

TEMPERATURE LIKELY TO RISE

Light rain or drizzle is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country till 6:00pm today. Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Kushtia and Srimangal and may

abate, Met Office said. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during night till morning. Night temperature may rise by (1-2) degree Celsius and day temperature may rise slightly over the country. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:22pm**

and rises tomorrow at 6:41am. Country's highest temperature 27.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Sayedpur and lowest 09.0 degrees in Srimangal. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	23.0	13.0	93	78	Khulna	22.8	13.0	92	79
Chittagong	26.0	17.5	58	67	Barisal	22.6	12.9	95	85
Rajshahi	24.4	09.3	86	73	Sylhet	25.4	13.4	99	84
Rangpur	26.0	11.0	93	72	Cox's Bazar	26.0	19.0	73	74

NEW YEAR'S EVE Outdoor celebration in capital banned for tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has banned all outdoor and street gatherings in the capital on New Year's Eve.

The city dwellers can arrange celebratory programmes in hotels and clubs but have to take permission from local police stations, DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed told a press conference at DMP media centre yesterday.

All-out security measures, including special arrangements in the diplomatic zone, key establishments and churches, have been taken to avert unpleasant incidents, he said.

The DMP will restrict vehicles and outsiders' movements on Dhaka University campus, and in Gulshan and Banani after 8:00pm, he said, adding that entry to Hatirjheel was prohibited at the time.

The DMP chief requested the city dwellers not to explode crackers, and warned of tough action against reckless and drink-driving.



A September sunset on Kaptai Lake in Rangamati was captured by a finalist in the Rivers of Bangladesh category of The Daily Star's inPixel photo contest.

PHOTO: SOHEL AHMED



Sting operation captures New Year's Eve booze suppliers at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities last night handed over three youths to the Shahbagh police for supplying alcoholic beverages to the students in dormitories ahead of New Year's Day.

Ashik, a student of Dhaka University, Mehedi Hasan of North South University, and an unidentified youth were caught with two bottles of vodka on the Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall playground.

The three had been circulating a leaflet in the dormitories since Monday. "Drinks are available in our store. You can get Absolute Vodka [sic], Passport, Haig and many more. Easy to order. Just call us. It is [a] home delivery and trusted service," the leaflet reads.

Sayem Khan, president of Bangladesh Chhatra League's AF Rahman hall unit, baited the three to the playground by ordering three bottles of liquor by phone.

Quoting the three, Sayem told The Daily Star that they supplied alcohol round the year on the campus, and that they had kept the bottles for sale in Room 436 of Mohsin hall. Acting Proctor Prof Amzad Ali said the three would be sued.

WATER, SANITATION, HYGIENE

70pc of government budget goes to three cities

WaterAid, Simavi, DORP workshop told; more allocation for rural areas suggested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 70 percent of the government's current budget for safe water, sanitation and hygiene has been allocated for Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong cities, discriminating against the rest of the country, said speakers at a workshop yesterday.

However, the rural areas, especially haors, chars and hilly villages, need more attention, they told the workshop organised by WaterAid, Simavi, and Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP) in Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

As a large proportion of the population lives in villages, a project should be launched for hygienic sanitation in rural areas, said Head of Policy Advocacy of WaterAid Shamim Ahmed.

Chief of Research, Evaluation and Monitoring of DORP, Zobair Hasan, said due to bureaucratic tangles local government representatives get budgetary allocation near the end of a fiscal year, and failing to utilise the fund in a short time, they often return it to the ministry.

Tk 4,113 crore has been allocated for sanitation while around Tk 295.5 crore is being spent every year to treat

diseases caused by a lack of hygiene, Zobair mentioned. He urged the authorities to increase the budget and ensure that it reaches every part of the country in time.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Moshir Rahman Ranga, who was the chief guest, asked the event organisers to provide him a list of areas which need safe water and sanitation. "The ministry will address the issue soon," he promised.

WaterAid Country Director Khairul Islam, and DORP Chief Executive Officer AHM Nouman also spoke among others.

Appoint spokesperson for rescue operations

PM tells home ministry after Jihad's death in a well, criticises media's role; a condolence meeting however blames govt failure for the 4yr-old's death; Ecneec okays Tk 199cr fire department upgrading budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the home ministry to designate a spokesperson, who will brief the media from time to time in situations like the rescue operation of four-year-old Jihad, who died in a deep well on Friday.

