

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 34.2 L 27.4	H 32.0 L 23.5	H 33.0 L 25.8	H 33.7 L 21.5	H 35.6 L 23.2	H 27.8 L 22.5	H 35.0 L 27.0	H 34.0 L 26.7	H 32.4 L 25.2

Rain/thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty/squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions with hails at isolated places today, reports UNB. Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged, Met Office said. **The sun sets in the capital today at 6:30pm and rises tomorrow at 5:20am.**

Teach Pritilata's ideals to youths

Sultana Kamal tells the revolutionary's 106th birthday programme UNB, Dhaka

Human rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday called upon all to inculcate the ideals of revolutionary Pritilata Waddeder in the minds of the young generation.

Sultana Kamal, also a former caretaker government adviser, made the call while speaking as the chief guest at a programme marking the 106th birthday of Bangalee anti-British movement revolutionary.

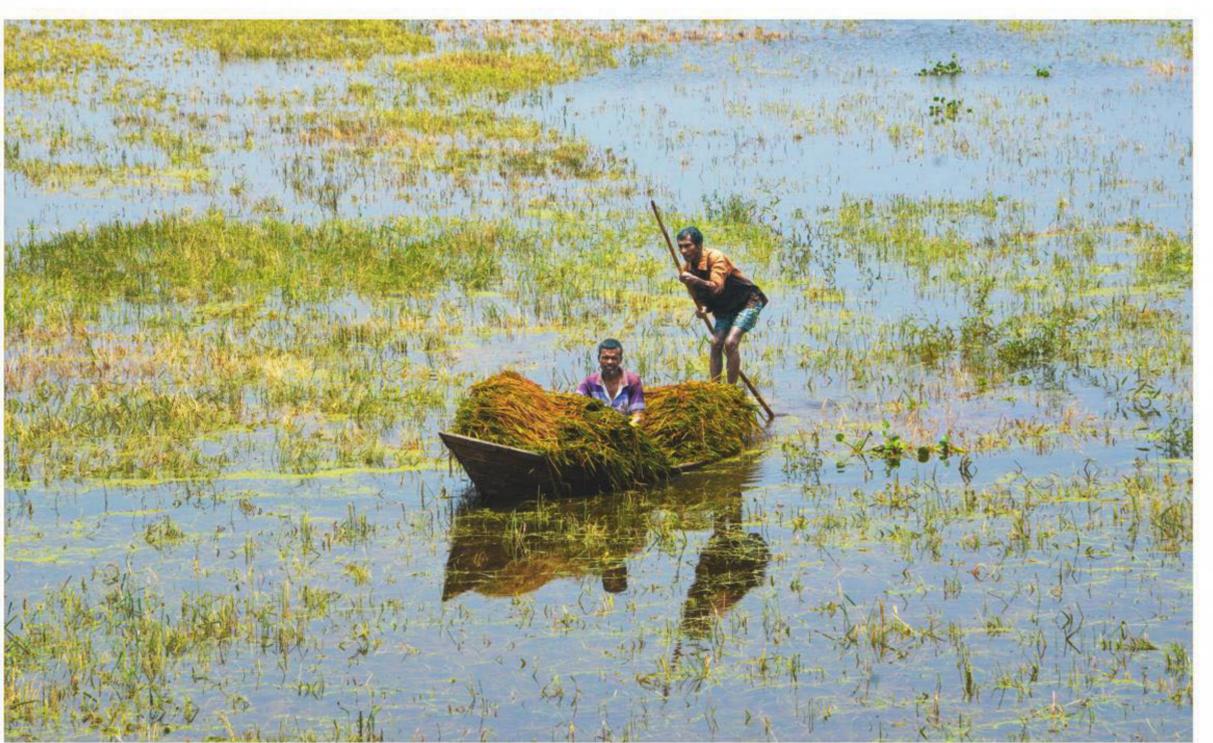
The Bangla daily Bhorer Kagoj and Pritilata Trust jointly organised the programme titled "Banglar Swadhinatar Agnishikha" (Flame of Bengal's Independence) at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Sultana Kamal said, "Vultures are trying to grab our national flag. Now we need to awaken the ideals of Pritilata among the young generation. We have to bring her at the forefront and move ahead to build a complete secular state."

Pritilata is a noble part of history, said Sultana Kamal, adding, "The names of Pritilata and other revolutionaries ring bells whenever we think of independence."

She went on saying, "Pritilata and other revolutionaries gifted the younger generation a new country, new life and new flag. Our independence is meaningless if we exclude them. They presented us with high ideals; this is high time we think whether we're following those ideals or not."

Pritilata Waddeder was born on May 5, 1911 in the British India and sacrificed her life on September 24, 1932 at Pahartali of Chittagong during an attack on a European club, which had a sign board that read "Dogs and Indians not allowed".



