

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 28.01 L 20.6	CHITTAGONG H 31.51 L 19.0	SYLHET H 30.21 L 18.6	RAJSHAHI H 29.81 L 20.7	KHULNA H 31.51 L 24.0	BARISAL H 30.21 L 19.8	RANGPUR H 29.91 L 18.6	COX'S BAZAR H 31.71 L 19.5
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Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Dhaka & Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions till 6:00pm today. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:16pm and rises tomorrow at 5:47am.

War hero passes away in negligence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Veteran freedom fighter Md Rafiz Uddin Refaz, who was bed-ridden for two years, died for lack of better treatment at Muktagacha Upazila Health Complex in Mymensingh Friday noon, aged 84.



He was suffering from various diseases including acute respiratory problem.

Refaz, a company commander during the 1971 Liberation War, participated in many battles in Mymensingh and trained over 300 youths at a temporary camp in Muktagacha College.

With support from Awami League leaders Khandaker Abdul Malek Shahidullah, Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan, Dhalu (in India) Youth Camp in-charge Principal Motiur Rahman and deputy camp in-charge Shishir Kumar Raxsit, he formed "Refaz Company", where some 80 freedom fighters along with him fought against the Pakistan occupation army, said Shahidullah, a freedom fighter and a member of provincial assembly in 1970.

After the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975, Refaz was arrested for protesting the killing. He was taken to Muktagacha Police Station and brutally tortured, said Abdul Hye Akand, a former freedom fighter member of "Refaz Company", and an ex-secretary of Muktagacha unit Awami

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National Advisory Committee on Autism in Bangladesh Chairperson Saima Wazed Hossain, also member of World Health Organization's Advisory Panel on Mental Health, addresses a seminar during a daylong programme United Nations organised at its New York headquarters yesterday marking World Autism Awareness Day.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

14 ministries addressing neuro-dev disorders

Saima Wazed says about Bangladesh at daylong UN programme marking World Autism Awareness Day

AGENCIES

Fourteen Bangladesh ministries are coordinately ensuring rights of persons with disabilities, including neuro-development disorders (NDD) like autism, and their access to socio-economic activities like education and employment, said National Advisory Committee on Autism in Bangladesh Chairperson Saima Wazed Hossain yesterday.

She was addressing as a panelist the inaugural discussion, "Bridging the Inequality Gap (Goal 10 of SDGs)", of a daylong programme United Nations (UN) organised at its New York headquarters, marking World Autism Awareness Day, reports UNB.

One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Goal 10 aims to improve and promote social, economic and political inclusion for all irrespective of age, sex, disability or religion to ensure inclusive socio-economic development.

On the moderator's query on effects of ongoing multisectoral approaches to autism, Saima said a massive country-wide awareness programme has been running since 2009, says a message from the Bangladesh permanent mission to the UN in New York.

Statements of her mother Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sonia Gandhi of India at an international conference on autism in Dhaka in 2011 prompted people into addressing the disorder, she said.

Rural institutions, including social service centres, community health clinics and development organisations are reshaping services and programme to reach autistic persons and their families, said Saima, member of World Health Organization's (WHO) Advisory Panel on Mental Health.

Parental meetings, training for doctors, field-level health and social workers, education delivery etc are taking place in a coordinated way and now the issue rests on policymakers, parliament members and government officials, added the renowned school psychologist.

"Everyone is now recognising that they need to do something differently...in evolving creative and innovative ideas," she asserted.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in a video message, said SDG's main aim was inclusive development leaving none behind. Author of "Neuro Tribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity", Steve Silberman presented the keynote.

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STRENGTHENING STRUCTURES AGAINST EARTHQUAKE Reinforced ground floor columns make buildings safer

The Daily Star-UAP roundtable told presenting research findings, emphasising enforcement of national building code

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The construction of buildings could be more earthquake resistant with cost effective simple reinforcement of the ground floor columns, experts said at a roundtable discussion in the capital yesterday.

The ground floors having columns (without brick walls for car parking), susceptible to enormous active loads of an earthquake effect, can still survive with a simple jacketing of steel plates, said Prof Iftekhar Anam of University of Asia Pacific (UAP), while presenting a research findings.

The ground floors of buildings with mere columns (without brick walls) remain particularly vulnerable, he said.

The UAP and The Daily Star jointly organised the discussion on the "Research Findings on Strengthening Structural Members beyond ENBC Code for protection against Earthquakes"

(BNBC) for Protection against Earthquakes" sponsored by a real estate builder Building Technology and Ideas (BTI) at The Daily Star Centre.

Noted civil engineer and earthquake expert Prof Mehedi Amhed Ansary said one lakh out of four-lakh housing units and a thousand of 3,500 factory buildings in the capital are vulnerable as per preliminary assessment.

The ground floors with bare columns, known as "soft story", would probably be the foremost reason for building collapse, said Dr Ali Akbar Mollick, a freelance consultant.

Alongside in-built steel jacketing of columns, wing-walls on the both sides of columns would be the most effective measure to prevent the ground floor collapse, he said.

Prof Md Nazmul Islam of North South University said that architectural and structural features of a building should be carefully chosen

to reduce the avoidable casualties.

Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, president of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh, said there is a severe dearth of practicing structural and foundation engineers, leaving 95 percent of the buildings constructed without involvement of professionals and they remain most vulnerable.

Of the 4,500 building plans that Rajuk approve every year in the capital, only 1,000 are designed by recognised architects, he said, adding that there was no mechanism to ensure the quality of materials and compliance with the approved design during construction.

Enforcement of building laws and BNBC is also a must to ensure buildings' safety, he said.

Loopholes in the building approval process are an immense threat, he said adding that despite a High Court

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Bumper litchi harvest expected in north

Following excellent blooming this season

BSS, Rangpur

Formation and growth of tender litchi have been continuing smoothly amid favourable climatic condition, predicting excellent output of the juiciest, tasty and fleshy fruit this season in the northern districts.

Officials and experts in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and other organisations concerned have predicted bumper production of the fruit following excellent blooming in the litchi trees this season.

The farmers are now busy nursing litchi trees in orchards and homesteads as formation of the tender fruit continues superbly after the rainfalls in recent days. The harvest would begin from the next month, they hoped.

According to the DAE, over 90 percent of litchi trees in about 9,200 small, medium and big-sized litchi orchards, homesteads and other places have massively bloomed this season.

Hundreds of litchi orchards have been set up in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Kurigram,

Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and other northern districts.

Horticulture Specialist of the DAE at its Rangpur regional office Khondker Md Mesbahul Islam said commercial litchi cultivation has already become popular, bringing self-reliance to hundreds of farmers through farming the fruit in recent years.

"The farmers mostly have been cultivating high yielding varieties like China-3, 'Bedana', Bombay, 'Mozaffarpuri' and Madrazi and late variety 'Kanthali' litchi following repeated bumper production and lucrative price," he said.

Mesbahul suggested the farmers to spray recommended dose of 80 percent sulphur on litchi trees if mite attack is found following rise in temperature during fruit formation stage for getting excellent yield.

Litchi growers Morshed Hossain, Aminul Haque, and Nilchand Roy said they were expecting bumper litchi yield again this season to make excellent profits.

HSC, equivalent exams begin today

UNB, Dhaka

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations will begin across the country today.

Over 12.18 lakh candidates under eight general education boards, Madrasah Education Board and Bangladesh Technical Education Board will sit for the examinations.

The examinations will end on June 9 while the practical tests would be held from June 11 to June 20.

This year, some 1,218,628 students from 8,533 educational institutions will attend the exams.

Of them, 1,020,109 students will sit for the HSC exams, while 91,591 will appear in Alim (higher secondary level of madrasa) examinations, 102,132 in the technical education, and some 4,796 students in

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Participants at a roundtable on "Earthquake" at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, organised jointly by the newspaper and the University of Asia Pacific Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

আমরা শোকাহত

মরহমা হাওয়াতুন নেছা

ঢাকা ব্যাংকের পরিচালনা পর্ষদের সম্মানিত পরিচালক ও সাবেক চেয়ারম্যান জনাব খন্দকার মনির উদ্দিন এর শাশুড়ী মাতা মিসেস হাওয়াতুন নেছা (৭৮), বার্বকাজনিত কারণে ১লা এপ্রিল ২০১৬, শুক্রবার সকালে ঢাকার এ্যাপোলো হাসপাতালে ইলেক্ট্রিক্যাল করেন (ইন্টা লিভ্লাই ওয়া ইন্টা ইলাইবি রাজিউন)। মৃত্যুকালে তিনি ১ পুত্র, ৯ কন্যা, নাতি-নাতনী, আত্মীয়-স্বজনসহ অসংখ্য শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষী রেখে গেছেন। শুক্রবার বাদ জুম্মা পুলাশান সোসাইটি মসজিদে প্রথম ও বাদ আছর নিজ গ্রামের বাড়ী সোনারগাঁও নারায়ণগঞ্জে দ্বিতীয় নামাজে জানাযা শেষে মরহমাকে পারিবারিক কবরস্থানে দাফন করা হয়েছে। মরহমা হাওয়াতুন নেছার মৃত্যুতে আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত।

ঢাকা ব্যাংকের সম্মানিত পরিচালনা পর্ষদ ও কর্মকর্তা কর্মচারীদের পক্ষ থেকে আমরা তাঁর শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জানাই। একই সাথে মহান আল্লাহর দরবারে তাঁর আত্মার মাগফিরাত কামনা করি।

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