

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 34.8°C L 25.0

CHITTAGONG
H 31.4°C L 24.0

SYLHET
H 37.2°C L 20.8

RAJSHAHI
H 37.2°C L 21.5

KHULNA
H 35.0°C L 23.2

BARISAL
H 34.2°C L 23.3

RANGPUR
H 35.5°C L 19.7

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.0°C L 22.5

Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:12pm and rises tomorrow at 05:56am. Country's highest temperature 37.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Rajshahi and Sylhet and lowest 16.5 in Srirangal.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hafiz Chand Shawdagar, 46, lost his eyesight to small pox during his childhood at Amkhawa village in Jamalpur's Dewanganj.

He ended up in an orphanage following his mother's death in 1974. He lost his ancestral home in river erosion several years ago and is struggling to survive along with his wife and a son.

He urged the affluent for help so that he can buy a Braille machine that costs Tk 50,000 with which he can write and explain the verses of the Holy Qur'an and make a living.

Aid can be sent to Sherina Begum, savings account no-6949, Islami Bank, Jamalpur Branch; Cellphone: 01959753838.

Hartalless capital jammed again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The old scenario of traffic congestion was back on Dhaka city roads yesterday as the hartal was withdrawn on the week day after enforcing shutdown for 37 working days, except for one day, since February 1.

The BNP-led 20-party alliance on Tuesday announced its decision to spare the public from continuous hartals for today but to continue the blockade.

Transports on different routes had to wait for long to cross a short distance due to a rush of vehicles especially during peak hours yesterday.

"It took me one and a half hours to reach my office at Karwan Bazar from Shantibagh by a bus but during hartals it takes around 30 minutes," said Rafikuzzaman, a private

company official. Md Ripon, helper of Shikar Paribahan, a Jatrabari-Mirpur-12 route bus, said compared to Tuesday, it took the bus half an hour more to reach Gulistan from Jatrabari. Sumon, helper of ETC Transport Company Ltd, a Gulistan-Mipur-12 route bus, said, "Our bus took around 45 minutes to cross Farmgate area in the afternoon whereas at the same time on other days it takes only 15 minutes."

A huge number of private cars and other vehicles entered the city, taking advantage of the hartal free day. Schools, colleges and universities, which remained closed during hartals, also opened yesterday, causing people to bring their own transports on roads and to contribute to the congestion.



Prof Emajuddin Ahmed speaks to the media after a pro-BNP delegation led by him met Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad in his office of the capital yesterday demanding, among others, extension of the deadline by two or three days for filing applications seeking candidacies for the Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations' mayoral polls.

PHOTO: STAR



Forty-four people, including freedom fighters, hold up flaming torches in honour of the Liberation War martyrs at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar on the eve of the 44th Independence Day. The Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971 organised the event, demanding declaration of March 25 as "International Day of Genocide".

STUDENT LEADER KILLING Prime accused Shibir man acquitted

None convicted in the 1994 case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After 21 years into the murder of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute's student leader Jamir Uddin, a special tribunal delivered the verdict yesterday acquitting all 13 accused including Nasir Uddin alias Shibir Nasir, locally known as an Islami Chhatra Shibir goon.

The charges were not proved, said Public Prosecutor Ayub Khan, citing it as a case of "Justice delayed is justice denied".

He said that out of the 21 witnesses, only nine testified including four cops and deposition of only one -- the complainant -- went in favour of the prosecution.

Ayub Khan said some witnesses died, some went abroad for treatment, and some lost physical mobility.

Fifteen Shibir activists were indicted in August 2000, but the High Court stayed the trial in 2003 when the defence challenged the legality of the trial at a special tribunal. Proceedings resumed in April 2014, said the prosecutor.

Two accused died in "gunfight" with law enforcers.

On November 20, 1994, armed men shot dead Jamir Uddin, the institute student council's general secretary, on the campus, said court sources.

Jamir's brother Md Aziz Uddin, who had filed the murder case, said the family did not get justice.

Shibir Nasir is accused in 36 cases over killings and arms dealing.

Judge Reza Tareque Ahmed of Chittagong Tribunal Speedy Trial Tribunal pronounced the verdict.

Five accused were present at the dock while eight were on bail.

