

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 34.1 L 27.8	MYMENSINGH H 32.2 L 27.2	CHITTAGONG H 33.5 L 26.5	SYLHET H 33.0 L 25.8	RAJSHAHI H 35.0 L 27.0	RANGPUR H 32.2 L 28.0	KHULNA H 34.0 L 27.0	BARISAL H 32.2 L 27.3	COX'S BAZAR H 32.2 L 26.0
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Light to moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind and lightning flashes is likely to occur at a few places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, and at one or two places over Dhaka, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Rajshahi till 6:00pm today, reports UNB quoting Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:49pm and rises tomorrow at 5:20am.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Children enjoying the rain.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Rainy Delight

Like a broken record, the same sequence of events has repeated several times this year. Before I leave the house for my morning run, I check the sky. It looks overcast but not overbearing. Yet, as soon as I reach the farthest point in the park, it quickly darkens. I see the first drops splashing in the lake but the leaves overhead block them from reaching me. Two or three minutes more and the heavens open up. Soon the rain crashes through the canopy to drench me, cooling me from the oppressive heat.

I don't worry about catching a cold from the rain, having been drenched enough times to know it does little damage (but if you are used to showering in hot water, then beware.) The wind, though, blows hard with the rain and I do worry about falling branches. When running in that fierce rain I am constantly checking the trees overhead. Usually it is a smaller twig, or a cluster of green leaves that falls. The coconut trees however drop large fronds that tumble through the branches before coming to rest.

There is another advantage to looking up in the rain: the feel of cold water sprinkling on my face. It is one of the most delightful sensations in life. Think back to your childhood and how much fun getting caught in the rain was. The key of course is to surrender to the rain. Otherwise it is an unpleasant experience. Along with the sensation of the

drops on my skin is the smell of rain – that earthy, leafy fragrance that emanates from trees and grass and earth that the rain touches and reminds you it is good to be alive.

But still, like everyone else caught in the rain, I want it to stop soon – at first. Then I give in and enjoy it, while walkers and runners who refuse to get wet wait anxiously from their shelter in the park's small gazebo.

The water accumulates in the park's lawn but the grass hides it, and I only find out because my shoe sinks when I step on the grass which has become spongelike. In exposed, uneven soil, the puddles grow and merge with each other. Soon they submerge the smaller seedlings and plants dotting the ground whose tops still peek out desperately from the water.

My only nagging worry in the rain is my cell phone. It turns out that the strap I use for tying it to my arm (while running) also keeps it dry. Because it holds the phone in a vertical position, it catches few raindrops even in heavy rain.

The rain has covered my running path with masses of flowers and leaves: red *krishnachura*, purple *jarul*, leaves of various shapes, sizes and colours. As I charge through them, I keep hoping that the rain which keeps me mercifully cool will keep pouring until I finish my run.

www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram

Helping Rohingyas become economically productive

In conversation with Brac ED Dr Muhammad Musa

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Apart from monsoon-induced landslides and repatriation in the short and long term, one major challenge for the Rohingyas camped in the hills of Cox's Bazar is to enhance their economic capabilities so that they have meaningful lives.

Brac, the biggest non-governmental organisation in the world and also the biggest on-ground responder to the crisis, is planning to replicate the successful models from its social enterprises to develop the economic capacities of the Rohingyas.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Dr Muhammad Musa, executive director of Brac, said: "We have already finished a ground-level assessment to find productive avenues for the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. Now we are planning to implement capacity building, training and livelihood projects following our successful social business models."

Leading Bangladeshi fashion brand Aarong, a sister concern of Brac, currently has a network of 65,000 artisans around the country. These artisans, mostly women, are first given training and raw materials for making handicrafts. Aarong then directly buys back their products. The proceeds from selling these items are then invested back in Brac's development projects.

Dr Musa – a public health specialist by training with an illustrious career in leading humanitarian, social development, and public health organisations – said Brac is now trying to adopt this model for the Rohingya community, based on the assessment findings. Rohingyas will first receive training in making both Bangladeshi and Burmese handicrafts, and then be given raw materials; the finished products will be bought back.

"We will buy back the products and sell them. The proceeds will be invested for the welfare of the Rohingyas and also the host community," said Dr Musa.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

"Rohingyas can't just continue to remain passive receivers of relief and emergency services," Dr Musa said.

Brac identifies that the young adults are among the most vulnerable groups who might fall prey to social ills such as drugs and trafficking. One way to prevent this would be to engage them in productive activities so that they can see the value and worth of their lives.

When Rohingyas arrived, they were traumatised but now they are becoming frustrated and



PHOTO: COLLECTED

aggressive.

"We are engaging young Rohingyas in various ways. We have initiated a leadership programme to give them training on how to build a positive society," Dr Musa said.

REPATRIATION

Repatriation of the Rohingyas, which is now almost unanimously considered by most responders as the biggest challenge, is not a bilateral issue between Bangladesh and Myanmar anymore.

Dr Musa said Myanmar can start gaining trust by rehabilitating the Rohingyas who were displaced from Rakhine but didn't come to Bangladesh and

took shelter elsewhere within Myanmar.

"If they are rehabilitated, it will be a good demonstration. It will give the Rohingyas [in Bangladesh] hope and trust. They will be encouraged to go back voluntarily," said Dr Musa.

"The UN and other organisations should make their voices louder. The fear is that if they stay [in Bangladesh] for a long time, the plight of Rohingyas will lose the attention of the international community. This year we haven't received the necessary funds. If we do not get funds, who will feed this large number of people?" he said.

OTHER MAJOR CHALLENGES

The top official of the world's largest NGO identified several short-term challenges which should be addressed immediately.

Rainfall-triggered landslide in monsoon is now the biggest short-term challenge, as vulnerable people do not want to relocate, and there is a chance of disease outbreak as water is contaminated.

In addition, tension between the host community and the Rohingyas is on the rise, a shortage of funding and deforestation must also be addressed with immediacy.

