

# Dhaka feels WINTER CHILLS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following bouts of light rain over the last couple of days, the age-old question of when will winter arrive might finally have its answer.

Meanwhile, Dhaka dwellers were also seen getting their winter clothes out of the closet and sporting it on the streets.

Fuelled by cyclonic storm Michuang passing over the West-central Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas, Bangladesh may start experiencing a chilling weather from tonight.

There is no chance of rain today and most parts of the country will remain dry. After the clouds clear, temperature will fall 1-3 degrees Celsius today. This will leave many places feeling colder, especially in the northern and western parts. The sun will appear either in the morning or afternoon, said meteorologist Monowar Hossain.

The difference in temperature between morning and night will also increase. So, the feeling of winter will increase on Saturday, he added.

"We recorded 19.5 degrees Celsius temperature in Dhaka on Friday, which was supposed to be 14.1 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature, which was supposed to be 26.5 degrees Celsius, was 21 degrees Celsius," he said.

The lowest recorded temperature was 17.2 degree Celsius in Dinajpur yesterday, as per BMD.

According to the weather forecast of the Met office, light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Chattogram and Sylhet divisions. Weather may primarily remain dry, with cloudy skies elsewhere over the country in the next 24 hours, commencing 9:00am yesterday.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the country during the early morning.



Following drizzling rain that captured the country on Thursday, Dhaka dwellers finally reached for their winter clothes from yesterday. In the Katabon area, two mothers were seen on a rickshaw with their babies sporting colourful hoodies, while one of them wrapped themselves in a shawl.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



## Begum Rokeya Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Begum Rokeya Day will be observed countrywide today to pay tribute to Begum Rokeya Sakhawat, a social reformer and pioneer of women's education.

The momentous day marks the 143rd birth and 91st death anniversaries of Begum Rokeya.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued messages, paying respect to the memory of Begum Rokeya.

Various organisations have chalked out numerous events to observe the day.

The main event will be marked by the Begum Rokeya Award giving ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka, reports BSS.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## The 'lucky' 32 No AL independents contesting in 32 constituencies

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Though a record number of independent candidates is going to participate in the 2024 national elections, none are contesting in the 32 constituencies where many Awami League heavyweights are running for offices.

For instance, no independent candidates submitted nomination papers in Noakhali-5 constituency where AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader is the party's nominee.

Likewise, former industries minister and one of the members of AL's advisory council, Amir Hossain Amu has no opponent running as an independent in Jahlakathi-2.

In fact, only two candidates, one nominated by Jatiya Party and another from National People's Party (NPP) are contesting against the veteran leader.

The Election Commission data shows 747 independent aspirants submitted nomination papers till the last date of submission, however the final list of candidates will be known on December 17 as it's the last date of withdrawing from the race.

AL supremo Sheikh Hasina on November 26 gave the go-ahead to her party colleagues to run as independents in an effort to make the election competitive and increase voter turn-out.

However, the party later said any AL leader seeking to run as an independent must get the party nod.

With the latest development, approximately 400 "independents" from the AL are pitted against their party nominees in 266 seats. This means the AL candidates will be challenged by multiple party colleagues in those seats, apart from the "lucky" 32.

With the BNP boycotting the election and candidates from a handful of "small parties" competing in those constituencies, nominees in the 32 seats are now "relieved" and hoping for an easy win.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## 'More like a settlement project in the hills' Speakers tell seminar on CHT peace accord

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar opined that the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord seems more like a project to establish settlements in the hills, intruding on ancestral lands of indigenous people.

They said this at a seminar titled "Full Implementation of CHT Peace Accord and Necessity to Establish Land Rights of Indigenous People of CHT" held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, marking 26th anniversary of the treaty.

"The accord seems more like a project to allow settlers in the hills, intruding on indigenous people's ancestral land to turn them into a minority," said Prof Robaet Ferdous of Dhaka University's mass communication and journalism department.

He said the treaty's full implementation would happen only through unilateral pressure on the government.

