

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 34.0 L 20.8

MYMENSINGH H 31.9 L 18.8

CHITTAGONG H 32.0 L 20.8

SYLHET H 32.0 L 18.5

RAJSHAHI H 34.1 L 17.0

RANGPUR H 29.8 L 18.3

KHULNA H 34.2 L 21.0

BARISAL H 33.8 L 20.5

COX'S BAZAR H 32.2 L 20.0

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Barisal, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions with hails in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:07pm and rises tomorrow at 06:09am. Highest and lowest temperatures in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

PRESS COUNCIL HC stays judicial committee's decision on Star report
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months the decision of Bangladesh Press Council's Judicial Committee that censured one of the seven reports The Daily Star published between January and April last year on different issues of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. It also stayed for the same period the committee's order that asked The Daily Star to fully print and publish its decision in 15 days.

At the same time, the court issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of Bangladesh Press Council and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University to explain why the Judicial Committee's decision and order should not be declared illegal. The bench of Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir delivered the order and rule following a writ petition filed by The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, challenging the Judicial Committee's judgement and order on the ground of legal error.

Bangladesh Press Council's chairman, its judicial committee's chairman, its secretary, vice chancellor of BSMMU and Proshanto Kumar Majumder, section officer of Registrar office of BSMMU, were made

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Mirpur slum wakes up to devastating fire
Around 1,000 shanties gutted, say officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was around 3:00am yesterday. Most of the people living in Elias Mollah Slum of the capital's Mirpur were in deep slumber.

Suddenly, Renu Begum, a 55-year-old slum resident, heard someone screaming "Fire! Fire!". And she immediately realised that a fire might have broken out and was gutting the shanties around her residence. At the same time, the electricity went off.

Without thinking twice, she started searching for the key of the almirah so she could take out the valuables before the fire engulfed everything.

But she could not as the fire came so close that she along with around 15 members of her family had to run for lives, leaving the valuables only to be gutted by the fire.

She was narrating her harrowing tale to this correspondent when she returned to the slum in the morning. By this time, almost the entire slum, which was abuzz with activities even a day before, had taken a deserted look.

Around 1,000 shanties were completely gutted in the devastating fire, leaving thousands of slum dwellers homeless, said Abdullah Al Arefin, senior station officer at Mirpur Fire Station. However, locals claimed there were around 3,000 shanties there.

Though no casualty was reported, the proprietor of Jewel Pharmacy, a drug store near the slum, said around 100 people took primary treatment at his facility.

Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost, said only a woman named Zamila Khatun, 65, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) with burn injuries.

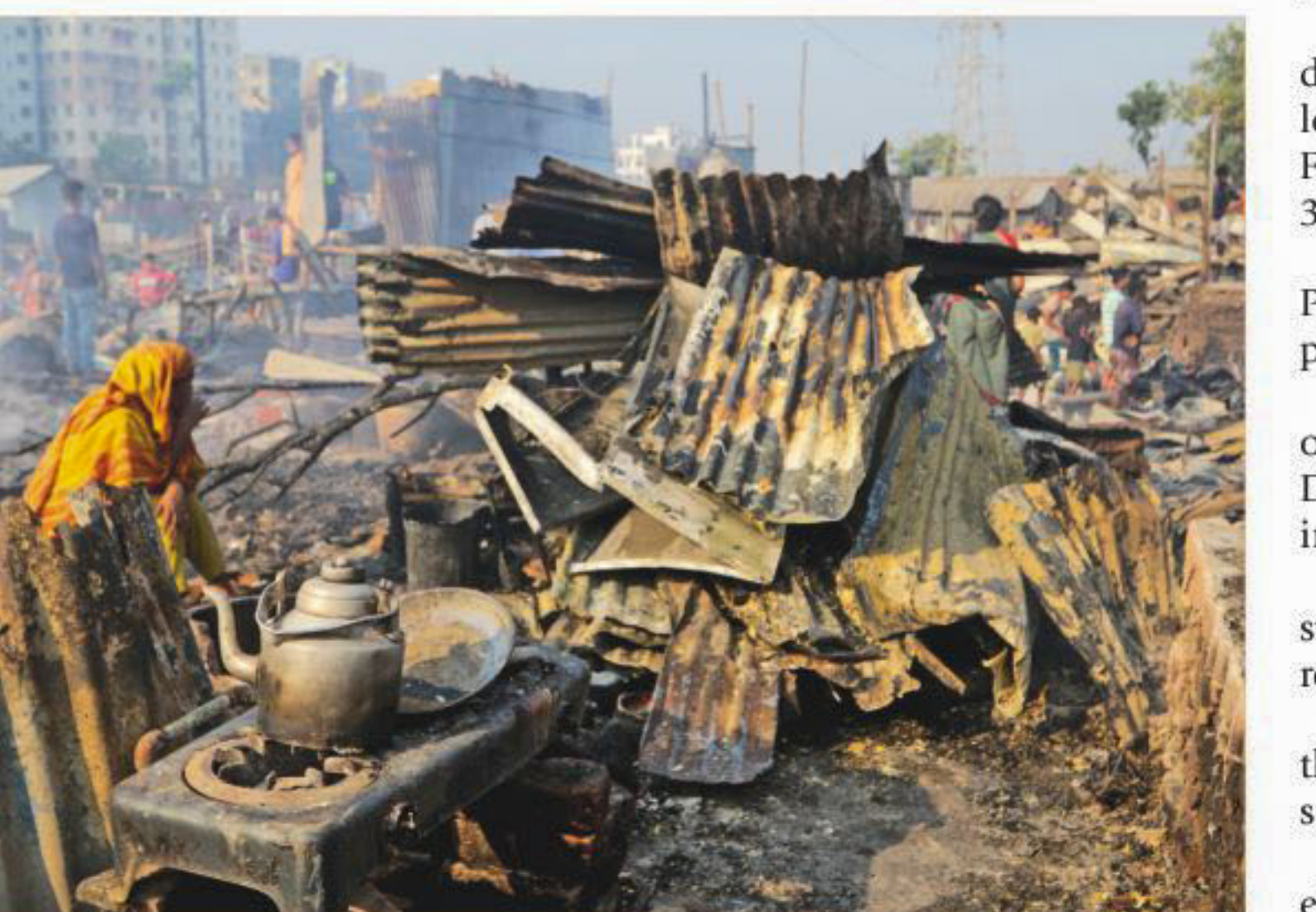
Like Renu Begum, other slum dwellers also had similar stories to tell. They were found sifting through the charred remains of their belongings.

Sakhina Begum, 25, from Gaibandha, started living in the slum around a year back with her husband and two school-going children.

Sakhina was working as a maid while her husband was eking out a living as a rickshaw puller.

Like everyone else, they also did not get any time to save their belongings. All of their valuables including a saving of Tk 16,000 were burned in the blaze.

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Clockwise from top, An aerial view of burnt-out Elias Mollah Slum in the capital's Mirpur 12. Around 1,000 shanties were gutted in the devastating fire early yesterday. A kettle on a gas stove shows a telltale sign of life even the day before while the woman sitting nearby among the debris uncovers the cruel reality now. Despair overwhelms a woman after the fire destroyed everything in its wake.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Three 'gunfights' in one day

Four 'criminals' killed in N'ganj, Ctg, claim law enforcers

STAR REPORT

Four alleged criminals were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers in Narayanganj and Chittagong early yesterday.

In Narayanganj, alleged robbers -- Zillur Rahman, 35, and an unidentified man -- were shot dead in a gunfight with Rab on Dhaleshwari River in Alirtek area of Sadar upazila.

Rab found a foreign pistol, a bullet and some sharp weapons on the spot.

Lt Col Kamrul Hasan, commanding officer of Rab-11, said the gunfight ensued when a Rab team raided the area where around eight to ten robbers were preparing to loot ships. The others fled, he said.

Another alleged robber, Jahangir, 38, was shot dead in a gunfight with police in Jampur Mirerbag area of Sonargaon upazila.

Police also detained five robbers and seized a pistol with a bullet, a machete and a knife.

Narayanganj police said a gang of around eight robbers was preparing for robbery on a road.

When police rushed to the spot, the robbers started firing bullets, ensuing the "gunfight".

In Chittagong, an alleged thug, Sabedul Haque alias Kalu, 42, was shot dead in a "gunfight" with Rab in Jangal Salimpur area of Sitakunda upazila.

Rab claimed to have seized 14 firearms, including a pistol and seven guns, a magazine and 48 bullets from the spot.

His accomplices escaped, said Rab.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, a total of 162 people were killed in "crossfire", "shootout", and "gunfight" with law enforcers and in their custody in 2017.

BANGLADESHI WORKERS PM hopes better environment in Singapore

UNB, Dhaka



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed hope that

Singapore will continue providing decent working environment to Bangladeshi workers.

She said this during a lunch hosted by her Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong at Istana, the official residence and office of the president of Singapore and the working office of the country's prime minister.

While Singapore has the capital, advanced technology and know-hows, Bangladesh is well equipped with young and educated workforce, the premier said, adding that the combination can benefit both the countries.

Lee Hsein Loong said Singapore is eyeing to invest in Bangladesh's energy and port sectors.

No bar to confiscate Concord high rise

It was built on orphanage land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court verdict that ordered confiscation of Concord Group's 18-storey tower on a government land that was leased out to Sir Salimullah Muslim Orphanage in the capital's Azimpur.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after dismissing an appeal filed by Concord Group's Managing Director Mir Showkat Ali, challenging the HC verdict.

Following a writ petition, the HC on September 17, 2015 had ordered Concord Group to hand over its 18-storey building to Sir Salimullah Muslim Orphanage through the social welfare ministry in 30 days after receiving the copy of the verdict.

