



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 29.1 L 16.2

MYMENSINGH H 28.8 L 13.2

CHITTAGONG H 31.0 L 17.5

SYLHET H 28.7 L 15.3

RAJSHAHI H 26.6 L 13.5

RANGPUR H 26.3 L 14.2

KHULNA H 27.5 L 14.5

BARISAL H 28.6 L 14.6

COX'S BAZAR H 31.3 L 19.0

Light rain may occur at one or two places over Chittagong regions and weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today, says the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:22pm and rises tomorrow at 06:42am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

## RAMPAL POWER PLANT 'No', reiterate greens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reiterating their demand, green activists yesterday called upon the government to stop the construction of coal-based Rampal power plant, which is being built in the ecologically critical area (ECA) of the Sundarbans.

They also demanded that another 320 government and non-government projects be stopped in the ECA to protect the world's largest mangrove forest, said a press release.

The demands were made at a press conference organised by the National Committee to Protect Sundarbans, a platform of green activists, at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital.

Speaking at the conference, Sultana Kamal, convener of the committee, said, "Our national asset the Sundarbans is now under the biggest threat of destruction." Along with some natural and man-made causes, industrialisation near the forest increased the threat, she said.

Different international and local environmental organisations and scientists opposed the project based on their study saying that the project would create a devastating impact on the forest, said Sultana, also an eminent rights activist.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

## Tannery estate not worker-friendly yet Say union leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Tannery Workers Union leaders yesterday demanded that the government take immediate measures to urbanise the Tannery Industrial Estate in Savar to create a worker-friendly environment.

During the Union's office inauguration programme in the Estate, its general secretary Abdul Maleque said the Tannery Industrial Estate is established in an area of 200 acres in Horindhara.

In last two years, almost all the 154 tannery factories shifted from Hazaribagh in the capital to Horindhara in Savar, outside the capital, following government orders, although the area was not fully developed to house all the factories and its workers.

Some 30,000 workers are working in the Estate while most of them still have to reside in Hazaribagh as there is no good housing facility or school in Horindhara.

Besides, there is no street light, no proper drainage system which frequently cause water-logging even in light rains, and not even any permanent solid waste dumping station in the area while the roads are in a sorry state.

The workers have to count some Tk 100 to 120 per day as travelling cost while on the other hand the daily long journey is making them exhausted day by day, said Maleque.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Antara Talukdar, a community health care provider (CHCP) at the Betchari Mukh Community Clinic in Khagrachhari district, distributing free medicines to the patients. She is the only person to run the two-room community clinic and on a typical day she single-handedly attends to 60-70 patients and provides primary medical care to them.

PHOTO: STAR

## Taking healthcare to hard-to-reach area

SAIKAT DEWAN, Khagrachhari

Betchari Mukh is a small village on the hills of Khagrachhari district in south-east Bangladesh. The local community, consisting mostly of marginal farmers and their families, lives 9km away from the district town.

It is not always feasible for locals to commute to the nearest hospital at the district headquarters for their medical needs. The Betchari Mukh Community Clinic has now become the centre of health care for the people of the area.

Their day to day medical needs are met single headedly by Antara Talukdar, a community health care provider (CHCP) at the clinic.

Housed in two rooms and an oblong veranda in front, the small community clinic is the only place the locals trust for primary medical care. The path to the clinic is paved, which makes it easier for the patients to walk to and fro.

On a typical day, Antara sees 60-70 patients and provides preliminary medical counselling. The clinic is equipped with 30 types of

basic medicine, free of cost.

"I treat my patients for a range of ailments, whether it is for injuries or diarrhoea. Patients come to me whenever they feel ill and a simple medicine can sometimes make them feel better," she said.

"For patients with more serious symptoms, I refer them to Khagrachhari District Sadar Hospital. But patients mostly come with basic ailments that I can treat with the medicines available," she added.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has set up community clinics across the country to take health services to people's door steps at every ward. The prospective caregivers have to go through an intensive three month training programme at the sadar upazila before qualifying to be a CHCP.

Sixty-five-year-old Amena Begum of Bhuyachari Guccha village came to the clinic with complaints of cough and cold. The CHCP listened to her complaints

and gave her flu medicines.