Terming it a form of state-sponsored repression on the indigenous communities similar to the plight of the Palestinian people, he noted, "The number of indigenous people in the hills is decreasing, akin to the decline of the Palestinian population in their land."

Highlighting the alarming demographic shift, he said, "Now indigenous people

are only 55 percent of the hill population, while the percentage of settlers has increased to 45 percent. If this situation continues in CHT, the indigenous people will become a minority in their ancestral land 20 years later."

Raja Devasish Roy, chief of Chakma Circle, questioned whether the government wants to implement what it had written in the CHT Peace Accord.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, pointed out that the incumbent government had promised to implement the accord before the previous election, but they did not do so.

He demanded that the next government must provide a time-bound roadmap and

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ROBAET FERDOUS, Professor at Dhaka University

"They might have thought, 'Let them surrender their arms, and things will be seen later'," he said.

Sultana Kamal, rights activist and co-chair of the International Commission for the CHT, said, "The government seems to think that it can escape safely by fooling the people and breaking laws and agreements. But the countrymen cannot be fooled by dishonesty and hypocrisy."

She also said the former and present governments of the country should offer

engage in high-level talks with indigenous communities' leaders to properly implement the accord.

He also called for formulation of a national indigenous policy to safeguard the indigenous people's rights.

"The CHT Land Commission has been formed, but they can't sit and hold meetings? Why? Why are the laws of the CHT not implemented? We have to ask these questions," said Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Save Gabtoli waterbody

### Civil society urges PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society representatives have called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to stop the filling activities of a waterbody in Gabtoli, urging her intervention to restore the filled areas to their original condition.

In a letter to the PM on Thursday, they said Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation has filled a water retention pond in Gabtoli's Goidartek and undertaken a project to enhance seed potato production.

The 12-acre waterbody is designated as a water retention pond in the Detailed Area Plan (2022-2035) of Rajuk. The retention pond is now under DNCC's jurisdiction.

The letter said the percentage of reservoirs and wetlands in Dhaka was 20.58 percent in 1995, which decreased to 2.91 percent in 2023, according to Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

An ideal city should have 10 to 12 percent waterbodies whereas the capital has only 2.91 percent.

The representatives also said long-lasting waterlogging in Dhaka after a little rain is a direct effect of filling up the reservoirs.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## India extends export curbs on onions until Mar 31

STAR REPORT

India has extended the ban on the exports of onion till March next year, according to a notification issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade on Thursday.

The announcement comes three weeks ahead of the expiry deadline of export restriction on the vegetable, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The measures took effect yesterday and will continue till March 31, 2024.

However, onion export will be allowed through the permission of the Indian government to other countries based on the request of their governments.

Besides, the notification will not be applicable to exports for which the loading has already commenced.

India on October 28 imposed a minimum export price of \$800 per tonne for onions – much higher than the prices at which importers were buying – to curb export and increase domestic availability until December 31 this year.

Prices of onion have risen in Dhaka as Bangladesh meets a portion of its requirement through import, mainly from India.



## Dengue claims 7 more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven dengue patients died, four from Dhaka, in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new deaths, the total number of fatalities rose to 1,650, of which 953 are from Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

With 251 new dengue cases, the total number of cases this year rose to 3,16,411, of which 1,08,818 were from Dhaka.

A total of 2,384 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country.

So far, 3,12,377 dengue patients have already been released from hospitals.

A total of 62,382 patients were hospitalised last year, while the total number of deaths was 281.



Activists carry a cage with a symbolic ballot box inside, which they feel depicts the current state of affairs in the country. A citizens' platform, consisting of writers, teachers, and artists, rallied for democracy and freedom of speech from the Jatiya Press Club to Shahbagh yesterday. This photo was taken near Shahbagh.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Nurul H Khan  
(1935 - 2020)

Always in our hearts  
Sharbi, Nobel, Adeebe, Shirley, Mariha, Tahseen, Sara, Fardeen, Saania and Tahzeeb