

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 26.1 L 15.8	H 26.1 L 17.6	H 28.1 L 17.6	H 26.1 L 13.6	H 26.1 L 13.6	H 26.1 L 15.2	H 28.1 L 14.5	H 27.1 L 13.5

Light rain or drizzle is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions till 6:00pm today. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy to cloudy sky elsewhere. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere during midnight till morning. Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met

Ex-conservator gets nature award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ex-chief conservator of forests and country representative of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad has got the Prokriti O Jibon Foundation and Channel i "Nature Conservation Award 2016" for his contribution to the conservation of the country's biodiversity and nature.

At an award ceremony held yesterday on the Channel i premises, Zahir Uddin Mahmud Mamun, vice-chairman of Incepta Pharmaceuticals Ltd, handed over a cheque for Tk 1 lakh to him while Dr Samiul Hasan on behalf of Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital, gave him a certificate of complimentary treatment for lifetime.

Environment and Forests Minister Anwar Hossain Manju, deputy minister Abdullah Al Islam Jakob, Managing Director of Impress Telefilm Ltd/Channel i Faridur Reza Sagar, and its director and chairman of the foundation Muqeed Majumdar Babu, were also present.

A book "Sabuj Amar Bhalobasa" written by Babu was unveiled at the programme.

Joya Pati cremated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The cremation of Joya Pati, youngest daughter of Kumudini Welfare Trust (KWT) founder and philanthropist RP Saha, was held at her village home in Mirzapur upazila of Tangail yesterday.



Mayoral aspirants of the forthcoming Narayanganj City Corporation polls pledge to help ensure a free and fair election and accept the polls verdict at a discussion organised by Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN) at Narayanganj Club Ltd yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

NCC POLLS MAYORAL CANDIDATES One drops out, remaining 6 pledge to accept results

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

While one mayoral candidate announced his withdrawal, the remaining six yesterday signed a 13-point pledge, which includes accepting the verdict of the around five lakh voters of the December 22 Narayanganj City Corporations polls.

Other promises include ensuring a free and fair election and refraining from unlawfully influencing it, including in the form of vote buying; cooperating with the person elected in implementing development activities and continuing ones taken up by the immediate past mayor; and annually making public a wealth statement once elected.

Kamal Proadhan announced the withdrawal of his candidacy, for which he was earlier expelled from Liberal Democratic Party, and extended his support for BNP-backed candidate Shakhawat Hossain Khan to, as he told journalists at BNP's media cell, show "respect to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's leadership".

The developments came at a discussion Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN) organised at Narayanganj Club Ltd where the candidates responded to various questions of the audience.

On whether she could work beyond the ruling party's influence, Awami League nominated candidate Selina Hayat Ivy said, "Last time I was a candidate of the people. I will be neutral and will work taking into consideration all views."

On trade license fee, she clarified that NCC could not reduce it since it was a government decision.

Shakhawat promised to work against all forms of crime once elected. "I want to build...a model city. The local government's current activities will not be hampered and development activities will continue," he said.

SHUJAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder conducted the discussion and educationist and columnist Syed Abul Maksud was present as the chief guest.

Fair polls requires neutral role

Eminent citizens seek it from law enforcement agencies, state machineries, including the EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies and state machineries, including the administration, must play a neutral role, as should a strong Election Commission (EC), to hold free and fair elections, said a group of eminent citizens yesterday.

The need for the next general elections to be so, inclusive of all the political parties, is a matter of national significance for democracy to be strengthened, they told a roundtable "Election, Election Commission and Democracy in Bangladesh".

The Dhaka Forum (TDF), a platform of some eminent citizens, organised the programme in the capital's Cirdap auditorium.

On the EC's reconstitution, former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said backgrounds of the prospective CEC and election commissioners should be checked for political involvement.

Holding a free and fair election is not solely the EC's duty and cooperation from supportive institutions like law enforcement agencies, civil administration and judiciary is also important, he said.

"The Election Commission has huge powers vested on it by the electoral laws and constitution. The commission needs to exercise it for fair elections," Huda viewed.

He also opined that the EC could comprise three members instead of the existing five. A culture had developed for governments to seek control over constitutional bodies like the Public Service Commission and EC, he said.

TDF founding member Ambassador M Serajul Islam presented a keynote paper containing some proposals over the EC's reconstitution.

It said the president should exercise his constitutional powers to form a committee, giving top priority to ensuring the members' neutrality and whose every action should be transparent, to search for eligible persons.

The committee should provide the president names of two persons eligible for the CEC post and eight others for that of election commissioners, it added.

It proposed that the CEC be a retired civil servant of any background, including the judiciary, and three of the four election commissioners be an armed forces officer,

a former diplomat and a woman.

TDF President and former Bangladesh Bank governor Salehuddin Ahmed urged the media to play the role of a watchdog so that the EC was reconstituted in a transparent manner with honest and neutral persons.

Former election commissioner M Sakhawat Hussain stressed the need for a legal framework for the reconstitution.

Dilara Chowdhury, a former professor of governance and politics at Jahangirnagar University, said the rule of law and social justice must be established to strengthen democracy.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, former adviser to a caretaker government, said an accountable administrative system was one key component to holding a fair election.

Journalist Mizanur Rahman Khan viewed that a fair election solely could not ensure good governance, rather good governance could ensure a fair election.

Former ambassador Masood Aziz moderated the roundtable, attended by over a dozen retired diplomats, bureaucrats, academicians and people from other professions.

FFs to be exempted from paying holding tax

For houses under 1,500 sq feet, say Dhaka city mayors adding that welfare fund in the offing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters living in the capital will get holding tax exemption if the size of their houses is not more than 1,500 sq feet, two Dhaka city mayors said yesterday.

The mayors also announced several initiatives taken for the freedom fighters' welfare, including forming a fund for troubled freedom fighters.

They disclosed these initiatives when addressing a reception accorded to the freedom fighters and their families at Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) organised the programme.

"We will form a welfare fund for the troubled freedom fighters so that they can easily get financial support whenever they need it," DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon said.

However, Khokon later told The Daily Star that the fund size was yet to be fixed. It

may be a separate or joint fund of the two city corporations, he added.

DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq claimed the two city corporations were very considerate of each issue of the war heroes.

The city corporations take measures outright when they come to know any issue related to the freedom fighters, he further claimed.

The two mayors informed that they already designated spaces at different graveyards to lay to rest war veterans when they pass away.

Freedom fighters Md Mosharraf Hossain, Abu Ahmed Mannafi and Amin Hossain Molla reminisced and shared their wartime experiences at the event.

NBR Chairman Md Nojibur Rahman said last year the government issued a gazette notification on duty-free vehicle import facilities for the freedom fighters.

DNCC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mesbahul Islam and DSCC CEO Khan Mohammad Billal also spoke.



Rafiqul elected president of Ctg Seniors' Club

CITY DESK

Advocate Rafiqul Anwar Chowdhury was elected president of Chittagong Seniors' Club for the 2016-17 term at the 89th annual meeting of the club held in its UCB auditorium on December 15, said a press release.

Md Manik Bablu was elected as vice president in the election. The other elected managing committee members are Md Alauddin, Belayet Hossain, Dr Md Jasim Uddin, MA Kabir Milky and Jahidul Islam Miraz.



Bamboo poles with paper bags on their top jutting out of a hole on Tajmahal Road in the capital's Mohammadpur as a warning to approaching vehicles, with none bothering to affix a slab to the hole even in the last two months. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



A delegation of Russian war veterans placing a floral wreath at the memorial of Russian mariner Jury Viktorovich Redkin at Chittagong Naval Academy yesterday. The veterans took part in minesweeping operations in the Bay of Bengal right after the 1971 Liberation War when their colleague Redkin died in the line of duty and was buried at Redkin Point, a place named after him at the naval academy. The delegation comprised Kozhurin Victor Pavlovich, Karamyshev Vladimir Alexandrovich, Chukanin Alexander Kuzmic, Koloskov Nikolay Nilolaevich and their spouses as well as Anna Molchanova, spouse of late Vladimir Molchanov.

PHOTO: STAR

Khaleda conspiring

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will never cast their votes for them."

At the beginning of the discussion, a one-minute silence was observed to show respect to the martyred intellectuals, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, four national leaders and the martyred freedom fighters.

BSS adds, the prime minister, however, reiterated her earlier passion about BNP's proposal on Election Commission's reconstitution saying the president invited them for discussion and he will take a decision in this regard after a discussion with all political parties.

Safe water options

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arsenic-free water," he mentioned.

"Most of the rural people do not realise the deadly effect of arsenic," said Chowdhury Mufad Ahmed, additional secretary to the education ministry. He also stressed on creating awareness among the rural community. Md Saifur Rahman, executive engineer of DPHE, said, "We have undertaken various projects, including finding alternative drinking water sources."

Nasimun Ara Haque Minu, president of Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra, and Md Khairul Islam, country director of WaterAid Bangladesh, also spoke.

3 of a family shot by neighbour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three of a family were injured in a shotgun attack allegedly by a neighbour at Delna in the capital's Khilkhet yesterday morning.

Shudho Miah, 50, his son Abdul Halim, 30, and his sister Fatema Begum, 46, received shotgun pellets in the legs and took primary treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost, said.

The incident occurred when Shudho found that Hamidur Rahman pulled a dredging pipeline through his land and they locked into an altercation, said Bachchu, quoting the injured.

An attempt to murder case was filed against Hamidur. But no arrest was made till filing of this report at 9:00pm.

BD role exemplary

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defence cooperation can bring these two countries together.

After his speech, war veterans from Bangladesh and India, who were involved in Operation Kilo Flight and Operation Jackpot, shared their wartime memories.

Indian war veterans Chandra Mohan Singla, Hemant Sardesai, Raman Prem Suthan, and Suresh Kumar Mitter; and gallantry award-winning freedom fighters from Bangladesh Sultan Mahmood, Badrul Alam, Shahbuddin Ahmed, Akram Ahmed, AW Chowdhury, Kazi Abdus Sattar and Jalal Uddin took part in the programme.

BD embassy in Ankara celebrates Victory Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Embassy of Bangladesh, Ankara, celebrated the 45th anniversary of Victory Day in Turkish National Library auditorium on Friday with participation of 300 guests, including foreigners.

The day started with hoisting of the National Flag on the embassy premises. A discussion highlighting the significance of the day was held, said a press release.



Seminar
The National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB) will hold a seminar on "Preservation of Jamdani Motifs- An endangered handloom of Bangladesh." Venue: Bangladesh National Museum, Time: 3:00pm

Workshop
Ministry of Foreign Affairs will hold a workshop on "Terrorist Designation and Asset Freezing under United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs). Venue: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Time: 9:00am

Seminar
Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) will hold a seminar on "Impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on Enhancement of Business and Profitability of Banks." Venue: BIBM, Time: 10:00am