

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 28.1   L 20.2	H 25.5   L 20.0	H 33.2   L 25.9	H 26.6   L 20.5	H 29.3   L 22.0	H 27.0   L 22.2	H 33.8   L 25.5	H 33.5   L 25.1	H 32.4   L 25.4

Rain/thundershowers with temporary gusty/squally wind and lightning flashes may occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Chittagong division with heavy to very heavy falls and hails at isolated places over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB reported quoting the Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:26pm and rises tomorrow at 5:25am.

## JU student 'sexually assaulted' in capital, 2 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female student of Jahangirnagar University was allegedly sexually assaulted by a hawker in the capital's Shyamoli area while she was walking along a footpath yesterday morning.

The incident happened around 11:50am while the student, aged around 24, was coming out of Indian Visa Centre in Shyamoli after submitting her application.

"I was walking along the footpath. When I reached near Faisal Tower, the accused, Shawon, 25, who sells garments on the footpath, came close to me with indecent gesture whistling...", the student alleged in a case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

When the girl protested, he hurled expletives at her and confronted her again offensively.

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A bus flipped over during nor'wester on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday morning. Locals said its driver was injured and taken to a hospital. Traffic remained halted in Boliapur area of Savar until the road was cleared around 10:30pm.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Sharp rise in snatching

UNB, Dhaka

Habibur Rahman, a student of East West University, along with his three friends got on a bus from Farmgate to go back home at Malibagh.

He found an empty window seat and sat on it right away. The bus started. Soon afterwards, he received a phone call. It was an old friend. Habibur got lost in confusion. Meanwhile, the bus got stuck in a traffic jam at Karwan Bazar.

Suddenly, someone snatched away his phone through the window. Before he could come to terms with the situation, the snatcher started running. The incident took place on March 16.

Just a month before, on February 15, housewife Jannatul Ferdous was going to Mohakhali from Bailey Road by a CNG-run auto-rickshaw. Her four-year-old daughter was also with her.

"My daughter was playing games on my tablet. As we reached Nabisco crossing in Tejgaon area, a person suddenly snatched away the tab from her."

"At first, I did not realise what happened or how it happened. Then I noticed a large hole at the back of the vehicle. That person must have cut it open. My daughter was very scared... so was I," she said.

On February 23, a senior journalist of the news agency also fell victim to mugging at Amin Bazar intersection. He was returning to the capital from Savar in a bus sitting by the window.

Last month, Mohammad Shamsul Islam, a private university teacher who lost his mobile phone to snatchers at Mirpur 1, wrote on his Facebook account that Mirpur now has become a safe haven for phone snatchers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Implement pay structure

Demand state-run jute mill workers; blockade road, rail tracks for four hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Almost 4,000 workers of seven state-owned jute mills in Khulna and Jessore yesterday staged demonstrations to press home their 11-point demand including implementation of wage board recommendations.

The workers from Daulatpur, Crescent, Platinum, Star, Aleem, Eastern, and Khalishpur jute mills blocked the Khulna-Dhaka highway for four hours and set fire on the road and rail tracks.

They also burned tyres in Notun Rasta intersection and Daulatpur area in Khulna city. The 11-point demand includes payment of arrears (4 to 12 weeks); implementation of wage board recommendations along with a 20 percent dearness allowance, and removal of corrupt officials from the factories.

"We've been facing problems for years, including irregular payments from the government," said Sohorab Hossain, convener of Bangladesh State-Owned Jute Mill CBA-Non CBA Oikya Parishad.

The government announced a pay structure following recommendations by a wage board in June 2015, but it has not been implemented yet, he said.

"If our demands are not met by May 1, we

will go for a tougher movement," said Putul Khatun, a female worker leader of Crescent Jute Mill.

Meanwhile, hundreds of commuters suffered as all Khulna-bound buses were halted due to the blockade, in Phultala and Nowapara areas.

Doly Kundu was on her way to Khulna Medical College Hospital from Narail district with her six-year-old ailing daughter. But, due to the blockade, the bus dropped them off at Phultala upazila, from where they took a rickshaw van to Daulatpur, some 20 kilometres away.

"We will have to walk another 5 km to reach the hospital," Doly told this correspondent.

