

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 31.4 | L 20.3

CHITTAGONG H 29.6 | L 18.4

SYLHET H 28.0 | L 19.1

RAJSHAHI H 30.8 | L 20.4

KHULNA H 32.8 | L 20.5

BARISAL H 32.6 | L 20.6

RANGPUR H 28.7 | L 20.4

COX'S BAZAR H 29.8 | L 18.4

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged and day temperature may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:59pm and rises tomorrow at 6:24am. Country's highest temperature 33.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Patuakhali and lowest 15.8 degrees in Sitakunda.

People slain in BDR mutiny to be remembered by BGB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) will observe a number of programmes today and tomorrow to commemorate those who died in the Pilkhana carnage in 2009.

The programmes include recitations of the holy Quran, doa and milad mahfils at BGB headquarters and offices across the country.

Besides, representatives of the president, the prime minister, the home minister, and senior secretary of the home ministry along with the chiefs of three defence services and the director general of BGB will place wreaths at the graves of the fallen.

A doa and a milad mahfils will also be held at Bir Uttam Fazlur Rahman Khandakar Auditorium in Pilkhana at 4:30pm tomorrow, said a press release.

Families of the victims will also hold a doa and a milad mahfils in Old DOHS Community Centre today.

Seventy-four people, including 57 army officials, were killed in the mutiny at the headquarters of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles on February 25-26, 2009.



State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroze Chumki speaks at the launching ceremony of the National Forum for Social Protection (NFSP), at Lakeshore Hotel in the capital yesterday, with, from left, Dr Tofail Ahmed, Nurul Kabir Siddiqui, Shaheen Anam and Sarah Cooke also on the panel. The forum will work to ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the government's safety net programmes and address local grievances.

PHOTO: STAR

MALIGNING BANGABANDHU  
HC clears way for trying Tarique in B'baria court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for a Brahmanbaria court to run the trial proceedings of a defamation case against BNP leaders Tarique Rahman, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin and Rizvi Ahmed.

The case was filed with Brahmanbaria Police Station on December 23 last year, as BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman at a programme in London on December 15 last year termed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "a top Razakar".

Nasir and Rizvi are accused in the suit filed by Brahmanbaria unit Bangladesh Chhatra League President Masum Billah, because they were present there but did not protest against it.

The HC rejected a petition filed by Nasir seeking its directive on the government to transfer the case to a Dhaka court from the Brahmanbaria court, so that he can appear before the court regularly.

In the petition, Nasir also

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# Extreme poor still too many despite reduction success

Launch of National Forum for Social Protection told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extreme poverty in the country is still very high with 2.6 crore people living below the poverty line, said the director general of the Department of Disaster Management and Relief yesterday.

The situation prevails though the government has halved poverty from 48 percent over the past five years with various social protection schemes, Mohammad Abdul Wazed told the launch of the National Forum for Social Protection (NFSP), first of its kind in the country.

The forum will take the views of the grassroots people for required policy reforms so as to make the safety net programmes more efficient, transparent and accountable.

Around 8.8 crore people are presently covered by the safety net schemes, said Meher Afroze Chumki, state minister for women and children's affairs. Yet 24 percent of the country's 16 crore population

- Poverty rate **24pc**
- Extreme poor **2.6cr**
- People under safety net **8.8cr**

is poor, she added.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) that works for human rights and good governance organised the launch of NFSP with support from UKaid and AusAid, in a local hotel.

Joint Secretary to the Ministry of Social Welfare Nurul Kabir Siddiqui said the government was conducting a total of 121 safety programmes with as many policies through 21 ministries.

All these schemes will be brought under a single authority, he said, adding that NFSP would help institute a mechanism to address local

grievances against the programmes.

Dr Syed Jahangir Haider, team leader of a recent study on 10 social protection schemes, while presenting the preliminary findings, said 84 percent of the 2,704 respondents reported that the selection of beneficiaries was not done transparently.

A significant portion complained of political consideration in the selection process, he said, while many people were found unaware of the services and of the authorities where to report anomalies.

Haider said female Union Parishad members were ignored in beneficiary selection, and neither the union nor the upazila parishads did maintain a complete database of households eligible for social safety benefits.

Though the government mobilises huge resources for such schemes, there are potential obstacles in their implementation, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF.

Bangladesh spends around 2 percent of its GDP for social protection purposes, which in the fiscal 2013-2014 was Tk 26,700 crore reaching 7.7 crore people, says an MJF release.

The NFSP is comprised of 44 renowned independent researchers, think tanks, and civil society bodies working on social safety, with Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, as convener and Shaheen Anam as co-convener.

The MJF will be the secretariat of the forum.

With the financial support of UKaid and AusAid, the finance ministry and DFID Bangladesh are conducting a five-year (2013-17) project titled "Strengthening Government Social Protection for the Poor (SGSP)" for reforming the social safety net system, a tool of poverty alleviation.

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## Formalin detected in fishes on protected markets: Study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Formalin tainted fishes are being sold in the capital's kitchen markets, even in the "formalin-free" markets declared by traders while most of the fish feed are found with high levels of toxic chromium, said two researchers based on their studies.

The researchers of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) said this while presenting their findings at a seminar, organised by the Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) and ULAB in the university auditorium

in the capital yesterday.

Quoting the study, Tawhidur Rahman, senior lecturer and research associate of ULAB, said formalin was found in 42 percent of the fishes collected from the "formalin-free" markets while it was detected in 48 percent of the fishes from the kitchen markets which were not declared as formalin-free.

He tested the fish samples with formalin detection kits made by the Bangladesh Institute of Food Science and Technology of BCSIR in August 2014.

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Although he is responsible to control this practice, a policeman himself takes two Ansar members on the back seat of a motorbike violating an ongoing indefinite ban imposed by the government on January 22 on riding pillion. The photo was taken from Wari area in the capital yesterday.

USTR happy with Dhaka's progress for regaining GSP facilities

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has expressed satisfaction with the progress made by Bangladesh on the action plan to regain the GSP facilities the US administration had postponed in 2013, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said in the parliament yesterday.

"We have sent the latest progress report to the US government. They...requested us to carry on with our efforts," he said in response to a lawmaker's query.

The government fulfilled most of the conditions of the plan, he said.

In response to another

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## Most visitors are buyers at book fair before end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost every visitor at the Amar Ekushey Granthamela-2015 yesterday was seen carrying packages of books they bought at the fair.

A physician, Nazmul Alam, was carrying four such packages as he left the fair. "But, I have not bought all the books on my list so I will have to come back," he said.

Many book lovers were seen carrying lists as they flitted from stall to stall.

Johirul Abedin Jewel of Ittadi Granthopakash remarked that most visitors were from the city.

"Customers from outside Dhaka did not make it to the fair this year," he said.

Manseng Chambugong brought 15 students from the school run by their NGO Good Neighbour Bangladesh.

The students belonging to class IV, V and VI bought books of their choice.

"I bought Bagh Mamar Biye," said



Lisa, a student of class IV, holding her colourful prize proudly.

"We started this programme of bringing children to the fair in 1996," said her teacher Chambugong.

Ahmed Publishing House yesterday distributed its children's books among 40 street children.

"Since they cannot afford to buy books, we have decided to hold this programme every year at the book fair," said Mesbahuddin Ahmed, publisher of the house.

"The book has challenges and conflicts they faced growing up and their thoughts as well as interviews of the parents," he said, adding that he also included many rare documents from foreign archives in the book.

Another book that was launched was "Agartalar Mamlar Onuchcharito Juddhashishu-Obidito Itihas",

already available at the Academic Press and Publication Library's stall in the Suhrawardy Udyana portion of the fair.

The author of the book Mustafa Chowdhury, a freelance researcher and former employee of public service of Canada, told The Daily Star that he came to know about the war babies while working with adoption in Canada.

After working for about 20 years, Chowdhury located and communicated with 14 of the 15 war babies of the Liberation War who were adopted by Canadian parents in 1972.

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