

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 21.4 L 17.2	H 25.0 L 17.3	H 25.4 L 17.6	H 26.5 L 16.7	H 20.6 L 14.5	H 25.4 L 16.0	H 23.4 L 16.6	H 22.5 L 14.8	H 29.6 L 18.5

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the country during midnight till this morning, Met Office said. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:16pm and rises tomorrow at 6:37am.**

65 journalists killed in 2017

Says Reporters Without Borders

BSS, Paris

Sixty five journalists and media workers killed worldwide in 2017, according to annual figures published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) yesterday.

Among them, 50 were professional reporters.

However, the downward trend points at journalists giving up working in the world's deadliest spots.

Of the 65 deaths, the report said 39 were murdered, while the rest died in the line of duty -- collateral victims of deadly circumstances like air strikes or suicide bombings.

War-torn Syria remains the most dangerous country in the world for journalists, RSF said, with 12 reporters killed, followed by Mexico where 11 were assassinated.

They include Javier Valdez, a prominent reporter of Mexico's deadly drug war, whose murder in May this year sparked a public outcry.

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THE UNSTOPPABLE... Day by day road users are becoming increasingly restless -- especially the bikers and pedestrians. Most of the bikers do not follow traffic rules or appear to lack proper training. The pedestrians, on the other hand, are seen jaywalking as they please. Their careless manoeuvres on the road often cause serious accidents and sometimes fatalities. The photo was taken at the capital's Bangla Motor intersection on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Will go back with safety assurance

Rohingyas tell Oxfam interviewers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rohingyas who took shelter in Bangladesh said they want to return to Myanmar only after their safety and equal rights including being able to work and travel freely are ensured, according to an Oxfam report.

Oxfam made the report by interviewing 208 Rohingya refugees living in makeshift camps in Cox's Bazar in between September and November.

It launched the report yesterday -- the day Bangladesh and Myanmar formed a joint working group in Dhaka for repatriation of the Rohingyas.

On November 23, the two countries signed an instrument to start the process within two months, and agreed to establish the joint working group within three weeks.

Oxfam unveiled the report titled, "I still don't feel safe to go home", in the capital's Cirdap auditorium.

While presenting the report findings, Oxfam regional campaign and policy manager Sultana Begum said every Rohingya individual they spoke to, talked about witnessing violence and horror. Some saw their family members getting killed in front of them in Myanmar. "They are traumatised, their wounds are fresh."

"We are calling on the Myanmar authorities to end the violence and live up to their commitment to fully implement the Kofi Annan-led commission's recommendations, including ensuring that all people in Myanmar have equal rights."

"Their return has to be safe and voluntary, with a

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Same old footpaths



Setting tables and chairs right on this footpath near Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium in the capital's Gulistan, agents of bus operators completely block the pedestrian movement. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

MAHBUBUBR RAHMAN KHAN

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has renovated major footpaths in the capital's Gulistan area with tactile tiles for physically-challenged people, but hawkers occupied those in such a way that even a fit person would struggle to walk.

From October last year, DSCC started clearing a number of footpaths under its jurisdiction for free movement of pedestrians. The authorities also conducted drives on a number of occasions to keep the footpaths free till afternoon during weekdays.

But hawkers started to occupy the footpaths again as the monitoring stopped, said some pedestrians.

During a recent visit to several areas including Paltan, Motijheel, New Market and Gulistan, it was found that some footpaths were completely occupied and some partially. As a result, pedestrians were forced to walk on the roads instead of footpaths, risking their lives.

A pedestrian, Shamsul Haque, was seen walking in the middle of the road in Paltan area. He said he was happy when DSCC freed the footpath for them. Now the nuisance of hawkers has come back, forcing him to walk on the busy road. Not only hawkers, some agents of bus operators also sell tickets blocking the pedestrian movement, he added.

Sexagenarian Habibur Rahman, who was also walking in the middle of the busy Paltan road, said, "What else can I do? It is difficult to walk on the footpaths occupied by hawkers while the buses are occupying the roadside to collect passengers."

Sources said hawkers are running the business on the footpaths in cahoots with influential locals connected to politics.

In a recent investigation, the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has found that every day Tk 100-Tk 200 is collected from each of the hawkers on footpaths of Motijheel Ideal School and College.

"Extortionists collect toll from the hawkers threatening them with the names of locally influential people," reads the report.

The PBI submitted the probe report to a Metropolitan Magistrate Court, which had earlier ordered to look into the beating up of a hawker in February by local extortionists in Motijheel.

In February, DSCC filed three cases with Motijheel, Gulshan and Shahbagh police against the extortionists who collected tolls from the hawkers.

After that, the corporation took an initiative to keep footpaths of Gulistan and Paltan free from hawkers until afternoon. The DSCC also engaged some of its workers for moni-

toring. But the initiative utterly failed in the absence of a proper monitoring, alleged footpath users.

Asked, DSCC Chief Estate Officer (CEO) Mohammed Kamrul Islam Chowdhury said the city corporation has prepared a list of around 6,000 hawkers in different areas under its jurisdiction and allocated Tk 3 crore for their rehabilitation.

However, the work has been going on at a snail's pace; as a result, many frustrated hawkers have returned to the streets, claimed some hawkers.

"We are listed. But we have not noticed any activity of the city corporation to rehabilitate us," said Sohrab Hossain, who sells ready-made garments on a footpath on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Hawkers are violating DSCC's order because of no visible initiative from the other side, he added.

Asked about the slack monitoring on the footpaths, Kamrul Islam said they could not continue eviction drives regularly due to a limited manpower.

About hawker rehabilitation, he said, "The proposal over the rehabilitation of hawkers has been sent to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for an approval. It will then be sent to the finance ministry. Once it is passed, the rehabilitation will begin."



The photo, taken around 10:30am on Monday, shows street vendors are selling their goods occupying a significant portion of this footpath on Bangabandhu Avenue near Zero Point. With time advancing, the footpath draws more hawkers, making it difficult for pedestrians to navigate their way through the walkway.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WB approves US \$510m for secondary education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank yesterday approved a financing of US \$510 million to improve the secondary education system in Bangladesh.

In addition, its "Transforming Secondary Education for Results" programme will benefit 13 million students from grade VI to XII, says a WB statement.

The programme would enhance quality of teaching and learning as well as improve access and retention of students -- especially girls and children from poor households.

To improve the quality of education, the programme would support modernisation of curriculum and ensure professional development, management, and accountability of teachers. It would also support

learning assessments and reform examinations.

"The next challenge is to improve quality of education and to ensure that poor children, both boys and girls, complete grade 12," said Qimiao Fan, World Bank country director for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

To increase school completion rates, especially for girls and poor children, the programme would support stipends and school grants. Furthermore, it would pilot an adolescent girls' programme to motivate girls to complete schooling.

This would include financial incentives for poor female students in grades IX to XII and adolescent health topics in the curriculum. It would also build separate toilets for female students.

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Kudos to the little heroes

Railway to award them for saving train from accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The two quick-thinking little boys, who saved a freight train from a possible accident in Rajshahi on Monday, will be awarded by the Pakshey division of Bangladesh Railway today.

"We will give them an official letter each as well as award them money in recognition of their bravery," said Ashim Kumar Talukdar, divisional railway manager.

A programme will be organised today at Jhina village under Bagha upazila -- where the boys are from.

On Monday, Shihab Hossain, 6, and

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Shihab and Titon



Sitting in a palanquin, newly wed Shabnaz Sadia Emi enters the wedding venue of the 4th bridal festival at the Oasis of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital yesterday. Her husband Rifat Abdullah Azmi is walking in the front.

PHOTO: STAR

INFANT'S DEATH DURING MUGGING

Cop suspended over 'negligence'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities yesterday suspended the in-charge of a police outpost, a day after a baby died falling from a moving rickshaw during a mugging incident in the capital.

Assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Badrul Islam of Jatrabari Police Station was suspended for negligence in duty near the spot. The outpost is around 50 yards from the crime scene," said Iftekharul Islam, assistant commissioner of Demra zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The ASI has been attached to Wari division deputy commissioner's office and will be waiting for a formal investigation into the matter, AC Iftekharul Islam told The Daily Star.

Six months' old Arafat died after a mugger pulled his mother's bag hanging from her shoulder. The sudden force jerked her off the rickshaw along with the infant on her lap. The father of the child filed a murder case with Jatrabari Police accusing one unidentified person. Police could not arrest the mugger till last night.

Wedding bells in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adorned with a bridal ambience, the Oasis at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital wore the look of a newly-wed bride yesterday.

The fourth bridal festival themed "wedding shopping at home" started yesterday aiming to promote local brands and to encourage shoppers to buy Bangladeshi products, reports our correspondent.

A total of 38 booths at the festival venue showcased wedding outfits, makeover services, menu selection, decorations, photography, videography among others.

The ground turned into a wedding extravaganza when model turned actor Nirob walked in with his wife Tasfia Chowdhury Riddh in a palanquin and with wedding songs playing all around.

The couple also received a warm welcome by the organisers on the chilly winter afternoon.

Another married celebrity cou-

ple, Shabnaz Sadia Emi and Rifat Abdullah Azmi, also exchanged garlands on the ramp to add more festivity to the occasion.

Sikander Badsha, 28, and his wife came to the Sunskill - Naksha Biye Uthsob, a two-day bridal festival, to get an idea about how to plan their upcoming wedding reception.

"I found excellent ideas on wedding albums from the photography booths," Sikandar said.

It was a reunion of celebrities and cultural activists as well as a great opportunity for brides and grooms-to-be to choose, compare and get discounts on different promotional products and services.

Sumi Akter from customer care department of Diamond World said they were offering upto 31 percent discount on diamond jewellery. Visitors were mostly looking for engagement rings in the fest.

The programme will end today with a gala event for invited guests showcasing wedding fashion shows.