

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 34.0 L 26.3	H 33.5 L 26.0	H 34.9 L 26.0	H 34.0 L 24.2	H 34.8 L 25.0	H 33.0 L 24.4	H 34.6 L 25.5	H 34.0 L 25.4	H 34.7 L 26.0

Rain accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Chittagong division and weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country, says Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:31pm and rises tomorrow at 5:57am.

Banani rape trial begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial in camera of the sensational Banani rape case began yesterday at a Dhaka court with deposition of the complainant.

In a camera trial, Judge Shafiqul Azam of the Second Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression recorded complainant's statement behind closed doors.

Before recording statement, the tribunal requested all reporters to stay out of the courtroom.

Only prosecutors and defence lawyers were allowed to stay in the courtroom.

The victim narrated before the tribunal about her traumatic experience on that night when the incident took place in a hotel in the capital's Banani, sources said.

Later, defence lawyer for Naim Ashraf, one of the five accused, cross-examined the complainant on several points.

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Internet access rises, so does online harassment

Says Tahmina Rahman of ARTICLE 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With access to internet rising, Bangladesh sees a surge of gender-based harassment and cyberbullying, said internationally-recognised defender Tahmina Rahman yesterday.

"While most of these incidents are not reported, the victims face further victimisation because of gaps in existing laws and patriarchal attitude within the criminal justice agencies," she said.

Tahmina, director of British rights organisation ARTICLE 19 for Bangladesh and South Asia, was delivering a lecture on "Online Freedom of Expression and Digital Security Act" at the joint lobby of French and German embassies in the capital's diplomatic enclave.

At the programme, German Ambassador Thomas Prinz said a grave scenario of freedom of speech is apparent in Bangladesh where journalists, bloggers and Facebook commentators have to fear being threatened, murdered or put behind bars.

"Freedom of Speech is fundamental human rights... it is a safeguard against abuse of power, corruption and tyranny," he said.

Tahmina said the nature of online harassment can range from lewd comments on social networking sites to uploading a girl's image on a public forum without her consent. It also ranges from exhibition of unwanted sexual attention to distribution of pornographic materials online, she said.

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WHO CARES? Such defiance often adds to traffic congestion in the city. Police alone cannot improve the situation overnight until and unless people abide by the traffic rules. The photo was taken at 4:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Bishwa Ijtema starts on Jan 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bishwa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of the Muslims, is scheduled to be held in two phases on the bank of the river Turag on the outskirts of the capital from January 12 to 14 and 19 to 21.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday announced the schedule at a news briefing following a meeting on law and order at the home ministry.

"We will take special security measures including deployment of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), bomb disposal units, dog squads and other law enforcers to ensure smooth holding of the Ijtema in two phases," Asaduzzaman said.

Several control rooms, watch towers and a good number of close circuit cameras will be installed at various strategic points in and around the area to avert any untoward incident during the occasion, the home minister also said.

Responding to a query, Asaduzzaman said the security personnel are very much skilled in handling technology and they would consider every possible security aspects to hold the Ijtema in a peaceful manner.

Apart from other measures, the government will set up fire service stations and police control rooms at the venue.

Medical teams will also be deployed to provide health services to the devotees and special initiatives will be taken to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the areas, he added.

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Our 5-point proposal can solve Rohingya crisis: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the ongoing Rohingya problem could be solved through her five-point proposal placed at the UN General Assembly on September 21 last.

"We don't want any war; we believe all the problems can be solved through discussions. The Rohingya problem also can be solved in light of the five-point proposal that we've placed at the United Nations," she said.

The prime minister said this while receiving cheques of donations to her Relief and Welfare Fund from the leaders of Bangladesh Association of Banks at her office.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the programme.

Sheikh Hasina said her proposals are: Ending ethnic conflicts, sending UN fact-finding mission to Rakhine State in Myanmar, sending back the



forcibly evicted Rohingyas after ensuring their due security and immediate and unconditional implementation of the Kofi Annan Commission's recommendations.

Hasina said she could understand the pains and sufferings of the Rohingya people as she and her sister had spent a refugee life after the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975.

