

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 27.0 L 16.1	H 26.5 L 14.2	H 27.2 L 16.3	H 28.2 L 16.1	H 26.0 L 11.2	H 26.1 L 13.2	H 28.0 L 14.0	H 27.6 L 13.4	H 27.4 L 17.7

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. Light to moderate fog may occur at places over the country during late night till morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:11pm and rises tomorrow at 6:29am.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Sunset at Munlai Para.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Munlai Para

For me, the forests and haors of Sylhet and the mangroves of Sundarban have been the two major attractions of Bangladesh, enough to occupy my imagination. Recently, when my friend Shumon invited me to accompany him and two other photographers - Adnan and Naser - on a trip to Bandarban, I hemmed and hawed for days and almost declined, even though I have not visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts in my adult life. In the end, though, I decided to join the trip.

I am glad I went. Otherwise, I would have missed a part of this country with mind-bending scenery, where steep hills covered in green rise skyward from the banks of a shallow, fast-flowing mountain river, where the clouds play with the sun over the mountain tops and where the ridges and valleys roll out one after the other, caressing my eyes with their voluptuous green.

I would have missed the gentle people called Bawm, fifty-four of whose families inhabit the picturesque Munlai para (neighbourhood), where they live in houses raised on stilts, where the doors are always open, where women fetch the day's water in kolshis from the community reservoir every morning, where making a livelihood by growing bananas, peanuts or cashews is not easy but where everyone appears content.

I would have missed the Pahari food, such as Chong Mung (chicken inside bamboo), Pahari aloo, and sticky pitha inside banana leaves sweetened with coconut, delectable food served in a dining room with possibly the most spectacular view anywhere.

I would have missed watching the rainbow over the spray of an exquisite

waterfall called Rijuk, and, later in the day, the sun setting over a series of hills with a lone tree standing guard on a hilltop.

I would have missed standing on a bridge and looking down on a school of fanda fish swimming on the surface of the Sangu, sparkling like stars as they moved this way and that in perfect synchronicity.

I would have missed seeing not just one but an entire flock of rare raptors called Jerdon's Baza as they put on a show circling overhead in the hills, looking for prey, hovering for seconds when they spot one, then swooping straight down for the kill.

I would have missed the extraordinary sight of the life and death struggle of a White-throated Kingfisher as it fought back the predator bird that was trying to drown it in Sangu's water - and escaped.

I would have missed an epic boat ride down the Sangu while watching the fog roll in and out of the vertical walls of green that seemed to stand in our way straight ahead only to have the river deftly swing around them at the last minute, again and again.

Yes, I am glad I went to Munlai Para.

Practicalities: Munlai is a two-hour drive from Bandarban. All-inclusive adventures include trekking, kayaking, ziplining, as well as homestay with the locals and all meals. The tour is offered by Base Camp Bangladesh in partnership with the Bawm community of Munlai. See munlai.com.bd for more information. Please note that foreigners are not allowed in the Hill Tracts without government permission.

facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow [ihshamkabir](https://twitter.com/ihshamkabir) on Instagram.

Children's day out on a car-free Dhaka street

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

What if the children of Dhaka are given a day to do whatever they long to? What if they are given enough space to spread their arms and play? What if they are given the chance to break free from the confines of home for a day?

They would do exactly what they did on a free Manik Mia Avenue yesterday morning.

Taking turns to ride a bicycle, Subarna and her little brother Safwan were having a quarrel when brought to Manik Mia Avenue, one side of which was kept shut to traffic for three hours from 8:00am as part of a car-free city event.

Seventh grader Subarna had already rode a few times and was attempting to ride once more, but second grader Safwan would not allow it. He demanded that it was his turn. Eventually their mother, Razia Sultana, intervened before the girl gave in.

"Growing up in the city, our children usually don't see open space. The roads are always filled with traffic. It's a nice initiative; it gives the kids a space to breathe," said Razia, a retired government officer.

Car-free Dhaka is a monthly event of Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Authority to discourage use of cars. It takes place on the first Friday of the

month.

People from different corners of the city came to spend time in front of the National Parliament. Different types of outdoor playsets including seesaws, slides, badminton gears were kept over a 200-metre stretch of the road.

The children were playing badminton, football, basketball and more. The whole place was abuzz with their joyful chatter. Not only children but parents too enjoyed the morning. Some even started taking part.

"Usually, on holidays, I sleep in. But seeing this event on social media I brought my family here," said Mohsin Reza, who was playing badminton with his wife. Their two sons were also playing by their side.

"It feels wonderful to spend time with family this way. I want to come back again," said mother of the boys, Rubaiyat. The family lives in Shyamoli.

