

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
H 27.5 L 24.5	H 25.3 L 17.2	H 30.6 L 22.4	H 25.3 L 19.6	H 33.5 L 20.8	H 26.8 L 17.4	H 34.0 L 24.8	H 31.3 L 24.4	H 30.5 L 21.0	

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two paces over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Day temperature may rise slightly and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, says Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:12pm and rises tomorrow at 5:56am.



The Ice Factory playground (Borof Kol Maath) at Nagar Khanpur in Narayanjanj.

PHOTO: STAR

Where'll the children play?

BSS, Dhaka

Raihan Ahmed came home very tired as he had a hectic day at the bank. All he wanted was to get a complete rest, but his six-year-old son was eagerly waiting for his father's return so he could go to the roof and play games.

As there is no playground nearby, the little boy waits all day for his father to come home and take him to the roof. But he does not understand how tired his father gets after working all day at the office.

"I feel my son's predicament. But I feel so exhausted [when I come home]. Nevertheless, I have to take him to the roof and give him time," Raihan said.

"My son would have been less restless if his school at least had a playground. But it is very unfortunate of him that his school is housed just inside a building that has no playground," Raihan said.

As with this story of Raihan Ahmed's son, most of the children in the capital undergo similar experiences since their schools too do not have any playground.

Around 64 percent of schools in the capital do not offer any class or course on physical exercise or games, according to a study of Work for Better Bangladesh (WBB), an anti-tobacco organisation.

As per government rules, each primary school and kindergarten in the capital must have playgrounds.

But the situation is quite the opposite. At least 67 percent of children in the capital do

not have any place to go for playing, the report claims.

Due to a lack of playgrounds, most of the children spend time by watching television or playing games on computers, tablet computers, smartphones or on other electronic devices.

Jahanara Parveen, an employee at a government office, said, "My five-year-old son always fantasises about the world he sees in cartoons on the television and he also tries to speak in the same language [of the characters]."

The WBB study says around 47 percent of the children in the capital watch more than three hours of television each day.

Dr Helal Ahmed, assistant professor of National Institute of Mental Health, said playground is crucial for the overall development of children. If a child does not get a place for playing and physical exercises, his/her mental and physical growth would be severely affected.

"Children, especially in the cities, are confined to concrete buildings and are deprived of socialisation," he observed.

"Such children may attain good marks in academic results, but their social skills will not be properly developed," said the mental health expert. "Lately, we have noticed that around 18 percent of such children, who spend most of their time indoors, are suffering from mental sicknesses -- either in one criterion or several criteria."

Dozens of guardians, while talking to the agency, wished that the authorities ensure playgrounds in all schools.

N'ganj playfield in peril

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Speakers at a human chain in front of Narayanjanj Press Club at Chashara yesterday vowed to protect the Ice Factory ground (Borof Kol Maath) at any cost.

They said there is no alternative to playgrounds as the playgrounds play a vital role in protecting youths from getting involved in antisocial activities such as terrorism and drugs.

"When the prime minister in her speeches has been recommending building one playground in each union, a vested quarter has been trying to turn the Ice Factory ground into a [residential] quarter," they added.

"We will protect this ground by any means, and if necessary, we will shed

our blood", vowed the locals.

The participants of the human chain later brought out a procession in the city to press home their demand.

National football team players Nazrul Islam, Sohel Rana, Alauddin, general secretary of Pollster Club Kamaruzzaman and Mohammad Sumon were present among others.

The speakers said, though the historic Ice Factory Ground at Nagar Khanpur on the bank of the Shitalakkhya river is under BIWTA, locals have been using it as a playground before the independence era.

Former player of the national football team Samrat Hossain Emily, known as Maradona of Bengal, played in this ground. Captain of present national football team Nazrul Islam

and striker Sohel Rana also played in this ground, they also said.

Former footballer Isleh Uddin said, players are being barred from entering the ground over past few days. If the children and the youth do not have access to a playground they may turn to drugs.

BIWTA joint director AKM Arifuddin said, the BIWTA is owner of the ground as they had purchased it. The locals had been able to play in ground as it was left unused without having any project planned on it.

An inland container terminal, as pledged by the prime minister, will be built here.

Although a foundation stone for a housing project was laid there, but the project could not be implemented as there was no fund allocation for it, he added.

Nation celebrates Independence Day today

AGENCIES

The nation will celebrate the 47th Independence and National Day today.

BSS reports, the National Memorial at Savar will be the main venue of the celebration of the day where the president and the prime minister will place wreaths in the early morning.

Families of Bir Shreshthas, war wounded freedom fighters, members of the diplomatic corps, leaders of different political parties, social, cultural and professional bodies and people from all walks of life will also lay wreaths.

Every year, March 26 brings the most tragic reminiscence of the history's blackest episode that heralded a nine-month bloody ordeal from the night following March 25, 1971 in achieving the long-cherished independence on December 16 the same year.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages yesterday on the occasion, reports UNB.

"Being imbued with the spirit of our great Liberation War, let's take a fresh vow to advance our country's development and democracy," Hasina said in her message.

The president, in his message said, the people of Bangladesh have a great love for democracy, development and peace.