Otherwise, the ministry would take over its possession and property of the multi-storey building within seven days and hand it over to the orphanage.

The full text of the verdict was released on December 21, 2016, also directing the government authorities to immediately constitute an effective managing committee to run the administration and management of the orphanage and to protect, maintain and improve it and its properties.

The HC also declared illegal the government's inaction to protect its property leased out to the orphanage, and the transfer of the land to the developer under the influence of the president and secretary of the orphanage's managing committee.

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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION Dhaka seeks China's cooperation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Appreciating China's humanitarian assistance for the displaced Rohingya refugees, Dhaka appealed to Beijing for political support to address the crisis.

The State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam made the appeal, during a meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador of China to Bangladesh Zhang Zuo, at the foreign ministry yesterday.

It was the first political meeting of the Chinese envoy after presenting his credentials to the President Abdul Hamid on Wednesday, March 7, 2018.

The state minister also requested China to respond positively to the appeal, said a foreign ministry press release.

Stating that both Myanmar and Bangladesh are friendly neighbours of China, the envoy said his country will take a neutral position over the prevailing Rohingya crisis. He expressed happiness at the progress achieved by Bangladesh and Myanmar through bilateral engagement.

Meanwhile, as the state minister expressed his concern over the provocative actions of Myanmar army to destabilise the repatriation process, the Chinese envoy said that his country is communicating with Naypyidaw and persuading them to act sincerely for the repatriation.

In the meeting, Shariar Alam also underlined the importance of close bilateral engagement with China on political as well as economic fronts.

He appreciated China's deep interest and continued support towards socio-economic progress in Bangladesh, including speedy implementation of the Padma Bridge Rail Link project and Expansion and Strengthening of Power System Network under Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) area project.

Shariar Alam expressed optimism on development cooperation between Bangladesh and China, and hoped it will be driven by China's Belt and Road and Initiative.

In the meeting, Zhang Zuo also recalled the Chinese President Xi Jinping's milestone visit to Bangladesh in October 2016, when bilateral ties between the two states were elevated to "strategic partnership of cooperation."

He also revived that the countries had reached a consensus to expand the bilateral ties in a number of key areas.

The Chinese envoy also expressed his commitment to work with the Government of Bangladesh to promote bilateral relations between the two countries, by implementing the decision reached through the consensus of the two leaders of China and Bangladesh during Chinese President's visit to the country in 2016.

Violence against children on the rise: MJF report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence against children -- especially rape, sexual harassment, kidnap, early marriage and murder -- is on the rise in the country, says a report prepared by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

Besides, the number of children committing suicide, getting killed in accidents and being victims of political violence also rose last year.

The findings of MJF were disclosed in a report titled "Bangladesh Shishu Poristhiti 2017" at the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

MJF prepared the report from compilation of news reports published in six national dailies.

The number of "positive" and "negative" reports on children, published in the dailies, was higher last year than that in 2016, the report also says.

In comparison with 2016, child rapes last year rose by 36 percent.

As many as 472 children were raped in 2017, while the figure was 304 in 2016. Among the rape victims, 18 were killed in 2017 while 22 killed the previ-

ous year. Moreover, rape attempts were made on 45 children over the last two years, says the report.

The number of children who faced sexual harassment last year totalled to 101 -- four times higher than that in 2016.

Last year, with 72 children kidnapped and 10 of them later found dead, kidnap incidents saw a 26 percent rise over the previous year's incidents.

According to the report, in 2017, a total of 524 children were victims of child marriage. The figure was 83 in 2016.

In 2017, as many as 196 children were murdered with 28 others subjected to attempted murder. The child murder and attempted murder figures in the previous year were 191 and 14 respectively.

Moreover, 259 children were victims of torture last year. The number of tortured children in 2016 was 408.

The total number of children committing suicide last year was 203 -- a figure that is two and a half times higher than the previous year's figure.

The total number of child death last year was 1,595, with 679 of them killed in

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Prof Shahnaz Huda, 2nd from right, of law department at Dhaka University speaks during the disclosure of a report titled "Bangladesh Shishu Poristhiti 2017" at the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Manusher Jonno Foundation prepared the report from compilation of news reports published in six national dailies. MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam and other officials of MJF were present.

PHOTO: STAR

Language hero Abdur Razzak passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Language movement hero, freedom fighter and former law maker Shah Mohammad Abdur Razzak passed away yesterday.

Razzak was a former president of Rangpur Awami League.

He breathed his last around 2:15am at his residence in Satmatha area of Rangpur city. He was 90.

He left behind three sons, a daughter, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Abdur Razzak was buried at his family graveyard in Chanunia village in Pargacha upazila with state honour after his fifth namaz-e-janaza after the asr prayers.

Freedom fighters and leaders and activists of different political parties attended the janaza among others, reports UNB.