

DRY WEATHER LIKELY

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today. Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may remain nearly

unchanged over the country, Met Office said. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:40pm and rises tomorrow at 6:42am.** Country's highest temperature 29.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in

Sitakunda and Bhola and lowest 10.5 in Sreemangal. The highest and lowest temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	27.1	13.4	62	55	Khulna	27.8	13.5	79	75
Chittagong	28.0	15.2	82	53	Barisal	27.5	12.2	77	80
Rajshahi	27.1	11.4	72	62	Sylhet	28.2	14.5	81	53
Rangpur	25.0	11.5	85	65	Cox's Bazar	28.0	15.5	79	71



Cabbages rot right in the fields with distraught farmers unwilling to count further costs in paying labourers to harvest the crop amid a drop of prices to as low as Tk 1.5 to Tk 2 per kilogramme instead of the expected Tk 6 to Tk 8 being offered by wholesale traders who say transportation costs have risen due to the risk of arson attacks during the ongoing blockade of the BNP-led 20-party alliance. The photo was taken at Kodimpara of Ishwardi upazila in Pabna on Friday.



PHOTO: STAR

Mahbubur for talk that Shajahan dumps

Sara Hossain, Shaheen Anam urge end of civilian killing for opening up of way for dialogue, at BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When a high-ranking BNP leader yesterday saw dialogue as the only way out of the ongoing political impasse, an Awami League leader outright rejected any prospect of talks.

"There is no alternative to dialogue.... The government must take the initiative first. We've already extended our hands," said BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret) Mahbubur Rahman, a panellist at the 101st episode of BBC Bangladesh Sanglap, held in the capital's Biam auditorium.

However, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said there would be no dialogue with those perpetuating terror and killing people in the name of movement.

"With whom will we talk? There is an ideological clash between the two parties. One is pro-Liberation War and the other anti-Liberation War. So, dialogue won't bring forth any solution," he added.

Two other panellists, Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Service Trust (BLAST), and Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation called for a dialogue, and a stop to killings of civilians first.

The four also discussed the recent demand from a section of people that BNP chief Khaleda Zia be arrested for "giving directives to burn and kill" innocent people during the hartal and blockade.

"If Khaleda Zia is arrested, the country will plunge into a deep crisis," said Mahbub.

Shajahan Khan said the government did not decide on her arrest.

Both Sara Hossain and Shaheen Anam demanded a proper investigation into burning and killing of people. The perpetrators should be tried, no matter whoever she or he is, they said.

Shaheen Anam said civil society members felt uncomfortable when political parties tried to label them as partisan regarding their views on the ongoing political crisis.

About the government's recent call to the media not to "sensationalise" violence, Mahbub, Sara, and Shaheen, all the three, saw it as kind of interference in the freedom of press.

However, Shajahan said the government just gave a suggestion so that the presentation of news did not confuse people.

New US envoy Marcia Bernicat arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Amid escalating political tension, US Ambassador-designate to Bangladesh Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat arrives in Dhaka today to take up her diplomatic assignment.

A diplomatic source said she would not contact the media until she presented her credentials to the president.

The US Senate confirmed the nomination of Bernicat as new US ambassador in Dhaka since her predecessor Dan W Mozena went into retirement.

On July 17 last year, Bernicat said she would work hard to support efforts to promote accountability and strengthen human rights and democracy in Bangladesh. She called the parliamentary elections of January 5 last year "undeniably flawed".

Rayhan, Rafiq get Prothom Alo best book awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangla daily Prothom Alo conferred the "Prothom Alo Borsho Shera Boi 1420" (best book of the year) award on two authors in a ceremony at the capital's Bangla Academy yesterday.

In the fiction category, Rayhan Rhyne received the award for his novel "Agun O Chhaya", and in the non-fiction category, Ahmed Rafiq got the award for "Deshbibhag: Firey Dekha", a book on partition of India. Prothoma and Anindya Prakash respectively published the books.

The authors of the books, published in the last Bangla year, were given a crest and Tk 100,000 each.

Language Movement veteran Ahmed Rafiq is known for writing columns in newspapers, while Rayhan Rhyne teaches philosophy at Jahangirnagar University.

Addressing the event, Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman announced that the Bangla daily will begin conferring a new award, Jibanananda Das Award, on young poets.

"Aspiring poet Sayeed Jamil has been nominated for the award. The formal ceremony will be held sometime in April," he said.

The books were selected by a group of jurists headed by Director General of Bangla Academy Shamsuzzaman Khan.

Police, admin not helping Adivasis get justice

Human chain told in Rajshahi city; steps urged to stop migration of minorities out of country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Because of police and local administration's apathy to ensure justice to the indigenous communities in almost all cases of murder, rape, eviction, and land grabbing, the panic-stricken minority people in Rajshahi are leaving the country, speakers told a human chain yesterday.

They demanded immediate remedial action and security for these plain land communities in order to stop their displacement and migration out of Bangladesh.

Citing the January 8 killing of Santal student leader Bablu Hembrom in Tanore upazila, and the rape and subsequent suicide of an indigenous girl on December 19 last year in Naogaon, the speakers said nobody was brought to book in either case.

Rabindranath Soren, president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP), which organised the human chain at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi city, said that in the last two years, 150 families of Santal, Munda, Orao and other communities of Rajshahi crossed the border into India.

Fears constantly haunt them as criminals and land grabbers remain untouched by law enforcers, he said. A section of administra-

tive officials help grabbers forge the land documents of Adivasis, he added.

The human chain was joined by around 150 indigenous people from different parts of Rajshahi, while Barind Human Rights Defenders Foundation, Workers Party, Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad, Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, and Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad expressed their solidarity with their call.

Residents from Bottoli and Chhatrapukur villages of Godagari said the indigenous community's graveyard at Chhatrapukur was still occupied by Bangalee settlers although two days ago, on Tuesday, police visited the scene and freed the site from grabbers.

The settlers have built toilets and kept haystacks on the graveyard where at least five Adivasi freedom fighters are buried, they said, adding that several years ago four freedom fighters left the country.

The minority people placed a seven-point demand including freeing the graveyard, publishing a report on why indigenous people are leaving the country, protecting their land from grabbers, and stopping all injustices against them.

Vocational

FROM PAGE 4

Rasheda K Choudhury said automobile mechanics like those in the capital's Dholai Khal have acquired their skills without any formal training.

"We should provide them with institutional recognition so that their skills are valued around the world," she added.

President of Bangladesh Employers' Federation Tapan Chowdhury said universities, colleges and training institutes should consult industrialists and entrepreneurs of the country to learn about the nature of the future job market.

Chairman of Bangladesh Technical Education Board Md Abdul Haque Talukdar, Executive Director of UCEP Bangladesh Zaki Hasan, and Chief Executive Officer of National Skills Development Council ABM Khorshed Alam, among others, spoke.



Locals come to the aid of firefighters trying to put out a blaze which, in six hours before being contained, engulfed a tin-roofed concrete structure on a 1.5-acre area housing Kader Synthetic and Compact Spinning Mill at the Konabari BSIC industrial area in Gazipur city yesterday morning. The fire, suspected to have originated from an electric short-circuit, was first noticed around 8:00am during the change of shift for workers. Though there were no casualties, all the machineries and highly flammable synthetic clothes and threads were destroyed. The district authorities have formed a probe committee to confirm the fire's origins.

PHOTO: STAR

Cuta protests arson, bomb attacks across the country

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) yesterday formed a human chain on CUI Shaheed Minar premises to protest the ongoing subversive activities and arson attacks across the country.

CU Vice Chancellor Prof Anwar-Ul-Aziz Arif urged political parties to resolve the issue through negotiations and to stop the violence.

Cuta President Prof Benu Kumar Dey urged the association members to contribute to raising a fund for the victims.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Students' Union and Udichi Shilpogoshi also formed human chains on the campus in protest.

Two-day programme on learning disabilities ends in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The two-day programme titled "Learning Disabilities and Behavioural Approach" concluded in Chittagong city yesterday with a workshop, discussing how to overcome the difficulties that children face during their learning process.

In the workshop on "Behaviour Management", conducted by Dr Alefiya Nomanbhoy of the University of Nottingham in LGED Auditorium, participants also got the opportunity to understand the problems that they face in teaching children in mainstream schools. The workshop discussed how schools should deal with children with learning disabilities like dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Probel Play School organised the programme and The Daily Star was the media partner.

Missing madrasa boy yet to be rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Law enforcers are yet to rescue 13-year-old Mehedi Hasan who had been missing for the last nine days.

A madrasa student, Mehedi, son of Nitul Miah, who resides in Jessore, went out for Juma prayers on January 16 and did not return to his uncle's residence in Shoronika residential area in Savar municipality, according to a general diary.

The next day his uncle Zahid Hasan got a call demanding a ransom of Tk 1 lakh.

Detectives and Rab have also been informed, said Zahid, a cloth trader.

Debate over proclaimer of independence

FROM PAGE 3

war-time government of Bangladesh in exile to seek support of foreign countries in favour of the independence.

Recently, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's elder son Tarique Rahman claimed that his father Ziaur Rahman, a former president, had declared Bangladesh's independence.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), a non-political private research centre, organised the launching ceremony in the capital, attended by a host of retired and serving diplomats and envoys of foreign missions in Dhaka.

Prof Sobhan said his being the first envoy of what was then an "unconstructed" government was an "accident of history."

He said that on instructions of the war-time government, he along with two others set off on March 31, 1971 for Agartala in a bid to woo the Indian government for support for Bangladesh's Liberation War but the authorities in Agartala asked them to visit Delhi and contact the central government.

"We had hardly any contacts in Delhi then, except some leading economist friends, some of whom were then inducted into the government of India," he said. "We stayed over at noted economist Amartya Sen's place," said Prof Sobhan, now chairman of the think-tank Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The following day, he went on, they met Bangladesh's first Prime Minister Tajuddin

Ahmad and Barrister Ameer-ul Islam, who were already in Delhi, and together they met Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi seeking her assistance for the struggle of Bangladesh.

In April, Prof Sobhan went to the US as part of his war-time diplomacy, he said.

BEI President Farooq Sobhan, who wrote for the volume as an ex-ambassador, said the collection of essays captured the glory and agony of the historical transition, when Bangalee diplomats had a challenge of responding to would-be Bangladesh's identity crisis with skepticism of its viability due to periodic political instability and natural disasters, he said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said some of the essays with anecdotes and personal accounts touched upon some interesting and critical historic events that the diplomats witnessed. "As diplomats, they must have seen and surmised much more than they have written," he said.

Former foreign secretaries and ambassadors Faruq A Choudhury and Mohammed Mohsin also spoke.

Of the 43 diplomats whose essays appear in the volume, 11 were former foreign secretaries, and they served in 110 countries in different capacities, said Farooq Sobhan, adding that a second volume would follow with writings of other diplomats.

Finished Apartments at UTTARA

Call: 9857230 - 4
01714 039844, 01713 065055, 01714 039847

Asset DEVELOPMENTS