High potato yields bring no smile

Farmers complain of cold storage crisis, low prices

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Farmers are worried about fall in price and space crisis in cold storages although they have achieved a bumper potato production in the Barind region this year.

A sack of potatoes weighing 85kg are selling at the production cost of Tk 750, said the growers. The price, however, was Tk 1,020 during harvest two weeks ago, they added.

"I see a great danger ahead if the authorities don't pay attention immediately," said Abdur Razzak, who grew potatoes on 100 bighas of land in Tanore upazila of Rajshahi.

The growers blamed a syndicate of buyers and cold storage operators for lowering potato prices by creating an "artificial space constraint".

Most of the operators in Rajshahi started asking the growers not to bring potatoes to the cold storages on plea of space constraints. Even, those who booked spaces earlier are being asked the same.

Eventually, the farmers are selling out the crop from the cold storage gates and fields, and the customers are offering low prices, they said.

This year, the Department of Agriculture Extension so far recorded 12.5 lakh tonnes of production from 69,888 hectares of land, which is three times higher than the capacity of total 42 cold storages in Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Natore and Naogaon covering the

Barind region.

The production is likely to reach around 15 lakh tonnes of potatoes at the end of harvest, said Ahsan Habib Khan, DAE Rajshahi regional monitoring officer.

Of the cold storages, 30 are in Rajshahi, said Abu Bakkar Ali, president of Rajshahi Cold Storage Association, denying allegations of the artificial crisis.

"All the potatoes will not witness a mad rush of farmers for finding spaces in cold storages.

The growers piled up hundreds of potato sacks beside Mundumala road at Debipur in Tanore.

Enamul Haque, a grower of Dhuroil, said he was not allowed to store his 1,000 sacks of potatoes in a cold storage although he booked space earlier.

"...I will incur loss if I have



Farmers harvesting potatoes from a field in Debipur village of Tanore upazila in Rajshahi recently.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gulam Samdani, a student of 10th semester at International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, is fighting for life due to liver cancer.

Samdani had to stop his studies since he was diagnosed with cancer in March, 2016. He is now undergoing treatment at Green Life Hospital in the capital.

His father, an insolvent farmer, had to sell his farmland to continue his son's expensive treatment because each chemo therapy costs Tk 60,000.

He had already spent over Tk 25 lakh and can not afford his son's treatment anymore.

Therefore, he appealed to generous people to extend their helping hands to save his son's life.

Assistance can be sent to Ghulam Samdani Sarkar, AC No: 19915170685, Dutch Bangla Bank (Sonargaon Janopath, Uttara branch) or to bKash (personal) 01812553815.

CEC promises democratic atmosphere in Comilla

Visits the city, exchanges views with election officials ahead of the March 30 vote

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Democratic atmosphere will be ensured during the upcoming Comilla City Corporation polls, said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda yesterday.

In some cases, democratic atmosphere was affected in the country, he added.

The CEC was addressing a views exchange meeting with law enforcers and election officials, who will perform duties during the city polls, in Comila Shilpakala Academy auditorium.

They are not in favour of any party, view and caste, said Huda, asking the officials to show zero tolerance to those who will vio-

late rules.

"Don't show any inertia in enforcing laws. You will take stern actions against those, whoever they are, if they try to influence the voting and to enter polling stations forcibly," said Nurul Huda.

He hoped that the election would be held in a free and fair manner.

With the voting day coming nearer, the candidates and their supporters are spending busy times and conducting campaigns from door to door.

Four candidates are contesting for one mayoral post while 154 aspirants are contesting for councillor post in 36 wards in the election to be held on March 30.



Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, and Dr Ashok Seth, chairman of Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Delhi, inaugurate AFC Health Fortis Heart Institute in Chittagong city's Prabortak area yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AFC Health Fortis Heart Institute opens in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

AFC Health Ltd, in collaboration with Fortis Escorts Heart Institute of India, opened a cardiac hospital, AFC Health Fortis Heart Institute, in Chittagong city yesterday.

Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, and Dr Ashok Seth, chairman of Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Delhi jointly inaugurated the hospital in Prabortak area.

With improvement in health technology available, people would get better treatment, said Mashiur.

Ashok said Fortis Escorts would exchange its updated technological knowledge to enrich the super-specialty excellence of this centre.

AHM Mostofa Kamal, chairman of AFC Health Ltd, also spoke.

GENOCIDE DAY DU calls for int'l recognition

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday observed the national "Genocide Day" on the campus, demanding international recognition for the day (March 25).

For the first time, the DU authorities and DU Teachers' Association (DUTA) jointly organised a programme at the Memory Eternal of DU marking the national day as well as the "Black Night of March 25, 1971".

DU VC Prof Arefin Siddique said, "We want international recognition for Genocide Day as people of the country are always against genocide." Teachers paid tribute to the martyrs by placing wreaths at the Memory Eternal, observing a one-minute silence, screening Zahir Raihan's film "Let There Be Light" and holding a discussion.

Death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the eighth death anniversary of Sirajul Islam Babul, a businessman

On this occasion, a programme will be held at this residence today after the Zohr prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are asked to attend the programme and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Sirajul died in 2009 at the age of 57.

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