

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 33.6 L 23.8

MYMENSINGH
H 32.0 L 23.5

CHITTAGONG
H 31.5 L 22.9

SYLHET
H 31.7 L 21.4

RAJSHAHI
H 36.4 L 23.6

RANGPUR
H 32.9 L 22.0

KHULNA
H 32.2 L 24.6

BARISAL
H 33.0 L 23.0

COX'S BAZAR
H 33.5 L 23.5

Rain/thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Dhaka, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal & Sylhet divisions and weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:11pm and rises tomorrow at 5:58am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Mosquito menace beyond control

2 foggers for 6 lakh residents; Rangpur City Corporation yet to start anti-mosquito drive

KONGKON KARMAKER, from Rangpur

For an estimated six lakh people suffering from the menace of mosquitoes, the Rangpur City Corporation has only four fogger machines to fight the threat.

To make matters worse, two of the foggers went out of order a while back.

In 2012, Rangpur municipality, comprising an area of 52km, was upgraded to a city corporation. Since then, not only the population and area under the city corporation has increased, the city also witnessed a rise of the mosquito menace.

But the only thing that has remained stagnant is the inefficiency of the city corporation in failing to cope with the threat, alleged many of the residents.

They said due to a lack of proper monitoring and cleaning drive in water bodies, many areas under the city corporation have turned into an ideal breeding ground.

On top of that, this year, while residents are struggling to combat the mosquito menace, the city corporation is yet to start an anti-mosquito drive.

Aiyub Ali, conservancy inspector of the city corporation, said they were yet to start the drive. "We were waiting for the winter to pass. We are preparing to start the drive soon."

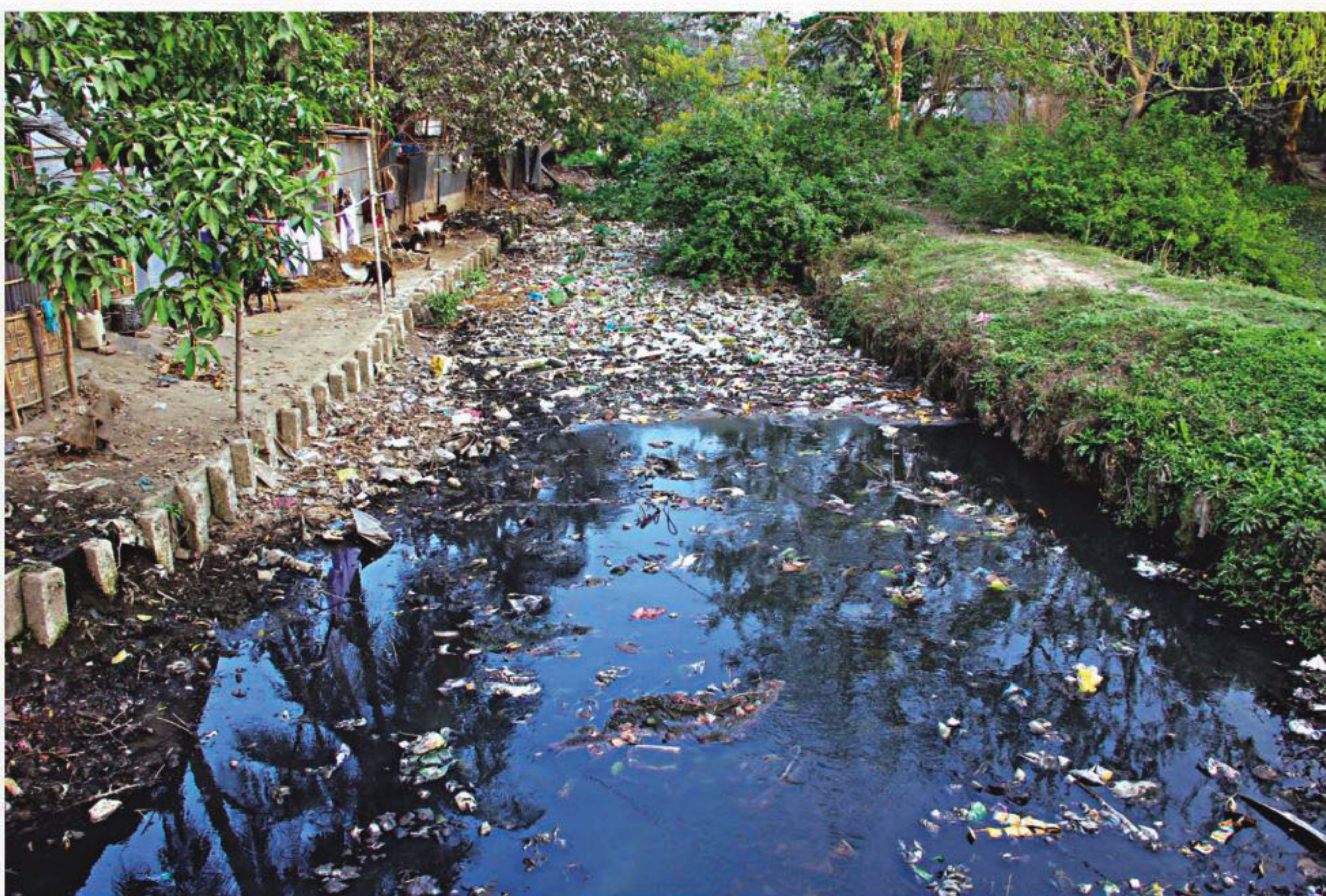
As they have a shortage of fogger machines, covering all the areas under the city corporation would be difficult, he said.

When asked why they were not purchasing more equipment as two of the four foggers went out of order, he said, "We will cover as much areas as possible."

This correspondent also asked him about the allocated budget for controlling mosquitoes. The inspector evaded the question and repeated the above.

He did, however, mention that the newly elected mayor is looking into the issue seriously.

Contacted, Mayor Mostafizar Rahman said though he just took charges on February 19, he is working to mitigate



Shyamsundari Khal in Rangpur city is now a fertile ground for mosquito breeding.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

the problem.

"I've already spoken with the officials concerned regarding the mosquito menace. We'll purchase more fogger machines, as the existing ones are not sufficient to cover the entire city."

The mayor said a tender has already been floated for purchasing more fogger machines. "Besides, RCC has started procuring insecticide to be used for controlling mosquitoes. The drives will start next week," he assured.

Regarding the budget for anti-mosquito drives, he said, "It is true that we do not have sufficient budget to fight the menace, but we are trying our best."

Meanwhile, amid the authorities concerned evading questions and the ongoing attack of mosquitoes, city dwellers continue to suffer.

"It does not matter whether it's day or night, mosquitoes are everywhere," said Sohel Rana, a resident of Station area.

According to many residents, the situation took a turn for the worse because of the appalling condition of the Shyamsundari canal. The canal is the main outlet that connects all the drains in the city.

Due to unabated dumping of waste and a lack of maintenance, the century-old canal has become a fertile ground for

mosquito breeding. In addition, garbage remains piled up all over the city without being disposed of properly, which also attract mosquitoes.

Expressing concern over the filthy condition of the 12-km canal, JP Chairman HM Ershad, also a lawmaker from Rangpur, urged the city corporation, at a recent meeting in February, to take an initiative to clean the water body.

During a visit last week, this correspondent found that the canal has turned into a narrow and polluted stream with foul odour. Once considered a lifeline for Rangpur city, the canal is now filled with garbage and aquatic

plants, and remained clogged-up with garbage at various points.

All in all, it has become an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

"We continue to burn money by using coils and incenses while the city corporation sits idle," complained Mohammed Rafiq of Dhap area.

Many of the residents of Engineer Para, Station Road, Alamnagar, Kamalkasna and Paharkasna also vented the same frustration.

Due to an absence of anti-mosquito drives, people are suffering, said Mofizul Islam Montu, a cultural activist. A lack of proper drain and waste management has intensified the problem. "I hope the mayor would take a prompt initiative and address the issue."

Many of the residents alleged that though they were paying high taxes, they were not getting required services from the city corporation.

Expressing concern, they also alleged that the city corporation, in previous years, only carried out drives in VIP areas such as Guptapara, Senpara and Mulatol.

About the allegation, Aiyub Ali, conservancy inspector, said, "When we get a request from any specific area, we operate our anti-mosquito drives there." He did not elaborate further.

Regarding the state of Shyamsundari canal, the mayor said, "Once the canal used to be our lifeline, now it has become a curse."

"Shyamsundari is dying. In the last five years, around Tk 25 crore has been spent to save the water body, but to no avail. Not only it's under a threat of encroachment, but due to a constant dumping of garbage, it has also become a breeding ground for mosquitoes."

The city corporation has formed a committee to survey the canal, he informed. "We'll take proper measures to save it."

About the mosquito menace, the mayor said, "Every thing will be fine within the next 15 days as we will start our anti-mosquito drive soon."

SHITALAKKHYA BOAT CAPSIZE

1 body found, 4 still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Fire service last night recovered a body after a boat capsized in the Shitalakkhya river in Narayanganj on Friday.

Identity of the deceased could not be ascertained immediately. On the other hand, four persons were still missing till filing of the report last night.

The boatman, Kalimullah, and nine others swam ashore while five others drowned when the boat capsized between Demra and Rugganj.

A total of 14 friends hired the boat on Friday from the ferry ghat near West Sultana Kamal Bridge on 5:30pm.

At about 9:30pm, a sand-laden vessel hit the boat at Kazipara area and it sank, Kalimullah said.

A five-member team of Demra Fire Service has been conducting a rescue operation.

The boatman said the vessel, which did not have any light, suddenly hit the boat.

Deputy Assistant Director of Fire Service and Civil Defence Mamunur Rashid said the drive will continue from dawn to dusk and will resume at 9:00am today.

Rugganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Abul Fateh Mohammad Shafiqul Islam said the rescue operation will continue till the missing persons are found.

He said the vessel has been seized and its driver has been detained. A case has been filed in this connection, he added.



Appeal for help
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahir Uddin Babar, a teacher at a polytechnic institute, is suffering from a rare degenerative motor neuron disease (MND).

Babar is advised to get "stem-cell therapy". For this, he needs Tk 15 lakh to get the treatment in China, says a press release.

Also a former student of Green University, Babar lost his father in 2015 and now his family is unable to afford the treatment. His friends are collecting money, but yet not adequate.

So, the family has requested all to extend financial help to save his life.

Financial assistance can be sent to Md Jahir Uddin Babar, A/C No- 20502400202667501, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, Khilgaon Branch, Dhaka.

Send him back

Law Minister Anisul urges UK government about extradition of convicted BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday requested the UK government to send back BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman to Bangladesh immediately so that the government can implement his jail sentence.

"You have given shelter to two convicts in your country," he said, referring to Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Tarique Rahman.

Chowdhury Mueen Uddin was convicted of committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War, said the minister, urging the UK government to extradite him as well.

Tarique Rahman has been awarded jail sentence as per due legal process, he said, adding that it is the government's duty to implement the verdict.

The minister was addressing a human chain arranged by Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) at Banani playground in the capital. BSJ, a pro-Awami League cultural organisation, arranged the human chain protesting "BNP-Jamaat's attack on Bangladesh High Commission in London and on the portrait of the father of the nation" last month.

Law Minister Anisul said some mischief-

makers who had been "patronised by war criminals" carried out the attack at the high commission.

Tarique Rahman, elder son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, has been in London since 2008 and facing multiple charges of corruption back in Bangladesh.

Speaking at the human chain, State Minister for Information Advocate Tarana Halim said though over a month has passed since the attack took place, no adequate measures have been taken to bring the perpetrators to book.

On February 7, the day before a special court in Dhaka pronounced verdict against Khaleda Zia in a graft case, BNP activists allegedly forced their way into the Bangladesh High Commission in London and assaulted its employees and vandalised some of its valuables.

Following demonstration by the UK chapter of BNP and its front organisations, a group of demonstrators entered the high commission in the name of submitting a memorandum, according to a press release issued by the high commission.

The release was circulated among journalists during a press conference by the

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Recalling the memories of the fateful March 25 night, Sector Commanders' Forum holds a candle light vigil at the Central Shaheed Minar in Chittagong city yesterday. On that night in 1971, Pakistani occupation army cracked down on the Bangalees and killed them indiscriminately.

PHOTO: STAR



Boats being fixed on the bank of the river Buriganga ahead of monsoon. The photo was taken from Kamrangirchar area in Dhaka on Friday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

4 held

FROM PAGE 4

from entering the shop. They also allegedly misbehaved with them, the post stated. When the girls finally reached the spot, the salesmen allegedly engaged in an altercation with the girls and assaulted them both verbally and physically.

After the Facebook status was shared, many users protested the disgraceful abuse of the women. The students later filed a complaint with the New Market Police Station.

Police raided the shop and arrested three salesmen from Shahnur Fabrics and one from the adjacent shop, the OC said. A case is being filed in this regard.

Diaspora

FROM PAGE 3

Prof Willem van der Geest, chief economist, former director at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and Karima Bennouna, UN special rapporteur, OHCHR, spoke among others.

NEPAL PLANE CRASH

Survivor Kabir to be taken to S'pore

Another emergency landing of US-Bangla flight at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US-Bangla plane crash survivor Kabir Hossain would be taken to Singapore for treatment.

His son, cousin and other family members told doctors that they want to move him to Singapore.

"A medical board formed for the plane crash survivors found his right leg severely infected. The leg may need to be amputated," Samanta Lal Sen, chief of the 14-member board, told reporters at a briefing at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

He added that the expenses for his treatment abroad would be paid by the US-Bangla Airlines. "Doctors will examine him. If his condition permits, an air-ambulance will fly him to Singapore," Al Helal Shaon, son of Kabir, told The Daily Star.

Hours after Kabir Hossain was brought back to Dhaka from a Kathmandu hospital on Monday, his condition gradually deteriorated. He has been kept on life support at the DMCH burn unit since Friday night.

On March 12, at least 49 people, including 26 Bangladeshis, died as an aircraft of US-Bangla Airlines from Dhaka to Kathmandu crashed at

Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal.

Among the survivors Mehedi Hasan, Saiyada Kamrunnahar Shwarna, Almun Nahar Annie, Sheikh Rashed Rubayet, Shahreen Ahmed and Shahin Bepari were treated at the DMCH. "Condition of Shahin Bepari remains unchanged. But the others are gradually improving," Samanta Lal Sen said.

Meanwhile, a US-Bangla plane heading to Malaysia was forced to make an emergency landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport due to technical issues yesterday. It left the airport after a three-hour delay. With 164 passengers onboard, the Boeing 737-800 took off around 8:45am, said US-Bangla Airlines GM (Marketing Support and PR) Kamrul Islam.

Around 15 minutes later, the pilot received a warning regarding fuel filter bypass and returned to the airport, he added. After checking the issue and getting the clearance of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh the plane left for Kuala Lumpur around 11:45am as "engineers found no fault", he also said.

Another US-Bangla Airlines plane made an emergency landing in Dhaka after taking off on March 4.