Two farmers carry Boro plants -- whatever they were able to save -- to the shore from Beel Kumari in Tanore upazila of Rajshahi on Friday. Early flood submerged most of the standing Boro crops on vast areas of the beel (wetland). PHOTO: STAR

Beel Kumari gripped by flood

Boro crops damaged

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

As soon as the boat filled with Boro paddy reached ashore near the Shib river bridge, Amjad Hossain ran towards it.

With a heavy heart, the 45-year-old farmer from Tanore upazila of Rajshahi took a few sheaf of paddy in his hand and saw water dripping from those.

"My entire paddy went underwater," lamented Amjad, who cultivated paddy on 15 bighas of land in the Beel Kumari. "Though I was able to save some, I won't be able to recover my production cost."

Early flood submerged most of the standing Boro paddy on vast areas of the beel (wetland), situated in the Shib river basin in Rajshahi.

Visiting the beel area on Friday, this correspondent saw hundreds of farmers were still harvesting the crops.

They were reaping the submerged Boro crops, loading them on boats, and carrying those to the road on both sides of the Shib river bridge near Gollapara of Tanore.

The farmers were drying the wet paddy under

the sun, winnowing the damaged crops in order to take those to nearby markets to sell at a lower price.

"The cost of harvest has increased due to the flood, but the output and paddy price are low," said Amjad.

He said he had to employ 20 workers, instead of the usual eight, for harvesting crops from one bigha of land while he rented boats at Tk 1,000 per day.

"Moreover, workers do not want to reap paddy from below the water for avoiding unwanted accidents," he said. "Many crops are also lost in the water current."

The overflow of Atrai river water flooded the Shib river and Beel Kumari covering Tanore and Mohonpur upazilas of Rajshahi and Manda upazila of Naogaon, according to agricultural experts and farmers.

The water of the beel started rising a week ago and it submerged almost 100 hectares of Boro lands, out of 157 hectares of the beel areas, until yesterday, said the farmers.

However, officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) assessed the crop loss would not cross over 15 hectares of land.

"Fearing storms and floods, most of the farmers

reaped the crop in advance. Those who did not, had to suffer losses due to the flood," said Deb Dulal Dhali, deputy director of DAE, Rajshahi.

Shahidul Islam, area coordinator of Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK), said, "Boro is the only crop that's cultivated once a year in the beel. The rest of the time the beel is used for fish farming."

"Also, the Shib river witnesses huge siltation due to an embankment on its eastern bank. For that reason, floodwater does not recede quickly," he said.

The farmers said although the paddy price in local markets is around Tk 1,200 per maund, the wet paddy sells below Tk 700 per maund.

Kazem Mandal, a farmer of Mohonpur, said he cultivated paddy on five bighas of land this year. "But I won't be able to get a better price since all my crops were submerged. Also, I hardly got 13 maunds of paddy. Normally it would have been more than 20 maunds."

Many of the farmers echoed Kazem and feared that they would not be able to recover their production cost due to the flood.

Yaba traders won't be spared

Warns PM at Cox's Bazar AL rally

BSS, Cox's Bazar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued a strong warning against Yaba trade in Cox's Bazar saying drug peddlers would be dealt with severely.

"Cox's Bazar earned a bad reputation as Yaba [tablets] are supplied from here. Yaba supply must be stopped and those who are engaged in it must be punished," she told a public rally in the district.

The premier added, "They (drug peddlers) won't be spared in any way."

Hasina also called upon the people of all spheres to save their children from onslaughts of drugs, saying "It destroys family and life of the people (and) when any person takes drugs he/she loses his potency and thinking ability, gets sick and dies."

"I would like to urge the people of all strata to save their children from the curse of drugs," she said.

The district Awami League arranged the rally at Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium coinciding with her visit at the country's premier tourist attraction.

Meanwhile, Hasina reiterated her call to the countrymen to put up a strong resistance against militancy and terrorism.

Terming Islam the religion of peace, harmony and brotherhood, Hasina said there is no room for terrorism and militancy in Islam. She said her government won't tolerate defamation of Islam by unleashing terrorism in the name of Islam.

About the government initiatives for providing certificates to the Qaumi madrasah students, the premier said there was no arrangement for giving certificates to Qaumi students and there was no specific curriculum for them.



"But our government has constituted a committee to specify their curriculum and we have also made arrangement for providing certificates to them," she said. "We want to create scope for all so that they can get job at home and abroad."

While talking about development of the country, the premier said 80 percent people have been brought under electricity coverage. "There won't be a single house without electricity by 2021." The Awami League president said, "We hope that you (people) would cast vote for next to make the Awami League candidates winners in the next polls."