"I had to come to Antara many times before. The best thing about her is that she listens and understands. I always receive the medicine I need from the clinic," said Amena.

Mosammam Pipasa, 25, of the same village came in with her seven-month-old son who was running a temperature. Antara had a quick look and immediately gave the child a few drops of syrup to reduce the fever.

has benefitted the locals immensely.

"Most of the people of the area are poor farmers. If they fall ill, they go to the quack doctor as they are not interested in going to the district hospital. But ever since the community clinic opened, locals are getting the medicine they need, free of cost."

Dr Uch Shay, upazila health and family planning officer of Khagrachhari Sadar, said there are 12 community clinics in the upazila.

There are six CHCPs who received training on delivery-related health care; Antara is one of them, he added.

"Through these workers, we provide health services to the pre and post-delivery mothers and provide information about childcare. Due to the community clinics, the number of patients visiting the hospital has gone down a notch."

Living right next door to the clinic, Antara has dedicated her life to better the lives of the people living on the hills as she is a source of comfort and reassurance for them.

### BETCHARI MUKH COMMUNITY CLINIC



Girls of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in the capital celebrating their success after the results of JSC and equivalent examinations came out yesterday. The results of primary terminal exams were also announced on the same day, and overall girls have fared better than boys in almost all areas.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Engage community in fight against child marriage

Dena Kimball of Kendeda Fund tells in interview with The Daily Star

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

Community-driven initiatives can bring about real changes to the scenario of child marriage in the country.

If people of a community become agents of the changes -- necessary for creating an environment not supportive of early marriage, nothing else can be a better solution, said Dena Kimball, executive director of The Kendeda Fund.

The organisation in association with CARE Bangladesh has been working for three years to fight the social menace in the country.

Their first project on child marriage -- Tipping Point -- has been extended for another three years. On this occasion, Dena came to visit Bangladesh to see for herself how far the project had left its mark. The project has been working at the community level, encouraging discussions among people of all ages.



Dena Kimball

This is how they get to learn better ways to deal with their social and economic challenges other than marrying their daughters off, said Dena in an interview with The Daily Star before leaving for the USA on December 6.

"It is probably the hardest way to work."

CARE and other partners in other countries that The Kendeda is working with are trying to connect that work to the broader dialogues that are happening

nationally and internationally to help create a better understanding of the problem.

Bangladesh has the second highest rate of early marriages worldwide with about 52 percent girls being married off before they reach 18, according to Unicef. Niger tops the chart.

The legal marriageable age has been mostly debated upon at discussions centring on child marriages following the enactment of Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2017 in February. The bill has a provision allowing boys and girls to be married off at any age under "special circumstances" with permission from court and guardians, which is the instigator of the debate.

But there are a lot more issues to be paid attention to and discussed if a sustainable, effective solution is sought, Dena said.

CARE has so far worked in 90 villages in haor areas of Sunamganj

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

**350 City ATMs & Counting...**

We are committed to expanding our footprint across Bangladesh for your convenience. That is why we have added 25 more ATMs so that you can always find us right beside you.

**New locations**

**Dhaka** • Kuril, Pragati Avenue • Tejturi Bazar • Abdullahpur Bus Stand • Doyagonj • Dhaka Uddan, Mohammadpur • Dhakeswari Road • Shaheed Sarani, Cantonment • South Banasree • Banglamotor • Hotel Golden Tulip • Maruf Market, Mouchak • Sector 13 & 14, Uttara • Green City Edge, Kakrail • Kobi Faruk Sarani, Nikunja 2 **Gazipur** • Borshon Tower • Bagher Bazar **Narayanganj** • Partex Star Particle Mills • Bhulta Branch **Narsingdi** • Dream Holiday Park **Chittagong** • Lohagara Branch • Fatikchhari Branch • Aziz Court **Feni** • Feni Branch **Moulavibazar** • Kulaura Branch

**Services available from ATM**

- Citytouch Internet Banking • Cash withdrawal • Balance inquiry • Mini statement
- Fund transfer • Mobile top-ups • Credit card payment • Stop cheque payment • PIN change

More City ATMs opening soon.

For more information, please call our **24 hours Call Center at 16234.**

f / TheCityBank