

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 30.2 | L 20.3

CHITTAGONG
H 31.5 | L 22.0

SYLHET
H 31.2 | L 18.3

RAJSHAHI
H 30.4 | L 16.8

KHULNA
H 31.0 | L 19.5

BARISAL
H 31.6 | L 18.8

RANGPUR
H 28.3 | L 16.0

COX'S BAZAR
H 32.8 | L 21.5

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:02pm and rises tomorrow at 6:19am. Country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Patuakhali and lowest 17.8 in Sitakunda.

No more court boycott during hartals in Ctg

26-yr-old practice comes to an end, lawyers to attend from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The 26-year-old tradition of refraining from court activities by lawyers in Chittagong during hartal has come to an end as the lawyers have decided to participate from today.

The decision to take part in court activities during hartal came at a meeting of present and former presidents and general secretaries of Chittagong Bar Association at its office yesterday.

"Lawyers will participate in court activities from 2:00pm during hartal and this decision will remain effective irrespective of which party is in power," said Advocate Md Mujibul Haque, president of the association.

He added that all senior lawyers have also agreed to the decision.

Pro-Awami League and

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Assistant Commissioner Rafiqul Alam, centre, arguing with leaders of the Progressive Student Alliance at Rajshahi University yesterday when police foiled their protest. The police officer said all political gatherings were banned on the campus but it did not apply to the Bangladesh Chhatra League, a student body backed by the ruling Awami League.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BAN ON DEMONSTRATIONS AT RU It does not apply to BCL

RMP Asst Commissioner Rafiqul Alam tells leaders of Progressive Student Alliance at RU while foiling their protest rally against Avijit's murder

RU CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing ban on political gatherings at Rajshahi University does not apply to Bangladesh Chhatra League, Assistant Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Rafiqul Alam said yesterday, after foiling a rally of leftist student bodies on the campus, which was briefly preceded by a procession of BCL itself.

"Only Chhatra League can bring out processions. The ban is not for them," he told the leaders of the Progressive Student Alliance, which was to hold a scheduled rally at Tukitaki Chhatter around 11:30am, demanding arrest of the killers of secular writer Avijit Roy.

Only half an hour before, the BCL brought out a march from near the central library to protest a bomb attack on Rajshahi city Awami League President AHM Khairuzzaman Liton on Monday night.

At the university, all types of processions, rallies and use of megaphones were banned a year ago, on March 3 last year, after the violence on February 2 when the general

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Siraj Master massacred Bagerhat villagers

Witness tells war crimes trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday narrated how war crimes accused Sheikh Sirajul Haque alias Siraj Master stabbed around 20 villagers before shooting almost all of them dead at Kandapara Bazar of Bagerhat on June 18, 1971 during the Liberation War.

"He was so infamous for killing innocent civilians that after the Liberation War, he was locked in a cage at Shilpakala Academy of Bagerhat for the people to see," the 24th prosecution witness, Sheikh Mustafizur Rahman, told the International Crimes Tribunal-1.

Later, Prosecutor Syed Sayedul Haque told The Daily Star that Siraj Master was put on trial for the massacre immediately after the Liberation War but got released in 1976 during the regime of Ziaur Rahman.

Mustafizur said he along with other freedom fighters went to Kandapara Bazar

around 10:00am while suddenly the war crimes accused accompanied by other Razakars and the Pakistani army attacked the marketplace.

The witness said they took shelter in a nearby garden and saw Siraj Master leading Razakars to Beshorgati village.

Around one and a half hours later, the Razakars brought around 25 villagers to Kandapara Bazar beating them indiscriminately. The detainees were taken to a nearby canal.

