

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 23.4 L 11.8	H 24.6 L 13.4	H 25.7 L 10.3	H 22.0 L 05.1	H 22.4 L 09.8	H 22.8 L 07.6	H 24.4 L 06.6	H 24.5 L 14.0

Light to moderate fog is likely to occur at places over the country, reports UNB. Mild to moderate cold wave sweeping over different places — including Barisal division, Faridpur, Madaripur, Khulna, and Satkhira — may continue. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:33pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am. Country's highest temperature 26.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Teknaf and lowest 5.0 in Tentulia and Rajarhat.

Bangladesh will soon be poverty-free

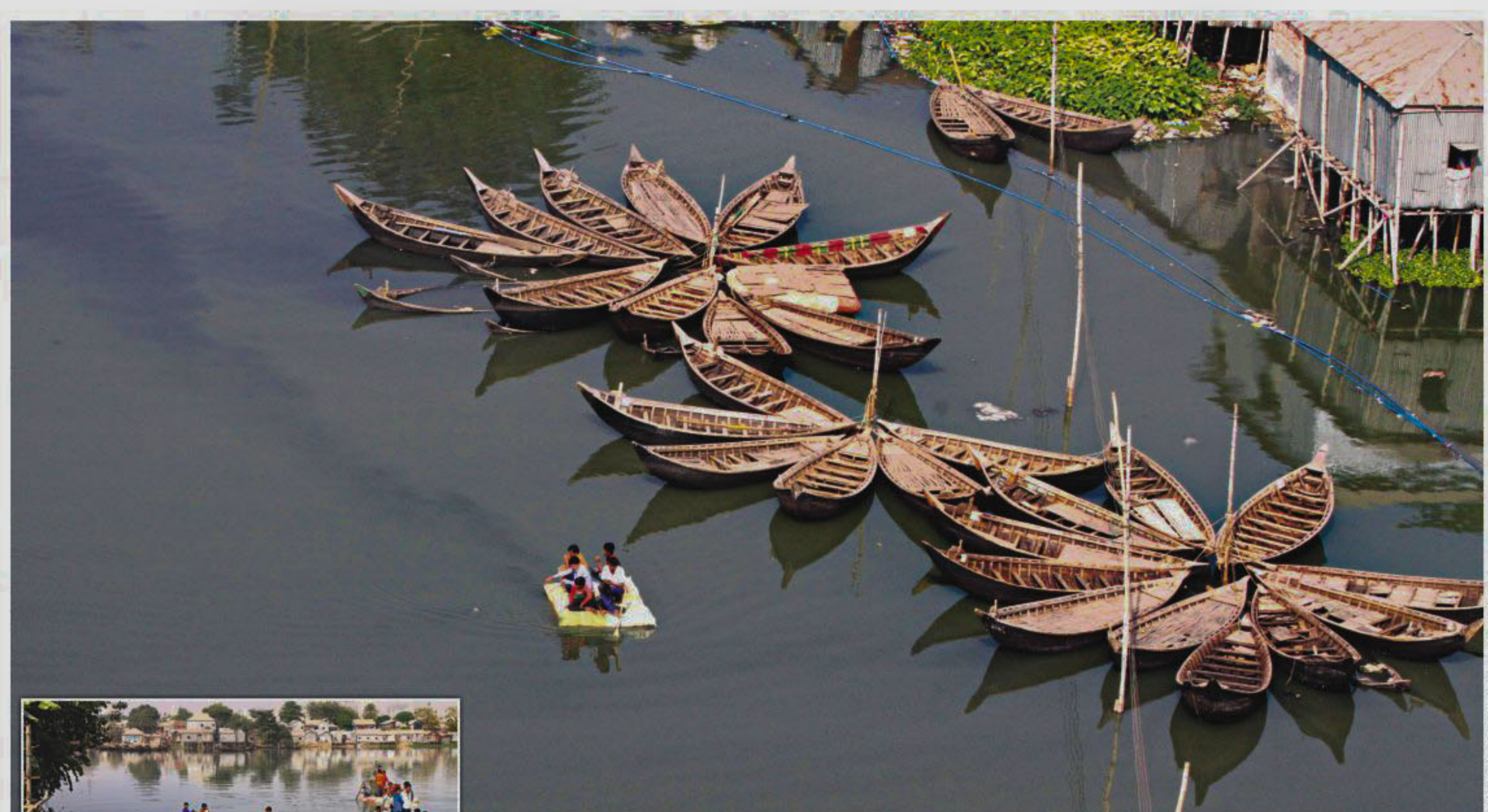
Say experts

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh is progressing fast towards being a digital country, free from hunger and poverty, said experts yesterday.

