

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 25.5 L 14.4	H 24.2 L 12.0	H 27.0 L 16.5	H 24.2 L 14.0	H 24.8 L 11.0	H 24.6 L 10.9	H 26.5 L 13.5	H 27.2 L 12.4	H 27.0 L 16.5

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. Light to moderate fog may occur at places over the country during late-night till morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:45pm and rises tomorrow at 06:39am.



Swiss president due Sunday
Scheduled to visit Rohingya refugee camps during four-day tour

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset will pay a four-day official visit to Bangladesh from Feb 4.

During his visit, he will hold discussions with top government leaders to further strengthen bilateral ties and express solidarity with Bangladesh for hosting over a million Rohingya refugees.

In the first official visit by a Swiss president to Bangladesh, there will be two main aims: to demonstrate solidarity with a country that is severely affected by the crisis in neighbouring Myanmar, and to establish closer bilateral relations, according to a press statement of the Federal Council of the Swiss government.

In Bangladesh, it said Berset is due to hold official talks with President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali.

Apart from underscoring the current status of bilateral relations, the two countries will discuss ways to further strengthen economic, development and cultural cooperation during the visit.

In addition, the Swiss embassy in Dhaka said "solidarity with Bangladesh in the Rohingya crisis will be a major focus of the talks, as will cooperation at multilateral fora."

On Tuesday (February 6), President Berset will visit



President Abdul Hamid receives a formal letter containing Awami League's decision to nominate him for presidency from Prime Minister and party President Sheikh Hasina at Bangabhaban yesterday. During the meeting, they greeted each other with bouquets. The ruling party has nominated Hamid for presidency for a second term as his tenure ends on April 23 this year. PHOTO: PID

NEWS IN brief

Rangpur city ex-mayor critically ill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Critically ill former mayor of Rangpur City Corporation Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu, has been shifted to Dhaka by an air ambulance yesterday.

He suffered a stroke on Wednesday night and was admitted to a hospital in Rangpur. Doctors subsequently referred him to shift to Dhaka, family members said.

Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu, also an advisor of Rangpur AL, was elected as the first mayor of Rangpur City Corporation held on December 20, 2012.

JS body for round-the-year dredging

UNB, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources Ministry yesterday recommended buying more dredgers and continuing dredging works in the rivers across the country round the year.

The committee also suggested the ministry to take initiatives for increasing the water flows in the rivers, said a Parliament Secretariat handout.

The committee came up with the recommendations at its 33rd meeting held at Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban with its Chairman Romesh Chandra Sen, MP, in the chair.

Committee member and Water Resources Minister Anwar Hossain (Manju), State Minister Muhammad Nazrul Islam, AKM Fazlul Haque MP and Rejwan Ahammud Taufiq MP, among others, attended the meeting.

The long wait is over, finally

Sandwip to get electricity for the first time

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

The long wait for power connection in the offshore upazila of Sandwip in Chittagong is finally about to end, as the initiative to connect the upazila with the national power grid by installing a submarine cable ushers in new hope for the islanders.

The Power Development Board (PDB) started installing the submarine cable in the Sandwip Channel on December 17 last year from Baoriya union of Swandip. It has engaged three ships for the job.

The setting up of the cable is a part of the project titled,

"Chittagong Zone Power Distribution System Development Project", which was approved by Ecnec (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) in 2014. The cost of setting up the cable has been estimated to be Tk 147 crore.

Executive Engineer Sumonto Kumar Devnath, in-charge of the installation project, told The Daily Star that the length of the main cable would be 15 kilometers. There will be another 25 kilometers of overhead lines on both sides of the sea.

Chinese companies SSBS, CCCB and ZIT are working under a consortium to execute the project, he

added.

He said through the submarine cable, Sandwip would be connected to the national power grid while connection to the cable would be provided from Barobkunda area in Chittagong's Sitakunda upazila.

"The work will be completed by June 2018, while power distribution will begin from December," he added.

The PDB is installing two parallel submarine cables to keep the power supply uninterrupted in case of any emergency.

"Due to strong current under the Sandwip Channel, it's challenging

to install a cable 10 feet under the riverbed. A cable as long as 30 kilometers, weighing 1,450 tonnes will be used," said Sumonto.

"Apart from the strong current, there are some other obstacles to install the cable. The five-km-long muddy slope along the channel has slowed our work down," the PDB official said.

The Institute of Water Modeling, a sister concern of BIWTA, found in their feasibility test that the average depth of the channel is 50 feet.

It is worth mentioning that PDB needs to clear 800 meters of mangrove forest after the authorities concerned

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Beyond the call of duty

Policeman gives SSC candidate 2km ride to help her find the right exam centre

MASLUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

All SSC examinees were in the exam centre by then. They were about to start one of the important public examinations of their life. But this was not the case for a female candidate. She was screaming outside the Annada Government High School centre in Brahmanbaria town after she discovered that she had mistakenly landed in a wrong exam centre.

