

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 29.6 L 13.4	H 28.0 L 11.5	H 31.2 L 15.0	H 30.5 L 14.0	H 27.1 L 11.0	H 25.7 L 13.8	H 28.5 L 12.5	H 30.0 L 9.2	H 29.0 L 16.4

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 5:45pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40am.

Month-long book fair begins in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A month-long book fair began on the Divisional Public Library premises in Khulna city yesterday. City Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque inaugurated the fair as the chief guest. Cultural Affairs Ministry, Jatiya Grantha Kendra arranged the book fair with the support of the district administration.

At the inaugural ceremony, the speakers said without literacy a nation cannot uphold its culture and history. Such a book fair will help this generation be familiar with the spirit of Language Movement and Liberation War.

Deputy Commissioner Md Helal Hossain said special security measures were taken at the venue where seminar, discussion, publication ceremony and cultural programmes will

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Road tragedies take two young lives

STAR REPORT

Two children and three persons were killed, and 15 injured, in accidents over the last two days, report our correspondents.

In Panchagarh, a 12-year-old boy was killed and his father injured when a truck hit their motorbike on Dhaka-Panchagarh highway near Boda bus stand on Thursday.

Fazle Elahi Shimul, a class V student of Boda Model Primary School, died on the spot, said police. Shimul's father Nazmul Haque from Darajgaon village in Thakurgaon was taken to Boda Upazila Health Complex. Later, he was transferred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Police seized the truck; the driver managed to flee.

Another child was killed as a tractor ran her over in Chartistapara village in Debiganj upazila the same day.

The victim -- Bithika, 6, daughter of Shajahan Mia -- was standing by a road in front of their house, said police.

Meanwhile, a woman was killed and two others were injured as a bus hit them while they were trying to cross a road in the capital's Darussalam area last night. Police identified the deceased as Rahima Begum, 55, resident of Natore.

In Narayanganj, a youth was killed and two others were injured in a head-on collision between a motorcycle and a battery-run auto-rickshaw in Bandar upazila yesterday afternoon. The deceased, Zahidul Islam Russel, 30, was riding the motorcycle, said police.

In Pabna, a man was killed and 10 others were injured as a bus collided head-on with a truck on Dhaka-Pabna highway in Sondaha area of Santhia upazila yesterday.

Rafikul Islam, 45, who was in the bus, died on the spot, said police.

DEATH BY 'SUICIDE' Wife of CMCH doctor held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Police detained wife of Chittagong Medical College Hospital doctor Mustafa Murshed Akash, who died allegedly by suicide at his residence in the port city on Thursday, from Nandan Kanan area early yesterday.

A team of Counter Terrorism Unit arrested Tanzila Haque Chowdhury Mitu, 27, from the residence of her cousin around 12:30am, said Mizanur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner (north) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police. He was addressing a press conference at CMP Headquarters yesterday.

Mitu, also a doctor, was being quizzed in Chandgaon Police Station, he said, adding that police also confiscated cellphones of Mitu and Akash for investigation.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

The Black Stork

The Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh, Vol. 26, Birds describes the Black Stork thus: "It is a large, glossy black waterbird with a long neck and red bill (length 98 cm, weight 3.2 kg, wing 56.2 cm, bill 17.5 cm...)" A long-distance migrant, it is known to be shy and wary. It was once considered an accidental winter "vagrant" in Bangladesh, but enough Black Storks have been sighted here in recent years to upgrade its availability to "rare."

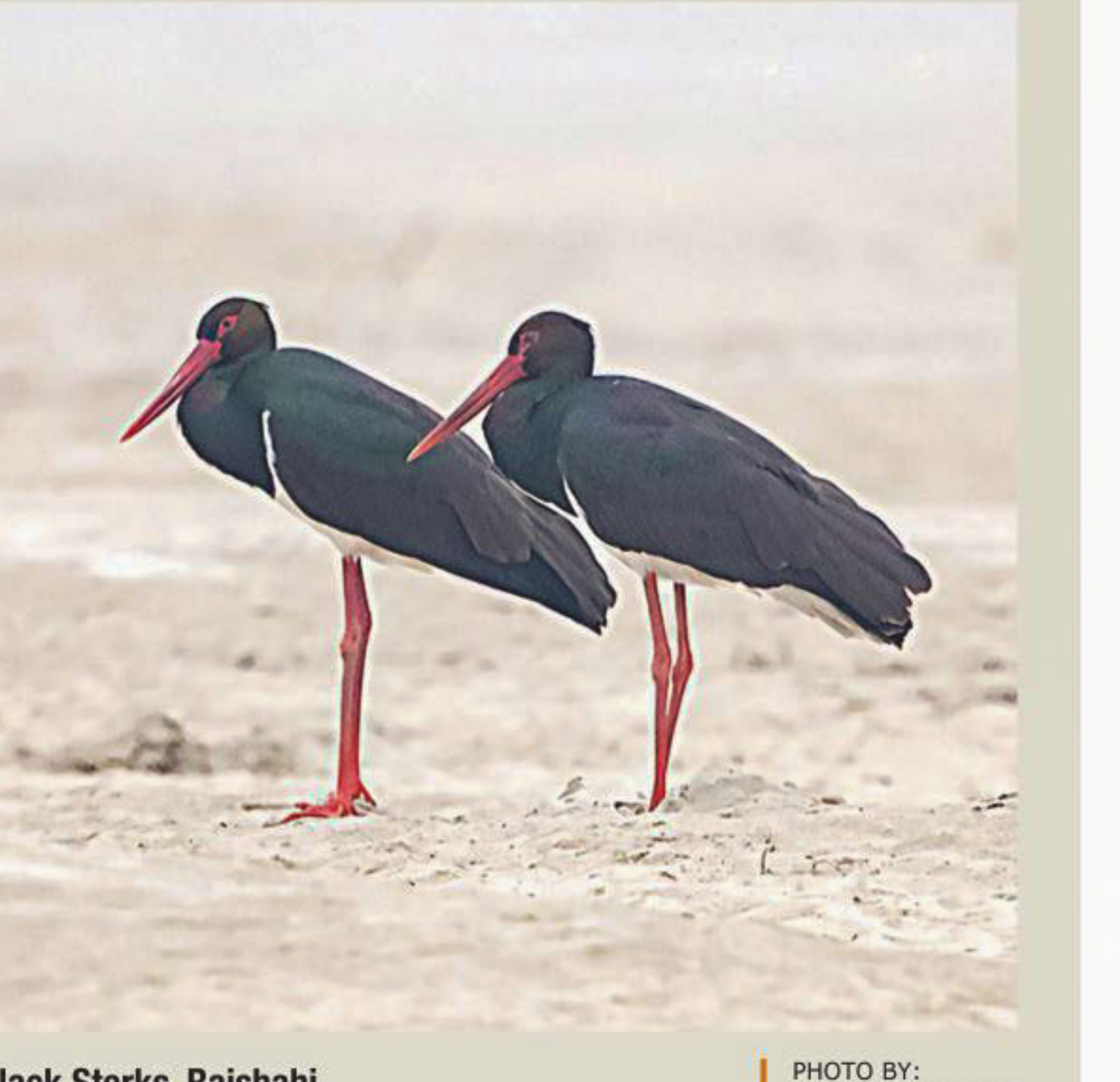
When I visited Rajshahi recently with friends to explore the chars of the Padma, I went with the knowledge that the Black Stork - along with Black-necked Stork, Woolly-necked Stork and Painted Stork - is sometimes seen there. However, I was well aware that these birds are rare and, even if spotted among the chars, are usually far enough to make photography difficult.

Thus, this bird was not uppermost in my mind during the trip. When, on the afternoon of our second day on the river, Nuru the boatman spotted two black shapes over a kilometre inland into a massive char, I was intrigued.

Two of us decided to accompany Nuru to get closer to the shapes.

After a few steps on the char, we confirmed their identity but also realized they were partially encircled by a flock of Grey Herons. If the herons flew, the storks might follow. So we decided to walk a wide circular trajectory around those herons before approaching the storks. Thus, for the first fifteen minutes, the storks didn't get larger in my binoculars. Fortunately the char was mostly sand and shallow mud (rather than the deep, sticky mud one encounters in many places.)

Cleared of the herons, we approached the storks in a zig-zag



Black Storks, Rajshahi.

PHOTO BY: IHTISHAM KABIR

pattern, sitting for a few minutes every ten feet, then moving quickly ahead. We moved by crawling or crouching. My height and heavy camera worked against me and at one point I sat and dragged my backside forward, one step at a time.

The storks were at first oblivious to us. They seemed to be enjoying the weather, walking a few steps this way and that, occasionally probing the ground with their beak. Like other storks they sometimes pointed their beak upward at an angle, craning their long necks skywards. Their red beaks, eyes and legs stood out against their black bodies.

Halfway to the birds, while we were sitting on the ground, a third birder from another boat joined us.

We photographed the birds every time we stopped. Presently it became clear that the storks were aware of our presence. They

started walking away from us. We sat still for several minutes until they resumed moving normally and, at one point, walked towards us.

When we were about a hundred feet from them, one took flight. It flew languidly in a wide circle and landed at high ground far to our right. The other Black Stork followed in a few seconds.

The birds were soon gone. I had gotten precious photographs, but was left with many questions. What were they eating? Where was their nest? Where will they migrate to during the warm months? How many offspring have they given birth to?

I guess I will never know. But I do know that I will remember this day.

www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow ihtishamkabir on Instagram



Officials of Chattogram district administration review a map for the demarcation of Karnaphuli river area. A drive to evict structures built occupying banks of the river will start from Monday. The photo was taken yesterday in Sadarghat area.

RAJSHAHI COLLEGE Hope revives for student union polls

ARAFAT RAHAMAN, RU

With election to Ducsu being slated for March 11 and other public universities also planning to hold polls, students and teachers of Rajshahi College are hoping that their longstanding demand for the student union election will be met soon.

Established in 1873 in Rajshahi city, the college is one of the oldest institutions for higher education in the country.

The students' union of the college has been inactive for almost three decades. The last election was held in 1991.

Nur Mohammad Siam, president of the college unit of BCL, said, "For the sake of a healthy political environment, the college authorities should hold the election immediately."

"If elected representatives of students in the election to the student union, we can stand up for their rights," said president of the pro-Awami League student body.

Rifat Hossain Antor, president of the college unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, said, "We also want the election. In absence of a student union, politics on the campus has become unhealthy."

Ohidur Rahman, organising secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree, echoed them.

Shariful Islam Babu, a former vice president of the college's students' union, said, "The election should be held on a regular basis for the proper development of student politics."

Contacted, Prof Habibur Rahman, principal of the college, said, "Students of this college have played a vital role in every movement including the Language Movement and Liberation War."

"I have discussed the matter with teachers. They are also in favour of the election. However, we want to wait for the Ducsu election first. Then we will make a decision," said the principal.

Manpower

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Besides, the operation of Chapainawabganj-Annua bypass Railways Station has been suspended following manpower crisis.

Contacted, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon said the process for splitting Bangladesh Railway into four zones is underway and effective measures will be taken soon to this end.

He also stressed the need for ending manpower crisis to ensure better services to passengers.

"Many cases are pending with courts over recruitment in different posts of the Bangladesh Railway. Initiatives will be taken to dispose those of quickly," he said.

The railways minister also said additional manpower will be recruited for providing better services to railway passengers.

Damen Group keen to invest in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dutch defence, shipbuilding and engineering conglomerate company Damen Group is keen to invest in Bangladesh in a bigger way considering factors including location, political stability and economic growth.

René Berkvens, chief executive officer of the Dutch company expressed the interest during a meeting on January 29 with Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands, according to a press release.