Earlier, Hasina inaugurated Cox's Bazar Medical College, 100-bed dormitory of Cox's Bazar Government Women's College, academic building cum extension hall of the Cox's Bazar Government College, two-storey academic building of the Bangamata Fazilatun Nesa Mujib Women College in Ukhia and Moheshkhali-Anwara Gas Transmission Pipe Line by unveiling their plaques from the meeting venue.

She also laid the foundation stones of Cox's Bazar Airport Development Project (first phase), 595-meter long PC girder box on Bakkhali River at Khuruskul point, Cox's Bazar Medical College Hospital, two floating LNG terminals, installation of single point mooring at Moheshkhali, Naf Tourism Park, academic building of Kutubdia College and office building of the Cox's Bazar Development Authority.

Declare Jessore a division

Demands human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of people formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding declaration of Jessore district as a division.

A number of eminent personalities and people from the district joined the programme. They said the division would comprise Jessore, Magura, Jhenidah, and Narail.

Arguing in favour of their demand, the speakers said Jessore was not only an old district of the country but one of the oldest in the Indian sub-continent. The district is being deprived of its rightful status to be a division for a long time, they added.

Kazi Rafiqul Islam, secretary of Jessore Samity, read out a written statement.

Lt Col (ret'd) Hasan Iqbal, secretary Narail Samity, Dhaka, and Kazi Rezaul Hossain, vice-president of Magura Samity, Dhaka, also spoke.

Dangers of shipbreaking

FROM PAGE 3

Contacted, Masud Karim, director of DoE, Chittagong, said they did not get any complaint regarding oil dumping into water at the shipbreaking yards.

"When we give clearance to any shipbreaking yard, it is clearly mentioned in the conditions that the yards must dispose oil without harming the environment."

"There is no scope for dumping oil in yards during dismantling of ships," he said, adding, "We will investigate the matter."

If any shipbreaking yard disposes oil violating the environmental law, they will be fined, said DoE Inspector Azhar, adding, the amount of fine will depend on the extent of damage.

It will not be less than Tk 5 lakh, he further said. DoE can also file a case against the yard responsible, and if the offence is proved in court, the yard owner may be sentenced to the highest 10 years' imprisonment, he said.

The environment clearance of the yard may also be cancelled, he added.

Contacted, Dr Hussain Jamal, a professor of the Institute of Marine Sciences and Fisheries of Chittagong University, said if oil is being dumped in the sea, it creates a longtime impact on the biodiversity as the degradation process of oil is very slow.

A large portion of oil remains in the water for long and affects the biodiversity, he said.

It has a bad impact not only on phytoplankton and zooplankton but also on birds hovering over the sea to catch fish, he said, adding, continuous dumping of small quantities of oil slowly add up to a large amount and block the sunlight from entering into the sea water.

Oil also reduces the dissolved oxygen in water and ultimately fisheries get affected, he said.

In a recent study by the Institute of Marine Sciences and Fisheries of CU, some findings suggested that biodiversity of Sitakunda is poorer than that of other areas, Dr Hussain added.



Ahsanullah Master's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 13th death anniversary of Ahsanullah Master, former Awami League lawmaker from Gazipur-2 constituency.

On the occasion, various programmes, including recitation from the holy Quran and milad mahfil, have been chalked out in the capital, Gazipur and Tongi.

Besides, Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Smriti Parishad will hold a discussion at Jatiya Press Club, said a press release.

Ahsanullah, a freedom fighter and also a Sramik League leader, was shot dead at a rally in Tongi in 2004.



Dumping of waste along the banks of the Buriganga goes on unabated. As a result, the river is getting narrower every year. In addition, grabbers continue to raise shanties, set up small factories and even some residential and commercial buildings on its banks. The photo was taken from Shyambazar area of Old Dhaka on Friday.



Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra, at Gonoshasthaya Dialysis Centre in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday. The 100-bed non-profit centre is going to begin its operation in a week, promising low-cost dialysis for kidney patients. (Story on Page 3) PHOTO: STAR

Participation of differently

FROM PAGE 3

assisted in participating in the IT sector so that they can contribute to the social progress, said Jamilur, also the VC of UAP.

He said the technology for differently-abled people were not friendly even a few years back, but the scenario is changing as new technological dimensions are being added.

A total of 81 differently-abled youths, aged between 13 and 19, took part in the competition this year in four categories. Twelve of them became winners and received Tk 30,000 and a smart phone each.

Phase out mercury use

FROM PAGE 4

named "Minamata Convention on Mercury" to protect human health and environment from the adverse effects of mercury. The treaty has now been signed by over 128 countries, including Bangladesh.

"I urge the government to implement law against the dental amalgam in order to protect mass health and environment from mercury pollution," said Syed Marghub Murshed, former secretary to the government and chairperson of ESDO.

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