

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

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| DHAKA H 33.6 L 26.3 | MYMENSINGH H 32.0 L 23.0 | CHITTAGONG H 32.0 L 25.5 | SYLHET H 23.7 L 21.4 | RAJSHAHI H 35.0 L 26.5 | RANGPUR H 27.5 L 21.2 | KHULNA H 34.5 L 25.3 | BARISAL H 32.6 L 26.7 | COX'S BAZAR H 31.0 L 25.2 |
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Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dhaka divisions, reports UNB. Day and night temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country, says Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:15pm and rises tomorrow at 5:51am.

CHILD MARRIAGE
Detailed guideline on act demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discussions at a workshop in the capital yesterday stressed the need for a comprehensive guideline for the Child Marriage Restraint Act-2017.

They said there were chances that unscrupulous people would take advantage and misuse the act.

The speakers also highlighted the need for more awareness building programmes and media campaigns.

We Can Bangladesh, an alliance of civil society organisations, individuals, and institutions, organised it at the capital's Cirdap.

The law was passed in parliament on February 27 with a provision for "special circumstances" that will allow parents or, in their absence, guardians to marry off boys or girls in their "best interests" with permission from court before they reach the permissible age for marriage -- 18 for females and 21 for males.

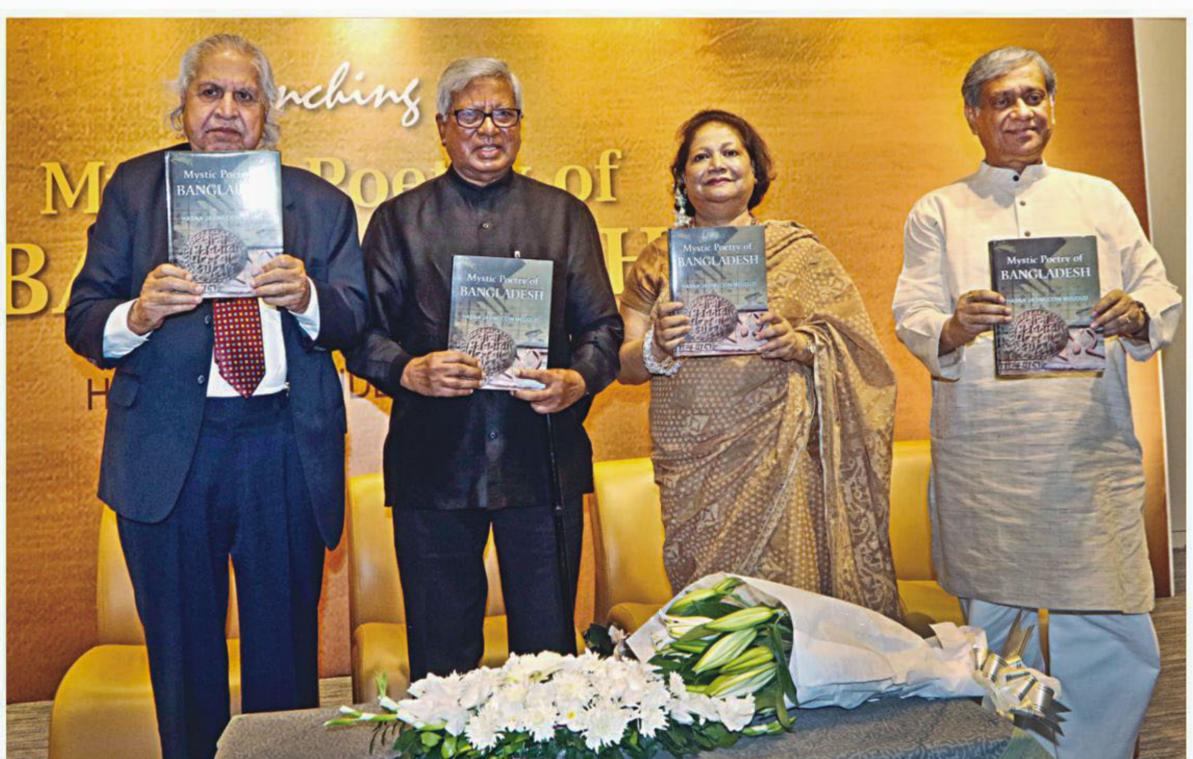
Justice Krishna Debnath of the High Court said those who formulated the law might have good intention, but reality was the act could be misused.

