

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 32.4 L 27.5	MYMENSINGH H 31.0 L 26.5	CHITTAGONG H 31.5 L 27.8	SYLHET H 33.7 L 26.2	RAJSHAHI H 32.2 L 27.0	RANGPUR H 30.3 L 26.6	KHULNA H 34.0 L 27.3	BARISAL H 33.3 L 26.2	COX'S BAZAR H 31.6 L 27.2
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Light to moderate rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at many places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Chittagong & Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Khulna, Barisal & Dhaka divisions at places over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:43pm and rises tomorrow at 05:27am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Professor dies in bus plunge

3 other persons killed in N'ganj, Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A professor of Pabna University of Science and Technology was killed as a bus fell into a ditch beside Dhaka-Pabna highway at Chakla Point in Bera upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

The deceased Prof Rashed Kabir, 55, of mathematics was the dean of the science faculty of the university. He along with his wife was returning to the university from his Dhaka residence after weekly holidays.

The incident occurred when the driver of the bus lost his control over the vehicle, said Abu Delwar Hossain Inam, officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station.

Prof Rashed died on the spot while 10 other passengers of the bus were injured, the OC said, adding, as the highway was free the bus driver was driving recklessly.

In Khulna, two people including a college student were killed and 14 others injured as a bus and an easy-bike collided head-on on Khulna-Satkhira Highway in Koiya Bazar area of Horintana upazila yesterday.

The deceased are easy-bike driver Rabiul Islam and Amit Sarker, 17, a first-year student of Sheikh Abul Kasem Degree College. Rabiul died on the spot while Amit, hailed from Paikgachha upazila in the district, was declared dead at Khulna Medical College Hospital later.

In Narayanganj, a bus passenger was killed and 10 others were injured as a bus turned turtle on a road-divider after the driver lost his control over the vehicle on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Madanpur bus stand in Bandar upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Abdul Khalek, 25.



Due to the last couple of days' incessant rain, many areas in Fatullah of Narayanganj went under water. Streets were inundated, while roadside water bodies bloated up. But on the brighter side, the residents had the joy of catching fish as the excessive water resulted in fish gliding through the overflowing water and entering the ditches. Inset, a local with a good catch using fishing net. The photos were taken on Friday.

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

HAJJ OF 18,000 BANGLADESHIS

Uncertainty ends at Makkah meet

RASHIDUL HASAN

The uncertainty over 18,000 pilgrims being able to perform hajj this year has ended following a meeting between officials of Bangladesh embassy in Saudi Arabia, Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh, and the Saudi government.

The crisis was over within 24 hours after the tripartite meeting held in the kingdom resolved the issue of additional moallem fees at Makkah late Friday night.

It fixed the fees at 1,500 Saudi Riyals, Golam Moshfi, Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

The fee was 520 Saudi Riyals but the Saudi authorities increased the amount and split fees into four grades. The fee for an A grade moallem, who

guides the pilgrims, was fixed at 3,950 Saudi Riyals, a B grade one at 1,900, C grade 1,500 and D grade 720 Saudi Riyals.

Opposing the move, hajj agency owners had said that they as per the previous rate had already collected 520 Saudi Riyals from each of the pilgrims.

On Thursday, owners and representatives of 91 hajj agencies at a press conference at the Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Makkah said it was impossible for them to run hajj tours following the fee hike.

They said the Saudi government had increased the moallem fees two months ago but the Bangladesh Hajj Mission and Hajj Council Office in Saudi Arabia did not inform them of the matter in time.

"And it is impossible for them to

ask the pilgrims to pay more," said Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh acting president Eyaqub Sharafati, adding, "Hajj agencies will not be able to deliver services to the pilgrims if they need to pay high moallem fees."

Sources said hajj agencies usually pay D-grade moallem fees to keep price of hajj packages low.

The tripartite meeting decided to fix the rate at 1500 Saudi Riyals for all hajj agencies of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the 105 pilgrims who missed their Friday night flight to Saudi Arabia, due to mismanagement by hajj agencies, left for Jeddah on a Saudia flight last night.

Director of Ashkona Hajj Camp Hafiz Uddin yesterday told The Daily Star that they have warned all hajj agencies about harassing pilgrims.

Honour for artwork

Six school students win TIB's art competition marking World Environment Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six secondary school students were yesterday awarded for their artworks portraying rural Bangladesh at an art competition in the capital yesterday.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the competition, "Amader Shwapner Bangladesh o Jalbayu Paribartan", at Bangladesh Shishu Academy, marking World Environment Day 2017.

Competition was held under two units - "Ka" and "Kha".

The winners from Ka unit are Nafisa Tabassum Ridi (1st) from Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Samia Huq (2nd) from TNT School and College and Arian Hasan Khan (3rd) Mirpur Cantonment Public School and College.

Under Kha unit, the award recipients are Hosna Akhter Sriti from Dhaka Bodhir High School, Zinat Akhter (2nd) from Dhaka Ideal Cadet School and College and Miraz Biswas (3rd) from University Laboratory School and College.

The winners were given books and certificates. Ten more participants were also given books and certificates for their artistic endeavour. A total of 64 participants from 29 education institution took part in the competition.

Addressing the award ceremony, artist Mustafa Manwar said Bangladesh is a country of art and culture. Children should be motivated according to their interest, he added.

Artists Muniruzzaman and Samina Nafies were at the jury panel.

PROGRESS IN INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

24 parties fail to update EC

UNB, Dhaka

BNP and 23 other political parties registered with the Election Commission failed to inform the EC of their progress on ensuring at least 33 percent positions to be reserved for women in all the committees of the parties by 2020.

Out of a total 40 registered political parties, only 16 parties including Awami League and Jatiya Party updated the EC before the report submission deadline of July 10 this year.

After the deadline expired, the EC on July 27 issued letters to the general secretaries of the 24 non-responding parties, extending the submission deadline of the progress reports by August 4.

"Many political parties didn't respond to our letters within the given time. So, we've sent [reminder] letters again," said Mukhlesur Rahman, additional secretary of EC.

The EC first sent the letters on June

11, asking the 40 registered parties to turn in their reports over their progress in achieving the goal.

As per article 90B of the Representation of the People Order (RPO) 1972, a registered political party will have to set a goal of ensuring at least 33 percent reserved women positions in all of its committees, including the central committee, by 2020.

The 40 registered political parties pledged to achieve the goal during their registration process with the EC.

Responding to the EC's requirement, only Awami League stated that they reached a certain percentage, while 15 others said that they will achieve the goal by 2020. However, these parties did not clarify their present situation on the issue, said an official at the EC Secretariat.

The 16 parties that responded to the EC's letter are AL, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Jatiya Party (JP-Manju), LDP, JSD

(Rob), Zaker Party, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), NPP, Gano Front, Bangladesh NAP, Bangladesh Kalyan Party, Jagpa, Khelafat Majlish, Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktiyot (Muktijot), Islamic Front Bangladesh and Islami Andolan Bangladesh.

The parties 24 that did not respond are BNP, Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal, Krishak Shramik Janata League, CPB, Gonotontri Party, Bangladesh National Awami Party, Workers Party, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), Tarikat Federation, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, Bangladesh Muslim League, Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh, Gano Forum, PDP, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Oikyabaddho Nagorik Andolan, Islami Oikya Jote, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Bangladesh Islami Front, Biplobi Workers Party, Bangladesh Muslim League and Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF).



Winners with guests, sitting from left, Muniruzzaman, Samina Nafies, Mustafa Manwar, Rizwan-ul-Alam and Zakir Hossain Khan at an art competition organised by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in the capital's Bangladesh Shishu Academy yesterday, marking World Environment Day.

PHOTO: STAR



The materials used by street hawkers have been kept on the median of a road, which may cause accident anytime if those fall onto the road. Such malpractice has become a common phenomenon but the authorities apparently are not taking actions. The photo was taken in the capital's Fakirapool recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Safe water

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water use and management are arsenic and salinity pollution, reduction of groundwater, scarcity of preservation of surface water, misuse of water and pollution by industrial waste and other sources.

She said the government is implementing short, medium and long term plans to solve the problems.

The government has formulated the National Water Policy 1999, Water Supply and Sewerage Act 1996 and National Water Supply and Sanitation Act 2014.

She also emphasised implementation of National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation and Implementation Plan.

Taking assistance from 12 development partners, the government has initiated a 100-year exemplary plan titled "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100" for coordinated water resources management, Hasina said.

A self-contradiction

FROM PAGE 3
keeping some important ministries like home, public administration, foreign affairs, and education, under the EC during the polls.

He said they will also propose making the list of election observers and revealing their identities before the schedule of the polls is announced.

Besides, the party is expected to present a strong logic not to use EVMs [electronic voting machines] in the polls.

The BNP leader said they will also propose withdrawal of the partisan field-level election officials. "The election officials working in any district for five years must be transferred. The same way, all the UNOs and OCs will have to be changed soon after the announcement of the election schedule."

"We'll also suggest the EC move the apex court over some critical issues."

In 2009, the armed forces -- Army, Navy and Air Forces -- lost the authority to arrest anyone without warrant on polling day as the RPO was amended dropping the words "Armed Forces" from the definition of law enforcement agencies.

Contacted, BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain,

said, "It's now more important to resolve the crisis over the election-time government than dialogue with the EC, as it [EC] won't be able to ensure a fair election unless a neutral administration is in place to assist it."

He said they will take the decision about joining the talks once they get invitation from the EC. "As a democratic party, we're ready to help the EC ensure a fair and acceptable election. We hope the commission will take proper steps for holding a credible election through talks with the political parties."

Another BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed said though they still did not finalise their decision to join the talks, their party is preparing the proposals to be presented during the talks.

He said they are making the proposals so that the commission can hold a fair and neutral election ensuring a level-playing field before and during the polls.

BNP Vice Chairman Shamsuzzaman Duda said their party is still positive to join the EC talks. "We'll propose a set of proposals before the commission for holding a neutral and acceptable election."