Four Khulna-bound trains were also stopped at Nowapara Railway Station in Jessore.

Contacted, Manik Chandra Sarker, station master of Khulna Railway Station, said three trains -- Chitra Express, Rocket Express and Mohananda Express -- could not leave the station yesterday morning due to the blockade. "Hundreds of passengers are stuck at the station due to the ongoing demonstrations."

Later, at 12:21pm, the Dhaka-bound Chitra Express resumed its journey followed by the other trains, he added.

## BFUJ, DUJ protest sacking of 70 journo, staff

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday condemned and expressed grave concern over the recent termination of 70 journalists and employees from two newspapers.

In a press statement, the unions alleged that some dishonest businessmen have surfaced in the media world. They appoint journalists from established houses and suddenly shut the newspaper or sack the journalists after their purpose is served. They demanded the information ministry's intervention in this regard. BFUJ acting president Shahid Ul Alam, secretary general Omar Faruq, DUJ president Abu Jafar Surjo and general secretary Sohel Haidar jointly issued the statement.

## Coasts still vulnerable

Speakers tell programme marking 27th anniversary of cyclone Gorky

STAR REPORT

Yesterday was April 29. More than two decades ago, on that very day in 1991, Gorky, a tropical cyclone with a wind speed of 155 miles [around 249 kilometres] per hour struck the coastal areas of southern Bangladesh.

The category 5 hurricane claimed 1.38 lakh lives and left around 1 crore people homeless. It also damaged properties worth US \$1.5 billion, making it one of the world's deadliest tropical cyclones.

"Though 27 years have passed, many survivors still have not been able to return to normality. Rather, they had to face new cyclones like Sidr, Aila, Mahasen and Roanu," said Shawkat Ali Tutul, assistant director of Coast Trust.

Tutul was addressing a human chain organised in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital to mark the occasion.

The government should prioritise building infrastructure in the coastal areas that may withstand natural disasters, he said.

Thirty rights organisations including Online Knowledge Society, ARPAN, Alok Jatra, UDDIPAN, Udayan Bangladesh, Unnayan Dhara Trust, SDO, Coast Trust, Nthara Women Farmers Association, National

Workers Alliance and Disaster Forums organised the human chain.

Mostofa Kamal Akanda, assistant director of Coast Trust who moderated the event, demanded that a portion of the money being spent for the Rohingyas should be allocated for the locals as they were being affected by the refugee influx.

The organisations also placed a 25-point demand during the programme. The demands include increasing government support for the coastal people; community radios in coastal and char areas; taking steps to prevent salinity and ensuring alternative source of water.

CTG COMMEMORATES THE VICTIMS

Speakers at a programme organised to commemorate those who died during cyclone Gorky emphasised the need for building an effective framework to fight such catastrophe and save people from natural disasters.

Coastal Development Foundation organised the event at a convention centre in the port city's Jamal Khan area, reports our staff correspondent.

Muslem Uddin, an associate professor of marine science at Chittagong University, said, "Over the years, we've been able to reduce the casualties caused by cyclones, yet there are many things left to be done."

Termining Bangladesh geographically vulnerable, he said an effective framework is a must to save people from natural disasters.

Kamal Hossain, president of the foundation, who chaired the event, echoed him.

Meanwhile, Disaster and Development Organization organised another programme at Silpakala Academy. Speakers at the event called for an effective strategy to help coastal people fight natural disasters. SAVE HATIA FROM EROSION

Meanwhile, Hatia River Erosion Protection Committee formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding protection of lives and land from river erosion.

From 1960 to 2017, around 250 square kilometre area in Hatia went into the river Meghna, said Mosaddeque Chowdhury, president of the committee.

The speakers demanded that the government take immediate steps to save Hatia from river erosion.

They said Boyar Char, Kering Char, Noler Char, eastern part of Char Isshar, western part of Char King and parts of Tamraddi and Sonadia unions were under a constant threat from river erosion.



Smoke billows from fire set by demonstrating jute mill workers on Khulna-Dhaka highway near Notun Rasta intersection in Khulna city yesterday. Workers of seven state-owned jute mills in Khulna and Jessore industrial belt blocked the highway for four hours.

PHOTO: STAR

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