

## TEMPERATURE LIKELY TO RISE

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Khulna, Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions till 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places over

the country, Met Office said. Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country. **The sun sets in the capital today at 6:33pm and rises tomorrow at 5:34am.**

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore, Syedpur and Chuadanga, and lowest 24.6 degrees at Sylhet. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	26.2	67	76	34.4	26.5	77	88
Chittagong	29.0	26.0	95	88	32.0	26.0	75	80
Rajshahi	34.4	26.2	88	74	32.2	24.6	92	77
Rangpur	33.5	26.4	89	92	30.7	26.5	82	81

**Hundreds of inter-district buses sit idle at Mohakhali bus terminal in the capital yesterday, the first day of Jamaat-e-Islami's 48-hour countrywide shutdown. Owners avoid running their buses on hartal days for the fear of vandalism, while tens of thousands of people suffer immensely due to absence of vehicles on the road.**



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Law minister urges judges to be sincere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday urged judges to discharge their duties sincerely and smoothly in order to remove allegations of corruption in the judiciary.

"I hope the judiciary will remain free of corruption even though reports of such allegations are sometimes published in newspapers," he said.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of a training course for newly appointed assistant judges at Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in the capital with JATI Director General Justice Khondker Musa Khaled in the chair.

A total of 35 assistant judges participated in the two-day long training programme.

The minister said judges have to discharge their judicial functions with charitable mindsets, determination, honesty and fairness, so that litigant people can get justice within a short period of time.

People's faith on the judiciary will increase if the long delays in disposing of cases are removed, he said.

Shafique Ahmed said the government is considering making a time limit for finishing investigation of criminal cases, since a lot of time is killed in completing investigation of such cases.

After the occasion, the law minister told reporters that the High Court verdict declaring the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami illegal cannot be changed through enforcing hartals or holding rallies.

The HC has already summoned two Jamaat leaders before it for enforcing hartal against its verdict, he said.

The law minister further said the public will resist anarchy or violence in the name of hartal.

## HOUSE RENTS IN CAPITAL

# Much-awaited HC verdict still to come

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Though the final hearing regarding the issue of house rents in Dhaka city concluded six months ago, the High Court is yet to deliver a verdict, which is expected to give tenants a respite from arbitrary increase in rents and huge advance payments.

Some Supreme Court lawyers and government law officials believe that it will be a milestone judgment to prevent house owners from treating tenants in an arrogant and autocratic manner and reduce their sufferings to some extent.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, they said it was not possible to say when the verdict would arrive as the HC bench of Justice Mohammad Bazlur Rahman and Justice Md Ruhul Quddus kept the matter waiting for a verdict any day after finishing hearing a related writ petition this January.

The petition, filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh more than three years ago, in April 2010, sought directives for strict enforcement of the House Rent Control Act 1991 so that owners cannot arbitrarily raise rents and take advance payments.

In May 2010, the High Court issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to enforce the law properly.

If the HC accepts the prayers of the petition, it may direct the government to form a commission to fix house rents considering

the standards of buildings, their amenities, and locations in the capital, said Manzill Murshid, who moved the petition.

If the house rents are set by the commission, around 80 percent of sufferings of the tenants would go away, he said.

Manzill said he urged the court to direct the government to introduce transaction of house rents through banks so that the government can earn revenue from house owners.

House owners in the capital arbitrarily increase rents and evict tenants without notice defying the rent control law, he said.

As per the act, owners have to sign deals with tenants and provide written receipts for rent payments and cannot charge tenants more than one month's advance rent, he added.

About 80 percent of Dhaka city people live in rented houses, said Manzill. The capital's population is estimated to be around 1.5 crore.

Deputy Attorney General Goutam Kumar Roy, who opposed the petition, expects that the HC verdict would protect the interests of house owners, tenants and the government.

Perhaps, the judges are taking time to prepare a detailed verdict, he said, adding that the judgement might come after reopening of the court following the annual vacation.

The court went into vacation on August 1 and will reopen on September 15.

# Hasina wants multipurpose education for rapid progress

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the need for multipurpose education for rapid progress of the country as education is the main tool for poverty alleviation.

The prime minister expressed the view when the members of Standing Committee of Bangladesh University Council (BUC), a forum of public university teachers, met her at her office.

After the meeting, PM's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters.

Hasina mentioned that education is the main tool for poverty alleviation and her government is taking various steps for its further development as no nation could achieve its desired goal without education.

She said Awami League in its previous tenure from 1996 to 2001 had taken initiatives to set up 12 science and technology universities in the country.

But the BNP-Jamaat alliance government shelved the project out of political vengeance when it had assumed office in 2001, she said. After returning to power, Hasina said, the present government launched the 12 universities.

Hasina said her previous government for the first time allocated Tk 12

core for research purpose. "After returning to power this time, the present government raised the allocation to conduct researches in various sectors," she said.

The prime minister said her government is providing free textbooks up to secondary level and stipends to over 1.19 crore students, and has introduced locally-managed midday meal in schools to check the dropout of students as well as to reduce the burden of their parents.

In order to help continue the study of the poor and meritorious students, the government constituted the Prime Minister's Education Trust Fund with Tk 1,000 crore as seed money.

She also mentioned that the present government was setting up multimedia classrooms and providing internet facilities to educational institutions across the country for the improving the quality of education.

The prime minister urged the teachers to maintain a congenial atmosphere on the campus. "It's your responsibility to groom the students as future leaders of the nation. And the university is for all," she said.

In response to some demands of the teachers, Sheikh Hasina suggested that they raise funds through alumni associations for the development of

respective universities.

She asked them to take part in the development of the country through paying income tax regularly.

In this connection, she said all the ministers and lawmakers except the president are now paying income tax. Putting emphasis on self reliance in all sectors, Sheikh Hasina said there is no dignity and honour of a beggar nation.

The prime minister also highlighted her government's "tremendous" successes in the fields of agriculture, economy, health, ICT and social safety net programmes.

The university teachers highly appreciated the prime minister for massive development in different sectors, including education, infrastructure and social safety net.

They said the country witnessed an unprecedented success in the education sector during the last four and half years of the present government under the visionary leadership of the prime minister.

The teachers thanked Sheikh Hasina for raising the retirement age of the university teachers to 65 years from 62.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and vice chancellors of different public universities were present.

## Boy shot in gunfight between two gangs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage boy was shot in the head during a gunfight between two gangs of local goons at a Eid fair in the capital's Laksmi Bazar last night.

The injured identified as Mohammad Saimon, 14, son of Zahangir Hossain of Protab Das lane at Sutrapur in Old Dhaka, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Saimon's uncle Liton Hossain, quoting witnesses, told reporters that Saimon along with some of his friends went to the fair around 10:00pm and the stray bullet hit him while he was roaming the fair.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sutrapur Police Station, said the gangs clashed over establishing dominance in the fair and at one stage the boy was shot.

## Domestic help 'commits suicide'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan in Siddheswari area in the capital's Ramna early yesterday.

The deceased was Mosammat Rashida, 30.

Rashida's employer Farjana Bakul was the first person to find her hanging with a scarf in a room around 3:30am, said Mashur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station.

She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead, he said, adding that the body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

An unnatural death case was filed with the police station.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

## High commission to celebrate tomorrow

CITY DESK

The High Commission of India has invited all Indian nationals and their families in the country to the flag hoisting ceremony tomorrow on the occasion of India's Independence Day.

The ceremony will be held at New Chancery Complex in the capital's Baridhara. Pankaj Saran, high commissioner of India, will unfurl the flag at 9:00am and read the president's address to the nation.

# Drug abuse alarmingly rising in Bangladesh

Addicts spend Tk 70m for illegal narcotics per day

BSS, Dhaka

In recent years, drug addiction has significantly increased in the whole world, especially in the South Asian countries like Bangladesh. In this country, this agent of human devastation has spread its tentacles to every nook and corner. International organisations like the United Nations and World Health Organization (WHO) are alarmed by the present proportion of addicts.

According to sources at different healthcare facilities, nowadays nearly 10 percent of outpatients are visiting the country's hospitals with cases of addiction-related complications involving heroin, marijuana and Phensedyl. The trend of drug consumption is higher in youth and teenagers, their age spanning between 15 and 30 years. They come from all strata of the society.

The average age of the drug addicts is 22. Students are mostly falling victims to drug abuse, which eventually lowers their standards of education and attendance at schools and colleges.

The WHO defines drug as a chemical substance of synthetic, semi-synthetic or natural origin intended for diagnostic, therapeutic or palliative use or for modifying physiological functions of man and animal.

There are a number of reasons why a teenager might try drugs.

Peer pressure is one of the leading causes. Reasons determined through research include curiosity and excite-

ment through its use, despair and frustration for continuous failure in works or economic insolvency. Some get addicted because they try to follow the western culture of drug abuse and enjoyment of life. A number of other reasons include poverty, easy access to drugs, dejection in love, and mental stress due to family problems.

There are three types of drugs available in Bangladesh—opium (like heroin), cannabis (ganja), and sleeping pills (seduxen). The most common drugs used in Bangladesh are stimulants. The teens are ignorant about variation of drugs. Some of them cannot tell the difference between stimulants and marijuana. There are a large number of young using drugs.

According to police, "In the last two or three years, many more teens have been arrested for using drugs than ever before."

Though it is not possible to find out the exact number of the drug users in the country, on the basis of different data and statistics, it is estimated that the number of addicts in Bangladesh is more than six million who spend over Tk 70 million every day on illegal narcotics, say studies and intelligence reports.

According to a WHO survey, most drug users are young, their age ranging from 18 to 30 years. Meanwhile, a separate study conducted by the Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition (JHPN) of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) shows that in the capital, 79.4 percent

of the users are male and 20.6 percent are female.

The JHPN study finds that 64.8 percent of the drug users in the country are unmarried, 56.1 percent are either students or unemployed, and 95.4 percent are smokers. About 85.7 percent get into consuming drugs under the influence of friends, while 65.8 percent get addicted to various codeine-laced cough syrups.

More than 1 lakh people are directly involved in illegal drug trade and supply. The study reveals that peddlers prefer women and children for carrying and selling drugs because it is easier for them to evade law enforcers.

According to intelligence sources at the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), heroin is the deadliest of drugs in Bangladesh. In recent times, Yaba has gained popularity and has become a "fashionable" drug. Cough syrup Phensedyl remains the most popular among the masses because of its low price and easy availability.

Sources at the DNC intelligence wing also said that around 10,000 cases are filed and 9,000 people are arrested every year in connection with drug-related violence and crimes.

Physicians say weaning someone off drug addiction is difficult, but not impossible. Support from family and friends, professional help from doctors, and will power of the patient during inpatient or outpatient drug addiction treatment may help to end dependence on drugs.



Police take Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan to Dhaka Central Jail after he was produced in a metropolitan magistrate's court yesterday. The rights activist was arrested Saturday on charges of tarnishing the image of the government, the state and law enforcers by publishing a "false report" online about the crackdown on Hefajat-e Islam at Motijheel in May.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA