

## WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 32.2 L 27.0

MYMENSINGH H 31.3 L 26.6

CHITTAGONG H 32.8 L 26.3

SYLHET H 34.0 L 25.0

RAJSHAH H 33.4 L 27.4

RANGPUR H 32.8 L 27.0

KHULNA H 33.0 L 27.4

BARISAL H 32.5 L 27.6

COX'S BAZAR H 31.5 L 25.8

Light to moderate rain/thundershowers with temporary gusty wind may occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal & Chittagong divisions, at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rangpur and Mymensingh divisions with moderate to heavy falls at places over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:21pm and rises tomorrow at 5:39am. City/Town temperatures in Celsius:



Hatirjheel offers a spectacular view as the authorities run an aquatic show for visitors marking the Eid holiday on Sunday evening.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## RAMPAL POWER PLANT Govt continuing project to serve 'interest of a group'

Says Sultana Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is continuing the Rampal power plant project adjacent to the Sundarbans to serve "interest of a group", eminent rights activist and environment advocate Sultana Kamal alleged yesterday.

She made the remarks at a press conference jointly organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolan (Bapa) and the National Committee to Protect the Sundarbans at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the capital.

"Around 10 months ago, we challenged the government by submitting 13 scientific documents on the environmental threats of the power plant to one of its high officials. But, he is yet to give us any reply, which creates doubt," she said.

"There is definitely some strategy at play here. They [the government] are continuing their project adjacent to the Sundarbans to serve the interest of a group, avoiding our objections and scientific evidence," added Sultana, convenor of the National Committee to Protect the Sundarbans.

The conference was organised following the statement of John H Knox, a special rapporteur on human rights and environment of United Nations (UN). In the statement published on July 31, he said Bangladesh must halt the industrialisation of the Sundarbans Reserved Forest -- the largest contiguous mangrove forest in the world.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr Ifekharuzzaman said, "We are not against development. Environmental protection and development

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## Law ministry inquiring into 'bail spree' ahead of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry is conducting an inquiry into a report that claimed around 800 accused were granted bail by the courts under Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) in Dhaka during the last two days before Eid-ul-Azha, Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The issue was brought to my attention and it was also reported in the media that the courts have granted bail to around 800 accused in the two days. My ministry is holding an inquiry in this regard," he said.

However, the law minister did not give any further details regarding the matter.

According to a report published yesterday by an online news portal of Channel 24, it was claimed that the CMM courts granted bail to some 800 accused on August 19 and 20.

The report stated 317 accused got bail on August 19 and some 432 the next day, including members of Ogyan Party (doping gang), muggers and yaba traders.

It included a quote from Additional Public Prosecutor Shah Alam Talukder saying, "Since separation of judiciary and executive in 2007 granting bail to so many accused in two consecutive days is unusual".

Contacted, Shah Alam confirmed his quote to The Daily Star and said the huge number of accused was granted bail by 35 courts

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## DELAY IN ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

# NHRC chief questions role of foreign ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing his frustration over the delay of repatriating Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque yesterday raised questions about the role of the foreign ministry in this regard.

"The repatriation deal was signed in November, but I'm frustrated because till today we couldn't send back any Rohingya. I'm doubtful of how effectively and courageously people concerned, including the officials of foreign ministry, have played their role in this regard," he said at a press conference arranged by the commission at its

office in the capital.

"We're tremendously frustrated over recent remarks of Aung San Suu Kyi who blamed our country for the delay of Rohingya repatriation, but till today we have not seen our government or foreign ministry making any protest against her statement," he said.

Reazul said, "We should play a more aggressive role to force Myanmar to take back the Rohingyas."

"I want to make it clear that the member countries of United Nations and world leaders have not played the roles they were supposed to. They seriously did not come forward to rescue Bangladesh from this burden," he added.

Replying to a question, Reazul said taking advantage of lengthy repatriation process, a quarter is trying to do business and make profit. "We want it to be stopped," he added.

The NHRC chief said he wrote to the chairman of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission last September, protesting atrocities on the Rohingyas, but the latter in a statement termed Rohingyas as "terrorists and not inhabitants of Myanmar".

NHRC also made a seven-point recommendation at the press conference.

It recommended that all Rohingya returnees be kept in a United Nations-supervised buffer zone before their

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## VIOLENCE AGAINST ROHINGYAS

# Perpetrators must be held accountable

Says Australian High Commission in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Australia has said the perpetrators of violence against Rohingyas must be held accountable, and called for justice for those who suffered.

"We urge Myanmar to take action on human rights violations. We welcome the establishment of Myanmar's Commission of Enquiry, which needs to be provided with authority to respond comprehensively to abuses," the Australian High Commission in Dhaka said yesterday.

In a press statement, the high commission also said it has supported the UN Fact Finding Mission and its independent investigation, and encouraged Myanmar to

engage with the findings of the mission and any other evidence of abuses.

"We will respond to its final report when presented at the Human Rights Council in September," the statement said.

Appreciating Myanmar's first step in agreeing to work with the UNDP and UNHCR to create conditions in Rakhine state conducive to repatriation, Australia called on Myanmar to allow UN agencies the full access they need to implement it effectively.

"Let us also honour the late Kofi Annan by renewing our efforts to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which he led," said the statement.

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## WORLD WATER WEEK

# Scarcity of water, the new normal

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA from Stockholm

Yesterday's programme at the World Water Week kicked off with the UN Deputy Secretary General, Dr Amina Mohamed, urging the involvement of young minds in water management.

She challenged the participants at this global annual meet to get more young professionals working in this crucial sector since better water resource management could help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Water is much as about the future as it is about the present. Let us value our water just like we value our lives," she said.

Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) Executive Director Torgny Holmgren said in his welcome speech that achieving the water related goals of SDGs is indispensable for sustainable development, growth and investment.

He indicated that water is almost a prerequisite for the rest of the development goals of the next decade. "Actually, I would go as far as to say that the water SDG is the cornerstone of the entire Agenda 2030."

The top SIWI executive said it was becoming increasingly clear that water is the primary issue with its rapidly growing demand.

He also noted the ever-growing shortage of water across the globe. "Scarcity of water has become the new normal in so many parts of the world. We might even be heading towards a global water crisis."

This, said Holmgren, was where the challenge lay. But he also saw it as an incredible opportunity as well as great responsibility.

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## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN GARMENTS INDUSTRY

# Female representation needed at mid-level management, say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Female representation is necessary at the mid-level management of garment factories and at trade unions to bring down the number of cases of violence against women at workplaces, said women labour leaders and rights activists.

Work environment has improved significantly after the Rana Plaza collapse in April 2013, but there's more to be done to provide job security and harassment-free workplace to women, speakers said at a programme organised by Shojag, a coalition of five non-government organisations, to disseminate findings of a baseline study on situation of gender-based violence in the garments industry.

The study was conducted between March and June this year with 382 female garment workers from Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur interviewed.



Maheen Sultan, team leader of Naripokkho, speaks at a programme titled "Dissemination of Baseline Study Findings on Situation of Gender-based Violence in the Garments Industry", at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

Only 11 percent of the women reported feeling insecure at their workplaces, which was a reflection of progress made so far regarding work environment. But of those who had

experienced violence but didn't seek any kind of assistance in and outside the factory premises, 67 percent said they have a lack of trust in prevention

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A queue of abandoned cars illegally parked under Malibagh-Mouchak flyover takes up a significant amount of space on the busy road, which leads to traffic congestion. Illegal occupation is rampant in Dhaka city where even a few feet of free space help. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Woman gang-raped at step-sister's home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was gang-raped by four men at her step sister's house in the capital's Gulistan area yesterday.

The victim, hailing from Faridganj upazila of Chandpur came to Dhaka a week ago, after her step sister promised to arrange a job for her in the city.

"The victim alleged that her step-sister Sultana called four men at her house near Golap Shah Mazar area and they raped her," Dr Bilkis Begum, coordinator of One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) said quoting the victim.

The victim was left near the hospital's emergency section in the morning by unknown persons. She was bleeding when she came to the hospital, Assistant Sub-inspector Babul Mia of DMCH Police Outpost said.

"Her injuries were so serious that we had to operate on her immediately," Dr Bilkis added.

## AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

# BNP wants punishment of real culprits, says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the party wants exemplary punishment of the real culprits of the August 21 grenade attack, and alleged that the government is making efforts to fulfill its desire, using the case as a political tool.

"As in the past, BNP still condemns and protest the brutal incident of August 21 grenade attack on the Awami League rally. We want proper trial and exemplary punishment of the real perpetrators of the attack to stop recurrence of such a ruthless incident," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said at a press conference at the party's central office.

"But the government's naked efforts to unfairly imperil the top

BNP leaders using police, investigation officers and the judiciary by cashing in on the incident can in no way be acceptable in a civilised society," he said.

BNP organised the press conference in the wake of ruling Awami League leaders' comments involving BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and acting chairman Tarique Rahman with the August 21 grenade attack case.

Refuting the ruling party's allegations against Khaleda and Tarique, Fakhrul accused the government of trying to use the issue as a weapon to suppress and weaken its main political opponents.

He also said the government carried out the investigation into the incident by a party leader and retired police officer, Abdul Kahar Akand, with a political motive.