

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 34.0 L 27.5	MYMENSINGH H 33.0 L 25.1	CHITTAGONG H 33.0 L 26.0	SYLHET H 32.0 L 24.6	RAJSHAHI H 34.5 L 26.8	RANGPUR H 34.0 L 26.4	KHULNA H 35.3 L 25.9	BARISAL H 34.0 L 26.0	COX'S BAZAR H 32.5 L 25.7
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Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at a few places over Chittagong, Barisal, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka and Khulna divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:33pm and rises tomorrow at 5:56am, said Met office.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Yellow monitor, Purbachol.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Our Monitors

Everyone knows about Indonesia's Komodo dragons but did you know we have three closely related species of lizards here in Bangladesh?

I have seen all three, the last one only a month ago. At first, looking down from a small bridge in Purbachol, I thought it was a snake swimming through the lake's water. Its head stuck out and V-shaped ripples followed on its wake, defining its progress. As it came closer the head appeared larger than a snake's. Presently it turned towards the shore of the small lake. Its head protruded and its tongue darted out, sniffing the air. Only then did I realize it was the large lizard known as a monitor (*guishap*.) But its colour was different from the two monitors I have seen, which are black. This one was golden yellow with a beautiful pattern.

I decided to ask an expert, Dr. Md. Kamrul Hasan, a professor at Jahangirnagar University and author (with Dr. Md. Monirul Khan and Dr. Md. Mostafa Zeeroz) of the book *Amphibians and Reptiles of Bangladesh: A Field Guide*. Kamrul pointed out that there are three species of monitors in Bangladesh: Bengal monitor, golden monitor and ring lizard (or water monitor.) They are non-venomous and harmless unless cornered. The first two live close to human habitats, while ring lizards are seen inside the forest. Ring lizards are the largest at 150 cm. Bengal monitors are about a metre long while golden monitors are somewhat smaller. In comparison, the Komodo dragon, is around three metres, and, I believe, quite dangerous.

Bengal monitors are seen all over Bangladesh. In Dhaka, I have seen them many times in the National Botanical Garden (often near the cactus house) as well as in the fields of

Purbachol. They usually escape quickly when they see me, but once I came close without detection. When it finally saw me, it broke into a swift but awkward run, its bulbous body swaying side to side much like a fat penguin waddling quickly.

I asked Kamrul about the population of monitors in Bangladesh. Bengal and golden monitors have good presence here, but they are considered "Near-Threatened" by IUCN because of human pressure. Kamrul explained why. Their eggs take 7-10 months to hatch. All this time, eggs must be in nest, which the monitor builds on upward-sloping ground, such as *ails* and borders of farm plots. In our intensive farming nation, it is hard for even the smallest patch of land to remain untouched for long, so their nests are constantly disturbed.

The ring lizards of Sundarban are considered "Vulnerable" by IUCN because of shrinking habitat due to human encroachment.

The ring lizard once gave me a thrill. Early one morning in 2012 in Sundarban, our tour group boarded a small boat to navigate a narrow creek in search of birds. Trees large and small grew on both sides and we passed under many overhanging branches. We had just crossed under one such branch when a ring lizard dived from that branch into the water with a loud splash, missing our boat by inches. If it had dived a second earlier it would have wreaked havoc on our boat.

Our monitors belong to the same genus (*Varanus*) as their Komodo cousins. They are part of the rich biodiversity of this land, and I hope they can survive and thrive here.

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Solar power likely from June

Dhaka Power Distribution Company signs deal with pvt firm

UNB, Dhaka

Electricity from the first commercial project of rooftop solar power generation is expected to be available in the capital from June next year as Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd (DPDC) has awarded contract to a private contractor.

DPDC officials said the rooftop solar project is now in progress.

"We've already signed power purchase agreement (PPA) with Bengal Group to buy electricity from the maiden project at Tk 9.80 per unit," Ramiz Uddin Ahmed, executive director of DPDC, told the news agency.

