

WEATHER FORECAST



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
H 26.6 L 16.0	H 27.5 L 15.0	H 26.9 L 17.3	H 28.0 L 16.6	H 26.2 L 12.7	H 26.0 L 14.2	H 25.8 L 15.2	H 27.0 L 14.0	H 27.3 L 17.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during midnight to till this morning, Met Office said. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:19pm and rises tomorrow at 6:39am.

2 'JMB operatives' held in capital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained two 'operatives' of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in the capital yesterday.

The arrestees have been identified as Romij Uddin Bhuiyan alias Babu, 34, and Shayekh Arif Hossain, 41.

The Rab official, at a press conference, said Arif is a fugitive criminal, a JMB shura member and ameer of its recruitment wing for Dhaka metropolitan east.

Ramij is also a JMB shura member and fugitive in a case filed with Rupganj Police Station.

Both of them used to teach at schools.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-11 yesterday conducted separate raids and arrested Arif and Ramij from Khilgaon and Mugda areas in Dhaka.

Lt Col Kamrul Hasan, commanding officer of Rab-11, said the duo was involved in recruiting new members for JMB.

The elite forces also seized militancy related books and pamphlets from Arif's possession, he added.



Discipline, order, patience and consideration for others -- these are increasingly becoming empty words among road users. In this photo taken from Madina Market area in Sylhet city yesterday, all sorts of vehicles are crossing the busy Sylhet-Sunamganj road by squeezing through a broken portion of the median.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

RAPING FOUR OF A FAMILY

Another arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cig

Police detained another suspect in connection with the rape of four women of a family in Karnaphuli upazila of Chittagong yesterday evening.

Intiaj Uddin Bappi, 23, was detained in Chaturi-Chowmuhony area at Anwara upazila, said Sub-Inspector (SI) Md Hossen of Karnaphuli Police Station, also the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case.

Earlier, two more suspects were shown arrested in the case. Bappi is an acquaintance of one of the arrestees, Abu, who earlier had worked as a mason at the victims' house, said police.

"We have clues and are interrogating the detainee," said the IO.

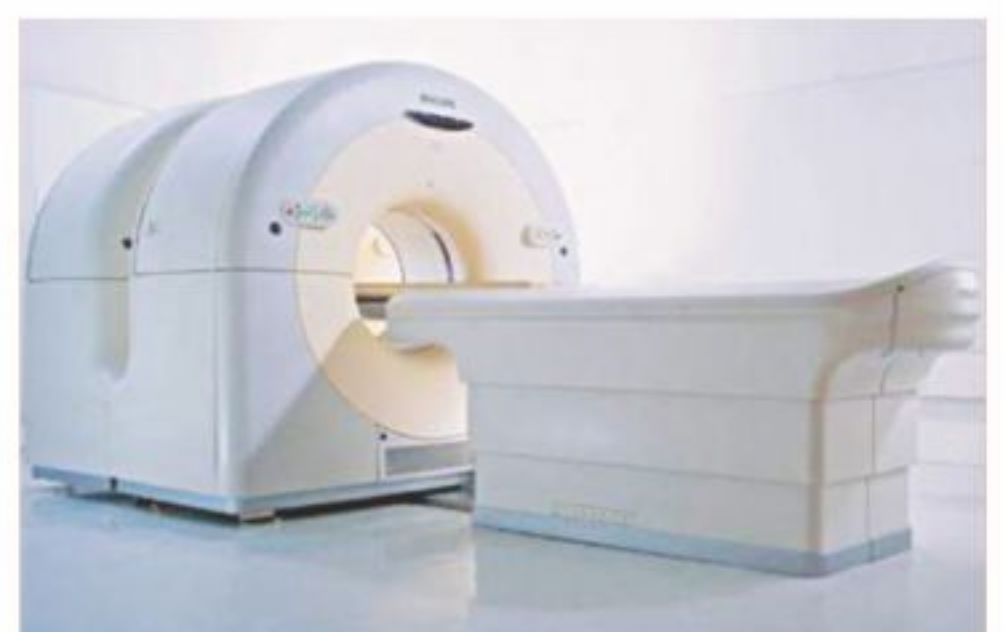
The role of police has drawn criticism as the main culprits are yet to be identified although 10 days have already passed. Police could not take any of the two arrestees on remand.

On December 13, the four women -- wives of three expatriate siblings and their sister-in-law -- were raped by four robbers at their house in Shahmirpur village.

Nuclear Medicine Instt gets cancer detection device

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and SHADMA MALIK

With an aim to detect cancer at its primary stage, the Nuclear Medicine Institute (NMI) is going to install a PET/CT scanner from early January next year.



Positron Emission Tomography and Computed Tomography (PET/CT) scanner, which has been imported from the USA in early December at the cost of Tk 20 crore, is being installed at NMI, located on Dhaka Medical College premises.

Prof Dr Sanowar Hossain, director of the NMI, said, "The modern equipment can diagnose cancer at the early stage. In this case, patients can begin treatment to prevent the disease from spreading further."

The initiative will also bring hope to cancer patients who seek low-cost treatment, he said.

At present, some hospitals have the equipment, said Dr Sanowar, adding that the new addition to NMI would also boost up the cancer treatment in the country.

Asked about the cost of treatment, he said, "At the NMI, the cost for the diagnosis will be much lower compared to other hospitals."

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JS body for anti-child marriage campaigns at colleges

BSS, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on women and children affairs ministry yesterday recommended taking steps to organise an hour-long session on early marriage every week at colleges for increasing awareness among the students.

The recommendation came at the 41st meeting of the committee at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with its Chairman Rebeka Mamin presiding, said an official release.

Committee members Mahabub Ara Begum Gini, Begum Nasrin Jahan Ratna, Begum Fazilatun Nessa, Amina Ahmed, Monowara Begum and Rifat Amin attended the meeting.

The meeting held discussions on the health services programmes being implemented by the ministry at different centers, clinics and hospitals.

The committee also recommended holding six job fairs at divisional level, the release added.

Hunger strike for salary scale upgrade

Assistant primary teachers' movement enters second day



Assistant primary teachers yesterday demonstrate at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The indefinite hunger strike enforced by the assistant primary teachers rolled onto second day yesterday with the teachers vowing not to return to their workplaces until their demand for upgrading their salary scale is met.

Under the banner of "Bangladesh Primary Assistant Teachers' Grand Alliance", several thousand assistant teachers of the state-run primary schools began their strike on Saturday at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar with a one-point demand -- fixing the trained assistant teachers' grade next to the trained head teachers' grade.

Some 27 teachers have already fallen ill and were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Shahinur Al-Amin, one of the alliance leaders, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We want the government to reduce the wage difference between head teachers and assistant teachers. We'll not go home until the government

meets our demand," he said.

He said there is a three-tier gap between the wage grades of assistant teachers and head teachers although both play almost an equal role in educating children.

The trained assistant teachers get salary under 14th grade of the wage board and the non-trained under 15th grade whereas the trained headmasters get salary under the 11th grade.

"We've been demanding for an upgrade for more than three years

27 ADMITTED TO DMCH

now, but the authorities concerned didn't pay any heed..." said Shahinur, also president of Bangladesh Assistant Primary Teachers' Society.

And without solving the problem, he said, the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has recently forwarded a proposal made by the Public Service Commission to the primary and mass education ministry for elevating the head teacher's grade to 10.

The agitating teachers said if upgraded to 11th grade, the basic salary of assistant teachers would increase to Tk 12,500 from Tk 10,200 in 14th grade.

They said since the independence till 2005, the difference between the wage grades of assistant teachers and head teachers were only one-tier. But it started to increase afterwards.

Tapan Kuman Mandal, another leader of the alliance, said, "We have decided to pass the nights under the open sky and continue our fast-unto-death till the government meets our demand."

He said although the DPE officials requested them in the last two days to call off their hunger strike, they are not leaving without getting an assurance from the ministry and the Prime Minister's Office.

This correspondent tried to get in touch with the director general of DPE for comments, but he did not answer his phone.



Garbage collectors emptying a van on the bank of the river Turag near Savar's Ashulia bridge. The river, a lifeline to Dhaka, is dying slowly due to unchecked dumping of waste and encroachment. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Afzal elected Dhaka Club president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Afzal Rahman Sinha (Kaiser) was elected as the president of Dhaka Club Limited for the year 2017-18.

The election was held on December 23, said a release of Dhaka Club.

Afzal is the chairman of ACME Laboratories Ltd. He is the finance chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Executive committee members are Anhara M Siddiky Pritha, Dr Zahirul Islam, Monir Ahmad, Abu Muhammed Sadat (Omi), Mahmud Koli, Waqar Ahmad Choudhury, Altamas Kabir, Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury (Kochie), Nazim Uddin Ahmed and Abdus Salim.

73pc Rohingyas now living in settlements: IOM

UNB, Dhaka

Some 73 percent of Rohingya refugees are now living in new spontaneous settlements, said International Organization for Migration (IOM) yesterday.

Meanwhile, some 13 percent of Rohingyas are now living in makeshift settlements, nine percent in host community locations and five percent in formal refugee camps.

Compared to the previous round, there has been a reduction in the proportion of Rohingyas in host community locations and an increase has been noticed in the proportion residing in collective sites.

IOM's newly-released Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) Round 7 assessed 1,635 locations hosting Rohingya refugees in collective sites and host communities.

On Christmas day, it will be four months since the influx of Rohingyas started into Bangladesh.

Latest figures show that 6,55,000 people

have arrived during that period, bringing the estimated total number of Rohingyas in Cox's Bazaar to 8,67,500.

As winter takes hold, IOM and its partners said they are scaling up their distribution of shelter and non-food items in response to the colder weather.

In the past fortnight, over 88,500 blankets and emergency shelter materials, including bamboo bundles for over 1,500 families, were distributed.

To date, IOM has distributed 1,24,000 tarpaulins, benefitting some 5,63,000 new arrivals. Some 32,000 people have also received other non-food relief items.

IOM is also providing the Rohingyas and the affected local population with water, hygiene and sanitation.

Some 1,400 cubic metres of clean drinking water have been trucked into spontaneous settlements with limited access to water and over 68,000 people have received hygiene kits.

Some 1,500 emergency latrines have

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Vehicles backed up while workers relocate utility lines for the ongoing work of metro rail in the capital's Khamarbari area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON