



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 31.6 L 25.6

MYMENSINGH H 31.0 L 25.2

CHITTAGONG H 33.0 L 25.9

SYLHET H 32.5 L 24.9

RAJSHAH H 31.1 L 25.3

RANGPUR H 30.2 L 24.8

KHULNA H 33.0 L 26.3

BARISAL H 31.4 L 25.6

COX'S BAZAR H 32.0 L 25.5

Rain accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Khulna and Barisal divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over the country 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 5:46pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50am.

Cost high, quality low



People push a CNG-run three-wheeler out of the mud on this portion of Naikkyangchhari-Sonaichhari road in Jaruliachhari area of Bandarban. The entire 13km road has turned into this deplorable condition just four months after it had been repaired, taking toll on the commuters. Locals alleged that low quality materials were used in the repair work. The photos were taken recently. PHOTOS: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

UNB, Dhaka

Though the road construction cost in Bangladesh is the highest in the world, quality roads are hardly made for lack of proper monitoring by the authorities concerned and the accountability of construction firms, said experts.

Talking to the news agency, construction expert and noted civil engineer Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Buet's civil engineering department Professor Shamsul Haque and urban and regional planning department Professor Sarwar Jahan, and ex-UGC chairman and urban expert Prof Nazrul Islam said good road design, its proper implementation, use of quality materials, load management, strong monitoring and timely implementation of the projects are crucial to ensure quality road construction at reasonable costs.

Officials at the Road Transport and Highways Division and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) said over 2,000km roads are needed to repair every year only because of overloaded vehicles.

They said there are 2.85 lakh km roads under the

ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN BANGLADESH

LGED while some 21.03 lakh km highways and district roads under the Road Transport and Highways Division.

In a report on June 20 last, the World Bank presented a list of infrastructure costs, especially in road construction. It shows the cost of per kilometre road construction is \$2.5 million to \$11.9 million in Bangladesh, which is the highest in the world.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury said good designs and their full implementation and proper construction are necessary for making high quality highways, roads and bridges.

He said most bridges are being constructed in the country ensuring international standard with strong monitoring. "Jamuna Bridge was constructed nearly 20 years back, and it's still in good shape. Padma Bridge is also being constructed maintaining the international standard."

Shamsul Haque said the most construction firms having political link and clout rarely ensure

quality road construction for lack of proper monitoring by the government authorities concerned. "Government engineers must be present to ensure quality during the construction work on roads, but they remain absent in most cases."

Besides, he said, the roads are not properly maintained after construction. "If any small hole is created on any road, it's not fixed immediately. The authorities concerned wait for repair until the most parts of the road get damaged. We should come out of such practice as it increases the maintenance cost."

Haque said roads will have to be kept free from rainwater stagnation as water is the biggest enemy to bitumen. "Roads and highways must be constructed with good designs so that rainwater can easily and promptly pass through those."

The renowned engineer also said the road foundation should be much stronger for its sustainability. "The road pavement also should be constructed with ensuring proper compaction and heat."

The Buet professor thinks the road construction cost will come down if the projects are implemented timely without extending their deadlines.

Sarwar Jahan said though the construction cost has marked a sharp rise over the years, the quality declined as roads are not designed properly considering the increased flow of traffic, mainly heavy vehicles and their load.

"The load capacity of roads is not increasing because of the use of substandard construction materials. More importantly, there is little monitoring...all these things lead to the quick destruction of road surfaces," he observed.

"It's also surprising that the road construction is very high in Bangladesh though labour cost is very cheap here," Sarwar said.

He said lack of accountability of the road construction firms is the major reason behind high road construction cost and poor quality. "Politicians are now involved with many construction firms. So, when they fail to maintain proper design and quality during road construction, no one dare make them accountable."

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5 'fraudsters' arrested in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has arrested five members of a gang, which cheats people by promising them high-salary jobs, in Dhaka.

"The gang targets retired government and bank officials," Mainul Hasan, additional deputy inspector general of PBI, told reporters at PBI metro office in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

On complaints from the victims, PBI officials arrested the five in a Pallabi flat on Friday, he said.

The arrestees are: Harun-or-Rashid, 56, Sanaj Saha alias Uzzal Chowdhury, 47, Shamsul Alam Majumdar, 48,

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Tangail girl 'raped' in Mirpur hotel

UNB, Dhaka

A teenage girl was allegedly raped at a hotel in the capital's Mirpur on Friday night.

Sources at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) said the girl, aged around 16, was rescued by one Nazma and her husband Sajjad Hossain Jiban, a security guard, from in front of the Prince Bakery in Mirpur-1 around 8:20pm on Friday.

"As the girl was very sick bleeding from her lower parts, we took her to a local clinic and then Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, and finally shifted her to DMCH," said Nazma.

Replying to a question, Nazma said the girl told her that she was going to Gazipur from Tangail to meet her brother-in-law on Friday morning. One Shakil took her to Mirpur promising that he would help her go to Gazipur, she said.

Later, Shakil took her to the residential hotel in Mirpur and forcibly raped her, Nazma said quoting the victim.

The girl was unable to speak clearly as she might have been put under the influence of a sedative, added Nazma. The victim is now undergoing treatment at DMCH.

Star felicitates Sonia Bashir Kabir for her SDG award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sonia Bashir Kabir, managing director of Microsoft Bangladesh, has recently been recognised as an SDG pioneer by the United Nations Global Compact for her immense contribution to the empowerment of the country's women in technology sector.

