

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 32.0 L 22.0	MYMENSINGH H 29.0 L 19.0	CHATTOGRAM H 30.5 L 19.5	SYLHET H 28.0 L 19.0	RAJSHAHI H 31.6 L 17.3	RANGPUR H 30.0 L 17.8	KHULNA H 33.5 L 22.0	BARISHAL H 32.2 L 21.5	COX'S BAZAR H 30.4 L 18.8
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Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country, having chances of light rain or thundershowers at one or two places over Khulna, Rangpur, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB quoting Met office. Night and day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:58pm and rises tomorrow at 6:25am.



Pencil Publications' stall at the book fair is an attraction in itself. The publication is known for promoting budding writers. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Tobacco causes over 1 lakh deaths in Bangladesh every year: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

What is the extent of health hazard and economic loss caused by tobacco? Findings of a recent study are quite alarming.

Tobacco users' risk of developing three major types of cancer -- lung, larynx and mouth -- is 109 percent higher than non-users', according to the study. Their risk of developing seven life-threatening diseases -- including stroke, heart-disease and tuberculosis -- is 57 percent higher than non-users'.

The economic loss caused due to the health hazards [from both direct tobacco usage and second-hand smoke] is about Tk 30,570 crore per year, the study said.

Bangladesh Cancer Society in association with Dhaka University, American Cancer Society and Cancer Research UK conducted the study on 10,000 families in all districts of the country in between July 2017 and April 2018.

Findings of the study, titled "Economic Cost of Tobacco Use in Bangladesh: A Health Cost Approach", were unveiled at a conference at Dhaka Club yesterday.

According to the study, tobacco usage causes 1,00,961 deaths every year in Bangladesh, and second-hand smoke causes 24,757 deaths.

Besides, over 70 lakh people -- age 30 and above -- suffer from various types of diseases related to tobacco usage.

These people need to spend a substantial amount of money for treat-

The economic loss caused due to the health hazards [from both direct tobacco usage and second-hand smoke] is about Tk 30,570 crore per year, the study said.

ment. At the same time, the government's expenses in the health sector have gone up, resulting in a big economic loss. In addition, loss of productivity and untimely deaths further extend economic loss, said the study.

That tobacco has a significant contribution to the country's economy is "only a misconception", the study said.

The government in 2017-2018 fiscal year earned Tk 22,810 crore as revenue from the tobacco sector. In the meantime, economic loss caused by tobacco usage and second-hand smoke was worth Tk 30,570 crore. Environmental hazards of tobacco cultivation and smoking were not even measured, it said.

To overcome the current situation and make Bangladesh a tobacco-free country by 2040, the study suggested that the government increase the price of tobacco products through imposing higher tax.

It also suggested implementing the existing tobacco control and usage act

DU CSU POLLS All student bodies, except JCD, finalise panels

DU CORRESPONDENT

All student organisations, except Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, have finalised their panels for contesting the long-pending Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) and hall union polls, scheduled to be held on March 11.

The leftist student bodies and quota reformists are likely to announce their full-fledged panel today while BCL high-ups said they would announce their panel by tomorrow.

Meanwhile, JCD, the student wing of BNP, yesterday started selling nomination papers for the upcoming polls at the party's Naya Paltan central office.

Nomination forms can be collected from 10am to 4pm from hall offices till tomorrow.

Sources said five top Awami League leaders were entrusted by the party on February 3 to provide assistance and

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From Facebook to print

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was back in 2017, when Luna Nusrat was invited to join a Facebook group called "Pencil" by one of her acquaintances. The group was a platform for literature enthusiasts to share their write-ups and have discussions.

The purpose of the group was to hone the members' creative skills.

Being a literature enthusiast, Luna, then a private service holder, was an avid reader. After joining the group, she started posting episodes of a story written by her.

She received constructive criticism from fellow group members which helped improve her writing and encouraged her to continue posting her write-ups. One day admins of the group called for write-ups from the members and Luna responded.

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PM's 'directive' already in place

Says Obaidul Quader about removing chemical establishments from Old Dhaka

STAR REPORT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said there is a "standing directive" from the prime minister to remove all chemical establishments immediately from Old Dhaka.

"The process is on. Initially, the risky and illegal chemical warehouses and establishments will be removed from Chawkbazar and nearby areas. There will be no compromise in this regard," he said.

The minister was briefing journalists in front of Hazi Wahed Mansion, where a devastating fire broke out Wednesday night and claimed lives of at least 67 people.

Replying to a query on why chemical establishments were not removed despite recommendations after the 2010 Nimtoli blaze, he said, "This time the government has taken all necessary measures to address the lack of [previous] coordination. A new journey starts through learning lessons from previous mistakes."

About the danger of CNG-run vehicles, he said, "The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority chair-

man has already been directed to take steps in this regard."

'BNP POLITICISING TRAGEDY'

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday at a book launching event in Chattogram said the comment of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir over the Chawkbazar fire in Dhaka indicates "the party could have connection with the incident."

"He [Fakhrul] said the fire broke out due to the absence of democracy in the country -- this is an irresponsible remark. We should investigate if they had any link to the incident," the minister said, reports our Chattogram correspondent.

Hasan said it was inappropriate for BNP leaders to bring politics in every issue.

"The entire nation is mourning the loss of lives. As a conscious political party, BNP should have demonstrated solidarity. They are politicising the incident inappropriately," he added.

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Veteran artists Monirul Islam and Murtaja Baseer, and National Professor Dr Anisuzzaman at the inauguration of the exhibition. PHOTO: STAR

Celebrating mother language through art

Fortnight-long int'l exhibition opens in BSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking International Mother Language Day, an international art exhibition titled Celebrating Mother Language in the Light of Art opened at National Art Gallery of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) yesterday.

The fortnight-long exhibition is organised by Artopolitan and BSA in association with The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and Channel i.

The inaugural ceremony honoured noted artist Murtaja Baseer, a Language Movement veteran, with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, handed him a cheque worth Tk one lakh along with a crest and certificate.

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TRESemme Bangladesh Fashion Week 2019, organised in partnership with Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh, began yesterday at International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka. Yesterday's show featured designers from Bangladesh, India, the Maldives and Nepal. The romantic bun hairstyles and updos were done specially for the event by Afroza Parveen of Red Beauty Parlour. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

70.4pc public transport drivers have eye problems

Manabik Shahajya Sangstha survey says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 70.4 percent public transport drivers have eye problems, says a survey conducted by Manabik Shahajya Sangstha (MSS) among 500 bus, mini bus, truck, and lorry drivers in eight bus stands in Dhaka.

Of this 70.4 percent, 73.29 percent had problem in both eyes, 14.49 in left eyes and 12.22 in right eyes.

They conducted the survey on January 1, 2019 among public transportation drivers under an eye care project titled "Healthy Eyes for Road Safety".

They revealed the results of this

survey at a press conference yesterday at MSS Head office in Dhaka.

They performed a preliminary scan to assess the drivers' ophthalmic condition, and to determine their interest in obtaining eye care services at cheapest rates, said Feroz M Hassan, president of MSS.

Hassan also said, "Healthy eyes are necessary to ensure safe driving. Many drivers have eye problems but they cannot realise it, or they simply overlook it. It was found that 31.53 percent had pain in their eyes, 32.24 percent had experienced itching, and 57.95 had a problem with eyes watering.

Most of the drivers in this survey were 31-40 years old who have more than 10 years of experience in driving and never checked up their eyes."

Most notably, around 109 drivers said that they have faced problems seeing road signs, he further added.

Hassan said they are planning to provide eye treatment to the drivers from today morning.

Swarna Reza, assistant director of MSS; Tarikul Ghani, advisor of MSS, and Dr Ahmed Taher Hamid Ali, director general of Al Bashar International Foundation, were present at the programme among others.

BANGABANDHU KILLING Commission to be formed to identify conspirators

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The government will form a commission very soon to find out people behind the conspiracy of killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

Accurate history will be written after the conspirators are found, he said.

The minister made the comments while speaking as chief guest at a felicitation programme at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium.

The lawyers' clerk association accorded felicitation to the law minister, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon, Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim and State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahboob Ali -- who are all lawyers by profession.

The law minister said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia had tried to initiate a movement through "fire terrorism" but did not succeed.

People like Khaleda Zia and Dr Kamal Hossain want to bring the country down, he alleged.

He urged people to remain cautious about the conspiracy.

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