There was a part of the road where a wide blue mat was spread, allowing children to draw pictures. There was no award, but the children were deeply immersed in their artworks with free colour pencils and papers given to them.

"I like to draw and I have made friends here. I will play with them after finishing the drawing," said six-year-old Bonni Shikha, talking between

the strokes she was making to create her artwork. She came with her mother Hasina Begum, a lawyer, from Farmgate.

The road was also decorated with colourful banners carrying different slogans to encourage the use of bicycles, zebra crossing, and compliance with traffic rules.

National women's basketball team player Ashreen Mridha was there with her team to promote women's sports. She was campaigning for her newly founded group "Deshiballers". They were also teaching children the basics of the game.

"We don't have much open space in the city to play, especially for the girls. Besides security remains a major concern. The Car Free Street Dhaka event at least gave us a picture of how a city should look like for girls," said Ashreen.

Although a part of the north side of the road was blocked, the rest was open to traffic. Yesterday being a holiday, there was no jam in the morning.

"We diverted the vehicles to one side of the road so that the event can be held without any interruption," said Traffic Inspector of Mohammadpur Zone Biswajit Roy, who believes that using fewer cars will also improve the city's environment.



Children and adults alike enjoy three hours of playing badminton, basketball, drawing, and cycling on a car-free Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka yesterday. It was an initiative of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority to discourage use of cars. Called "Car Free Dhaka Street", the event takes place on the first Friday every month.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Man held over 'anti-state' Facebook posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was arrested yesterday allegedly for attempting to destabilise the country by spreading anti-state propaganda on Facebook, Rab claimed.

The arrestee was identified as Harun-or-Rashid, 34, admin of Zia Cyber Force, a Facebook group that has been "misguiding the public and spreading anti-state, false news," said Lt Commander Ashekur Rahman.

On information that such groups have become active ahead of the national election, a team of Rab-3 arrested Harun from Dhaka's Gulistan area, Ashekur said.

Harun, also secretary general of a pro-BNP organisation, had made indecent remarks about the prime minister on social media, Rab claimed.

In primary interrogation, Harun admitted to spreading propaganda with the intention to "destabilise" the country and "overthrow" the government, the Rab official claimed, adding that they had also arrested several members of the group earlier.

Malaysia reviewing agency linked to legalising foreign workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia is reviewing the services of MyEG, a private company of the country contracted for providing IT services to the immigration department related to renewal of work permits of foreigners.

Malaysian home ministry is conducting the review as the government took notice of numerous complaints on the services provided by MyEG presently, particularly the online service to renew temporary foreign worker permit (PLKS), reported The Edge Markets, a financial newspaper of Malaysia on Thursday.

"The government takes note and admits that the appointment of companies via direct negotiations has raised certain issues

among the consumers due to poor quality of services," Malaysia's Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Aziz Jamman told the Dewan Rakyat (parliament) on Thursday.

The issue is relevant to Bangladesh as MyEG, Iman Resources Sdn Bhd and Bumi Megah (BM) Sdn Bhd, three Malaysian private companies, were linked to processing documents of irregular foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, since February 2016.

However, agents and sub-agents appointed by these companies there have allegedly swindled a huge sum of money from thousands of Bangladeshi workers in the Southeast Asian country, who, over the last two years, had

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Please help, you're our only hope

Wife of 'missing' former Rab CO seeks PM's intervention again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"My husband had traced many victims while serving as Rab commanding officer, but no one came forward to help us find him when he went missing in August. Four months have gone by; we are yet to find his whereabouts."

"We are helpless. Honourable prime minister, you're our only hope, last resort. Please direct law enforcers to find my husband..." Shamima Akhtar broke down in tears.

Wife of Hasinur Rahman, a former commanding officer of Rapid Action Battalion-7, was speaking at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

"None other than law enforcers could have picked him up from a secured place like Mirpur DOHS," she said. She urged for Hasinur's safe return before the national election.

Hasinur, who was also an army lieutenant colonel (sacked), was allegedly picked up by 14 to 15 plainclothes men around 10:30pm on August 8 when he was on his way home after meeting his friends, Shamima said.

Her husband cried for help when plainclothes men tried to force him into a microbus, she said quoting locals. As locals approached to help him, the men, wearing jackets with "DB" inscribed on them, told them they

were from the Detective Branch of police.

They came in two minibuses, Shamima said. They also picked up caretaker of the house as he tried to capture photos but later dropped him near ECB intersection, she added.

Both Rab and Police, however, had denied picking up Hasinur. Shamima filed a general diary with Pallabi Police Station on August 9.

Hasinur also worked with the Border Guard Bangladesh. He was sacked from the army for alleged connections to militants. Shamima, however, claimed that her husband was

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