The alliance co-chair, Shaheen Anam, said the aim of the guideline would be to prevent child marriage.

Farida Yasmin, executive committee member of We Can, said the "special circumstances" provision took the society to backward.

Referring to Unicef's The State of the World's Children 2016 report, she said in Bangladesh 52 percent of girls were married off before they reached 18, and 18 percent of girls got married before they were 15.

We Can national co-ordinator Jinat Ara Haque, International Crimes Tribunal Prosecutor Taposh Kanti Bal, Oxfam gender manager Nazmun Nahar and Deputy Director of Dhaka district Social Services office Khan Abul Bashar, among others, also spoke.



From left, Har-Anand Publication Chairman Narendra Kumar, Brac founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, writer Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, and Bengal Foundation Chairman Abul Khair at the launch of the book "Mystic Poetry of Bangladesh", an English translation of Charyapada, the earliest extant Bangla poems, at Poet Sofia Kamal Auditorium in the National Museum yesterday. Story on Page 3. PHOTO: STAR

More allocation for improving human resources stressed

BSS, Rajshahi

Educationists yesterday called for more budgetary allocation to the education sector for improving human resources.

They urged for special budgetary allocations to promote technical and vocational education for transforming the youths into skilled human resources.

Channel i arranged the pre-budget discussion at Shaheed Mamun Mahmud Police Line School and College playground in the city.

Chairman of Rajshahi Education Board Prof Abdul Kalam Azad, Principal of Rajshahi College Prof Habibur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Education ad ICT) Parvej Raihan, District Education Officer Rafiqul Islam and Principal of Rajshahi Education Board Model School and College Prof Taifur Rahman took part in the open discussion. Director of Channel i Shaikh Siraj moderated the discussion.

More than 300 teachers and students from various educational institutions took part in the meeting.

They viewed there were enormous resources and potentials like sustainable agriculture and manpower to make the nation self-dependent. They added political commitment and collective efforts were needed to transform the dream into reality.

The participants mentioned that the budget should be pro-people and welfare-oriented so that it could bring economic emancipation of the people in general.

They underscored the need for giving priority to agriculture, food security and agro-based industries in the budget for Rajshahi region.

80pc of people in Bangladesh carry TB germs: Expert

BSS, Dhaka

Over 80 percent of people in Bangladesh are carrying tuberculosis (TB) germs, says a lead chest disease expert.

"Yet, it is not a matter of concern as the TB germs are not always harmful for the human body," said Dr Shamim Ahmed, an associate professor of the Pulmonology Department, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

"One of the main reasons of becoming a TB patient is the immunity of an individual. In many cases, the germs are likely to be harmless and these types of germs are called latent," he explained.

Despite having TB germs in the body, a person can lead a normal life and doctors do not prescribe any treatment until the person gets infected.

Mentioning the disease as a contagious one, Dr Shamim said the common signs and symptoms of TB include fever, chill, night sweats, loss of appetite, weight loss, and fatigue.

It may infect any part of the body, but most

commonly occurs in the lungs (known as pulmonary tuberculosis).

TB is caused by an infectious agent called Mycobacterium Tuberculosis which generally responds well to anti-TB drugs.

A general TB patient gets cured completely if he or she takes drugs for six months regularly, he said, adding that if a patient does not take drugs regularly, or does not complete a full course or if the drugs are of low quality, then TB germs become drug-resistant.

"This is called MDR-TB and it is not generally cured with existing drugs. The patients have to take new drugs for about 24 months," Dr Shamim said.

Despite achieving a remarkable success in detection and treatment of TB, it is still a major public health problem in Bangladesh as nearly 5,000 patients are diagnosed with MDR-TB every year, he added.

In Bangladesh, Shamim said, the estimated incidence rate for all forms of Tuberculosis in 2015 was 225 per 100,000 population while incidence

rate for MDR-TB was six per 100,000 population.

He, however, said the government, together with its many partners from the public and private sectors, is committed to further intensify the actions for controlling TB in order to sustain the achieved success and reach the TB control targets.

Community-based treatment programmes such as DOTS-Plus, and MDR-TB-specialised treatment using the popular Directly Observed Therapy-Short Course (DOTS) initiative have shown considerable success in the treatment of MDR-TB in some parts of the world, including Bangladesh, he added.

The TB expert said these programmes are proven to be a good option for proper treatment of MDR-TB in the poor and in rural areas.

The Bangladeshi government has introduced DOTS in 1993 and the programme has achieved remarkable progress in TB control, Dr Shamim said.

He also informed that the programme has successfully treated 94 percent of bacteriologically confirmed new pulmonary TB cases registered in 2014.

If you just believe it, there's nothing to it

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

She provides for education of not just one, but three of her siblings. Her husband found financial stability with the drugstore she had bought for him.

To many people, what Afsana Mimi has achieved as a woman with a seven-year-old daughter and a high school education, is an amazing success story.

And this strong-willed woman from Khulna's Aronghata did all this with her job as a driver of motor vehicles.

Afsana's present employer is Bangladesh Election Commission (EC) where no other woman has worked as a professional driver before.

Her life was not this glittery when she and her husband moved to Dhaka after getting married -- soon after her SSC exams in 2004.

Back then the low-income job of her husband was not enough for even two of them. Finding it difficult to survive in the city, the couple returned home where she got a job at Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) of Brac while her husband found work at a drugstore.

The turning point in her life came in 2012 when Anwar Hossain, area manager of Brac in Khulna, advised her to take a driving course offered by Brac.

Encouraged by her employer, Afsana approached her mother for advice. Her mother was initially upset as she was not a proponent of women driving motor cars, but her father and her husband stood by her. Afsana's mother finally agreed and Afsana went on to get her training at Brac in Dhaka. "I am successful because of the support I get from my husband."

After getting a driving license, she joined Brac Bank in Dhaka the same year. Two years later she joined Unicef in Khulna where she worked till April 2015. In May 2016, she passed the test for a driver position in the EC's Dhaka office. She was transferred to Khulna in September.

Since the profession of driving is relatively new for women, only 500 in the country, Afsana has to encounter awkward situations on the road every once in a while.

"I was driving down the road one day in Ashashuni of Satkhira during my days at Unicef. A driver of a three-wheeler ran into a roadside shop with his vehicle while steering at me," Afsana said with chuckles. "Thankfully, no one was hurt."

Despite getting strange look and sometimes criticism, especially from the elderly, Afsana holds a positive and professional attitude. "I often hear comments passed at me. Some of them sometimes appreciate my work too. I really enjoy all this as I truly love my job."

"Most interestingly, my mother now says she feels proud of me after seeing articles on me in different papers," said a glowing Afsana.

There are around 15,000 female drivers in the country and over 500 of them are professional drivers.

DU teacher demoted for plagiarism

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities on Thursday demoted a teacher as he was found guilty of plagiarising in his articles, and suspended two officials for giving wrong information to the media.

Syndicate member Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed said Associate Professor of the Arabic department AJM Qutubul Islam Nomani was demoted to assistant professor.

DU's Physical Education Center Director Showkotur Rahman and its Deputy Director Abu Foisal Ahmed were suspended as they earlier proclaimed in the media that affiliated colleges of DU can participate in sports on behalf of the university and use its logo, however the university authorities never said so, said Farid.

Bullet-proof prison English translation of

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van with bombs and guns.

In a latest incident, two crude bombs were thrown targeting a police van that was escorting a prison van carrying banned Islamist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami leader Mufti Abdul Hannan Munshi and 20 other suspected extremists in Tongi on March 6 this year.

After approval from the ministries concerned, Bangladesh police finally imported four high security prison vans from Team Leyland International Ltd of the UK.

Additional Deputy Inspector General (transport) of PHQ AKM Hafiz Akhter said the four high-defensive prison vans were brought especially to carry notorious criminals and militant leaders so that they can transfer prisoners safely.

Each prison van, having the capacity of carrying 14 prisoners, has the double lock system and it is impossible to open the doors of the vehicle from outside, he said, adding, the vehicle has the facility of recording activities of prisoners inside.

"We've already selected 38 policemen for providing training to operate the four high security prison vans," he said.