At a meeting in the capital, they observed that Palli Daridro Bimochon Foundation (PDBF) is playing an important role to increase resources and people skills by 2021 as part of the pledge to build a hunger-and-poverty-free Bangladesh.

Currently, PDBF is implementing the government's poverty reduction programme involving 12 lakh beneficiaries through 5,000 officers and employees in 403 upazilas of 52 districts. It is dealing with microcredit, small entrepreneur loans, social development, training, solar energy, ICT and other development activities, they added.



Boats lie idle on the capital's Banani lake following a decision taken by the authorities concerned to stop the water transportation service since according to them the boatmen did not have permission to navigate on the water body and to ensure security in the area, putting many of them in dire straits, who, out of desperation still try to earn a living by helping people cross the lake on makeshift rafts made with large sand bags, inset. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTOS: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Khadiza Akter, 18, daughter of late Mohsin Ali of Dhobakal-Khiarpara village in Dinajpur's Parbatipur upazila, is suffering from acute kidney disease.

Khadiza achieved golden GPA-5 in 2014. Later, she passed her HSC in 2016 from Kholahati Degree College.

She is now undergoing treatment at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. According to doctors, her both kidneys are damaged.

Her family has urged affluent people to come forward to save one life.

Financial assistance can be sent to bank account name: Mofakharul Islam, A/C no: 001016728, Sonali Bank Ltd, Parbatipur Branch in Dinajpur.

She can be contacted at Rana Sarker's no: 017042461200 and 015212472413.

Boatmen struggling to navigate thru life

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

For about twenty years the Bowbazar Ghat remained a crowded place as hundreds of people used to cross the capital's Banani lake on boats, but, now it looks like a deserted pier with boats lying idle as law enforcers have shutdown the popular water transportation system.

The shutdown has not only increased the transportation cost for the passengers but also pushed many jobless boatmen's families to utmost poverty.

"I worked as a boatman for the last eight years and took care of my family with the income. It's not easy to get another job right away. I barely survive by selling vegetables now," said Khokon Majhi, 35.

He said most of the boatmen are facing the same adversity.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Gulshan Zone Mostaque Ahmed said the ghat has no approval from Dhaka North City Corporation and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha.

He said they have stopped the boat service after the Gulshan café attack. "To ensure security of the diplomatic zone, we took the decision," he added.

"It's the only thing we know. Out of desperation, some of us still help people cross the lake by using makeshift rafts with sandbags for survival," said Khokon. "People still use the service to save money. But police often chase us away."

"Before, for Tk 2 we could reach Gulshan-1 from the slum [Karail] within just five minutes," said Sharmin Akhtar, a RMG worker of Badda.

Now Sharmin shares a rickshaw ride with her co-workers to reach Mohakhali Wireless Gate to minimise her transportation cost. "Rickshaw-pullers demand Tk 30. We have no other option but to pay them the amount. Now it takes around 30 to 40 minutes to reach our workplace."

At least 1,800 garment workers used to cross the lake every day. Besides, school goers, day labourers, security guards, domestic help and others used the boats to go to their respective destinations, said Kalam Fakir, who had been supervising the ghat.

"Forty-five boats, each carrying ten passengers, made at least four trips every morning between 7:30am and 7:45am," he said. When asked, Kalam said they did not take any lease from anyone for

the boat service.

For many families, the boatmen were the lone bread earner and the shutdown has pushed these families to poverty, he said.