In the meeting, Ambassador Belal described Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100 to Berkvens and also explained how the government of Bangladesh is preparing to implement the plan.

The ambassador also called upon the Dutch company to be a part of the plan and requested to come up with a plan of business expansion in Bangladesh.

In response to Ambassador's

request, the CEO promised to visit Bangladesh in April 2019, the release added.

Ambassador Belal also highlighted both ongoing and upcoming mega projects in Bangladesh and urged the Dutch company to be a part of the development journey.

Earlier, the ambassador paid a visit to Damen Shipyard at Gorinchem, The Netherlands. Since 1970s, the dutch company has been active in the shipping sector of Bangladesh.

The company is having significant cooperation with BIWTA, Ministry of Water Resources, Khulna Shipyard, Chattogram Dry Dock Limited (CDDL), Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Coast-Guard.

The 91-years-old company is equipped to provide all kind of vessels, including tug boats, off-shore vessels, high speed craft and ferries, pontoons and barges, dredging and specials, defence and security vessels and yachts.

Child marriage foiled in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mobile court on Thursday sentenced local marriage registrar (Kazi) Husain Ahmed, to seven days in prison for attempting to solemnise the marriage of an underage girl in Pankali village under Dacope upazila of Khulna district.

On information from locals, Abdul Wadud, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Dacope upazila conducted a drive and stopped the marriage of a 14-year-old girl with a 20-year-old boy in the village.

The mobile court also imposed a fine of Tk 3,000 on the groom's father, the UNO said.

A case filed with Dacope Police Station in this regard against the marriage registrar. He is now in jail, after being produced before a Khulna court.

The court also took an undertaking from the bride's father that he will not force his daughter to get married until she turned 18.

"The bride's father had prepared false birth certificate to hold the marriage ceremony," UNO added.

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY DAY President, PM urge all to join movement for safe food

BSS, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the eve of "National Food Safety Day", urging all to join the movement for safe food.

In a message, the president said he is delighted to learn that Bangladesh Food Safety Authority is going to observe National Food Safety Day today for the second consecutive year.

"The theme of the day this year is 'Sustho-Sabot Jati Chai, Pushtisommoto Nirapod Khadder Bikolpo Nai' (We want a healthy nation, there is no alternative to nutritious, safe food). For being enlisted as a developed country, nutritious and safe food is very important," he said.

The president emphasised on nutritious and safe food for ensuring public health as food contamination is a threat to human health, which may cause diseases like cancer, kid-

ney failure and disabilities.

"It is very important to make people aware about safe and nutritious food. The present government is working to implement various programmes to develop public health, ensure availability of nutritious food, medical facilities, health education and developing sanitation system," President Hamid said.

Emphasising on creating awareness among people, the president said there is no alternative to the availability of nutritious and safe food.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her message, reiterated her government's commitment to safeguard the health of the people.

She also said the theme of the day this year is time-befitting. The present government has undertaken various plans to ensure food safety and availability of nutritious and safe food, she added.

"Bangladesh has achieved self-sufficiency in food production and

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Ushering in month of language with alphabet procession

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The month of February is marked with heroic tales of patriots laying down lives for the mother tongue. This month of language inevitably causes one to reflect on the martyrs of Language Movement in 1952, their valour, selflessness and love for motherland.

Imbued with its spirit, "Barnamalar Michhil" (a procession of Bangla alphabets) was organised in Sylhet city yesterday.

Sammilito Natya Parishad Sylhet brought out the parade from Sylhet Zila Parishad premises in the morning, which ended at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar.

Afterwards, Chhanda Nrityalaya presented dance with inspirational songs of the Language Movement.

People of Sylhet have been organising the event for the last five years to recall the supreme sacrifice of the country's language heroes, said Rajat Kanti Gupta, general secretary of Natya Parishad.



UPHOLDING THE SPIRIT OF AMAR EKUSHEY... With placards, depicting Bangla alphabets and the immortal 21st, and garlands youths usher in the month of February at Central Shaheed Minar in Sylhet city yesterday. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR