

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 26.8 L 15.0	H 27.0 L 13.0	H 25.0 L 14.0	H 28.4 L 12.7	H 25.4 L 07.1	H 25.2 L 10.0	H 25.8 L 09.5	H 26.2 L 08.3	H 25.0 L 15.0

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today. UNB said quoting the Met office. Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rangpur division. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:34pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.



A smiling Shahanaj Akhter on her scooter after it was recovered by police yesterday. As soon as she was handed over the bike in the afternoon, she wiped it clean and headed out to work.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Shahanaj gets back her sole source of income

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As police were trying to recover her stolen scooter, Shahanaj Akhter did not take off her helmet even for a second. She said the helmet was the only thing making her feel that the scooter was still with her.

She was ecstatic after police returned her scooter – her only source of income – within just 10 hours of lodging a complaint with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Shahanaj became a social media sensation less than a week ago for her struggles to provide for her family by working as ridesharing service provider – a profession that does not usually draw women in Bangladesh yet.

“The whole incident seemed like an episode of the Indian TV show ‘Crime Patrol’. I watch the show where Indian police act this way. Like an eagle, police picked him [the thief] up and recovered my scooter,” a visibly emotional Shahanaj said at a press conference held at the office of Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Tejgaon Division.

Led by an Assistant Commissioner of Tejgaon Zone, Abu Tyab Md Arif Hossen, police arrested the thief, Zubaidul Islam alias Jony, 27, from his home in Raghunathpur area of Narayanganj around 3am yesterday and the scooter was also recovered from there.

Shahanaj said it was beyond her imagination that police could recover her scooter so soon. She thanked police, journalists and everyone who helped her cause.

The single mother of two came to limelight when her story was posted on Facebook by online activist Rafiuzzaman Sifat. The post has been shared nearly 10,000 times, with many lauding her courage and steely resolve.

“I took the responsibilities of my daughters. This scooter is the only source of my income and every morning I need to give Tk 100 to my daughters for their meals,” Shahanaj said.

After her scooter was stolen, many tried to console her while some suggested looking for a different job. But she was adamant, because she liked this job.

Shahanaj said that she would be grateful if she could land a permanent job that involves riding a bike, providing her a stable income.

Knowing that she hasn’t had any income for two days, the Tejgaon DC Biplob Kumar Sarker handed her Tk 10,000 on behalf of the department, though Shahanaj was initially reluctant to take any financial help.

“It’s not a handout. We want to stand by this woman trying to earn an honest living,” the DC said.

Asked if police can also perform with such efficiency in other instances, Biplob said police always tries to do so, but sometimes are not successful.

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Everyone's doing it!

Discipline campaign brings little change to Dhaka's traffic madness

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

From Shishu Park to Shahbagh police box in the capital is a five-minute walk. But by bus on a weekday afternoon yesterday, it took over 30 minutes.

During this period, the on-duty traffic constable opened the intersection for traffic movement five times, but had to close it after allowing two or three buses to pass because of the gridlockup front.

Although the roads from Shahbagh towards Elephant Road and Banglamotor were found almost empty, traffic was clogged at the intersection as buses were busy dropping off and taking passengers, standing in the middle of intersections.

This was the scenario of the intersections around 2:35pm to 3:05pm yesterday – just a day after Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan inaugurated the fortnight-long traffic discipline programme.

This correspondent's efforts to ask several bus drivers and their helpers at the intersection about it were met with aggressive counter-questions: “Why are you asking me? Ask others!”

While travelling by a bus of Bihanga Paribahan from Gulistan to Karwan Bazar, the bus driver was seen stopping every time he saw a potential passenger on the road, in contrast to the rule under which buses are supposed to keep their doors closed after leaving a stoppage until reaching the next stoppage.

Even people waiting to board buses were not standing at any designated stoppage; they were seen raising hands in the middle of roads whenever they saw a bus coming.

Asked about it, bus driver Helaluddin said they have to stop if they want to get passengers. “Besides, there are only a few designated bus stoppages, so we have to stop in the middle of the road,” he added.

Similar scenes were seen in front of Gulistan Mazar, Paltan, Press Club, Fakirapool and High Court areas in the capital. People were jaywalking riskily without a care for zebra crossings,

There are holes and barriers on the footpath, so I have taken the road as it is smooth.

SUZAUL ISLAM
Jagananth University student, when asked why he was walking along the road near Bangla Motor.

although Red Crescent volunteers were trying to shepherd them to the right path.

A number of people were seen walking on the roads instead of taking footpaths, while some motorbikers parked their vehicles on the footpaths.

Asked, Sumon Bhounik, who parked his motorbike on footpath in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, rather angrily said, “Everyone's doing it; what is your problem?”

Suzaul Islam, a Jagananth University student was seen walking along the road avoiding the footpath near Bangla Motor. “There are holes and barriers on the footpath, so I have taken the road as it is smooth,” he responded casually when asked about the reason.

“We were able to bring people and vehicles under discipline in places where we have a number of traffic police personnel and volunteers. The situation will not improve in a day, but we are trying our level best,” Mir Rezaul Alam, additional commissioner (traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

About bringing buses under discipline, he said that they are holding meetings with bus drivers and asking them to follow traffic rules. “We hope to improve the situation.”

In some places of the capital, traffic police officials were indeed seen passing a busy time along with members of Bangladesh Scouts, to bring back discipline on roads.

At Kawran Bazar intersection, two traffic sergeants were busy filing cases against bikers for not having proper documents around 4:05pm.

Three police constables were found working hard and requesting people to stand at the designated bus stoppages. Passenger buses were also found stopping at designated stoppages.

The fortnight-long traffic discipline programme will continue till January 31. During this period, the DMP traffic department has taken an 11-point special action plan, including setting up check-posts at 57 points and bringing public transport under discipline.

Ranabi's tête-à-tête with youth

Abdur Razzaq Foundation holds first 'Baithaki'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation has launched a new monthly programme where the audience will get to participate in interactive sessions with reputed personalities from various fields. The first session took place yesterday at Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth in the capital's Dhanmondi.

The initiative, titled “Bidyapeeth Baithaki: Antaranga Alapey Gunijan” will feature one or more guests. They will interact with a 40-member audience selected through applications on a ‘first come first served’ basis, said a press release. The sessions are free of charge.

The 90-minute programme will take place on Wednesdays on a selected topic, it said.

The programme's objective is to provide a space for interacting with reputed personalities in a congenial environment that go beyond regular lecture events.

At yesterday's session, renowned artist Rafiqun Nabi shared his thoughts with 40 youths, mostly university students, on the topic “Art and Artist.”

The session shed light on Nabi's artistic career and the course of fine art in Bangladesh while some participants also wanted to know his thoughts on the country's social and political situations.

Artist Abul Barq Alvi and the foundation's Director General Ahrar Ahmad were also present in the session.

Interested individuals can find out more about the programme and the application process on abdur-razzaq-foundation.org.



Rafiqun Nabi, popularly known as Ranabi, speaks at the session flanked by artist Abul Barq Alvi, left, and Director General of Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation Dr Ahrar Ahmad. The programme was held at Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth in Dhanmondi.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Quit BNP: Quader to Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir should resign from his party, taking responsibility for failing to wage a movement and losing in the election.

“As a secretary general he couldn't wage a movement even for 10 minutes over the last 10 years while his party couldn't get even 10 seats in the election. He should resign, taking responsibility for the failures, if he has any sense of shame,” he said.

A day after Fakhrul asked him to apologise publicly for “vote rigging” in the 11th parliamentary polls, Quader hit back at his BNP counterpart while talking to reporters at AL's Bangabandhu Avenue office after an extended meeting of Dhaka south city unit of Jubo League.

Quader also said Fakhrul is now behaving like a “reckless driver.”

“Ask Mr Quader to go to a stadium and apologise to the nation for resorting to blatant lies and deceiving people,” Fakhrul had said.

Terming the election “transparent and excellent”, Quader questioned whether any agent of the candidates of BNP and Jatiya Oikyafront raised objection about the transparency of the election on the voting day.

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