

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

<b>DHAKA</b> H 33.0   L 23.4	<b>MYMENSINGH</b> H 30.2   L 22.7	<b>CHATTOGRAM</b> H 31.0   L 22.4	<b>SYLHET</b> H 30.6   L 21.0	<b>RAJSHAHI</b> H 33.0   L 21.6	<b>RANGPUR</b> H 30.2   L 21.5	<b>KHULNA</b> H 33.5   L 24.0	<b>BARISHAL</b> H 32.0   L 22.5	<b>COX'S BAZAR</b> H 29.2   L 21.8
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Light rain may occur at one or two places over Rangpur division. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere 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 05:29pm and rises tomorrow at 5:58am.

# Woman throws newborn off hospital roof, kills herself

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Following a "quarrel" with her expatriate husband over medical bill, a woman killed her newborn by throwing him from the roof of a five-storey hospital building and then committed suicide by jumping off it.

The incident took place around 8:30am yesterday at Labaid Diagnostic Centre and Specialised Hospital in Brahmanbaria.

On Tuesday morning, Shima Akter, 25, was admitted to the adjacent Life Care Shima and General Hospital with labour pain. Her mother, Rehana Begum, accompanied her.

She gave birth to a boy by caesarean section the same night and was due to be released from the hospital yesterday morning, said doctors.

Unbeknownst to all, she somehow managed to get out of the hospital on Old Jail Road and then went to the adjacent Labaid building, said Selim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station.

He said police were yet to find out the reason behind her actions but according to hospital staffers, other patients and eye witnesses, Shima killed her son and committed suicide over a quarrel with her expatriate husband the night before.

Her husband, Monir Mia, of Basudeb union in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila, is in Lebanon now. The couple got married last year.

This correspondent also spoke to one Shimul Mia, who witnessed the incident.

Shimul Mia, an employee of nearby Shandhani Child Care Hospital, said he was standing on the street when the incident took place.

"Our hospital is just opposite Labaid. While standing, I saw something fell from the roof of that building. Many passers-by started screaming, saying it was a child. Some also shouted that a woman threw the child," he said.

"I instantly looked up and saw the woman standing near the edge. She was about to jump. All were shouting and telling her not to do so. Suddenly, she jumped," he added.

While visiting Life Care hospital, this correspondent saw Shima's mother, Rehana Begum, sitting on the cabin's bed. She was wailing and was beyond any consolation. She kept on saying why her daughter would act in such a way.

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The festival of Durga Puja came to an end yesterday through the immersion of idols at different parts of the country. In Dhaka, a group of Hindus bid farewell to the goddess in the Buriganga River, top. In Sylhet it was the Surma, near Keane Bridge, bottom left. Before the final rituals, women play "Sindur Khela", a part of Bijaya Dashami celebrations, when they smear each other with "sindur" (vermillion) on the faces.

# Star journo receives award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rafiul Islam, a staff correspondent of The Daily Star, won the award in human rights category, conferred by Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh (CRAB) yesterday.

Rafiul received the award for his report "No safety in custody", published on September 27 last year.

CRAB awarded five reporters from print and electronic media for their outstanding reports in 2017 at a programme titled "CRAB Night - Reporting Award and Cultural Programme 2018". The event was held at Bangladesh Medical Association auditorium in the capital.

The awards were given under five categories: corruption, repression of women and children, human rights, investigative report on drug abuse for print and online media, and crime report for television.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan was present at the programme as the chief guest while CRAB President Abu Saleh Akon presided over the programme.

The other awardees are: Parvez Reza of Ekattor TV, best report on corruption; Bakul Ahmed of daily Samakal, best report on repression of women and children; SM Azad of daily Kaler Kantho, best investigative report on drug abuse; and Abu Jahed Md Salim of Maasranga Television, best TV crime report.

# 'We don't consider AL our rival now'

Says BNP senior leader Nazrul Islam Khan

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday said they do not consider Awami League as their rival now as they have to face the law enforcers, not the ruling party, in politics.