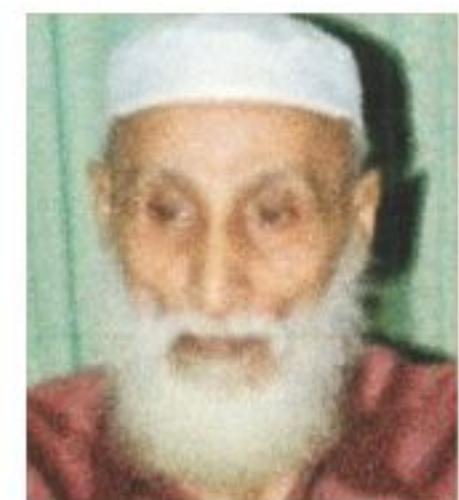
"Accused Siraj Master stabbed them (detainees) with his knife and ordered others (Razakars) to cut the rest," the witness said. "Later, they shot all dead."

The Razakars left the area before sunset.

The witness said he found 19 people dead and one injured when he visited the place later.

After the deposition, the witness identified the accused at the dock.

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STATEMENT ON BERGMAN VERDICT ICT-2 clears ten more of contempt of court charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday exonerated 10 more eminent people from proceedings for contempt of court, as they apologised unconditionally for a statement they issued expressing concern over the sentence of Dhaka-based British journalist David Bergman for demeaning it.

Earlier on February 23, the tribunal exonerated 14 of the total 49 signatories as they had also apologised unconditionally for their statement.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam also fixed March 18 to pass a further order on the remaining 25 signatories following time prayers.

The tribunal gave the time to the signatories as the last chance.

The dignitaries exonerated yesterday are Parween Hasan, Ali Riaz, Tahmima Anam, Nur Khan Liton, Faustina Pereira, Seuty Sabur, Firdous Azim, Samia Huq, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Sarah Shehabuddin.

The same tribunal on December 2 last year sentenced Bergman, editor (special reports) of the daily New Age, to

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Forkan shot Patuakhali Hindu man dead

Witness tells war crimes tribunal; also corroborates accusation of rape against him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday testified that he saw Forkan Mallik shoot a Hindu man dead at Kakrabunia Bazar in Patuakhali during the Liberation War in 1971.

Sundar Gazi of Kakrabunia village in Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila also corroborated on the rape of a woman for three days by Forkan, fellow Razakars and the Pakistani troops.

The 65-year-old told International Crimes Tribunal-2 that when he was selling fish at Kakrabunia Bazar around 2:00pm on the 5th day of Bangla month Bhadra (August-September), he saw the Pakistani army and local Razakars arrive at the market and open gunfire indiscriminately.

"Forkan Mallik and Akabbar Gazi were among them [attackers]," he said, adding that they also looted the shops there. "I had witnessed the lootings from behind a mosque."

Forkan shot one Sanad Kumar from behind when he was fleeing and he died on the spot, said the witness, adding that Forkan and his men also tortured one shopkeeper, Moslem Hawladar.

Sundar said Forkan, who was acquainted to him, also caught him and forced him to load looted goods onto their gunboat before releasing him.

Testifying on the rape, the witness said Forkan and his accomplices then entered a house on the eastern side of the bazar and dragged out a young woman of the house.

When her father requested them to leave her, Forkan shot him dead and his accomplice Akabbar Gazi took her to the gunboat, said Sundar.

Forkan and another Razakar took her to Patuakhali Circuit House, which was an army camp, said the eighth prosecution witness.

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DEATH PENALTY REVIEW

Last chance for filing plea tomorrow for Kamaruzzaman

Counsels to meet him today

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, must file a petition with the Supreme Court by tomorrow if he wants a review of his death penalty upheld by the same court for committing crimes against humanity in 1971.

If he does not submit the petition by tomorrow, he will lose the right to seek a review, and the government can fix a date for executing him, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

A convicted war criminal can seek review of the verdict on the appeal in 15 days since receiving the certified copy of the judgment or being informed about it, said the SC in its full judgement on two review petitions filed by executed war criminal Quader Mollah.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Kamaruzzaman to death on May 9, 2013. After upholding the penalty on November 3, 2014, the SC released the full text of the verdict on February 18.

