

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 31.0 L 19.0

MYMENSINGH
H 28.6 L 18.5

CHITTAGONG
H 30.5 L 18.8

SYLHET
H 29.1 L 17.9

RAJSHAHI
H 29.8 L 18.5

RANGPUR
H 25.5 L 18.0

KHULNA
H 32.5 L 20.5

BARISAL
H 32.5 L 18.6

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.5 L 18.5

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, said the Met office. Light fog may occur at places over the river basins of the country during late night till morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:01pm and rises tomorrow at 06:21am. Highest and lowest temperatures recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:



Zainab Murtaza passes away

CITY DESK

Zainab Murtaza, wife of late MG Murtaza, passed away at United Hospital in Dhaka yesterday, says a press release.

She was the third daughter of Khan Bahadur Faizur Rahman and Begum Mariam Rahman.

Zainab Murtaza was born in Calcutta in 1933. She left behind her two daughters, two sons-in-law, a daughter-in-law, seven grandchildren, three great grandchildren and a host of relatives to mourn her death, the release added.

Qulkhani for the deceased will be held on March 3 at Gulshan Asad Mosque at 5:00pm after the Asr prayers.

Quader's mother laid to rest

BSS, Dhaka

Begum Fazilatunnesa, mother of Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, was laid to rest at her family graveyard at Companiganj in Noakhali yesterday.

Before the burial, her namaz-e-janaza was held on Government Mujib College premises at 3:00pm. A host of Awami League leaders attended the janaza.

Fazilatunnesa died at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital on Monday at the age of 92.

WAR CRIMES IN PATUAKHALI

Trial of five men nears final stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The case proceedings against five Patuakhali men is set to enter the final stage as the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday fixed April 16 for hearing the closing arguments.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Shahinur Islam fixed the date after the defence counsels declined to produce any witness.

Earlier in the day, the tribunal completed recording cross-examination of Satya Ranjan Roy, the investigation officer and also the last (11th) prosecution witness in the case.

After completion of closing arguments of both the prosecution and the defence counsels, the tribunal will keep the case waiting for delivering a verdict.

The accused -- Esahaq Shikder, 83, Abdul Goni Hawlader, 72, Md Awal alias Awal Moulavi, 69, Abdus Sattar Pyada, 65, and Solaiman Mridha, 86, of Patuakhali Sadar upazila -- are in jail.

Of them, Esahaq was a member of "Patuakhali Peace Committee" while the other four were members of Razakar Bahini, according to the prosecution.

The prosecution pressed two charges against the five on October 13, 2016 and the tribunal took the charges into cognisance on November 17.

According to the charges, on May 4, 1971, the five along with a group of Pakistani army killed 17 people of Itbaria village, torched and looted 21 houses, and abducted six children, and 15 women, whom they confined to Patuakhali Circuit House and raped for 10 days.

Meanwhile, the tribunal directed the prosecution to submit an investigation

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Chairs lie scattered after a clash among BCL activists during the council of the organisation's Chittagong north district unit yesterday. At least 15 activists were injured in the factional scuffle.

PHOTO: STAR

They say it all

Govt engineers blame influential contractors, design loopholes for delay in project implementation during views-exchange meeting with ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Engineers of different government departments yesterday gave the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) a description of how anomalies take place at different public projects.

They blamed influential contractors, loopholes in project design, and land acquisition problems for the delay in project completion.

ACC invited 80 top engineers of different government departments in the views-exchange that took place at the commission's Segunbagicha headquarters.

"Professional contractor used to work in the construction sector in the past. But now

it is seen that many contractors, who are influential and do not have any track record in the relevant sector, get work tender," said Taher Hossain, superintendent engineer of the Department of Fisheries.

"Because of their inexperience, projects cannot be finished in time. On the other hand, actions cannot be taken against them as they are influential," he said.

Kazi Golam Nasir, chief architect of the Department of Architecture at the housing and public works ministry, said many government departments start projects based on draft designs.

As a result, contractors face obstacles during

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ASSAULT ON EHSAN RAFIQ DU expels student, suspends six others

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday expelled a student and suspended six others for assaulting their fellow Ehsan Rafiq on February 6.

Meanwhile, five more students were suspended for harassing their female classmates on Facebook.

In Ehsan Rafiq's incident, Omar Faruk, assistant secretary of Salimullah Hall unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League and a second year student of disaster science, was expelled.

The six other suspended are the hall unit vice-president Ariful Islam, assistant secretaries Ruhul Amin Bappery and Fardin Ahmed Mugdho, deputy training affairs secretary Mehedi Hasan Himel and members Samiul Islam Sami and Ahsan Ullah of the pro-Awami League student body. Ruhul, Fardin, Sami, Ahsan and Himel were suspended for two years and Ariful for one year.

In the other incident, Ashikur Rahman, Hazrat Ali, Mustakim Al Mamun Piyal, Muhammad Zahurul Islam and Rahad Ahmed Ali -- all are second year students of Pali and Buddhist studies department -- were suspended for two years. The decisions were taken at a syndicate meeting, confirmed its member Prof Maksud Kamal.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Vehicles left to rot inside an office compound of the Ministry of Social Welfare in the capital's Tejgaon area. The cars, initially allocated to the ministry, were brought here to be auctioned off as they had become old. But it has been years since the cars are gathering dust under the very nose of the authorities concerned. The photo was taken yesterday.

Question paper leaks a blow to edu system

Say eminent educationists at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent spate of question paper leaks is worsening the country's education system that is already in a shambles, eminent educationists said at a discussion yesterday.

The "epidemic" of public exam question paper leaks is sweeping through the nation and even question papers of the first to fourth grade exams were leaked in many places, they observed.

They urged the government to prevent the menace by taking timely and effective measures before the exams are held.

They also urged students and their guardians to focus on learning instead of running after good results. Teachers and education officials should also encourage students to put emphasis on learning, they added.

Sammilito Samajik Andolon, a civic platform, organised the discussion on "the current situation of education in Bangladesh" at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital.

During his speech, eminent educationist Dr M Kaykobad, a professor of computer science at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), said although students of Bangladesh are performing well in various international competitions like the Mathematical Olympiad and programming contest, it does not indicate that the country's education system is well enough.

The government took some measures like banning mobile phones near the exam centres, but those came so late and did not yield good result, he said. "Once, there used to be a healthy competition among the students. But now they only run after getting GPA-5 -- a reason behind the question paper leaks."

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Festivity all around

MATHEWS CHIRAN

It rained on Monday. As a result, both the venues of the Amar Ekushey Granthamela were a bit muddy.

But that could not dampen the spirit of the bookworms. People of all ages thronged the book fair yesterday to satiate their literary cravings and went home happy heaped with books.

The publishers were upbeat too as the sales were high.

And the festivity continued throughout the day.

With only one day left till the curtain drops on this year's Ekushey book fair, there was a sense of bittersweet contentment amid the booklovers. But it was also filled with optimism as the book fair would return soon.

"I feel happy and sad at the same time. The month went by so quick," said Tania Ahmed. "I've already visited this year's book fair a couple of times with my friends."

The private university student was talking to this correspondent at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. She bought books written by Ahmed Sofa from Khan Brothers and Company.

Mahbub Alam, a private job holder, said, "The rain cooled down the temperature. My daughter wanted to buy more books so I brought her along."

His daughter, Maesha Samia, was all smiles as she showed this correspondent the pile of books she bought. "Humayun Ahmed is still my favourite," said the student of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College.

"I was afraid that my father won't be able to bring me here as he was busy with work. But finally he did. I plan to visit all the stalls..." she said smilingly.

The fair grounds were also abuzz with children's chatter buying books on their favourite "Sisimpur" characters and comics. Their parents were also seen

buying old favourites and books written by new writers.

Shadeet, a law student at a private university, was hurriedly walking towards the stall of Seba Prokashoni. "I just bought a collection of Misir Ali by Humayun Ahmed. Now, I have to go to the Seba stall to buy some 'westerns' for my friends."

His mother, Nasreen Ahmed, was busy too. She was looking for Bangla classics.

Visitors were also in for a treat as quite a few of their favourite writers were greeting them at stalls.

Meanwhile, a handful of booklovers were not only taking autographs of cartoonist Ahsan Habib, many were capturing the

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Not just books, people return home from Ekushey book fair with a smile. The photo was taken in front of Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Invest in country's youth development

Say speakers at 2-day ActionAid youth conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be in a serious socio-economic crisis after 2041 unless investments are made in education, skills development and employment for youths, said speakers at a youth conference in the capital yesterday.

As a result, the country may fail to reach the status of a middle-income country and to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), they added.

Policymakers, researchers and development partners working with youths in Bangladesh made the observations on the inaugural day of a two-day youth conference titled "Investment for Youths" at a city hotel.

ActionAid Bangladesh organised the conference where it presented several reports of research works conducted on problems and prospects of youths in the country.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Youth and Sports Biren Sikder said Bangladesh would reach its desired goals

and "the SDGs before the deadline if participation of youths were ensured".

Abdus Salam, director general of the NGO Affairs Bureau, said youths can help the country achieve its goals and there has to be investments in youths for that reason.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said, "Almost half the country's population now consists of youths... They won't be able to contribute to the country's development if they are not skilled and qualified... So, we need to hear the stories of youths to understand their thoughts. We have to invest in our youths."

Saleemul Huq, director of International Centre for Climate Change and Development, said Bangladesh is a country of immense possibilities due to its youth population. He urged the youth to be watchful about the climate change issues.

Peter Bogh Jensen, head of Danish government's development organisation Danida, said development of youths is one of their fields of work in Bangladesh.

CJ warns SC officials not to get involved in corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stern actions will be taken against Supreme Court officials or employees if any of them gets involved in corruption and irregularities, warned Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday.

The SC officials have to discharge their duties with honesty and sincerity, he said.

The CJ made the warning at a courtesy meeting with the SC officials and employees at its auditorium, several officials told The Daily Star.

He also urged the officials and employees to perform their functions in such a manner so that the reputation and goodwill of the SC are not damaged.