EDUCATION

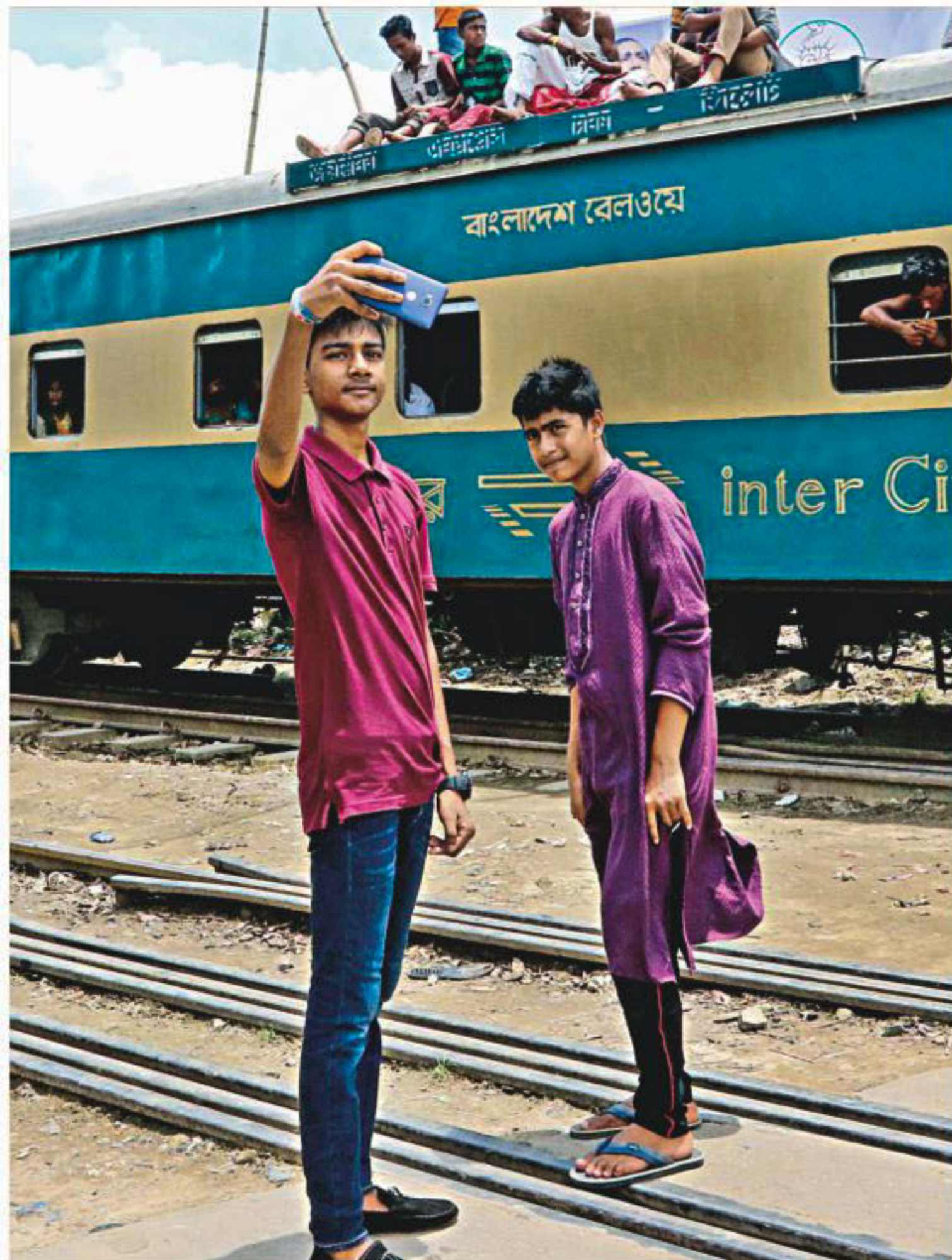
Brac has already set up 354 learning centres in and outside the camps. It now plans to set up at least 750 such learning centres for both Rohingyas and the host community in the coming months.

At Brac's learning centres, Rohingya children are being taught a curriculum in the language of Myanmar, basic mathematics, and English. Half of the teachers are Rohingyas who were given training on methods of instruction and the other half from the host community.

"Since the beginning, Brac has been working to complement and support the government's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

WHO CARES ABOUT SAFETY?



Clockwise from left, Two youths stand on a rail track taking a selfie with an oncoming train in the background, at the Ashkona rail crossing in the capital; a child jumps over the closed door of a running train; and a group of people, including women and children, get on the rail tracks after crossing the security barrier. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMANX

ACC runs competency test for promoting officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to evaluate proficiency of its officials for promotion, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for the first time conducted a written examination at its headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

Of the 61 candidates, thirty-nine assistant directors and 14 deputy directors sat for the test, said Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, public relations officer (PRO) of ACC. Eight deputy directors remained absent.

The exam was held as per ACC's service rules and other regulations, but there has been opposition from a few officials, said sources.

Earlier, a committee comprising ACC high-ups and representatives of the cabinet division, Ministry of Public Administration and Public Service Commission was formed to ensure transparency, fairness and accountability in promoting officials. The committee set the questions and will also oversee the promotion process.

ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmood said competent officials will be promoted to deputy director and director, based on the exam.

ACC will gradually conduct tests for officials serving in different posts at both the headquarters and district offices across the country, said the ACC PRO.

Integrated Indian visa centre to open today

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A new integrated Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) will be inaugurated today at Jamuna Future Park (JFP), jointly by the home ministers of India and Bangladesh.

The new centre will replace all existing IVACs (Motijheel, Uttara, Gulshan and Mirpur Road) in Dhaka, a statement issued by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka said yesterday. Simultaneously, the existing e-token (appointment) system for submission of Indian visa applications will also be withdrawn, it added.

The new IVAC at JFP will replace the existing IVACs in Motijheel and Uttara from July 15, and the remaining two IVACs in Dhaka will also be shifted there by August 31, making it the only visa centre for all categories of visa applications in Dhaka.

The new state-of-the-art IVAC, located on an 18,500 square feet commercial area, will be a model visa centre and have facilities like computer-generated token vending machines (with expected waiting time), comfortable seating, vending machines, and 48 counters for submission of applications.

Separate counters will be reserved for senior citizens, women, freedom fighters and business applicants, the statement said.

"The consolidation of visa application services at the JFP and the provision of amenities reflect the continuing efforts of the High Commission of India ... to further streamline the Indian visa application process and strengthen people-to-people contacts between India and Bangladesh," said the statement.

Mathletes to get hero's welcome

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi Mathematical Olympiad Committee will accord reception to Ahmed Zawad Chowdhury, who won Bangladesh's first Math Olympiad gold medal at the 59th International Mathematical Olympiad in Romania.

The committee will also receive bronze winners Tamjid Morshed Rubab, Joydeep Saha and Tahnin Noor Samin, as well as Soumitra Das and Rahul Saha, who received honourable mentions. Zawad, from Cantonment English School and College in Chittagong, won gold with a score of 32 out of 42.

The team will arrive at 5:15pm at Shahjalal International Airport, where they will be given the reception, says a press release.

Bangladesh, France to witness launch of major projects soon

Says French ambassador

UNB, Dhaka

French Ambassador Marie-Annick Bourdin yesterday said Bangladesh and France can do a lot more together for peace and stability in international arena and in respective regions -- ensuring sustainable development for all.

"We will soon witness the launch of major projects, notably in the field of water treatment (Dhaka WASA and Suez-Veolia) and energy," said the ambassador in a message marking the French National Day [July 14].

The envoy said France has been very happy to join in sharing the pride of Bangladesh after the successful launch of Bangladesh's first communication satellite Bangabandhu-1, built by the French company Thales Alenia Space, marking the entry of Bangladesh in a new era.

Ambassador Bourdin said Bangladesh and France have nurtured warm and friendly relations since the early days of the fight for independence led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1971; the support lent to him by Andre Malraux remains in the collective memory.

France President Emmanuel Macron

received Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Paris last December and expressed gratitude and warm appreciation for the generous welcome and protection granted by Bangladesh to some 8,00,000 Rohingya refugees forced to flee Myanmar since August.

He confirmed his country's active support in the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council, in order to press for an end to violence and bringing their perpetrators to justice.

The ambassador said sustainable development is indeed the focus of their official development assistance, operated by the Agence Française de Developpement, which aims among other things, at ensuring access to potable water, facilitating sustainable urban transportation, enlarging access to energy and improving its efficiency.

"In terms of scientific and technical cooperation, we have also focused our efforts on environment-related issues, such as oceanography, hydrology and renewable energies," she said.

France celebrates its National Day in commemoration of the storming of the Bastille in Paris on July 14, 1789.

Govt unininvolved in India's denial to Carlile: Quader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The government had no hand in India's denial of entry to Alexander Carlile, a legal adviser for Khaleda Zia, said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"It's completely India's internal matter," he said. Quader was replying to reporters' queries in Chandra area of Gazipur, while inspecting the road condition there.

He was referring to India denying entry to British lawmaker Carlile on Wednesday night. He was supposed to brief reporters about Khaleda Zia there.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

1st Death Anniversary of Mrs. Pratima Das Gupta



Today marks the 1st Death Anniversary of Mrs. Pratima Das Gupta. She was associated with a number of organizations including Dhakeswari National Temple, Baridhara Society and Manabik Shahajya Sangstha (MSS). She introduced Gold Medal for the most meritorious student of the Banking and Insurance Department of Dhaka University.

Her relatives, well wishers and acquaintances are humbly requested to keep her in their prayer.

Family Members