ICT-2 issued the death warrant on February 19 and the jail authorities read the warrant before Kamaruzzaman on the same day, which means 15 days of the review petition will be finished tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Kamaruzzaman's counsel

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Just let me know if he is dead or alive

Weeping mother of a missing JCD man appeals to govt; seeks PM's intervention; maintains that police detectives picked him up on Thursday; local police station OC says they don't even know about the incident while family claims they have been non-cooperative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mother of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activist, who went missing five days ago, yesterday appealed to the government to let her know whether he is alive or dead.

Mahadi Hasan Ruyel, a master's student and JCD activist of Government Titumir College, was picked up from inside Jamuna Future Park on Thursday, allegedly by detectives, the family claimed.

"Let us know whether my son is alive or dead. I can't take the pain anymore. Bring him back to my lap or shoot me dead, shoot the whole family," Anjuman Ara said between sobs, during a news conference at Jatiya Press Club.

"If my son has committed crime, prosecute him in line with law. Why was he picked up this way?"

Fear has gripped the family, following the recent recovery of several bullet-hit bodies and deaths of people in alleged shootouts with law enforcers.

Against this backdrop, the family besought the prime minister to intervene for Mahadi's safe return, by organising a news conference.

Anjuman Ara alleged that police did not cooperate with them in finding out her son. "We had gone to Bhatara Police Station several times but they refused to even register a general diary," she said. Later, the victim's elder brother, Mahmudul Hasan, filed a GD with Khilkhet Police Station.



and contacted several police stations, the detective branch (DB) of police, and the Rapid Action Battalion but all of them denied arresting him, she said.

The family came to know of his abduction from a youth who was with him at the time.

On that day, some men identified themselves as detectives and picked up Mahadi and a junior at his college named Shuvo from the first floor of the shopping mall, said family members. Shuvo, however, was dropped from

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Christine Cipolla, head of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Dr Samanta Lal Sen, honorary adviser to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, inquire about the health of a burn victim in DMCH yesterday. ICRC also donated dressing materials to the institute.

PHOTO: STAR

EKRAM KILLING CASE SC stays bail for prime accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed a High Court verdict that granted bail to Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury Minar, the prime accused in the Phulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque killing case.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC stilled the judgment of bail till today after a brief hearing on an appeal filed by the government.

The chamber judge will further hear the appeal today, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star.

He also said Minar could not get released from jail following the stay order.

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No standard fixed for energy drinks

Amu tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no government fixed standard for energy drinks in the country, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu told parliament yesterday.

"The energy drink is not on the list of the government fixed 155 products, for which Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution certificates are mandatory," he said replying to a lawmaker's starred question.

"The energy drink is not an item under soft drink categories," said the minister.

Amu said after receiving complaints about the use of various highly addictive substances, including caffeine and opium, in energy drinks, the BSTI requested the Department of Narcotics Control to take measures to this end.

Responding to another starred question, he said all 15 state-run sugar mills except Carew & Co (BD) Ltd are unprofitable organisations.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid told parliament that the government is taking steps to import gas and electricity from Myanmar. A high-level technical team from Myanmar will visit Bangladesh soon in this regard, he said.

He said there are 57 privately owned power plants in the country with a generation capacity of 4,437MW.

Missing Nawhata mayor found buried in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Mayor of Nawhata municipality in Rajshahi was found buried in the capital's Azimpur graveyard yesterday more than two months after he had gone missing.

Police exhumed the body of Abdul Gafur Sarker, who was also an Awami League leader.

The recovery came on information from one Jannatul Salma Mim, who was arrested in this regard and developed an "extra marital affair" with the mayor while she was working as the Nawhata branch manager of an NGO "Chhayagram" around five years ago, said police.

Mim's two sisters Jannatul Naim and Jannatul Ferdous were also arrested.

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