



In grip of bitter cold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shivering cold coupled with dense fog pummelled the country, disrupting daily activities and communications by roads, rivers and air and spreading winter-related diseases.

Yesterday, Dhaka saw its lowest temperature of 11.5 degrees Celsius this winter and Chuadanga recorded the lowest temperature in the country of 8.4 degrees Celsius.

The weather caused immense sufferings to low-income people who needed to work outside, elderly people and children.

Because of the foggy weather, the sun was mostly invisible in many parts of the country, exacerbating the cold. Many fishermen did not go out fishing due to the bone-chilling cold wind.

The frigid weather condition, which has been continuing for the last few days, may continue for several days, said Shaheenul Islam, a meteorologist at Bangladesh

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COLD BRINGS MISERY FOR LITTLE ONES - PAGE 3

- Dhaka's lowest temperature, 11.5 degrees Celsius, this winter recorded
- Temperature in Chuadanga lowest, 8.4 degrees Celsius
- Ferry services suspended amid fog, many vessels stranded mid river
- Homeless and the poor bearing the brunt



Homeless people are the worst sufferers of the biting cold wave that has been sweeping the nation for the past few days. Belayet Mamun, a blind man in his 70s, was battling the elements on a footpath in the capital's Shahjahanpur yesterday as his blanket was proving inadequate.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Govt doing everything to ease your pain: PM



UNB, Tungipara

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the Awami League government would provide all sorts of cooperation to the people to ease their sufferings caused by the economic recession resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war.

She said this while addressing the first joint meeting of the newly elected AL national committee, central

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Road accidents eat up over 1.5pc of GDP

Finds Road Safety Foundation; 80pc victims last year were earners; 79pc rise in road deaths in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 80 percent of the 7,713 road crash victims last year were aged between 18 and 65 years, the most productive segment of the population, Road Safety Foundation said yesterday.

The loss to the workforce caused by road accidents across the country amounted to Tk 23,460 crore, and the figure would be more than 1.5 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) if the property damages are also taken into consideration, it said.

According to the organisation, the number of road crashes and deaths last year were 27.14 percent and 22.74 percent higher than that of the previous year.

Motorcycles were involved in 2,973 road crashes, which left 3,091 people dead last year. The figures were 43.53 percent and 40.07 percent of the total crashes and deaths that year, the foundation said.

Prof AI Mahbab Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the foundation which compiled the data from media reports, revealed the information at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Earlier, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity also said the number of road crashes and deaths increased last year. It said 9,951 people were killed in 6,749 road crashes last year.

Road Safety Foundation found 10 major



reasons behind road accidents, including faulty vehicles, speeding, unskilled and unfit drivers, unfixed working hours for professional drivers, operation of slow-moving vehicles on highways, reckless bike driving by youths, poor traffic management, and extortion in the transport sector.

It also made 10 recommendations, including proper implementation of Road Transport Act-2018, fixing working hours for drivers, increasing the capacity of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), and halting operation of slow-moving vehicles on highways.

Such a grim picture indicates deteriorating

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Homecoming turns tragic

4 of a family, driver die in pile-up in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

When their expatriate family just landed in the Dhaka airport early yesterday, their joy knew no bounds.

Hugs, kisses and selfies filled their entire moment upon reception at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, before the entire bunch heading towards their Moulvibazar home in a microbus.

However, that very joy turned into a complete nightmare within a few hours when tragedy struck, as a sand-laden truck collided with their vehicle and then a covered van on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Shahpur area of Habiganj's Madhabpur.

Sadia Sultana, 24, of Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila, her husband Abdus Salam, 32, their daughter Habiba Jannat, 3, Sadia's cousin Shihab, 15, and their driver Sadir Ali, 25, were killed.

Of them, Shihab, Salam and Sadir died on the spot, whereas Sadia and Jannat breathed their last on their way to the hospital, said Jashim Miah, sub-inspector of Shayestaganj Highway Police.

"The accident took place due to poor visibility cause by the dense fog."

The microbus first collided head-on with a sand-laden truck around 3:30am. Another covered van then hit the microbus from behind and dragged it a

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True grit for true identity

Ankita Islam becomes first openly trans woman to be admitted to DU

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Perhaps even a few years ago, it was unimaginable for an openly trans person to pursue higher education in the country.

Most would keep their gender identities hidden due to the social stigma, which, to this day, pervades society.

However, with small steps and a heart full of courage, some have made strides, created history, and brought about



"... I was determined to continue my education no matter how difficult it might be for me. At the same time, I was also determined to establish my identity as a trans woman."

changes.

Ankita Islam is one of them.

Fighting all odds, the 25-year-old has now become the first openly trans woman to be admitted to Dhaka University.

After qualifying in the admission tests in December, she has been selected to pursue her MBA at the university's Department of Management.

She is also one of the handful of Bangladeshi trans people employed in the formal sector, working as an officer at a reputed private bank for the past year and half.

like girls. I was often reprimanded and even beaten by my family members for being 'girly'," she told The Daily Star.

The abuse further intensified in school, where her male classmates would bully her.

"Groups of boys used to take positions on my way to school to tease and harass me. My teachers never took any step in my favour, as they too thought 'being girly' was a fault and I must learn to 'become a man'."

At one point, Ankita had to stop going to school.

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Authorise the PHQ to punish, promote SPs

Police officials urge Home boss

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Police officials yesterday demanded that the government authorise the Police Headquarters to investigate the SP-level officers and determine their transfers and promotions instead of the home ministry.

They also requested that the inspector general of police be included in the Superior Selection Board (SSB), an administrative body that scrutinises government officers' service records and recommends their promotion in the civil service and in autonomous organisations.

Presently, the home ministry senior secretary is the appeal officer for the departmental cases against SP-level officers. Since the inspector general of police is equivalent to the senior secretaries, the police officials demanded that the powers be given to the PHQ.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of Detective Branch of the DMP, placed the demand on behalf of police officials during a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on the fifth day of the police week yesterday.

Sources present at the meeting said the police officials also demanded an increase in the IGP's annual expenditure limit to Tk 50 crore from the current Tk 5 crore because the IGP is equivalent to a senior secretary.

The demands also included upgrading the IGP's rank to that of a four-star general and creating 10 Grade-I posts in police from five.

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According to the Campus Track Survey B-School 2022 conducted by NielsenIQ. They conduct this survey globally and since 2013 in Bangladesh.