

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 26.4 L 14.0
MYMENSINGH H 25.0 L 12.3
CHATTOGRAM H 26.8 L 12.9
SYLHET H 27.5 L 13.6
RAJSHAHI H 25.5 L 10.0
RANGPUR H 25.2 L 12.5
KHULNA H 27.0 L 11.0
BARISHAL H 27.0 L 10.3
COX'S BAZAR H 28.5 L 14.3

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. Light to moderate fog may occur at places over the country during midnight to morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:35pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.

Zia's 83rd birth anniversary today



UNB, Dhaka

BNP has chalked out a two-day programme to observe the 83rd birth anniversary of its founder Ziaur Rahman today. BNP Senior Joint Secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced the programme at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office in Dhaka on Thursday. The programmes include SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Govt to recruit more teachers: Dipu Moni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the government will recruit more teachers, ensuring transparency in its effort to reduce shortage of educators at educational institutions.

"One of the problems at educational institutions is shortage of teachers. Transparency will be ensured in recruiting new teachers," Dipu Moni said while addressing a programme on the occasion of 50th anniversary of Haimchar Government Boys High School in Chandpur.

The newly appointed education minister also said the government had resolved various problems plaguing educational institutions and developed relevant infrastructure.

Major improvements took place in the education sector in the last 10 years but there are still some issues, she said, adding that the government is addressing those issues one after another since it is impossible to resolve all of them at once.

Deputy Inspector General Nibas Chandra Majhi, Chandpur Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Moinul Hossain, Additional Superintendent of Police Md Mizanur Rahman, among others, spoke at the programme.



Carrying used plastic containers, a man walks towards Karwan Bazar. When asked, he said he works as a cleaner at a city hospital and after using the substances inside the jars, he usually sells the empty ones at the market. Safe disposal of medical waste continues to be a matter of serious concern for health. If not handled or dumped properly, such malpractice can hasten the spread of some serious infectious virus.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



The "Solar Powered Tri-Cycle" in front of the a2i stall at this year's trade fair. Below, some of the products that the ICT division is showcasing at the fair for people with disabilities. PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Innovation that empowers

Govt's a2i stall showcasing products for people with disabilities at Dhaka trade fair

MATHEWS CHIRAN

At first glance, it looks like an ordinary auto-rickshaw with three wheels.

Upon closer inspection, it seems a bit different. The vehicle has only one handlebar and one seat instead of two behind it, which gives an impression that it's either defective or unfinished.

The lone handlebar also provides a mounting place for controls such as brake, throttle, clutch and horn. The vehicle runs on solar energy instead of battery.

This auto-rickshaw is specially designed for people with physical disabilities and it's being displayed at the month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair.

Amid the array of stalls, Access to Information (a2i) programme under the government's ICT division



is showcasing the vehicle called "Solar Powered Tri-Cycle".

A total of 10 items, designed and developed under the programme, are being exhibited at this year's trade fair. Not just for people with disabilities, some items can be used by all for everyday purposes.

The products are being

showcased to let people know of the government's initiative in this regard, according to the authorities concerned.

"If anyone wants to buy these, they can leave their contact information and we'll get in touch with them," said Zakir Hossain, a staffer at the stall. He said the govern-

ment took this initiative to inspire youths in generating ideas that can contribute to the country's development.

There is an option on the a2i website for people to pitch their ideas, he said.

The stall is also displaying a device that looks like a smart phone, developed for people with speech impairment. It uses touch screen technology and a user can avail various services through it.

The device has several preset directions (in text format) stored inside, which a user can choose upon need. For example, if a speech-impaired person needs to use bathroom or wants medical assistance, he or she can select an already built-in instruction from it.

The device would then read it aloud for others to listen and SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Killing a waterbody generations grew up with

HELEML ALAM

Even a decade back, the around five-bigha pond in the capital's Gandaria was a source of fresh water for the residents, but the waterbody is in death throes now due to sheer negligence of the authorities concerned.

The pond used to provide a much-needed respite to the residents from the jaded city life. It used to be surrounded by various trees. Over the last 20 years, locals planted many of those themselves.

Besides being a natural haven and a spot to relax awhile, the pond used to cater for households of the communities.

But over the years, rampant encroachment and waste dumping has continued to threaten its existence.

Nowadays, with structures surrounding it and almost the entire pond covered by aquatic plants and garbage, it's almost impossible to imagine this used to be a vital part of the neighbourhood.

The encroachment started around 10 years back but it escalated a few

days before the national election (December 30, 2018) when some influential locals felled many trees and started constructing shops in and around the water body, said locals.

According to the Field, Open Space, Park and Natural Water Body Protection Act 2000, filling up of waterbodies including ponds is illegal.

The construction started in a massive scale just before the election and it's still ongoing, said locals. If not immediately saved, the waterbody will disappear soon and remain just a whisper of the past, they added.

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) acquired the land, including the waterbody, for its residential project, Gandaria DIT plot, in 1962/63, said a Rajuk official.

Ali Hossain, a resident of the Gandaria DIT plot, said the pond was used by many. "We grew up with it. This waterbody is a part of our heritage."

Contacted, Chairman of Rajuk Md Abdur Rahman on Monday said they have already been informed about the

encroachment. "No illegal structures will be allowed. I've already instructed officials concerned to demolish those as early as possible," assured the chairman.

He said they have a plan to protect the pond under a project. "The details concerning estimation of the plan will be finalised by next week. After that, we will float a tender in this regard," he added.

Meantime, one fourth of the pond has already been grabbed, said locals. Also, incessant dumping of waste from the nearby households has made its water, which was once fresh, dirty.

"For the last seven years, due to the water's worsening quality, no one has been using the pond anymore," said Anisur Rahman, a local.

Jesmin Sultana, an elderly resident, said she and her sister used to swim in the waterbody around 25 years back. "We used to have so much fun swimming there during the warm summer days. Our children can't even imagine that nowadays. To them, it's just a dirty waterbody."

She also requested the authorities concerned to save the pond.



As if lack of maintenance of this pond by the authorities concerned was not enough, influential locals have started to erect structures in and around the waterbody, inset. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: STAR

Actor, admaker Tanvir found dead in Uttara flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of actor and ad filmmaker Tanvir Hasan Sumon from a flat in Dhaka's Uttara yesterday.

A domestic help saw the body hanging from the ceiling fan around 10am, Nur-e-Alam Siddique, officer-in-charge of Uttara (East) Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Police are primarily suspecting it to be a case of suicide. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy, to determine the cause of death.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Tk 2,000cr project for non-stop power supply to Dhaka, N'ganj

UNB, Dhaka

A move is underway to implement a Tk 2,000 crore project to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Dhaka's central and south-west zones and major parts of Narayanganj within the next three years.

According to official sources, Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd (DPDC) has undertaken the project to implement it during the 2019-2022 period as part of its development programme.

"Once the project is imple-

mented, DPDC will be able to build a power distribution system to ensure non-stop electricity supply to consumers living in major parts of the two cities," DPDC Executive Director Ramiz Uddin told the news agency.

He said the project got the approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) on November 7 last year, which was its last meeting under the previous government.

Of the total cost, the government will finance Tk 1,882 crore while SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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