali.

Tanshen, who was held before the Aparajeya Bangla on the campus, claimed that he made a deal of Tk 3.5 lakh with Shahjahan for using him as his proxy in the exam.

Shahjahan admitted to the DU officials that he belonged to an admission forgery syndicate. He also claimed that he is a cancer patient and participated in the forgery for paying his treatment cost.

Shahjahan attended the exam without changing the photo in the admit card. But to look alike, he got a haircut similar to Tanshen's, said the proctor.

On Thursday, the university authorities detained three other people in the central Shaheed Minar area for their alleged involvement in DU entrance exam forgery. However, no detail has been disclosed about the detainees.

Youth crushed by train while taking selfie

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was crushed under a train in the capital yesterday afternoon while trying to take a selfie.

The deceased was identified as Sadiqul Islam, 24. He used to live in Jafraabad area of Rayerbazar.

Hailing from Nababganj upazila of Dhaka, Sadiqul was working as a driver in the capital, said Robiullah, assistant sub-inspector of Dhaka Railway Police Station.

Quoting locals, he said the youth was trying to take a selfie on the rail tracks in the Kuril area and was hit by the Kamalapur-bound "Balaka Express" around 5:30pm, leaving him dead on the spot.

Rotten rice imported from Thailand

Alleges BNP

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP yesterday accused the government of importing "rotten" rice from Thailand.

Two ships carrying rotten rice from Thailand are waiting to be unloaded at Chittagong port, although the food department has refused to accept the rice, claimed BNP senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office.

"After importing rotten wheat from Africa, the government has now procured rotten rice from Thailand... the government is mocking with people's hunger," he said.

"Some 12,000 tonnes of rice have been brought by a ship, MV Thai Bin Day, on August 31, while some 19,850 tonnes brought by another ship, MV Diamond, from Thailand this month."

"We think the government high-ups are involved in importing the rotten rice from Thailand," he also said.

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The family at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

'LEAKY GAS PIPE' BLAST IN CAPITAL Five of family burnt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five members of a family including three children suffered serious burns when a fire broke out after an explosion caused by a "gas line leak" at their house in the capital's Shyampur area early yesterday.

Enayet Hossain, 35, a grocer, his wife Mariam Begum, 30, and their three children -- Anny, 8, Habiba, 4, and Jubair, 2, -- were sleeping at the time.

They are undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), said Abdul Jalil, officer-in-charge of Kadamtali Police Station.

Enayet's condition is critical as he sustained 90 percent burn injuries. The other four sustained less than 20 percent burn injuries, said Dr Partha Shankar Paul, a

resident surgeon at the burn unit. "But they are also not out of danger."

Mujibur Rahman, elder brother of Enayet, said "The family went to bed around 11:00pm. Around three in the morning there was a loud explosion and a fire broke out inside the room they were sleeping."

Neighbours rushed to the spot and took them to DMCH, he added.

Contacted, Saidul Alam, senior station officer of Postogola Fire Station, who visited the spot, said the family lived in a room of an apartment on the ground floor of a five-storey building. The doors and windows of the room were damaged in the explosion, he said.

Saidul suspected that the explosion might have occurred as gas accumulated in the room due to a leak.

ROAD ACCIDENTS Seven killed, seven hurt in three districts

STAR REPORT

As reckless driving and violation of traffic rules continued, seven people were killed and seven others injured in five road accidents in three districts on Wednesday and yesterday.

In Sunamganj, two pedestrians were killed and seven passengers of a mini-bus injured as it plunged into a roadside ditch after hitting them on Sylhet-Sunamganj highway in Nilpur area of Sadar upazila yesterday, reports UNB.

The deceased are Amina Begum, 60, of Bahadurpur village; and Badrul, son of Abdur Rahman of Tajpur village in Laxmansri union of the upazila, said police.

They were rushed to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital

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CELEBRATING LIFE DISTRICT TOUR

TODAY

COX'S BAZAR GOVT COLLEGE

Photo Exhibition Film Screening

Partners: