

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 27.2 L 16.0

MYMENSINGH H 26.3 L 15.4

CHITTAGONG H 26.9 L 17.5

SYLHET H 28.2 L 16.3

RAJSHAHI H 26.4 L 12.5

RANGPUR H 27.2 L 15.0

KHULNA H 26.0 L 14.5

BARISAL H 26.0 L 15.4

COX'S BAZAR H 29.0 L 18.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today, says the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17pm and rises tomorrow at 06:38am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Birds of Madagascar

Madagascar, an island in the Indian Ocean northeast of South Africa, broke off many million years ago from the giant merged continent called Gondwanaland. Being independent of the continents, life here evolved at its own pace. Thus, there is a large number of endemic species – that is, those that cannot be found elsewhere – of flora and fauna in Madagascar.

For birders Madagascar is attractive because, of the three hundred species of birds found here, one hundred and seven are endemic. Therefore, a trip to Madagascar offers the opportunity to see many birds not seen anywhere else.

Thus it was that my birder friends and I went to Madagascar with great anticipation. We were not disappointed.

The large island supports several types of ecosystems, including tropical rainforests, mountain and cloud rainforests, deciduous forests as well as an arid spiny forest. Each ecosystem supports its own set of birds some of which can only be found in a small region.

In the time allotted we decided to visit two regions: the rainforest at Perinet and the spiny forest in the south. We also spotted many birds in a lake in the center of the capital Antananarivo, Lake Tsorotsoa, which has been designated a Ramsar site for being a special wetland.

Our days in Madagascar went quickly, replete with the excitement of new species we had not seen before, and punctuated by lemurs, reptiles, insects and various exotic trees.

Over a month has elapsed since our trip, giving me time to reflect and ponder on what I saw.

I saw bird species very similar to our birds, but different enough to be their own species, and they gave me food for thought. For example, Madagascar magpie robins look exactly like our *doels* in colour and pattern. They even flick their tails like ours. But when I saw them something

did not feel right. Of course! They were much smaller than our *doels*, an unsettling observation. Madagascar hoopoes look similar to ours, but their voice was different and they were also smaller. The Madagascar green pigeon looks like our *horial* (yellow-footed green pigeon) including similar black stripe patterns on its green wings. And this list goes for many other birds I have seen in Bangladesh.

How is it these species ended up like this? To me that is a mystery, this is the kind of mystery that evolutionary scientists try to solve.

On the other extreme, there the joy of spectacularly different birds: for example, the many species of the family coua, with a round blue circle over the eyes, looked like nothing I have seen, and the sickle-billed vanga was unforgettable.

Along with the joyous memories were some sad ones, which started even before we landed, for from the plane one can see how the land is denuded, the earth gouged out for mines and forests cut down for farmland. While a determined conservation movement has managed to save some

forest land, much of the original forests of the island have been lost to development. Worse was the incursion of foreign species. We saw mile after mile of planted eucalyptus forests, which probably got there before anyone knew how bad the tree is for the environment. And despite its avian wealth, Madagascar's most common bird is the common myna.

Still, I doubt many places on earth would offer such an exciting and varied trip to nature lovers as Madagascar did to me and my friends.

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Sickle-billed Vanga.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

RANGPUR CITY CORPORATION ELECTION

Supporters' clashes leave 35 hurt

Police charge baton, fire tear gas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 20 people were injured as police yesterday charged batons on supporters of a defeated councillor candidate at Rangpur City Corporation election.

The incident took place in Central Road area of Rangpur city around 11:00am.

Witnesses said several hundred supporters of Abul Monzur Kuthial – a candidate who lost to Mamunur Rashid Manik Master by

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Almost fair, says Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thalergaon

Although the BNP candidate could not campaign for the Rangpur City Corporation election as much as the other candidates due to hindrances caused by police, the "overall election was fair", said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

However, he said his party does not have faith in the present election commission since it was formed following "wrong process" and ignoring their proposal to ensure its neutrality by including eminent personalities who are acceptable to the people, he said.

He made the remarks at an election rally in Panchagarh for Hakikul Islam who is the party's mayoral candidate in the upcoming Boda municipality election, scheduled for December 28.

At the rally Fakhrul once again said the "first condition" under which his party will participate in the next parliament election is that it has to be held under a "neutral government".

The true intentions of the present election commission cannot be presumed only through the Rangpur city election, which was not a major one and the people will not accept the government's attempt to hold another national election similar to that of January 5, 2014, the BNP leader said.

Fakhrul also clarified that Jamaat's alliance with BNP is for movement purpose, not for elections and his party is taking initiatives to forge a larger alliance with other parties.

Organising Secretary of BNP central committee Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu, Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal Panchagarh unit President Mohammad Kayes, were present, among others.



The idea was a noble one -- to add much needed green to the capital's dry surface by placing these large concrete tree planters on the median. But not just the trees were uprooted, most of the planters were left to ruin also. The photo was taken on VIP Road in Naya Paltan area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Participants at the "1st International Conference for Rehabilitation Professionals 2017" organised by Bangladesh Physiotherapy Association at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in the capital. From left, Reiza Dejito, Prof Dr Mohammad Ismail Khan, Valerie A Taylor, Mohammed Nasim, Saima Wazed Hossain, Nasirul Islam, Prof Dr Golam Rabbani and Dr Lori Maria Walton.

PHOTO: STAR

DIGNITY OF PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS

Saima calls for creating regulatory body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Formation of a regulatory body is necessary for ensuring dignity and quality of services provided by rehabilitation professionals including physiotherapists and occupational therapists, said Saima Wazed Hossain yesterday.

The professionals in the sector face neglect because people lack adequate knowledge about them. Also, there is no institution to regulate services provided by the professionals, Saima, the chairperson of National Advisory Committee for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, also said, according to a press release.

"I urge the authorities concerned to form a regulatory body so that immediate measures can be taken to make the profession up to date. Through it an eligibility criteria to enrol in the profession also should be formed," she said.

Saima, the daughter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, made the remarks while giving a keynote presentation at the first International Conference for Rehabilitation Professionals 2017 held at Krishibid

Institution Bangladesh in the capital, the release said.

Bangladesh Physiotherapy Association (BPA) organised the two-day conference on "Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services for achieving Sustainable Development Goals". Medical and rehabilitation professionals from 13 countries including Bangladesh took part in the programme.

Saima in her speech said people should understand the rehabilitation profession and the professionals must engage themselves to gather knowledge in order to enrich the sector.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammed Nasim said the government will take immediate measures to form the body and build necessary institutions for rehabilitation professionals on a piece of land allocated in the city's Mohakhali area.

Valerie A Taylor, founder and coordinator of Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP); and Dr Nasirul Islam, president of BPA; also spoke at the programme, said the release.



Iftikher Hossain passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Iftikher Hossain, who served as managing director of Uniproperties and Uniholdings Ltd in Zambia, passed away at 11:35pm yesterday, at the age of 69.

He left behind his wife and two sons and daughters-in-law. For the last few months, he had been suffering from severe kidney and multi-organ complications.

Iftikher started his career with SQUIBB Bangladesh after independence and served for various other organisations including Bengal Group and Bengal Steel. He was also a member of Dhaka Club.

Take advantage of economic zones

Amu urges Indian investors at Kolkata industrial trade fair

BSS, Dhaka

Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu yesterday invited Indian entrepreneurs to invest in Special Economic Zones (SEZs), saying the government was providing all necessary support to run business smoothly and make profits.

"The government of Bangladesh is setting up 100 SEZs for foreign and local investment. The investors of India, especially from north eastern region, may take advantage of the attractive package of incentives offered by the government at the economic zones," he said while inaugurating the "30th Industrial Indian Trade Fair (IITF)" at Kolkata in India.

Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BNCCI), the oldest Chamber of Commerce in India, organised the fair aiming to expand trade and business in eastern and north-eastern regions of India, said a press release.

In recent time, Amu said, there had been some forward looking steps taken by both the Bangladesh and Indian governments regarding connectivity encompassing transit and trans-shipment facilities in India, particularly as an aftermath of Bangladesh prime minister's historic visit to India and Indian prime minister's visit to Bangladesh.

"This scribe feels that the relations between the two countries are headed for better times, and both have entered into

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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