Death anniversary

CITY DESK



Today is the 9th death anniversary of Khondker Abdus Sami, a

former joint-secretary of ERD.

A Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil for him will be held in his hometown Sirajganj today.

Independence

FROM PAGE 4

Theatre troupe Prachyanat staged a half an hour long street performance "Lal Jatra" on the Chhobir Haat premises at Shahbagh and then marched to the Uddyan singing patriotic songs.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote also organised a candlelight vigil at Rajarbagh Police Lines where the first resistance struggle was attempted by police members when they were attacked on the night.

WAR CRIME TRIALS Govt appeals to SC seeking death for Abdul Jabbar

Probe report submitted to prosecution against eight Jamalpur 'Al-Badr men'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday filed an appeal with the Supreme Court, seeking death penalty for Abdul Jabbar for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 on February 24 sentenced the fugitive Jatiya Party leader to imprisonment until his death considering his old age.

Assistant Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star that 10 reasons have been cited in the appeal for which the Appellate Division of the SC may consider for sentencing Jabbar to death.

Meanwhile, the investigation agency yesterday handed over to the prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal a probe

report on eight Jamalpur "Al-Badr men" who were allegedly involved in crimes against humanity.

Matiur Rahman, the investigation officer of the case, gave the probe report, statements of witnesses and other documents to the Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Arief Tipoo in his office.

The suspects are Ashraf Hossain, 64, Prof Sharif Ahmed, 71, Abdul Mannan, 66, Abdul Bari, 62, Mohammad Harun, 58, Abdul Hashem, 65, Shamsul Haque alias Badr Bhai, 75, and SM Yousuf Ali, 83.

Scrutinising the documents, the prosecution will file formal charge(s) against the suspects if the findings are satisfactory. Of the eight, two are now in jail while the rest are on the run.



Exhibition
Through the Lens: Bangladesh (TTL BD) will organise a five-day photography exhibition on "Bangladesh in frames 7". Venue: Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi, Time: 4:00pm

Boat Race
Bangladesh Rowing Federation will organise a boat race to mark the Independence Day. Venue: Hatirjheel, Time: 4:00pm

Discussion
Kochi-Kachar Mela will organise a discussion on the Independence Day. Venue: Kochi-Kacha auditorium, Time: 10:30am

STAR WEEKEND

in other news...

With a fresh new format, new writers and a new perspective, the *Star Weekend* has an array of articles for your reading pleasure. This week our focus is Independence Day, which was celebrated yesterday on March 26. Our spotlight will show you what independence means for Bangladeshis around town. There will be articles that will take you back to 1971; special shows on the radio to motivate our Freedom Fighters and on the heroic acts of the Crack Platoon. There is also an article on the miseries of the people in Bihari Camp, and much more. Don't forget to pick up your copy of *Star Weekend*, tomorrow, Friday!

Rangamati Medical College set

FROM PAGE 3

over the start of classes." She said, "...we have already lagged more than two months behind. Any further delay would lead to a session jam of one-and-a-half years, as we would not be allowed to appear at the first professional examination of MBBS under Chittagong University, which is supposed to take place in May next year."

Classes were scheduled to begin on January 11, but Pahari Chhatra Parishad, which enforced a blockade to stop the inauguration, clashed with Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jubo League.

The indigenous people see the founding of the college as a step to push Bangladeshes into the Adivasi-populated district and demand full implementation of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord before starting its operation.

The students are reluctant to take classes in Rangamati, fearing violence.

Mahera said, "We witnessed the January 10 clash, and every one of us was terrified to see the extent of violence."

"I saw a man with one of his eyes gouged out in the clash," she said. "How terrible that was!"

Sharing the same fear, another student Shahrin Sultana Tani said, "The authorities can distribute the 51 students to four other government medical colleges under CU until a solution comes out."

She said, "We heard the representatives of the indigenous people did not accept the health ministry's decision of holding classes in Rangamati."

Snehashish Chakraborty, another student, said classes might be held at Chittagong Medical College or Chittagong General Hospital or Infectious Diseases' Hospital for now.

Principal Dr Tipu Sultan said, "We argued for holding the classes elsewhere except in Rangamati for the time being considering security, but we were instructed to hold those in Rangamati."

"I am worried about the students' safety," he said. "But what can I do? As a public official, I have to follow the government's decision."

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