

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 27.2 L 15.0

CHITTAGONG
H 28.8 L 16.0

SYLHET
H 28.8 L 13.3

RAJSHAHI
H 26.7 L 11.8

KHULNA
H 27.8 L 14.8

BARISAL
H 27.9 L 13.1

RANGPUR
H 26.0 L 13.5

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.5 L 17.4

Likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins during late night till morning. Met Office said. Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:50pm and rises tomorrow at 6:35am.

Solution matter of a day, if govt agrees to talk

BNP's Khoka tells
media in New York
STAR REPORT

The ongoing political stalemate can be resolved in a day if the government agrees to talk to the opposition alliance, BNP Vice-chairman Sadeque Hossain Khoka said on Sunday.

At a views exchange meeting with media representatives in New York, where he is being treated for cancer since June last year, Khoka said dialogue could be held on the basis of Khaleda Zia's seven-point proposal placed on December 31.

The proposal includes holding of a fresh all-inclusive election as soon as possible, creating a level-playing field for all parties, reconstitution of the Election Commission, and dissolving the parliament and cabinet.

Khoka said talks could start at the expert level as precursor of the top-level dialogue. Civil society members can also join the open discussion, to be aired on national television, he added. "We are ready to sit in any type of dialogue. We are not saying Sheikh Hasina will have to quit tomorrow and we will take over immediately. We want a fair democratic system restored. We will concede if Sheikh Hasina or any other party comes to power through that process."

Litigants suffer amid abstention by SC lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred litigants suffered immensely, as the High Court which disposes of over 250 cases on a workday on average could not hold proceedings properly yesterday due to an indefinite work stoppage by the Supreme Court Bar Association.

Many of the HC judges did not attend proceedings because of the absence of lawyers, but the Appellate Division judges presided over cases.

The SCBA dominated by pro-BNP lawyers called the work stoppage on Sunday, considering the "security" of all amid the ongoing hartal. In support of the programme, BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum rallied on SCBA premises.

At the same place, the Awami League-affiliated lawyers yesterday held a meeting and a procession protesting the decision.

The stoppage will continue till further notice from the SCBA.

SC sources said judges of 22 HC benches out of the total 49 sat in their courtrooms and adjudicated cases.

At the Appellate Division, judges of the Court No-1 headed by Chief Justice SK Sinha presided over 42 cases, and Court No-2 led by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah

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WHEN GOVT RESTS ON ITS LAURELS

FEBRUARY 8, 2015



The Khulna city protection embankment has been slowly going into the Bhairab River over the last couple of years. The Daily Star reported it twice--in 2013 and again in 2014--within the space of one year. Each time, the local officials of the Water Development Board, its custodian, said they asked for Tk 22.19 crore from the headquarters in 2011 to rehabilitate the structure, which is protecting the city's eastern fringe from flooding. But the fund has not been available yet. Meanwhile, local businessmen and social activists repeatedly blamed use of substandard construction materials for the early damage to the embankment, which was built only in 2000 and was supposed to last four or five decades.

PHOTOS: STAR

AUGUST 31, 2014



JULY 16, 2013



Blockade keeps tourists off Ctg's holiday destinations

Local tourism industry, city's eateries eking out existence

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN and MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

The number of visitors heading for four of Chittagong's popular tourist destinations every day has drastically plummeted by around 95 percent, proportionally slashing the industry's peak season earnings, while sales at the port city's restaurants and eateries are witnessing a slump as high as 80 percent all due to the ongoing blockade.

December to February is the height of the holiday season for the beautiful coastlines at Patenga, Kattali and Parki and Foy's Lake.

However, those who are the vital source of jobs and hard currency for the local economy are staying away in large numbers due to the BNP-led 20-party

alliance's programme, raising apprehensions among those in the tourism and leisure industries on how to keep businesses afloat for the rest of the year.

The number of holidaymakers arriving at the Patenga beach has reduced to merely around 1,000 while the view of 30 to 50 parked buses signifying the presence of picnickers seems to be a distant memory as per an association of the nearly 330 restaurants and souvenir shops there.

Mohammed Bappi and Mohammed Ali who own such tourism businesses say their daily sales are barely reaching Tk 500 to 1,000.

Hit even harder are the local holiday trade relying heavily on tourism such as outlets offering photographers,

rides on horseback and renting out quad bikes and speed boats.

The grim scenario also prevails at the grassy Kattali beach with the number of holidaymakers arriving to view its mangrove forest, intertwining canals and flocks of birds down to around 100.

SM Shamshul Alam, Ali Akber and Shahidul Alam Mamun, authorities of three private parks, say the phones were barely ringing for reservations for picnics at a time when they would have usually been arranging three to four daily.

Times have become desperate for Mamunur Rashid who goes around selling food. He can do nothing but

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Political dialogue only solution

Eminent citizens, politicians tell Oikyaboddho Chhatra Samaj discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no alternative to holding national dialogue among representatives of political parties, different communities and conscious citizens to end the political deadlock, eminent citizens and veteran and former politicians told a discussion yesterday.

The rise of extrajudicial killings in the name of gunfights and crossfire was also condemned at the programme Oikyaboddho Chhatra Samaj organised in the capital's Jatiya Press Club marking its second anniversary.

"Whether you go for an election or not right at this moment, at least sit for dia-

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stop extrajudicial killings
- Stop immolating people
- Reach national consensus

logue," urged Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain.

People should reach a national consensus against partisan politics for the sake of restoring peace, he said, urging identification of barriers to freedom of press, speech and thought and reaching a national

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A near deserted Patenga sea beach in Chittagong, a scenario prevailing since the ongoing blockade of the BNP-led 20-party alliance was enforced early January prompting prospective visitors to stay put and squashing tourism businesses' expectations to rake up substantial amounts in revenues in the peak holiday season. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Prosecute arsonists

Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee discussion told; Law Minister Anisul Huq dismisses call for talks, says perps to be brought to book in 6 months; Muntassir Mamoon slams civil society saying they are not protesting arson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The people killing civilians and committing crimes in the name of the blockade and hartal must be brought to trial immediately, some eminent persons said yesterday.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance is out to turn Bangladesh into a "failed state", so the government and the people must joint hands to prevent these crimes, they told a discussion, "Terrorism, human rights and democracy: Perspective Bangladesh", in the capital's WVA auditorium.

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the programme, marking the 93rd birth anniversary of National Professor Kabir Chowdhury.

Speaking as chief guest, Law Minister Anisul Huq assured that the perpetrators would be brought to book within the next six months and be prosecuted under the Special Powers Act, Anti-Terrorism Act, Law and Order Disruption (Speedy Trial) Act

and Explosive Substances Act.

"Today's battle is to protect Bangladesh... We are ready for that," he said. "We don't think violence is a crisis of politics or of the law and order. Rather, we are taking it as a threat to Bangladesh's existence. There will be no compromise on action against the criminals."

He dismissed any possibility of talks with the BNP.

Blasting civil society members for their call for dialogue, historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon said, "But why don't they raise voice against criminal activities?"

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman said, "The perpetrators have launched a battle against the ordinary and poor people."

Referring to news reports that civil society mulls to formulate a socio-political charter for ending the ongoing impasse, he said the constitution itself was a charter of the

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