The capacity of the DPDC rooftop solar project is 750 kilowatt. Matsaya Bhaban at Ramna and Shikha Bhaban at Abdul Goni Road, Shilpakala Academy in Segunbaghicha are among the six government buildings which will be brought under the project.

Under the project, the DPDC has

arranged the rooftops of these buildings under a long term rent and handed over those to the sponsor to set up rooftop solar panels. Only Shilpakala Academy building is yet to be handed over.

"We received an approval of the cultural affairs ministry to use their building's rooftop. We hope we can sign a contract with Shilpakala Academy soon," said the DPDC official.

Bengal Group will implement the project on build-own-operate basis (BOO). It means the private firm will set up solar panels on the rooftops at its own cost and operate the plants. The DPDC will purchase electricity at Tk 9.80 per unit.

Ramiz Uddin also said the DPDC has undertaken another project to use its own office and sub-station buildings in the city to generate another 750 kilowatt electricity in the same way.

The DPDC earlier installed a rooftop plant at Bangladesh Secretariat's Cabinet Division building on a pilot basis.

Desco, another distribution company operates in north-western and eastern part of the city, has undertaken another project to generate rooftop power from the government buildings.

The buildings include Uttara Haji Camp, Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) Building and Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Officials said the power distribution companies have moved for such rooftop solar projects as part of the government's plan to generate 10 percent electricity by 2020 in line with the SDGs to ensure access to green and modern energy for the people.

The government has already finalised a national plan to generate 3,168MW power from renewable energy sources by 2021. Of this, officials believe, about 1,000MW electricity will easily come from the rooftops of buildings in Dhaka city.



Benjamin Costa passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fr Benjamin Costa, an eminent educationist and former principal of Notre Dame College in Dhaka, died at a Dhaka hospital yesterday. He was 75.

The man, who had a great contribution to the country's education sector and human development, left behind a host of relatives, admirers, followers and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Also former acting vice chancellor of Notre Dame University Bangladesh (NDUB), Fr Benjamin had

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Businesses continue to thrive encroaching upon a road in front of the capital's Tejgaon Railway Station, while the authorities concerned turn a blind eye. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Workshop on Rohingya crisis today

UNB, Dhaka

A daylong workshop on "Domestic, Regional and International Dimensions of the Rohingya Issue: Dealing with a Man-made Crisis" will be held in the capital today.

The workshop, being organised by Cosmos Foundation, will begin at 11:00am at Hotel Amari, 47, road no-41, Gulshan-2, said a press release.

Enayetullah Khan, chairman of the foundation, said the event is expected to be attended by key members of the intelligentsia and the civil society and hoped that it would lead to a successful outcome, addressing some possible solutions.

The panelists will be Prof CR Abrar of Dhaka University, Maj Gen (ret) Muniruzzaman of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), and Asif Munier and Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan of The Daily Star.

The workshop will be chaired by Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, principal research fellow of the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) in Singapore and former foreign advisor to a caretaker government.

To tune in to the workshop live, visit www.facebook.com/unbnewsroom at 11:00-12:00 and 13:00-16:30.

DU KA UNIT ENTRANCE TEST

12 admission seekers jailed for cheating

DU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday sentenced 12 admission seekers to 15 days' imprisonment each for using electronic devices in 'Ka' (science faculty) unit admission test of Dhaka University (DU) at different centres in the capital.

Electronic devices, including mobile phones and any other communication devices, were prohibited inside the examination halls.

The detainees are Al Imran, Nure Alam Arif, Shah Poran, Abul Basar, Nahid Hasan Kawser, Tanvir Hossain, SM Zakir Hossain, Rakibul Hasan, Khandaker Mirazul Islam, Abu Hanif Noman, Showmika Prodichi Sottaya and Arifa Billah Tamanna.

Of them, Arif was caught using a mobile phone while the rest were caught with tiny hearing devices and a communication device that looked like a credit card.

Imran, who was held at business studies faculty's exam centre, said, "As my preparation for Physics was not good, I made a contract of Tk 2.5 lakh with one who assured me of supplying the answers of multiple choice questions through the communication device that looks like a credit card."

But, the person neither mentioned his name to Imran nor that of his gang, the admission seeker added.

Another examinee, Arif, who was also caught at business studies faculty, admitted that he made a deal of Tk 7.5 lakh with a student of Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University named Rafi. But, almost halfway through the exam, Arif was caught copying answers with the help of a hearing device.

DU Proctor Prof A Amzad Ali told reporters that Executive Magistrate Hakim Towhid Elahi sentenced them to 15 days' imprisonment after they admitted their crimes during an interrogation at the proctor office.

Asked about how the students entered the examination centre with electronic devices despite having metal detectors in the entryways, the proctor said, "The metal detector could not detect the electronic devices properly as the students in a huge crowd were rushing into the exam centres."

"Guards at the entryways should be more careful about detecting such devices," he added.

The one-and-half-hour test was held between 10:00am and 11:30am in 87 centres inside and outside of the campus where 89,506 admission seekers vied for 1,765 seats.

30 fishermen jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Thirty fishermen were jailed in Faridpur yesterday for defying the ongoing ban on hilsa fishing.

Three mobile courts sentenced the fishermen to 10-day imprisonment.

They also seized 160kg of hilsa and 1 lakh metres of nets from different places in the Padma river in Faridpur Sadar, Sadarpur and Charbhadrans upazilas.

The 22-day ban on catching and selling hilsa for safe spawning of the fish started on October 1.

General election on time a challenge for govt: Inu

UNB, Kushtia

Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu yesterday said it is a challenge for the government to hold the next general election on time foiling all conspiracies centring the polls.

He made the remarks while talking to reporters after a views-exchange meeting with party leaders and activists at his residence at Golapnagar in Bheramara upazila in the morning.

Regarding BNP's reaction over the issuance of arrest warrant against its Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Inu, also the president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, said the court has issued the warrant against

Khaleda Zia.

"If she believes in democracy, she will appear before the court as she is not above the law," he said.

When reporters drew his attention to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)'s upcoming emergency meeting on Rohingya issue, Inu said the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh has got an international recognition through the repeated emergency meetings at UNSC.

Bheramara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sohel Ahmed, Officer-in-Charge of Bheramara Police Station Aminul Islam and district Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Abdul Alim Swapan, were, among others, present.

Lightning kills two

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Two persons were killed in separate lightning incidents in Jamalpur's Dewanganj upazila yesterday.

The dead are Minhaj, 15, son of Sukkur Ali of Bhatipara village, and farmer Sirajul Haque, 48, son of Muslim Miah of Dakatia village.

A thunderbolt struck Minhaj around 1:30pm while he was taking cattle home from a field, said police quoting locals.

Sirajul was struck by lightning around 2:00pm while working at his farm.



Visitors look at paintings at a two-week-long solo art exhibition of Samar Majumder titled, "Mrittika Maya", at Alliance Française de Dhaka yesterday. Professor Emeritus Dr Serajul Islam Choudhury inaugurated the exhibition as the chief guest. Art critic Moinuddin Khaled was present as a special guest. Director of Alliance Française de Dhaka Bruno Plasse presided over the inaugural session.

PHOTO: STAR

Three 'drug peddlers' held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) arrested three drug peddlers of a syndicate with 30,000 Yaba tablets in the capital on Thursday afternoon.

Of them, Mohiuddin Islam, 24, was held near Hanif flyover in Shanir Akhra and Mobarak Hossain Babu, 29, was arrested in Dayaganj of Gendaria, said Mukul Jyoti Chakma, deputy director of DNC (Dhaka Metro).

In Nababpur, the DNC team recovered 20,000 pills from a storehouse of one Nasiruddin at MS market and arrested Dulal Chandra Shil, 48, a guard at the market, for his alleged assistance. Nasiruddin could not be found.

The DNC official said they had been looking for the syndicate since July.

Two more cases were filed