To celebrate this achievement, The Daily Star yesterday arranged a ceremony at its office. Many noted personalities, including her friends, colleagues and well-wishers, were present to pass on their felicitations.

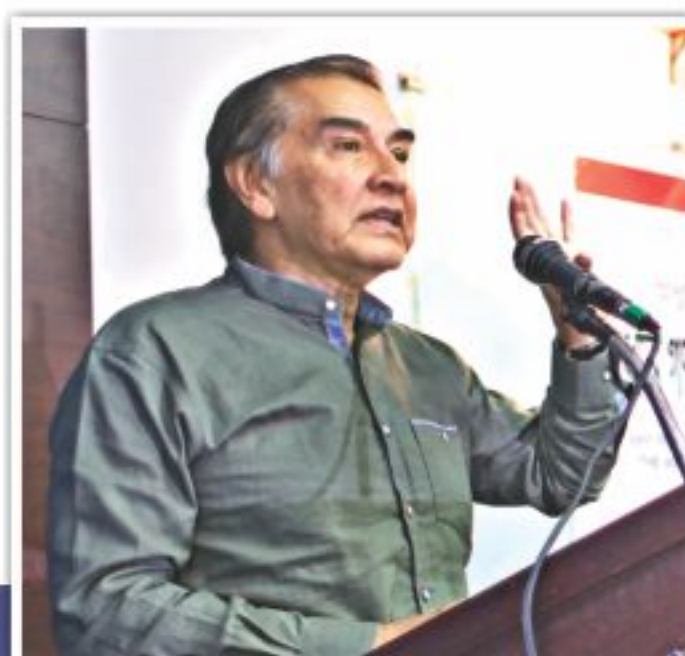
Mustafa Jabbar, president of Bangladesh Association of Software

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The Daily Star yesterday organised a reception in honour of Microsoft Bangladesh Managing Director Sonia Bashir Kabir, centre, for her achievement of being recognised as an SDG Pioneer by the UN Global Compact. The programme held at The Daily Star Centre was attended, among others, by (from left) Arif Khan, Tina Jabeen, Rubaba Dowla Matin, Aref Bashir, Ihtisham Kabir, Shehzad Munim, Mustafa Jabbar, Md Arfan Ali, Luna Shamsuddoha, Shamim Ara Khanom, Kamran Bakr, and Shawkat Hossain.

PHOTO: STAR



A section of the audience at the 15th Monthly Public Lecture titled "Why freedom of press is necessary for the advancement of a modern state" in RC Mazumder Auditorium of Dhaka University yesterday. The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, inset, was the speaker at the event organised jointly by Reading Club Trust and Gyantapash Abdur Razzaq Foundation. Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Dr Iftekharuzzaman presided over the event.

PHOTO: STAR



United efforts urgent to check religious extremism

Says president

UNB, Dhaka

Urging all to stand by helpless and destitute people alongside following religious customs, President Abdul Hamid yesterday stressed the need for taking a united effort to prevent religious extremism in the country.

"Today, religious extremism is a threat to global peace. No religion supports terrorism, militancy and extremism. Extremism creates intolerance and hampers social discipline," he said while talking to media people during a reception at Bangabhaban.

The president hosted the reception for the members of the Hindu community on the occasion of Durga Puja. Abdul Hamid and his wife Rashida Khanom also exchanged greetings with the guests.

Hamid said humanity is the universal message of all religions while religions drive people towards welfare and

keep them away from untruth and injustice.

"So, we should come forward for the welfare of humanity apart from following the religious customs and rules. We should stand by helpless and destitute people," he said.

Mentioning that communal harmony is the tradition of the people of Bangladesh, the president said this tradition must continue.

Durga Puja festival is derived from the depth of the tradition and culture of the Bengal, he said adding that Durga Puja is playing an important role in building mutual sympathy and unity among the country's people.

Hindu religious personalities and members of various puja committees joined the reception.

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and State Minister for Youth and Sports Dr Biren Sikder were also present.

RMG workers block road for salaries

UNB, Gazipur

Workers of a ready-made garments factory staged demonstration on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in MC Bazar area of Sreepur upazila yesterday morning demanding their salaries and arrears.

Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mawna Highway Police Station, said the workers of "Walltex Factory" started to gather in front of the factory in the morning and took position on the highway around 11:30am.

Vehicular movement came to a halt as the protesting workers blocked the highway for half an hour.

On information, police rushed to spot and brought the situation under control by assuring the workers of solving their problem.

ROHINGYA ISSUE

Govt now helpless

Says BNP leader

Mosharraf

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said the government has turned an "orphan" diplomatically with no support from close foreign friends over Rohingya issue.

"When the Chinese president visited Bangladesh, our prime minister said Bangladesh-China diplomatic ties reached its peak. Despite getting nothing during her India tour, she also said the relations between the two countries as tall as the Himalayas. But neither China nor India is now with Bangladesh over the Rohingya crisis," he said.

Speaking at a discussion meeting, the BNP leader further said, "It's snow proved that the government has become an orphan diplomatically..."

Mosharraf, a BNP standing committee member, said a pro-people and elected government is a must to force Myanmar to take Rohingyas back through strong diplomatic efforts at the international level.

ASM Hannan Shah Smriti Parishad arranged the programme at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the 1st death anniversary of BNP standing committee member Hannan Shah.

Mosharraf voiced concern as the United Nations Security Council did not take any decision on the Rohingya issue. "We've got frustrated seeing the weak resolution of the Security Council meeting."

He said the UN must take strong steps to stop Myanmar from eliminating an ethnic group and to force the country to take back its

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