"We don't consider Awami League as our rival now. Not Awami League, police, Rab and BGB stand in front of us when we want to bring out any procession and hold any rally. BNP has to face different government forces, not Awami League," he said.

The BNP leader came up with the remarks while speaking at a discussion arranged by Afsar Ahmed Siddiqui Smrity Foundation at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Nazrul, a BNP standing committee mem-

ber, said the government is making "black" laws one after another to gag the media and people's voice.

"Those who struggle for democracy and raise voice for the restoration of democracy are being convicted in false cases," he alleged.

Besides, he said, the government is trying to suppress opposition leaders and activists by filing "fictitious" cases and "indulging in killing and enforced disappearance".

The BNP leader alleged that the ruling party has long been rigging votes in elections by using the law enforcers as its shield.

He said people do not believe that the national election will be held in a fair and

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# No electricity shortage in country: Muhith

UNB, Sylhet

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said there is no shortage of electricity in the country as the Awami League government has increased the power generation by six folds during its tenures.

He came up with the remarks while addressing a programme on the Sylhet Sadar upazila parishad premises.

The incumbent government is cent percent successful in the electricity sector as it had been sincere since the beginning of its tenure, Muhith said.

"Now, the entire country is illuminated... while people's living standard has been enhanced," he added.

He said the government of Sheikh Hasina has been working to create scope for people's welfare and underscored the need for unity and cooperation to expedite the development pace.

The minister inaugurated five development projects and laid the foundation stones of seven others from the programme.

# Sexual offender lands in jail as girl fights back

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

A youth has landed in prison on the charge of sexual harassment after the victim caught him and took him to police in Bogura town on Tuesday.

The girl said she was groped by Abid, 19, a local delinquent, when she was aboard a rickshaw in Kathaltali area. Police said the youth lives in Nishindhara area and was earlier taken to the police station for pick-pocketing.

The 18-year-old victim said, "On Tuesday I was going to a bookshop in Kathaltali with one of my friends. Our rickshaw was stuck in a traffic jam, and it was around 7:00pm. Suddenly I felt someone groping me. I caught his hand right away."

"After getting down from the rickshaw, I shouted at him 'why did you touch me'? But I was surprised to see he had not regret. He looked at me as if I were the one who did something wrong."

The girl, who passed HSC exams this year and is a university admission candidate, was even more surprised at the reply when she told him, "I will take you to the police station."

"Go on", he said to my face."

In the meantime, a crowd of onlookers and shopkeepers caught him. "They were about to beat him, but I asked

them not to. If I had let them do it, he would get sympathy of police and would escape the legal punishment," she said.

With the help of the people, the girl took him to Bogura Sadar Police Station and filed a case, and he was put in the lock-up.

SM Badiuzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station, said, "Abid is a local delinquent. Once he was taken to this police station for pick-pocketing."

He said a case was filed against him under the women and children repression prevention act on Wednesday, and the court sent him to jail the same day.

Talking to The Daily Star, the girl said she demands exemplary punishment for the criminal to ensure safety of women in public places. "I will do everything that needs to be done to make sure he gets the punishment."

She said, "Maybe I will be a mother someday, and it may be a girl. I won't teach her to draw back in fear from sexual offenders. I will teach her to fight."

Recalling a past incident, she said she first faced sexual harassment when in fifth grade. "This was a mental trauma, and I was haunted by it. This was when I resolved to fight back and raise my voice against gender violence."



Left, workers carry on with construction, encroaching on a part of Barishal-Khulna highway in Jhalakathi's Mollabari area. Right, used wire spools left on the highway at Nalchity. Below, workers block a part of Barishal-Patharghata highway at Rajapur. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

# Choking the highways

Rampant encroachment escalates risk of accidents, congestion in Barishal

M JAHRUL ISLAM JEWEL, Barishal

Unauthorised vehicle stands, local markets and restaurants set up on highways have led to severe traffic congestion in Barishal division. Moreover, wires, spools, bricks and debris are often left on the highways, escalating the risks of accidents.