There were 90 boats that operated on two shifts every alternate day. One boatman, who usually got a chance to row every other day, could earn upto Tk 400 on each shift, they said, adding, the boat owners used to get Tk 100-120 from each boat.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mofizur Rahman, local councillor (ward 19), said they were not thinking about restarting the boat service.

"There will be beautification of the lake and roads will be built alongside it and speedboats will run on the lake like Hatirjheel. So there is no scope for plying of these boats," he said.



Guests at the welcoming ceremony of the newly enrolled students of Spring 2017 of North South University (NSU) held on its Bashundhara campus in the capital yesterday. NSU Board of Trustees Chairman Azim Uddin Ahmed; Benajir Ahmed, MA Hashem, MA Kashem, Rehana Rahman and Yasmin Kamal were present among others. NSU Vice-Chancellor Prof Atiqul Islam chaired the event where 69 meritorious students were awarded scholarships for their results in the admission test.

ATTACK ON HINDUS Cops to seek further remand for Ankhi today

Hearing of Rasraj's bail plea Monday

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police would seek further remand for Haripur Union Parishad Chairman Dewan Atiqur Rahman Ankhi, allegedly an organiser of the October 30 hate attack on Hindus in Nasirnagar, today.

Earlier on January 8 the court granted a five-day remand for Ankhi that ended Friday. On January 5, a patrol team of Bhatara police arrested Ankhi, also a local Awami League leader.

He was shown arrested in a case filed with Nasirnagar Police Station over vandalising the Gouramandir in the upazila. Ankhi has been shown arrested in another case of vandalising a temple at Duttapara under Nasirnagar Sadar.

OC Abu Jafar of the police station confirmed the plea for further remand to The Daily Star.

Besides, hearing of a bail prayer of Rasraj Das, in a case filed against him for allegedly demeaning religion, would be held Monday. Rasraj was detained following a Facebook post that "instigated" attacks on the Hindus in Nasirnagar.

On November 29, police arrested Jahangir Alam, owner of Al-Amin Cyber Point and Studio at Horinber Bazar in Haripur, who played an active role in inciting locals against Hindus after a post appeared on Rasraj's Facebook wall.

Jahangir in his confessional statement on December 8 said Ankhi ordered him to gather people and hire trucks for carrying out the attack.

Two held with Ctg councillor's rifle, bullets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion-7 yesterday detained two persons at Hathazari upazila of Chittagong with a foreign rifle, 56 bullets and a magazine "which belong to a CCC councillor".

According to Councillor of No-1 Dakkhin Pahartoli Ward of Chittagong City Corporation Toufique Ahmed Chowdhury, one of the arrestees, Sohel Rana, 32, is his nephew while other Shafiqul Bashar Roni, 27, is his chauffeur.

He said he left the arm and ammunition with Sohel in my car due to a hurry while Roni was driving it when Rab made the arrest. It is illegal to carry someone else's arms, said Rab.

Prof Helaluddin worked for marginalised people

Speakers tell memorial at Central Shaheed Minar

DU CORRESPONDENT

1997 and retired in 2014.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, said, "Prof Arefeen served his whole life for the rights and development of adivasis. His absence is a great loss for the poor, marginalised and adivasi people of Bangladesh."

"Arefeen's only meditation was study and his only achievement was his beloved students," said his elder brother Prof Dr Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir.

Prof Helaluddin's nephew Prof Muntassir Mamoon, Associate Prof Robaet Ferdous of DU and Prof Farhana Begum, among others, also recalled his memories.

Prof Helaluddin's children, Munia Arefeen and Anan Asheq Arefeen, and his family members and well wishers were present at the programme.

Dr Arefeen was born on February 1, 1948 at Gulbahar village of Kachua upazila of Chandpur district.

Nasim hopes BNP would

FROM PAGE 4

BNP in particular "should stay patient for two years more as national election will be held in due time".

He, however, ruled out possibilities of a possible dialogue between the ruling AL and BNP saying generally the Election Commission took such initiatives for such talks ahead of elections while the present already held discussions with the political parties. The 14-party spokesman said they so far organised political activities and took programmes on national issues and now "we will perform our social responsibility (as well)".

"We, the 14-party alliance, will distribute winter clothes among the cold-hit people on January 20 and 21 in Bogra and Rangpur respectively," he said.

Nasim strongly condemned the murder of Gaibandha lawmaker Manjurul Islam Liton and demanded stringent punishment to those involved in the killing.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif, was, among others, present.

IUB student found 'killed'

FROM PAGE 4

On Friday evening, when family members came back from Madaripur, Shihab's room was found locked. They did not knock the door thinking that he was inside, he said.

But yesterday morning, when Shihab was not responding, they broke the door and discovered him dead, the DC added.

Masud Hossain, one of Shihab's neighbours, said Shihab used to hang out with friends in their apartment. He might have been killed by his friends, Masud added.

NEWS IN brief

BCL leader hacked in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Unidentified miscreants hacked Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) secretary of Phulbaria upazila unit yesterday evening.

The victim was Sarwar Hossain, 27, son of Abdur Rashid of village Bhalukjan.

Quoting locals, Rifat Khan Rajib, officer-in-charge of Phulbaria Police Station, said a group of five to six miscreants hacked Sarwar indiscriminately at upazila headquarters around 6:00pm, leaving him critically injured.

The miscreants fled immediately, he said.

Sarwar was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, the OC said, adding, no case was filed yet and an investigation is underway.

8 held with fake gold bars in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Detective Branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested eight people, who allegedly cheated people by selling fake gold, at Baluchhara in Chittagong city yesterday.

The team arrested Asma Begum, 30, Rokeya Begum, 28, Md Badsha, 20, Md Solaiman, 32, Nur Uddin, 24, Md Idris, 51, Shahidul Islam, 28, and Md Hasan, 28, and seized five fake gold bars and two CNG-run autorickshaws, said a press release.

During primary interrogation, they admitted to the crime, it added.

Fugitive convict held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested a fugitive, who was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in an arms case, with a foreign revolver, a magazine and seven bullets in Mirer Khil area at Hathazari upazila in Chittagong early yesterday.

Abu Taher, 38, son of Tobarak Ali of Chandrapur in Hathazari, went into hiding after getting bail from a Chittagong court in 2001, said police.

Another arms case was filed against him.

Selim Al Deen's death anniversary observed at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

The ninth death anniversary of "Natyacharya" Selim Al Deen was observed yesterday on the Jahangirnagar University campus.

The Department of Drama and Dramatics organised a daylong programme that started with a procession in the morning and was attended by renowned theatre and cultural personalities from the capital.

Wreaths from JU Vice-Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam, drama and dramatics department, Shikhhok Samaj, Students and Teachers Centre, Jahangirnagar Cultural Alliance, Jahangirnagar theatre, Taluk Nagar Theatre, Shaheed Titu Theatre, Selim Al Deen Memorial Society, and Selim Al Deen Foundation were placed at his grave.

JU IR department reunion on Feb 18

JU CORRESPONDENT

The first reunion of international relations (IR) department of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will be held on February 18 on the campus.

Various programmes have been organised to celebrate the occasion. Incumbent and former students of the department are requested to register at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/juir.alumni> by February 10.

People thronging digital innovation fair in Rangpur

BSS, Rangpur

Thousands of people, mostly youths and students, are thronging the three-day Digital Innovation Fair -2017 in Rangpur city with great enthusiasm.

Divisional Commissioner Kazi Hassan Ahmed inaugurated the fair on Public Library ground on Friday afternoon.

Visitors are showing interests in the display of digital innovations, "Solve-A-Thon", innovation culture of the administration, internet browsing, getting information and e-services using laptops, digital devices and ICT at 52 stalls.

Young visitors yesterday told the BSS that the fair was bridging them with ICT, rights to information and making government services available for common people in order to realise Vision 2021 as envisioned by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office being funded by the GoB, USAID and United Nations Development Programme is assisting in organising the fair that will conclude today.

Death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Dr Babar Kabir, former country director of Bangladesh of Water.org, Missouri, USA and senior director of BRAC's Water Sanitation, and Disaster Management and Climate Change programmes.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to keep him in their prayers.

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