



The year's first monsoon shower yesterday brings Dhaka city people respite from the recent hot spell. The photo was taken at Mouchak.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

First monsoon rain brings respite

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a long hot dry spell, light rain in the beginning of the monsoon has brought a sigh of relief to the countrymen and dwellers of the capital.

The weather office recorded 9 mm of rainfall on the second day of the monsoon yesterday. It rained in a few places in Dhaka on Friday night.

There was moderate to heavy rain in Sylhet and Cox's Bazar and drizzle in other parts of the country, including Dhaka.

Met office recorded 172 mm in Teknaf and 111 mm in Kutubdia in 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday and slight rain in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Sreemangal.

Maritime ports in Chittagong and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal three (R) for squally weather.



Akikunnessa Ahmad's 30th death anniversary today

METRO DESK

The 30th death anniversary of Akikunnessa Ahmad, a noted writer and pioneer in progressive women's movement in the late 1940s, will be observed today, says a press release.

She was the wife of renowned litterateur, journalist and politician of the sub-continent late Abul Mansur Ahmad and daughter of eminent Islamic thinker and litterateur Maulana Ahmad Ali Akalavi.

Her significant literary works include "Adhunik Stree" (Modern wife) and "Adhunik Swami" (Modern husband).

Special prayers will be held at her children's homes tomorrow to mark her death anniversary.

Jamaat-Shibir men clash with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, clashed with police in the capital's Motijheel yesterday afternoon leaving at least 20 people, including three policemen, injured.

During the clash, the Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised several vehicles while 57 of them were detained by police.

The injured policemen were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Line Hospital while the injured Jamaat-Shibir men to different hospitals and clinics.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when police barred a procession of the Jamaat-Shibir men, in front of City Centre at around 5:30pm, from progressing.

The Jamaat-Shibir men were demanding release of Jamaat-e-Islami Nayebe-e-Ameer Delawar Hossain Sayedee, who has been detained over charges of committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT Govt prioritising use of promised fund

Says communications minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government's priority was to construct the Padma bridge with the donors' promised fund as the door for negotiations with World Bank was still open.

However, the government has alternative proposals and if those do not provide any outcome then the government would use its own money to construct the bridge, he said.

In September last year, World Bank suspended its funding of the US \$2.9 billion Padma Multipurpose Bridge project on graft allegations. It had committed US \$1.2 billion. Asian Development Bank, Jica and Islamic Development Bank are the co-financers.

Obaidul Quader was talking to journalists while on a visit to Mawa to see the project's rehabilitation and

settlement works, which, till date, cost the government Tk 1,100 crore.

"The government wants to construct the main portion of the bridge with World Bank funding, if the bank agrees. We do not have any dispute with the bank," he said.

An optimistic Obaidul Quader reiterated that the government wants to start the bridge's construction works in February next year.

Since World Bank suspended its funding, construction of the 6.10 kilometre bridge, an electoral pledge of the Awami League government, remained stalled.

Afterwards, the government took initiatives to find alternative sources for the project's funding and this resulted in a recent signing of a memorandum of understanding with Malaysia.

Obaidul Quader informed the journalists that a Malaysian delegation would visit Bangladesh on June 28 to place their formal proposal.

Malaysia would place a fresh proposal during this visit as the first proposal, placed earlier last month, had some weaknesses in it, communications ministry officials said.

Meanwhile, the World Bank looks to have softened its stance.

World Bank Vice President Isabel Guerrer, in a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina earlier this month, proposed five new conditions for the government to ensure graft-free implementation of the project, said the officials.

Before visiting Mawa yesterday, Obaidul Quader took part in an awareness building campaign on preventing road crashes on the Dhaka-Mawa road.

He went along the road, observing firsthand the spots which are more prone to car crashes.

He was accompanied by lawmaker Tarana Halim, columnist ABM Musa, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, artist Rokeya Prachi and

Ilias Kanchan, chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai Andolon.

They exchanged views with the locals on the importance of following traffic rules and avoiding the tendency to overtake, park haphazardly and take unnecessary risks while crossing roads.

Many of the locals complained that 44 speed breakers have turned the journey over this 40 km road a nightmare.

Obaidul Quader assured that the unnecessary speed breakers would be gradually removed while the road itself would be upgraded to four lanes.

Ilias Kanchan said road accidents should be declared a national problem and people, irrespective of their political affiliation, should join the awareness campaign to check road accidents and save lives.

Tarana Halim said road accidents would reduce by half if existing traffic rules were implemented.

Gaziul Haque's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of language movement veteran ANM Gaziul Haque.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his residence 'Jhilom' in the capital's Hazipara area. A daylong Quran recitation will be held at his graveyard at Sultanpara in Bogra, said a press release.

Recalling his works and life, a discussion will also be held at MBC building premises in Berlin in Germany at 3.00pm.

He was born in Nishchinta village of Chhagalnaya under Feni in 1929, and died on June 17, 2009.

He was the man to announce the decision to violate section 144 following the historic Amtala meeting on February 21, 1952.



PHOTO: STAR

Opratishtanik Khat Shrama Odhikar Forum, an association of workers of informal sector, forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding that the government ratifies ILO Convention 189, which specifies protection for domestic workers, and that it frames a national policy for those workers.

HIMU'S DEATH Riad's mother denies son's involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mother of Junaid Ahmed Riad, one of the accused in the Himu murder case, yesterday denied her son's and husbands' involvement in the incident of torture on Himu that led to his death.

Rehana Aktar, at a press conference in Chittagong Press Club, claimed that her husband Shah Selim Tipu and their son Riad were away to a local mosque to perform prayers when the incident occurred.

She claimed that Riad's friends Shaju, Danny and Shaon, were also busy with prayers at the time.

She, however, could not say who were involved with the incident that took place at the building of Farhad Mansion, which is owned by Tipu, at Panchlaish Residential Area in the port city.

Asked about Tipu's whereabouts, Rehana said she was not in contact with him for some time and that he will face the public when the right time comes.

Danny's mother Anwara Begum, Riad's grandmother Delwara Begum and his teachers Sajedul Ajad Chowdhury Sahajid and Shahed Sharif were present at the conference among others.

Meanwhile, members of Shikor, an anti-drug organisation with which Himu was involved, formed a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club yesterday demanding arrest of and punishment to the accused in the Himu murder case.

On April 27, Himadri Majumder Himu, 18, was taken to Farhad Mansion by his friends where they allegedly assaulted him, unleashed dogs onto him and pushed him down from the fourth floor of the building.

He succumbed to his injuries at Square Hospital in Dhaka on May 23.

A murder case was filed with Panchlaish Police Station in this regard accusing Riad, Shaju, Danny and Shaon and Tipu. Of them, only Shaju has been arrested so far.

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