Bangladesh not alone in Rohingya situation

Says Malaysian dy prime minister

BSS, Cox's Bazar

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi yesterday said Malaysia will remain beside Bangladesh to ensure smooth repatriation of forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

"Bangladesh is not alone in terms of Rohingya issue... we are with Bangladesh," said Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister after visiting Kutupalong Rohingya camp in Ukhia, Cox's Bazar.

Referring to Myanmar's unwillingness to take back its nationals, Hamidi opined that Naypyidaw would be compelled to take back its nationals if the ASEAN countries put pressure on Myanmar authorities to this end.

"The inhuman atrocities carried out on the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine state can't be acceptable in the present time," he said citing the statements of Rohingya refugees who fled Bangladesh following persecution by Myanmar army and the Buddhist mobs since August 25.

Lauding Bangladesh for giving the distressed Rohingyas shelter despite many limitations, he asked the Rohingyas to lead a peaceful life in the camps.

In this connection, he said that Malaysia would construct a field hospital in the camp area for providing health care facilities to the Rohingya refugees.

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Vice Chancellor of Barisal University Prof Dr SM Imamul Huq visits a photo exhibition of The Daily Star-Standard Chartered Bank Celebrating Life -- a film, photography and lyrics contest -- on the campus yesterday. A total of 21 winning photographs were displayed at the exhibition. In university auditorium, six films were also screened. Earlier, the VC inaugurated the programme attended by the university teachers and students.

PHOTO: STAR

'ATTEMPT TO KILL HASINA'

Verdict in 1989 case Oct 29

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgment in the case filed for making an attempt to kill present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 1989 will be delivered on October 29.

After hearing closing arguments from the prosecution and the defence, Md Zahidul Kabir of the Forth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka yesterday set the date for delivery of the verdict.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 12 prosecution witnesses including that of the complainant and investigation officer of the case.

On August 10, 1989, activists and leaders of Freedom Party allegedly launched an attack on Sheikh Hasina at her residence in Dhanmondi's Road 32.

According to the case statement, Freedom Party members Kajol and Kobir with 10 to 12 men attacked Hasina's residence by hurling bombs and firing gunshots.

While they were leaving the scene, they

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675 physically challenged get free prosthetic devices

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Around 675 disabled poor from different parts of the country were provided with various types of prosthetic limbs and devices free of cost at a special camp.

Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, (BMVSS), India, better known as 'Jaipur Foot', organised the month-long camp at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) in Dhaka.

A team of 15 experts from BMVSS conducted the third limb fitment camp in collaboration with the Moyeen Foundation of Bangladesh. Earlier, in two previous camps held in the capital benefitted 1617 amputees from Bangladesh, said a press release.

Harsh Vardhan Shringla, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, during his visit to the camp yesterday, said the significance of the BMVSS is that it focuses on the poor and disabled and provides limbs, calipers and other aids totally free of cost, without any distinction on any grounds.

Till date, he said some 1.6 million people in India and all over the world have benefitted from its philanthropic actions.

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SMOKING-FREE COUNTRY BY 2040

Surcharge to be used in anti-tobacco initiatives

Cabinet approves new draft policy in this regard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

According to a new draft policy, the government would use the Health Development surcharge, collected from the sale of tobacco products, to curb tobacco use for a smoking-free country by 2040.

Currently, the Health Development surcharge is 1 percent.

In line with the government's vision of a smoking-free nation by 2040, the cabinet yesterday approved the draft, titled "The Health Development Surcharge Management Policy-2017", said Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam.

The objective of the policy is to curtail the use of tobacco by raising public awareness

on the adverse effects of tobacco on human health, he also said while briefing journalists at the Secretariat following the weekly meeting of the cabinet.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting at her office.

Nearly Tk 300 crore is being deposited annually into the coffers of health ministry under the Health Development surcharge, but the money has been sitting idle as there was no policy as to how to make use of the money, Secretary Shafiqul said.

Once the policy is in force, the accrued funds will be used for controlling tobacco use and farming, preventing non-communicable diseases, building anti-tobacco awareness

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