When the onlookers remained mute spectators and did not know what to do, a policeman came along. He took the girl to his motorbike and travelled around two kilometres to help her find the exam centre -- Niaz Mohammad High School.

Finally, the girl, a student of Ulchapara Maleka Saheb Ali High School in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila, could appear in the exam.

When police often hit the newspaper headlines for all the negative reasons, ASI Shariful Islam of traffic police has set a glaring example for other members of the force, showing how to act beyond the call of duty.

Hailing from Terokhada of Khulna, Shariful, 37, joined police in 2001 as a constable. He was posted to Brahmanbaria around two years back.

While talking to The Daily Star, Shariful said he had noticed a gathering of people centring around a crying girl. After coming to know about the gravity of the issue, he decided to help the girl find her exam centre. Shariful also showed his generosity saying a teacher of the school also requested him to help the girl.

Meanwhile, the incident went viral after one Mehedi Hasan Shawon, a student of Brahmanbaria Government College, posted it on Facebook. Everybody was showering the ASI with praises.

Traffic Inspector of Brahmanbaria Mujibur Rahman said Shariful has done a commendable job.

This type of act will enhance the image of police, he said.



ASI Shariful Islam



Vehicles sit idle on both sides of the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue as far as the eyes can see. City dwellers have been remaining stuck on the street lately due to the ongoing trade fair and installation work of the underground utility lines in the area. At times, the gridlock starts from Shahbagh and lasts for hours. The photo was taken near Farmgate around 9:00pm on Wednesday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

It'll choke free speech

FROM PAGE 3

deterioration of law and order and instigating against any person or organisation through publishing or transmitting any material in websites or in electronic form. It stipulates maximum 14 years in prison for the offences.

Now, the draft of Digital Security Act-2018 splits these offences into four separate sections with punishment ranging from three to 10 years' term. The proposed law describes some crimes as "non-bailable" and allows a police official to search or arrest anyone without a warrant in special circumstances. On January 29, the cabinet approved the draft of the Digital Security Act-2018.

There would be every chance of the act being misused against people's right to express themselves after it is passed by the Jatiya Sangsad, observed the speakers.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) termed the proposed digital security act a threat to the freedom of speech, expression and the safety of citizens, reports UNB.

TIB in a statement yesterday said the proposed act contradicts the constitutional rights of free speech and opinion and the International Convention on the Rights of the People. "The government should amend all the controversial clauses of the law and revise it on the basis of the respective experts and partners immediately," it added.

University

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Citing a survey report, UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan emphasised equipping the country's young generation with updated knowledge and skills for enabling them in the job market.

He said the commission was relentlessly working to ensure quality education at tertiary level for producing quality graduates.

Professor Mohammad Yusuf Ali Mollah, member of UGC; Syed Almas Kabir, president of BASIS; Mahboob Zaman, managing director of DataSoft Systems Bangladesh Ltd; faculty members of different universities and representatives from a number of industries also spoke.

Myanmar

FROM PAGE 3

Myanmar's military's crack-down on August 25 last year. The government of Myanmar has refused her entrance to the country.

Responding to a question about an Associated Press report yesterday that details a massacre and at least five mass graves in the Burma village of Gu Dar Pyin, Lee said that while she didn't have specific details on the village, "you can see it's a pattern" that has emerged with the Rohingya.

She said such reports must be investigated, "and this is why we've called for a fact finding mission ... and access for international media to the areas in northern Rakhine state where the Rohingya live.

Lee said that Myanmar's actions were "amounting to crimes against humanity."

"These are part of the hallmarks of a genocide," she said.

"I think Burma needs to get rid of this baggage of 'did you or did you not,' and if proven that they did, then there has to be responsibility and accountability. No stones must be left unturned because the people, the victims, the families of the victims definitely deserve an answer," she said.

Survey excluded local water bodies

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the DAP for a 20-year period till 2035.

The councillors of the municipality presented that the consultant firm responsible for preparing the survey report for the DAP did not include many local canals in the NNAIS.

Nigar Sultana, town planner of Tarabo Pourasabha, said had they done the field survey properly and communicated with the Bangladesh Water Development Board authorities, instead of depending on satellite images only, they could earmark all the canals in the proposed plan easily.

Kazi Golam Hafiz, team leader of the consultant firm Development Design Consultants (DDC), could not be reached for his comments on the issue since his cell phone was found unreachable despite several attempts made by this correspondent.

The community representatives of Tarabo also demanded that the DAP needs

to properly identify all public lands in the municipality to develop civic amenities, propose a road connectivity with the Eastern Bypass and the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, and relocation of heavy industries out of the municipality.

DAP project director Ashrafur Islam said he would deploy a planning team including representatives from the consultant firm at the municipality for the next one week to rectify flaws in the survey report.

With the current DAP expiring its 15-year term in 2015 without having implemented most of its key recommendations on conservation of wetlands and flood flow zones, Rajuk embarked on adopting yet another 20-year detailed plan in March 2015 for the period 2016-2035.

Rajuk board member for planning Abul Kalam Azad among others was present while municipality mayor Hasina Gazi chaired the meeting.

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