Also, many influential people leave their construction materials beside and on the highways and often, workers continue the works blocking a portion of the roads, alleged locals. Many a times, vehicles load and debris are often left on the roads.

There are some 21 roadside markets and seven vehicle stands within the 40km highway from Barishal to Pirojpur, which witnesses a large volume of traffic daily. Many of these establishments have encroached upon the Barishal-Khulna highway as well.

"Remaining stuck on the highway [Barishal-Khulna] for around 30



minutes due to the markets and vehicle stands has become a norm," said Jamal Hossain, a bus driver.

Besides, heavy spools of wires are often left on various spots on Barishal-Khulna highway in Jhalakathi. These spools, being used as part of the ongoing development works, have occupied a major portion of the road at Pratap in Jhalakathi's Nalchity area.

Jamal said he witnessed at least 15 road accidents in the last six

months. "I once hit a battery-run auto-rickshaw while crossing it in Nalchity as the other side of the road was blocked," he added.

Contacted, Ashraf Alam, additional chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department, Barishal, said workers of Palli Bidyut Samity dumped those. "We asked them several times to remove the spools from the highway, but to no avail," he added.

Emdadul Haque, general man-

ager of Palli Bidyut, Jhalakathi, said, "We have two depots in Nalchity for storing those but workers tend to keep them on the highways for transporting them easily. They don't follow our instructions as they are contractual workers."

Construction materials like bricks, sand and rods are also left at various spots on Barishal-Khulna and Barishal-Dhaka highways, hampering smooth vehicular movement.

Vehicles, especially two-wheelers, frequently skid off the road due to the sand. The risk escalates during rain as the roads become slippery, said Md Shifun Newaz, assistant professor of the Accident Research Institute of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology.

Jahangir Hossain, a regular commuter, said, "I was injured when my motorbike skidded off the road after hitting brickbats near Rajapur in Jhalakathi."

# Age-old Thakurgaon Bijaya Dashami Mela held

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

The decades-old Bijaya Dashami Mela was held yesterday at Riverview High School ground in Thakurgaon with much fanfare.

People from all caste and creed look up to this fair as it is not only a place where they can find stalls of traditional snacks, handicrafts or amusement rides, but also because it is where they can reunite with friends and acquaintances at least once a year.

For about past eighty years, without being arranged by any particular organiser, vendors have been gathering at the same place every year around noon, on the day the idol of Durga is immersed. Even after the Durga idols are immersed, the fair does not close until midnight.

People from Thakurgaon, especially the ones that have moved out of the town for their profession, find the Bijaya Dashami Mela a perfect destination for some tasty treats, fun activities or catching up on long-time friends or neighbours.

Like every year, a huge crowd of all ages including women and children thronged the fairground. Most children were seen enjoying Ferris wheels (nagordola) and other rides while many others were visiting stalls showcasing toys, balloons, pottery, hand-crafted

items and food. Government official Parimal Sarker, resides in Dhaka for work, brought along his family to his home in Collegepara of Thakurgaon town. While visiting the fair, he said, "This is an annual attraction for us. Here we can meet and exchange greetings with our childhood friends and dear ones."

SM Ataur Rahman, principal of Puratan Thakurgaon Technical College, said, "I come here on this day every year with my family to see my friends and neighbours -- especially to see the ones whom we cannot visit usually as they live out of town for their work."

A veteran lawyer, Advocate Balaram Guha Thakurta said he has been seeing the Bijaya Dashami Mela being held at the same place since he was a child.

The 86-year-old lawyer, practicing in Thakurgaon town, observed that with passing of each year, the fair is getting more vibrant and attractive with a larger number of people making it their favourite destination.

While speaking with this correspondent, Shamim Ara Begum, the headteacher of Riverview High School, the site of the fair, said, "The daylong fair is an age-old tradition. We welcome traders, food vendors and game organisers on the school premises for the sake of a greater social affinity."