The Additional DIG said Bangladesh police has been facing lack of adequate number of prison vans.

"We've already got approval for buying more than 100 ordinary prison vans, which are expected to join the prison vans' fleet within next two years.

"We'll buy more high security prison vans, if needed," he said.

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Hasna Jasimuddin Moudud, daughter of great Bangla Poet Jasimuddin, matched the poems with contemporary terracotta tiles found in northern part of Bangladesh, showing that the poems or the pictures were seemingly made for each other.

The book documented the oral, written and art work of the period and a rare form of Buddhism, Sahajia mysticism, which flourished in the then East Bengal.

Prof Kaiser Hamidul Haq of the English department at the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh, said Charyapada spoke of the great philosophy of liberty.

Translating such a book in English means a wider reach, he said. "The book should inspire others to do more work in this area."

Speaking as chief guest, Brac Founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed said he was delighted to see the great work by

Hasna Moudud, who developed interests in literary works, alongside many other fields of work.

She was a lawmaker, worked on environment, and is now researching and writing, which is praiseworthy, Abed said, congratulating Hasna Moudud.

DU Bangla professor Dr Shoumitra Shekhar said Hasna Moudud had been very methodological in researching and translating the Charyapada, which needed considerable scholarship.

People all over the world would now know that the center of Charyapada was today's Bangladesh, which is great, he added.

Abul Khair, chair of Bengal Group Ltd and Bengal Foundation, in his welcome speech, lauded Hasna Moudud for her tireless work that "will inspire others".

Har-Anand Publication Chairman Narendra Kumar, Prof Fakrul Alam of DU's English department, and Poet Aminur Rahman also spoke.

Cancel exam

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the exams are held. These places must be monitored strictly to find the main culprits."

Talking about the government's strategy to show higher pass rates, Shyamoli Shil, a teacher of Jagannath University, said, "A teacher is not given answer scripts to evaluate for a second time if he or she properly evaluates them. The education board compels teachers to give more marks."

Shikhabarta Editor AN Rasheda, education secretary of Awami League Shamsunnahar Chappa, and Shishir convener Rakhal Raha also spoke, among others.



Rapid Action Battalion's intelligence wing chief Lt Col Abul Kalam Azad is given military honour before his burial at the military graveyard at the capital's Banani yesterday. He died from "splinter injuries", according to an autopsy. PHOTO: STAR

Youths should

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for the students for equipping them with modern knowledge for the sake of cherished national development.

He viewed there is no alternative to generate community leadership among the students to take forward the nation successfully and that is very important to bring a qualitative change everywhere in the society.

Ayen Uddin disseminated his expertise on various youth development issues and mentioned that each of the youths should have commitment of building a poverty-free and self-reliant Bangladesh.

Prof Saidur Rahman Khan viewed time has come to generate more and more students leadership in the society for making them time-fitting social actor to free the society from various crimes and malpractices like drug-addiction.

Give preference to

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He said he was very happy that the government recruited local engineers in many important government projects and he hoped the number would eventually go up.

Prof Choudhury said this is the first time an engineer has received the Ekushey Padak, which would encourage other engineers to contribute more in the national level.

Minister for Science and Technology architect Yafes Osman said Prof Choudhury is a rare personality who can inspire people. Appreciating his expertise in technology, his social awareness and his commitment to the country, Osman made a call to follow in the footsteps of Jamilur Reza.

Prof Nazrul Islam and Brac University Professor Emeritus Ainun Nishat also lauded Prof Choudhury's contributions to the country.

Lawyer Shahdeen Malik said Prof Choudhury worked in the national level for many years, but most probably he is the only person who kept himself away from controversy.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam termed Prof Choudhury a very good teacher, an efficient manager and a patriot. Jamilur Reza authored about 70 papers in international journals and conference proceedings related to, among others, tall buildings, low-cost housing, earthquake resistant design, retrofitting of structures, and IT applications and policies.

He was born in Sylhet and had his early education in Dhaka (St. Gregory's School and Dhaka College). He obtained BSc in civil engineering in 1963 from Buet, and MSc and PhD from the University of Southampton in 1968.

Prof Choudhury received numerous awards during his illustrious career.