

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 34.2 L 25.4	H 33.8 L 25.5	H 34.0 L 25.5	H 34.6 L 25.5	H 28.0 L 25.6	H 31.0 L 25.1	H 31.7 L 24.5	H 33.5 L 25.0	H 32.6 L 25.5

Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:36pm and rises tomorrow at 5:55am, Met office said.

Recover govt ponds in Gazipur: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to recover the public ponds and water bodies that have been grabbed and filled up in Gazipur.

It also asked the government to submit a compliance report to it within 30 days.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned why they should not be directed to recover the grabbed water bodies in Gazipur and to protect and preserve them.

The HC asked the government to submit a list of the public ponds and water bodies in Gazipur to this court within 30 days.

Secretaries to the ministries of LGRD, forest and environment, land and home, inspector general of police, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Gazipur have been made respondents to the rule, Deputy Attorney General Tapas Kumar Biswas told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

DEALING ROHINGYA CRISIS UN assures full cooperation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres assured Bangladesh of the highest cooperation from the UN in dealing with the Rohingya crisis.

"The UN is doing all that is necessary towards a solution to the problem," Guterres told Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the UN headquarters, according to a statement of Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN.

Muhith met Guterres yesterday and pressed for a safe zone for Rohingya refugees now staying in Bangladesh, in line with what Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had said at the 72nd UN General Assembly in September.

He also called for a quick and permanent solution to the prevailing Rohingya crisis.

UN chief Guterres thanked Hasina and her government for the humanitarian effort to shelter the refugees.

"I am impressed by Bangladesh's providing humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees despite the country being densely populated," he said.

Up until now, about 520,000 Rohingyas have crossed the border into Bangladesh to escape persecution in Myanmar. The UN fears further exodus due to continuing violence in Rakhine State of Myanmar.

Bangladeshi representative to the UN, Masud Bin Momen, UNDP administrator Achim Stainer, and UN Under Secretary General Fekitamoeloa Katoa were among those present in the meeting held at the UN headquarters in New York.

Finance Minister Muhith also sought financial assistance from the UN to help Bangladesh face the adverse impacts of climate change and achieve Sustainable Development Goals.



Although this is the lone highway connecting the capital with the division headquarter of Barisal, its dilapidated state might give a different impression. A large number of people use this 28-kilometre stretch of road between Jayashree and Bhurgata to get to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital every day. Riddled with at least 100 large potholes, the busy highway saw only minor repair work over the past four years. At least 50 people were injured in accidents last month due to its poor condition, said Gournadi Highway Police Sub-Inspector Ashok.

Militants might fish in troubled waters: Impose sanctions on Myanmar

Roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday called upon the government to mount pressure on the Myanmar authorities for a sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas to their country from Bangladesh as early as possible.

If the crisis prolongs, militant groups may take the opportunity and cause instability, posing a threat to the neighbouring countries also, they opined.

They said this at a roundtable discussion titled "Rohingya Problem: Social and Economic Impact" organised by Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its Karwan Bazar office in the capital.

Pointing out the recent activities of different militant groups, Major General (Retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), said taking advantage of the current crisis, many of them might become active in the region.

If it happens, not only Bangladesh,

but other countries in the region including India and China will also face security threat, he added.

Economist Wahiduddin Mahmud said Bangladesh needs to conduct an assessment of environmental, social and economic impact caused by the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals who have been given shelter in Bangladesh.

"Rest of the world will then understand how much burden the country [Bangladesh] has been under," he said.

Member Secretary of Planning Commission Kamal Uddin Ahmed said if the repatriation doesn't take place in a sustainable way, the Rohingyas might come back to Bangladesh in near future.

Former chief forest conservator Yunus Ali said the way hills are being razed to give shelter to the Rohingyas, there might be a catastrophic landslide in the days to come.

M Golam Abbas, former official of UNHCR, suggested that Bangladesh

should register the Rohingyas so that Myanmar does not refuse to take them back in future.

Stating poor health condition of Rohingya refugees, Abdullah Al-Muyeed, technical adviser to WASH programme of WaterAid, said they have identified 12 diseases that may turn epidemic in the days to come and affect people in nearby villages.

Former ambassador Shamim Ahmed said Bangladesh needs to put pressure on Myanmar through UN Security Council for sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas.

FOREST PROPERTIES WORTH TK 151CR DESTROYED

Forest department yesterday informed the parliamentary standing committee on forest and environment ministry that the entire environment of Cox's Bazar

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) yesterday urged the global community to put continuous pressure on the Myanmar government so that the latter immediately takes back the Rohingya refugees and stop "ethnic cleansing" of the Muslim minorities.

It also called for imposing economic sanctions on Myanmar, and taking legal action against its government and army at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

"Myanmar is carrying out genocide... and it is continuing amid worldwide criticism. So, putting stronger pressure is a must," said NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque while speaking at a press briefing.

NHRC organised the briefing at its office in the capital, after its members visited the Rohingya camps on October 8 and 9. Officials of the United Nations Development Programme and the Swedish embassy also took part in the visit.

Reazul said they have sent a letter to

Myanmar NHRC recently regarding the Rohingya issues. In a reply, it acknowledged the violence against the Rohingyas.

The letter signed by Myanmar NHRC Chairperson Win Mra reads: "The violence has led to the exodus of people in different directions... hundreds of thousands of Muslims fled west towards Bangladesh."

"...we are supportive of all measures to be urgently taken to provide full and unimpeded humanitarian access to all communities in Rakhine state."

Reazul said a safe zone should be created in Myanmar for the Rohingyas under the UN supervision.

The UN Security Council should at least help Bangladesh to sue Myanmar at the ICC, whether it takes action against the Myanmar government or not, he added.

Sharmeela Rasool, a chief technical advisor of UNDP, Nazrul Islam, full-time member of NHRC; and Prof Akhter Hussain, a member of NHRC; was present at the briefing.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The executive magistrates can run mobile courts till October 31 as the Supreme Court yesterday again extended its stay order on the High Court verdict that declared unconstitutional the rules under which they run such courts.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by acting Chief Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah passed the order following three separate leave to appeal petitions filed by the government challenging the HC verdict.

The apex court also adjourned hearing on the petitions till October 31.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, who moved the petitions, told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar for the executive magistrates to conduct mobile courts till October 31 following the order.

He also said he sought extension of the SC stay order and adjournment of hearing on the petitions for four weeks in order to prepare for placing arguments before the apex court.

Following the SC's August 16 order, the executive magistrates could run the mobile courts till yesterday.

Earlier on May 11, the HC declared unconstitutional the rule under which executive magistrates can run mobile courts.

Delivering a verdict on three writ petitions, the HC also observed that empowering executive magistrates with judicial powers is "a frontal attack on the independence of the judiciary and is violative of the theory and separation of powers".



Relief items from Singapore being unloaded from a cargo plane at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong yesterday morning. The Singapore government sent 7.162 metric tonnes of aid for the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. Singapore Defence Minister Dr Mohamad Maliki bin Osman handed over the goods to Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Mannan.

CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

Bangladesh practice lauded in Delhi Bimstec event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Commending the cyclone preparedness programme of Bangladesh, Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday said it is recognised as global best practice.

He was inaugurating the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) Disaster Management Exercise-2017 in New Delhi.

All the Bimstec member states have made significant progress over the last two decades in disaster mitigation preparedness, he said.

Natural disasters left 3.17 lakh people dead and more than 1.6 crore homeless in those countries from 1996 to 2015, said.

The exercise began with a warning that the frequency and intensity of floods, droughts and cyclones are likely to rise due to climate change and a plea for consensus on sharing of hydrological data of transnational rivers with downstream nations for better disaster preparedness.

Singh said in the recent monsoon season, floods and landslides affected millions of

people across almost all seven Bimstec countries -- Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Nepal. "This is yet another reminder of the importance of improving our disaster preparedness."

He urged the Bimstec nations to join hands to mitigate disasters since they face the problem of floods on a regular basis.

At the event, Bimstec Secretary General M Shahidul Islam said the Bay of Bengal region is one of the most natural disaster-prone areas in the world. "Since we have little control over natural calamities, we need to focus on disaster risk reduction. We need to learn from each other and our past experiences," he added.

Over 150 delegates from the seven countries are attending the four-day exercise.

The events during the exercise include a table-top exercise after the inaugural session to provide participants with an opportunity to review and discuss disaster response plans and sharing of best practices of one country with the other.

Gowher Rizvi for ensuring rights of sexual minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The society has a bigger role to play to ensure rights of the sexual minorities, said Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi yesterday.

He was addressing an award giving ceremony organised by Bandhu Social Welfare Society at The Daily Star Centre.

Ten lawyers, who worked and gave legal aids to sexual minorities and transgenders, received the Lawyers Fellowship 2017 of Bandhu. Advocate Tohida Yesmin, fellow of the programme from Dinajpur, said hijras are denied bank loans -- a violation of their legal rights.

Zi Panna, chairman of human rights and legal aid committee of Supreme Court Bar Association, was also present.

SC to hear 3 war crime convicts' appeals Nov 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday deferred to November 21 the hearing on the appeals filed by three convicted war criminals against death sentences handed by the war crimes trial tribunals.

The apex court was scheduled to hear the appeals of Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam and Jatiya Party leader Syed Mohammad Qaisar yesterday, while that of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdus Subhan on October 16.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah passed the deferment order after the defense counsel SM Shahjahan prayed for the adjournment to prepare for placing arguments.

8 Jamaat leaders on 10-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Maqbul Ahmad, its Secretary General Shafiqur Rahman and six other top leaders were placed on 10-day remand each in two cases.

The cases were filed with Kadamtoli Police Station on September 29 over creating anarchy during Durga Puja and procession of Ashura, and plotting to topple the government.

Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Nabi passed the order after the Jamaat leaders were produced with 20-day remand prayers. Earlier in the day, they were shown arrested in the cases.

Other leaders are Jamaat's Nayeb-e-Ameer Mia Golam Parwar, also a former lawmaker from Khulna-5 constituency, Chittagong City Ameer Md Shah Jahan, its Secretary General Md Nazrul Islam, Chittagong South District Ameer Md Zafar Sadeque, and its secretary general's Personal Assistants -- Md Nazrul Islam and Md Saiful Islam.

According to yesterday's forwarding reports, all the accused were present at the place of occurrence when the plan was made to create anarchy, and to topple the government, said Sazu Miah, OC (investigation) of Kadamtoli Police Station and also the investigation officer.

Soon after they were produced before the court, pro-Jamaat lawyers brought out a procession on court premises demanding their release and withdrawal of the cases.

They were arrested in the capital on Monday night over holding "a secret" meeting to carry out subversive activities.