



From fringe hobby to national pride
WR1



Israel strikes on Lebanon kill Hezbollah fighter
P7



An invisible killer on the loose
P8



Leverkusen eye 'immortality'
P10

Dhaka getting HOTTER

Rising temperature in the city rings alarm

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Dhaka is now one of the fastest-warming cities in the world, as it has seen a staggering 97 percent rise in the number of days with temperature above 35 degrees Celsius over the last three decades.

It ranks fifth on the list of hottest cities, trailing behind Delhi, Bangkok, Tehran, and Cairo, according to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

The UK-based independent policy research institute detected the trend after analysing temperatures in 20 of the most populous capitals for the last 30 years. The findings are yet to be made public.

"Bangladesh is experiencing more and more days of extreme heat because of climate change. This is having a major impact on the health, wellbeing, and productivity of all citizens, but

especially those living in low income and informal communities," IIED Principal Researcher Anna Walnycki wrote in an email to this correspondent.

Experts also blame high population density, unplanned urbanisation, lack of green spaces, and global warming for the rapid rise in temperature.

"It is a result of local climatic change fueled by break-neck population growth. More people require more basic amenities, which lead to the degradation of the natural environment," said Ashraf Dewan, who teaches at the School of Earth and Planetary Sciences of Curtin University in Australia.

Building materials such as bricks used in cities for housing, particularly in developing countries, are not

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

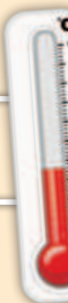
HOW DHAKA TEMPERATURE ROSE IN LAST 3 DECADES

Number of days with above 35° C

1994-2003
283 DAYS

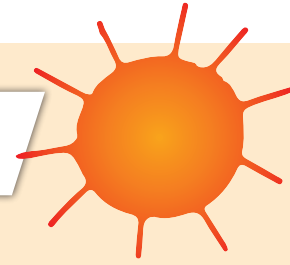
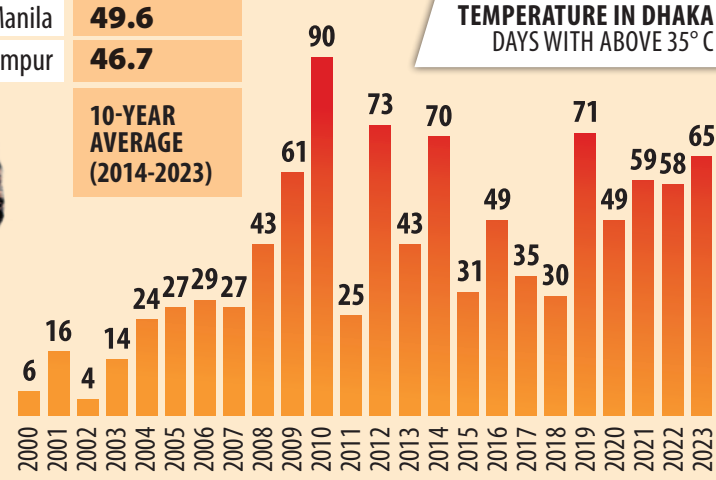
2004-2013
442 DAYS

2014-2023
517 DAYS



CITY	HOTTER DAYS
Delhi	159.1
Bangkok	107
Cairo	82.3
Tehran	77
Dhaka	51.7
Manila	49.6
Kuala Lumpur	46.7

10-YEAR AVERAGE (2014-2023)



"Bangladesh is experiencing more and more days of extreme heat because of climate change. This is having a major impact on the health, wellbeing, and productivity of all citizens..."

ANNA WALNYCKI
IIED Principal Researcher



'Advice from foreigners won't bear fruit here'

PM tells economists about devising plans

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the economists to devise their policies, plans, and programmes by taking into account the local realities as advice from foreigners in this regard would not be fruitful.

The premier was speaking at a programme marking the inauguration

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



THE CHILD BRIDES of Rasulpur

Poverty, lack of security force parents to marry off their daughters at early age



Holding her son, 16-year-old Lamia cooking rice in her family's yard in Rasulpur Char. PHOTO: TITU DAS

Sixteen-year-old Lamia Akter Meem was cooking rice in her family's yard, using an earthen stove. The sun hovered high in the sky, indicating it was nearing midday at the Rasulpur Char along the Kirtankhola in Barishal. Within a few minutes, Meem's 19-month-old baby boy ran to her crying for attention. Meem scooped him up and swayed him in her arms to soothe him.

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, back from Barishal

As Meem tended to the child, a group of girls around her age strolled past the yard. They invited Meem to join them in a game called Chhi-Buri, a traditional village game. Without hesitation, Lamia passed the baby to her mother inside the house and eagerly joined her friends.

Her enjoyment was, however short lived, as the baby's cries

soon prompted Meem to return to his side. "I enjoy playing with my friends, but my father disapproves," Meem said wistfully looking at the field.

Meem was only 14 when she was married off. Within a year, she became a mother. Her husband got a job abroad two years ago, leaving Meem to live with her parents.

Her husband no longer wants to reunite with her as he is now more affluent and his status in society is much "higher" than Meem's family.

Meem's story mirrors that of hundreds of other girls living in Rasulpur Char.

Married off between the ages of 13 and 15, they are thrust into the responsibilities of adulthood far too early in life.

During a recent visit to the Char, this correspondent found numerous young girls burdened with the duties of motherhood.

Many grapples with illness, and tragically, around six months ago, one young victim of child marriage succumbed to pregnancy-related complications.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Veggies too pricey to afford for many

Green papaya now Tk 100 a kg; prices of other vegetables rise up to 20pc

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Homemaker Nurunnahar Begum could not believe her ears yesterday when a trader asked for Tk 100 for a kilogram of green papaya at the capital's Kachukhet kitchen market.

"How can a kg of green papaya cost Tk 100? The price has soared by Tk 30 only within a week," said the 60-year-old woman from Mirpur-11. Traders and consumers said this might be highest price of green papaya in recent times.

Nurunnahar said the vegetable, which is available almost round the year, usually costs Tk 40 to Tk 50 a kg, but the price has now gone beyond their reach.

"How will the low- and fixed-income people buy vegetables?" she asked. The prices of some other vegetables, including pointed gourd and aubergine, have also shot up at Kachukhet, Shevrapara, Ibrahimpur, and Karwan Bazar kitchen markets over the last few days.

Yesterday, green chillies were sold for Tk 160-200 a kg, up from Tk 120-160 a week ago.

Traders blamed shortages in supply for the increased prices of green papayas and green chillies. They attributed the shortages in supply to damage of crops by the recent heatwave.

The prices of many other vegetables have soared by up to 20 percent within a week.

Pointed gourd was sold for Tk 60-100 per kg yesterday against the previous week's price of Tk 50-80.

The price of long tubular aubergine went up to Tk 80-120 per kg yesterday from Tk 60-100 a week ago, while round aubergine was being sold for Tk 60-80 a kg, up from Tk 50-60.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Heatwave to continue till tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mild to moderate heatwave is sweeping over eight divisions across the country and it may continue till tomorrow, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

The divisions are Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, and Sylhet divisions.

Md Omar Faruq, a meteorologist at BMD, said there was a chance of rain between the late hours of last night and early hours of this morning.

"Rain accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Chattogram and Sylhet divisions and one or two places in Dhaka Mymensingh, Barishal and Rangpur divisions due to the influence of a nor-wester in the next 24 hours commencing at 6:00pm on Friday."

According to Omar, a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Failed Bangladeshi asylum seekers to be deported from UK

Two countries sign deal

AGENCIES

Failed Bangladeshi asylum seekers in the United Kingdom will be deported under a fast-track returns deal between the two countries.

The two countries have held their first ever joint working group meeting on home affairs in London at the British Home Office and signed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on returns.

British Minister for Countering Illegal Migration James Tomlinson-Mynors KC, and Bangladesh High Commissioner in the UK Saida Muna Tasneem opened the meeting on Thursday and witnessed the signing of the SOPs between the two countries, reports UNB.

The Bangladesh-UK SOPs on returns is a successor to the earlier signed Bangladesh-EU SOPs of 2017, the procedure that used to be followed before the UK's exit from the EU for returning Bangladeshi overstayers from the UK, said a press release yesterday.

Nearly 11,000 Bangladeshis entered Britain on visas last year only to lodge asylum claims within 12 months in an

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



IT'S LITCHI TIME!

A fruit seller displaying litchis in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar yesterday. The season's first batches of litchi, collected from Pabna's Ishwardi and Narayanganj's Sonargaon, was sold for Tk 300 to Tk 350 each 100 pieces. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN