

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

**DHAKA**  
H 31.0°C L 15.9

**CHITTAGONG**  
H 33.0°C L 18.0

**SYLHET**  
H 33.5°C L 15.8

**RAJSHAHI**  
H 32.0°C L 11.9

**KHULNA**  
H 31.8°C L 15.0

**BARISAL**  
H 31.8°C L 14.3

**RANGPUR**  
H 29.7°C L 15.2

**COX'SBAZAR**  
H 33.3°C L 20.4

Day temperature may rise slightly and night temperature may fall slightly over the country, Met Office said. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:07pm and rises tomorrow at 6:09am. Country's highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Rangamati and lowest 09.8 degrees in Srimangal.



**A human chain of Chittagong Press Club and the Chittagong Union of Journalists demands arrest of the Bangladesh Chhatra League activists who assaulted eight journalists covering an Awami League-led 14-party rally in Laldighi Maidan of Chittagong city Wednesday. They threatened to besiege the office of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police commissioner if the attackers were not arrested by Sunday. The protest was held in front of the press club yesterday.**

## New force in offing to fight terrorism

Asaduzzaman tells JS; police to get 50,000 more members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning to form a separate force to combat terrorism in the country, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told parliament yesterday.

"Counter-terrorism battalion will be formed soon. There are counter terrorism forces in different countries in the world. We are planning to do so," he said replying to a query.

Steps have been taken to arrest those culprits who are involved in hatching a conspiracy to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the home boss said replying to questions from treasury bench members Tarana Halim and Fazilatunnesa Bappi.

"Different kinds of conspiracies are hatched against the prime minister regularly. Our intelligences have identified the conspirators. We will arrest them," he said, adding, "Those who are hatching conspiracies against the premier did not sit idle. Our intelligences are active. We've unearthed a lot of [information] in this regard."

The state minister said information and photographs of the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman have been sent to important international airports through Interpol for tracing locations of the killers. Steps have also been taken to confiscate assets of all the fugitive convicts, he added.

He said there is nothing to worry about the security in schools and colleges across the country as law-enforcement agencies are working for it.

The home boss said steps will be taken against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia as per the law.

BSS adds: the government has a plan to appoint 50,000 more police personnel to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies in the country, the state minister told the House.

## Manna's plea against remand rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a prayer of Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna, seeking cancellation of a 10-day remand he is on now in a sedition case.

The metropolitan magistrate found no grounds for its scrapping because six days of the remand period have already passed.

Manna was remanded on Saturday, on expiry of a 10-day remand in another case filed for "trying to instigate a revolt by the armed forces."

The cancellation of the fresh remand was sought on Wednesday, as Manna has fallen sick, his lawyer Abdul Mannan Khan said in the petition.

Manna was hospitalised following a complaint of chest pain on Tuesday night.

The Nagorik Oikya chief and BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka were sued for sedition on March 5, nine days after the leak of a phone conversation between the two.

Manna, a former Awami

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## SC extends stay on Minar's bail till April 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday extended its stay on a High Court verdict, which granted bail to Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury Minar, the prime accused in Fulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque killing case, till April 1.

The court passed the order after hearing a government petition moved by Attorney General Mahbubey Alam seeking an extension. The apex court also asked the government to submit a leave-to-appeal

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## Bangladesh ideal hub of regional connectivity: USA

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States has said Bangladesh enjoys advantageous geography that makes it an "ideal hub" for connectivity and will continue to promote pan-Asian connectivity for cooperation with the countries in the region.

"Even closer to Kolkata, Bangladesh...is sometimes overlooked in the discussion about regional connectivity but it shouldn't be," a senior official of the US State Department told the "Building Pan-Asian Connectivity Conference" in Kolkata Tuesday.

Bangladesh is rich in natural resources and strategically situated at the intersection of China, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean, said Neil Kromash, deputy director, Office of South Asian Regional Affairs.

About importance of emerging regional organisations, he said the US believed Bimstec was well situated to advance important regional objectives such as transit and trade.

On maritime sphere, he said, "We see the Indian Ocean Rim Association, or IORA, as a promising forum to address shared interests such as: freedom of navigation, anti-piracy, climate change, fisheries management, and maritime scientific collaboration. "So, promoting pan-Asian connectivity is an issue that has, and will continue to have a strong and enduring US commitment."

Kromash said the US was also watching the steps between India and Bangladesh to pursue the development of electricity grid connections, as well as other projects to the east such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Amina Ahmed, mother-in-law of Cultural Affairs Minister

Asaduzzaman Noor, died of old age complications in a city hospital early yesterday, aged 85.

She left behind five daughters and a son, says a press release.

Amina, wife of Bengal Civil Service official Khandakar Jalaluddin Ahmed, was a sub-editor of the Dipak, a fortnightly magazine. She was buried in Banani graveyard following a namaz-e-janaza at Noor's New Bailey Road residence after Zohr prayers.

## War crimes tribunal clears Sangram editor, 3 others of contempt

3rd witness implicates Mahidur, Chutu in 1971 Chapainawabganj village arson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)-1 yesterday cleared the Bangla daily Sangram's editor and three others of contempt of court charges after they apologised unconditionally for two reports containing comments on sub-judice matters.

Meanwhile, a third prosecution witness implicated Mahidur Rahman and Afsar Hossain alias Chutu in synchronised arson attacks in four neighbouring Chapainawabganj villages during the Liberation War.

ICT-1 asked them to be careful, cautious and respectful in making or publishing any statement or comment regarding judicial proceedings, the judiciary or judges.

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## BCC drive against illegal footpath shops obstructed by 'rowdy youths'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal City Corporation (BCC) attempt to remove some 20 makeshift shops encroaching on footpaths along a 150-foot stretch of Nabagram Road was cut short yesterday after tension escalated following protests by rowdy youths.

Jahangir Hossain, a BCC road inspector who led the drive with some eight officials and workers around noon, said the clearance, coming a day after the

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