

COLD WAVE MAY CONTINUE



WEATHER TODAY

Unh, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, said Met Office. Moderate cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Pabna, Tangail and Kushtia and mild cold wave is sweeping over Rangpur division and the	regions of Mymensingh, Faridpur, Madaripur, Sylhet, Barisal and Jessore and it may continue.	Country's highest temperature 26.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 6.0 degrees at Ishwardi.	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage			
	Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.	Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening		
			Dhaka	22.8	10.7	64	36	Khulna	24.5	10.5	70	56
			Chittagong	23.5	14.3	68	41	Barisal	23.4	09.9	87	68
			Rajshahi	22.4	07.0	92	63	Sylhet	24.5	10.0	100	77
			Rangpur	14.4	08.8	100	92	Cox's Bazar	26.5	15.2	69	60
	The sun sets in the capital today at 5:28pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.											

Justice Khairul defends scrapping of caretaker system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque yesterday defended the cancellation of the caretaker government system which critics say has given birth to the current political crisis marked by violence, a one-sided election, and persecution of minorities.

Justice Khairul was in office when the Supreme Court declared the system illegal and scrapped the 13th amendment to the constitution in May 2011. The provision of the caretaker government, which is led by non-political people, was included into the constitution through that amendment in 1996.

"We [SC judges] were bound to cancel the 13th amendment, as the constitution and law don't allow absence of sovereignty of the country's people for a single moment," said Justice Khairul, adding that the rule of people was absent during the caretaker regime.

The appellate division headed by Justice Khairul declared the 13th amendment illegal and unconstitutional on May 10, 2011, but observed that the 10th and 11th parliamentary elections might be held under the "illegal" caretaker government.

Khairul, now chairman of the Law Commission, was talking to reporters at the capital's Judicial Administration Training Institute following a discussion on Law Commission's draft recommendations for enacting an anti-discriminatory law.

The former chief justice was asked for an explanation about the pro-opposition people's claim that the political situation has become violent due to cancellation of the interim government system, reinstatement of which is the main demand of the BNP.

Terming the election-time and post-election attacks on

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KHANDAKER MAHBUB'S ARREST Ill attempt at destroying rule of law

Says Bar Council's Executive Committee Chairman AJ Mohammad Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The arrest of Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, is an ill attempt at destroying the rule of law, Bar Council's Executive Committee Chairman AJ Mohammad Ali said yesterday.

The present government is moving ahead to establish a one-party ruling by closing the door of democracy through the arrest of Khandaker Mahbub Hossain on Tuesday, he said.

Mohammad Ali, also president of the Supreme Court Bar

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Armed with sharp weapons and Molotov cocktails, Islami Chhatra Shibir activists clash with Bangladesh Chhatra League workers, *not in picture*, near Shaheed Satu Hall in Chapainawabganj district town yesterday. The pro-Jamaat-e-Islami students attacked the Awami League-backed students when the latter brought out a procession to condemn the recent attacks on minorities.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

Protests against minority repression sweep country

STAR REPORT

Waves of protest by different socio-political, cultural and professional bodies swept over the country yesterday with the demand for stern action against the people who attacked Hindus in different regions during and after the January 5 national election.

DHAKA

The Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) demanded due compensation to the victimised families from a protest rally in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

BFUJ President Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul said the nation had failed to protect the minorities and the entire nation had to take its responsibility.

Speakers at the rally compared the barbaric attacks with that carried out by the Pakistani army and its local collaborators in 1971.

Terming the attacks as crimes against humanity, they demanded a ban on all communal organisations, including Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir, immediately.

Samprodaiyikota Birodhi Sangbadik Mancha and Karmajibi Nari denounced the attacks through separate human chains in front of Jatiya

Press Club.

A civil society body, "Samprodaiyik Sohingsotar Protirodhe Bikhuddho Janata", headed by rights activist Khushi Kabir asked why the government and Election Commission, despite being aware of vulnerability of Hindus, could not protect them from the post-election persecution.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, it asked for an explanation about why law enforcers were not present at the scenes during the attacks. The organisation demanded banning of communal and religion-based politics through an executive order.

Manusher Jonno Foundation and associate bodies issued a press statement calling upon the progressive forces to stand united against such violence. The organisation will send aid to the affected areas.

Writers, artists, teachers, students, labourers, professionals, cultural and political activists gathered in front of the National Museum, demanding a neutral and acceptable inquiry into the attacks. They also urged creation of a specialised law enforcement agency to resist communal

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Muhith to propose banning of hartal by parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said he would propose in the next parliament to enact a law banning hartal to save people's lives and the economy.

"Hartal should be banned. Whoever calls hartal now becomes violent, and a violent protest is acceptable in no way," he told reporters after a meeting with a team of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) at his office.

About Jamaat-e-Islami, the minister said he would not table any proposal to ban Jamaat but said Jamaat should be declared a terrorist party. "Jamaat also attacked my house in Sylhet", said the veteran Awami League leader.

The minister said the first challenge of the next government was to restore law and order. No development is possible if law and order cannot be maintained, he said.

Asked whether he will continue as the finance minister, Muhith said the prime minister would decide it. "If she nominates someone, few people could turn her down."

UK envoy meets Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner in Dhaka Robert Gibson met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan residence last evening.

Voicing its displeasure over the low turnout in the January 5 parliamentary elections, the United Kingdom has urged the government and all political parties to act for sake of the people of Bangladesh.

Khaleda and the British envoy exchanged their views on the latest political situation, post election development and other mutual interest of the two countries, sources said.

Speaking on the Bangladesh election, British

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Attack on women lawyers Eminent citizens demand probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some eminent citizens have demanded investigation into an attack on women lawyers on the Supreme Court premises on December 29 last year.

In a statement issued yesterday, they demanded that the people who entered the premises with sticks and set a motorcycle on fire, and beat up agitating lawyers there should be punished.

"It is a disgrace for all women as well as the country as a whole that the attackers swooped on two women and beat them in the presence of police officers," said the statement.

On December 29, Awami League activists

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