

WEATHER

FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 31.0 L 19.9	MYMENSINGH H 29.0 L 20.0	CHITTAGONG H 34.5 L 22.5	SYLHET H 30.5 L 22.0	RAJSHAHI H 33.8 L 22.4	RANGPUR H 29.0 L 19.5	KHULNA H 35.0 L 21.5	BARISAL H 33.0 L 22.0	COX'S BAZAR H 36.0 L 23.3
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Rain/thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind and lightning flashes is likely to occur at many places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Chittagong division with hail at isolated places over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today, says the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:25pm and rises tomorrow at 5:27am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

NO LONGER A ROAD



Rain or shine, the road from Kajla in Jatrabari to Mridha Bari in Demra remains terribly battered. For years, the mud-filled and pothole-ridden road has been causing sufferings to people and affecting businesses in the area. According to locals, the authorities concerned occasionally do some patch-ups, which fail to offer a permanent solution. Clockwise from top left, A bus tilts forward precariously after one of its front wheels sinks in a pothole. A man helps push a rickshaw-van cross a muddy section. Holding a pair of sandals, a man walks over an inundated portion. A biker riding with his family struggles to balance over the slippery road. A car tries to maneuver out of a muddy crater. A woman and a child tread carefully to board a bus. The photos were taken in Jatrabari area yesterday. The suffering this photojournalist captured from 12:30pm to 3:00pm is just a glimpse into the agony people go through day in and day out.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Biogas power plant sits idle

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Although the construction work of a biogas plant with a capacity to produce 80 kilowatts of power in Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali under Barisal was completed in June 2016, it is still sitting idle. Constructed at a cost of Tk 8.49 crore, the government set up the biogas power plant as part of a seed farm, the largest in the area, on Char Bashbaria. Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory in Gazipur, owned by Bangladesh Army, was in charge of the construction of the 40,804 square feet plant. Six Chinese engineers supervised the setup of the plant that began on December 27, 2014, and was later handed over to Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC). But since then, the environment-friendly plant lies idle. According to BADC officials, the biogas power plant is ready to run, but it is unable to start operations for a lack of quality straw and skilled manpower to run it. Md Tasir Hismi, an official of the constructing firm, said, "We set up a

modern straw-based biogas/power plant for the first time in Bangladesh. It has been designed to produce the power needed to run the seed farm." About 50 kilometres east of Patuakhali city, the seed farm was set up on 1,044 acres of char land. It produces quality seeds that are distributed to farmers across the country by BADC. The char area is surrounded by rivers on all sides, providing irrigation all year round. The farm was setup at a cost of Tk 245 crore under a four-year government project that ended on June 30, 2017. It also houses a warehouse, dormitory, labour sheds, office buildings, and a workshop. After the project ended, the seed farm was transferred to BADC on July 1, 2017. The idea behind the seed farm that includes a biogas power plant was noble. The fields would produce crops, mainly paddy, for seeds; the straw of the paddy would be dried, cut and processed in the plant to produce power to run the farm and a bi-product of organic fertiliser; the fertiliser would again be used on the crops. Biswajit Sikder, the then deputy assistant engineer of the seed farm, said

the straw would first be processed to produce 500 cubic metres of biogas that would be refined to get 300 cubic metres of pure gas and stored in gas chambers. The pure gas would run two generators -- one producing 50KW of power and the other 30KW -- to deliver an uninterrupted supply of power to the seed farm, he added. At present, solar panels light up the office building, while the rest of the infrastructure remains in the dark after sundown. The biogas/power plant needs 1.5 tonnes of high quality straw a day to produce power and the straw was supposed to be collected from crops that are produced in the farm, he said. Kishor Kumar Biswas, deputy director of the farm, said, "We are unable to run the power plant for a lack of quality straw." The straw that is produced in the farm loses quality after it is dried in the sun, he added. "We also have a dearth of skilled manpower to run the plant." He said he wrote to the higher authorities on January 11 in hopes of making the plant functional. He is yet to receive a response.



The power plant at Char Banshbaria in Dashmina upazila under Patuakhali is yet to start operations. PHOTO: STAR

'PLOTING SUBVERSIVE ACTS' Top Gazipur Jamaat leader arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police yesterday arrested 45 people, including Gazipur city Jamaat-e-Islami ameer SM Sanaullah, at Swapnachura resort in the city on the charge of plotting subversive activities. Fifteen petrol bombs, four cocktails and 18 jihadi books were seized from their possession, said police. Sanaullah was an independent candidate for the post of mayor in the upcoming Gazipur City Corporation. He withdrew his candidature on April 23 and supported BNP nominated mayoral candidate Hasan Uddin Sarkar. Sarkar protested the arrest of Sanaullah.

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In pursuit of reviving a lost

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writing and receiving letters will always offer an experience that modern technology cannot touch, since sending a letter is almost as close to personally meeting someone. These were some of the sentiments shared at a "letter festival" held at the capital's Bishwo Shahitto Kendro yesterday. A total of 70 letters were exhibited during the festival. Of those, 50 were selected out of 200 written by individuals from various districts. In addition, 20 letters written by eminent personalities were also showcased. Some of the eminent personalities include Ahmed Sofa and Sardar Fazlul Karim. Nadia Momen of Narsingdi was one of the participants whose letter was selected for the festival. "It has been almost 10 years since I wrote a letter this way," she told this correspondent. "Writing a letter by your own hand feels more intimate..." "When I was in school, I used to write letters to my uncle who used to live abroad. The excitement we used to feel whenever we received a letter from him was priceless," said the student of Dhaka University. Himu Paribahan, a voluntary organisation, organised the daylong festival titled, "Daak Peon" (postman), to showcase the

forgotten art to the young generation. The letters were written in various categories such as writing to a family member, a friend or someone special. Each of those bore unique emotions. Some of the letters were also written to the organisation, expressing gratitude for their effort to rejuvenate the habit of writing letters among the youth. A letter written by Manoshi Saha Tuli, an intern at Dhaka Medical College, was displayed at the festival. She wrote about the fond memories she had while writing letters to her grandmother as a child. She also lamented giving up the habit due to social media, which she now uses for communicating with others. At the end of the letter she thanked the organisation for giving her an opportunity to journey back to her childhood. "It was our small endeavour to introduce the art of writing letters to the new generation. We have forgotten this joy as we remain too busy... Hopefully such events will help keep the art form alive," said Ahsan Habib Murad, coordinator of Himu Paribahan. He said they also have a plan to publish a book consisting letters exhibited during the festival.

Probe into London mission

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The sudden attack came on February 7 afternoon ahead of the verdict in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Khaleda, also a former prime minister, was jailed for five years on February 8 after she was found guilty in the case. In a statement, the Bangladesh High Commission in London had said the BNP activists and members of its wings forcibly entered the commission premises on the pretext of submitting a memorandum. "Bangladesh High Commission in

London represents Bangladesh in the UK. So, damaging the High Commission's asset is like damaging state assets, and attack on the High Commission is tantamount to attack on Bangladesh," according to the statement, which was read out by Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at press conference in Dhaka on February 8. Such destructive activities by the unruly demonstrators and their conducts tarnished Bangladesh's image abroad, the statement said.

JnU scraps MCQs in admission test

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we could not avoid admission related forgery due to the MCQ system. We have found out some admission seekers communicating with outsiders with the help of special devices. "If we introduce descriptive format system, we would be able to evaluate the merit of students properly," he observed. Like the admission tests, there will be no MCQs in all other exams, including mid-term, class tests and quiz tests, he added. The JnU is the first public university to make such a decision after the government's ban on MCQs from Primary Education Completion Examination amid severe criticism over a spate of question leaks.

At present, almost all the higher educational institutions in the country hold MCQ-based exams for admission seekers. At the JnU, admission seekers were to answer 75 MCQs in an hour. Besides, teachers were allowed to hold midterm and class tests with MCQs. The syndicate also decided that the teachers at the honours level cannot use multimedia in the classrooms, except for special considerations where the usage of multimedia is required, said the university's press statement. The teachers in no way can use notes, guidebooks and lecture sheets in any course and they will fix a standard text which is affordable and available in the market. Several reference books can be used, if needed, it said.

Tragedy strikes

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admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital. In Faridpur, Saiful Islam, 29, son of Azahar Ali Mir of Saltha upazila, died as a bus hit him while he was crossing Dhaka-Khulna highway in Majkandi area of Madhukhali upazila after he had got down from another bus on Thursday, reports our Faridpur correspondent. In Jessore, Raju Hossain, 34, the helper of a bus driver, was killed and at least 30 others were injured when the vehicle fell into a ditch beside Jessore-Narail road near Karimpur Secondary School, reports our Benapole correspondent. Seven of the wounded were rushed to Jessore General Hospital while the others to Narail and other places, passengers and hospital sources said.