In such cases, the media and people flock to the scene, breaking the concentration of the rescue team, she was quoted as saying at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) in NEC auditorium.

Hasina expressed astonishment that journalists were asking questions to the rescue

team members while they were trying to rescue Jihad, and that they were responding.

She also asked the ministry to issue a public statement in such incidents.

The PM, however, did not say anything about the fire service's failure.

Three youths recovered the body of Jihad in Shahjahanpur Railway Colony, in less than an hour after the rescue officials called off the operation after 23 hours.

Meanwhile, speakers at a condolence meeting said the government's inefficiency led to Jihad's death.

The government officials lied to the nation and tortured Jihad's father, uncle and

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Bangladesh to join next North American Bengali Confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshis for the first time will officially join the North American Bengali Conference (NABC) on July 10-12 next year at Houston in Texas, USA.

The Tagore Society of Houston will host the 35th NABC with the slogan "Celebrate Your Heritage; Embrace the Change".

Dr Ruma Acharjee Dey Sarker, the society's president, said, "We aim to bring together the Bangalee cultures of Bangladesh and West Bengal in the next conference."

Bangalees living in North America have been organising the conference in different cities of the USA and Canada for the last 34 years, to promote Bangalee culture, heritage and business products globally, organisers told a preparatory meeting at the capital's Bangla Academy.

Earlier, most participants were from India, and some Bangladeshis joined it unofficially.

ASM Shamsul Arefin, coordinator of the conference preparatory committee in Bangladesh, said, "It is a great opportunity to represent Bangladeshi culture and heritage in a global platform."

NABC Co-President Tapan K Das said, "We want to popularise Bangalee culture and tradition among our next generation, who

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SC upholds bail for Shuvo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court verdict that granted Asif Adnan Shuvo, who was allegedly recruited as an IS fighter, bail in a criminal case, clearing the way for his release from jail.

Shuvo, 26, son of former High Court judge Abdus Salam Mamun, has been accused under Anti-terrorism Act 2009 for "conspiring to commit terrorist and militant activities".

Shuvo was arrested from his Segunbagicha residence in Dhaka on September 24.

Shahbagh police filed the case the same day on the charges of his involvement in militant and terrorist activities.

Yesterday, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed "no order" on a petition recently filed by the government seeking stay on the HC verdict that granted Shuvo permanent bail on December 23.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam told The Daily Star that the HC verdict will remain in force and therefore, Shuvo will get released from jail in this case.



Dr Manjurul Alam, senior programme manager of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, speaks at a memorial meeting organised by Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital on its premises in the capital yesterday, commemorating Dr Maqsudul Alam, Bangladeshi scientist famous for his contribution to jute genome sequencing.

PHOTO: STAR

Government failing to remember Maqsudul Memorial meeting told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government skimmed off the credit for Maqsudul Alam's success in jute genome sequencing but has not held a commemorative meeting even nine days past his death, the scientist's friends and well-wishers said yesterday.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke of his success in parliament," said Prof Jonaid Shafiq, who was junior to Maqsudul at Government Laboratory High School in Dhaka.

Also managing director of Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital (JBFH), he said he grew a love for science in school because of Maqsudul.

Prof Jonaid was addressing a memorial meeting arranged by the hospital on its premises in the capital's Dhanmondi.

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Haab wants third carrier for Hajj pilgrims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) yesterday demanded that the government allow a third carrier to carry pilgrims for Hajj next year.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Haab President Mohammad Ibrahim Bahar urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to allow other airlines, particularly from the Middle-East, besides Biman Bangladesh and Saudi Arabian Airlines to carry pilgrims.

He made the demand while briefing reporters about Haab's eighth Hajj and Umrah Fair that will be held from January 2 to 5 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Pointing out some mismanagement of Biman and Saudia while carrying pilgrims, Bahar said, "If a third carrier is not intro-

duced, the pilgrims will go through the same uncertainty they faced last year."

A total of 101,758 people are so far expected to perform Hajj next year. Of them, 91,758 will go under private management and the remaining under government arrangement.

Biman and Saudia will carry pilgrims equally. However, Saudi Arabia Airlines can carry a maximum of 40,000 passengers in a Hajj season. So, there will be a crisis if the government does not engage a third carrier for the pilgrims, Bahar added.

The Haab president again requested the government to allow pilgrims to submit a deposit of Tk 30,000 instead of Tk 1.2 lakh for registration for Hajj.

The online registration for interested pilgrims began on December 15 and will end on February 5 next year.

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