



YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 34.0 L 27.0

CHITTAGONG H 35.0 L 27.0

SYLHET H 34.7 L 25.0

RAJSHAHI H 33.5 L 23.7

KHULNA H 34.5 L 25.6

BARISAL H 34.6 L 24.8

RANGPUR H 33.4 L 23.5

COX'S BAZAR H 35.2 L 27.8

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged and night temperature may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:21pm and rises tomorrow at 05:35am. Country's highest temperature 36.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Mongla and lowest 23.0 in Mymensingh, Tangail and Syedpur.

Free, independent press bridge between government, people

Says The Daily Star Editor, Publisher Mahfuz Anam in his speech on Sustainable Development and Press Freedom: Context Bangladesh organised by Nazmul Karim Study Centre of DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An independent and free press is a must for establishing true democracy and good governance in Bangladesh, which plans to ensure sustainable development, said Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, yesterday.

"For sustainable development, firstly, it is essential to know people's opinion. The government can know this through its party men or through intelligence agencies. But only the free press can give the objective and authentic views of the people," he added.

Mahfuz Anam was delivering a speech on "Sustainable Development and Press Freedom: Context Bangladesh" organised by Nazmul Karim Study Centre in RC Majumdar Auditorium of Dhaka University.

The government will adopt policies for different development projects but the private sector must be involved in the implementation, said Mahfuz Anam, adding that the private sector would build up industries and boost trade to create employment opportunities.

Neither the bureaucracy nor any other state machinery will raise questions if the government's plan fails to work in such a way, he mentioned.

So, it is a free press which will bring the whole thing before the public, he said. "There is no way for a society which can fight against corruption without a free press," he added.

He said it was the duty of the free press to act as a bridge between the government and the governed by focusing on transparency and accountability in all sectors in a democratic country.

He mentioned that the free press works as a watchdog to scrutinise any corruption or irregularity in the government projects.

"Parliament is a big institution and it is supposed to play a role in focusing on the government's failures. But it cannot do so properly as the majority of its members are of a particular party," he said.

So, it is an independent press which shows the government's failures to establish transparency and accountability in its policies and activities, he added.

Terming journalists "social doctors", Mahfuz Anam said it was the supreme duty of journalists to uphold truth to serve the country.

"If the press fails to work freely, progress of society can be seriously hindered," he said.

He, however, said the press must ensure transparency and accountability in its actions. In this regard, he mentioned that in many countries media watchdogs usually monitor press' activities.

Later, Mahfuz Anam replied to queries of participants regarding the free press and government.

Chairing the event, DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the press must uphold its credibility by acting as a bridge between the government and people.

Dr Nehal Karim, director of Nazmul Karim Study Centre, gave the welcome address and presented a brief biography of Mahfuz Anam.



Horse riders in a race on the Mymensingh Circuit House ground yesterday afternoon marking Pahela Baishakh. Mymensingh municipality has been organising the event for the last four years. This year, some 40 contestants from the region took part in the race in four groups.

PHOTO: STAR

RU teachers manhandled by ruling party men

RU CORRESPONDENT

With Awami League (AL) lawmaker Omar Faruque Chowdhury allegedly threatening to get the Rajshahi University (RU) vice-chancellor (VC) sacked the day before, the ruling party's men yesterday shouted expletives at the VC and manhandled teachers demanding that people of their choosing be appointed in the RU administration.

AL Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Dablu Sarkar also demanded an explanation from VC Muhammad Mizanuddin "why he had insulted Omar".

Yesterday's entire incident took place in front of The Daily Star correspondent.

On Wednesday, Omar, allegedly becoming irate on being asked to meet later, barged into the VC's office, forcing postponement of a meeting, thumped a table, and shouted expletives, threatening to get the latter sacked.

Refuting the allegation, Omar later said he had gone there and only talked about lessening a fine the RU authorities imposed on a private medical college.

Dablu, accompanied by 30 others, pushed his way into the VC's office yesterday while the latter was holding a meeting with some 20 teachers including RU Pro-VC Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan, Registrar Entajul Haque, Rajshahi University Teachers Association (Ruta) General Secretary Rezaul Karim Badal, and Public Relations Administrator Elias Hossain.

They also shouted expletives at VC demanding that he appoint their chosen people as staff, just a day after local AL lawmaker Omar had hurled abuses at him over a fine on a pvt medical college

Dablu questioned why the VC had still not appointed their men.

"Rajshahi city Awami League president and general secretary will provide lists from which you must provide appointments," he added.

When the VC replied that appointments will follow the RU ordinance, the AL men initiated the verbal abuse.

Awami Swechhasebak League Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Zedu Sarkar then demanded that the VC specify a date for the appointment.

"If you go to the prime minister regarding this incident, I will also go to the prime minister," he told the VC, and reminded him to keep in mind that Awami League is in power.

When science faculty Dean Habibur Rahman asked AL Rajshahi city unit Vice-President Sahadat Hossain to check his behaviour, Dablu shoved him, calling him an "insolent child".

The violent behaviour was repeated with other teachers who protested, including RU Student Adviser Sadequl Arefin Matin, and Ruta President Ananda Kumar Saha.

The AL men left threatening to "halt

all activities on the campus for an indefinite period" if their demand was not met.

Afterwards, a faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League men led by RU unit President Mizanur Rahman Rana brought out a procession on the campus demanding that the VC be sacked.

Asked of his behaviour, Dablu completely denied having done so, saying it was "only a peaceful dialogue" over allegations that the VC was patronising Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP activists on the campus.

"We will reveal how the VC was patronising the BNP-Jamaat men through a press conference later," he added.

Omar could not be reached over the phone for comments.

The VC said he was lost for words to protest. "I must seek remedy from the chancellor and the government maintaining official procedures," he added.

Ruta and RU Deans Committee issued statements protesting the incidents in the last two days, with the former demanding that Omar be stripped of his membership in parliament, and the latter seeking the intervention of Chancellor Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Similarly, Progressive Students' Alliance of four leftist student bodies organised a rally demanding that the perpetrators be punished following an investigation.

JU BCL suspends 5 for sexually harassing indigenous woman

JU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League's (BCL) Jahangirnagar University (JU) unit suspended five of its activists yesterday over allegations they sexually harassed a female indigenous student, assaulted her male friend and snatched their belongings near Muni Shoroni road on the evening of Pahela Baishakh.

Residents of Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall, Nishat Imtiaj, Bijoy is in his 3rd year at journalism and media studies, Nafis Imtiaj 3rd year chemistry, Abdur Rahman Ifti and Nurul Kabir 2nd year anthropology and Rakib Hassan geography and environment.

Citing that more punitive measures will be taken based on an investigation, JU BCL, in a press release, demanded that the JU authority do the same in 24 hours.

Meanwhile, JU unit Bangladesh Chhatra Union also brought out a procession voicing the demand and threatening to otherwise launch a movement.

The victim filed a complaint, now being looked into by the Anti-Sexual Harassment Cell of JU headed by Prof Rasheda Akter.

The student alleged that she was attacked at Chorungy area while returning to her hall and that her purse and cellphone had been snatched.

Prothom Alo Trust gets new committee



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of Envoy Group Kutubuddin Ahmed has been elected as chairman of the Prothom Alo Trust for three years.

In the trust's board meeting held at the daily's office, Managing Director of Berger Paint Bangladesh Ltd Rupali Chowdhury and Coordinator of Dhaka Medical College Burn Unit Dr Samanta Lal Sen have also been elected as its vice-chairman and treasurer respectively.

Managing Director of Brac Bank Syed Mahbub Rahman, Vice Chancellor of Central Women's University Dr Parveen Hasan and writer and journalist Anisul Hoque have also been included in the trust committee as its new members.

The Prothom Alo Trust was formed as a not for profit organisation in 2009 under the Trusts Act.



Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Arefin Siddique speaks at an event where Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam delivered a speech on "Sustainable Development and Press Freedom: Context Bangladesh", organised by Nazmul Karim Study Centre in RC Majumdar Auditorium of Dhaka University yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Interpol issues red notice for arrest of war criminal Jabbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International police organisation Interpol has issued a worldwide alert for the arrest of fugitive war criminal Abdul Jabbar who was sentenced to jail until death by a tribunal on February 24 this year for committing genocide and crimes against humanity in the 1971 war.

Issued on April 10 at the Interpol's website, the Red Notice, a request for local police to detain any wanted person for extradition, says former Jatiya Party lawmaker Jabbar, 82, might be located in the USA.

The international crimes tribunal in its judgment asked the home ministry secretary and the inspector general of police to ensure apprehension of Jabbar with the help of Interpol, if necessary.

The police headquarters sent a letter along with a copy of the Interpol notice to the registrar office of the International Crimes (Tribunals) on Wednesday, said Acting Deputy Registrar Md Aftabuzzaman, adding that the letter has been forwarded to the judges yesterday.

If Jabbar is traced, an extradition will be sought upon arrest



of the person, in conformity with its national laws and/or the applicable bilateral and multilateral treaties, reads the notice, adding that the red notice is to be treated as a formal request for a provisional arrest.

Dissatisfied at the tribunal's verdict, the prosecution sought capital punishment at the Appellate Division which is now pending.

HABIGANJ SIBLINGS' CASE

The tribunal-2 yesterday asked investigators to submit its probe report by April 30 on two war crimes suspect siblings of Habiganj--Mahibur Rahman Boro Mian, 70, and Majibur Rahman Angur Mian, 65.

The tribunal gave the order after prosecutor Sultan Mahmud Simon sought one-month time to submit the report.

Arrested on February 10, Mahibur, former chairman of Baniachang upazila's Khagaura Union Parishad; and Majibur, the incumbent chairman, are now in jail.

The two brothers allegedly formed the Razakar Bahini, the Pakistani occupation army's auxiliary force, in their area and used to hand over freedom fighters to the Pakistani army, according to primary investigation findings.

Mirza Fakhru gets 62nd bail

Still three more needed for release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir for six months in a vandalism and arson case, he cannot get released yet since he has been held in three more such cases.

The court also asked the government to explain in four weeks why he should not be granted regular bail in the case filed with Paltan Police Station on January 4 in connection with vandalism of a car and setting fire to it; and to explain in two weeks why he would not be granted bail in the other three cases as well. He was arrested on January 6, and facing 68 cases getting bail so far in 62, said his lawyer.

Tabith unveils 83-point manifesto for North

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In this context, I want to make Dhaka north a modern, liveable and ideal city with the help of the elderly and experienced people and using the spirit of the youth," the 36-year-old told a press conference at his Tejgaon election office.

Tabith said all parks would get health check-up booths, and low-income people, expectant mothers and children would receive free treatment at the city corporation-run community hospitals.

The manifesto also includes stopping the sale of contaminated foods, setting up night and farmers' markets at major intersections and food courts at public places, ensuring safe water and smooth supplies of gas, power and water, and building affordable houses for low-income people.

Tabith, the eldest son of Khaleda Zia's adviser and businessman Abdul

Awal Minto, said the roads would undergo renovation and necessary development works on an emergency basis, and there would be adequate, clean footpaths and a Mumbai-like "skywalk" for pedestrians.

For betterment of education, he would introduce modern school bus services for safe transportation of children, build a public university at Uttara, and set up scholarships for outstanding achievers in primary, junior and secondary school certificate exams.

Tabith promised to take every possible step to make the city clean, green and environment-friendly, and introduction of a modern waste management system would be one of the measures.

Replying to a question, he said that although he was contesting with the blessing of a particular party, but once elected, "I will be people's mayor, not the mayor of any politi-

cal party."

The other focus areas are facilitating social development, improving amusement facilities, providing digital services, and making the city corporation free from corruption upholding the spirits of the Liberation War, Bangladesh nationalism, and communal harmony.

BNP leaders Moudud Ahmed and Selima Rahman, pro-BNP civil society platform Adarsha Dhaka Andolan's convener Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, member secretary Shawkat Mahmud, and members -- journalist Mahfuz Ullah, Dhaka University Prof Mahbub Ullah, and journalist Abdul Hye Sikder -- were also present.

On Wednesday night, the platform unveiled a common manifesto for its two mayor candidates -- Tabith and Mirza Abbas (Dhaka south) -- promising to build a liveable, safe and clean city.

Qadirabad Cantonment as per an order of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He is the father of eminent journal-

ist Nadeem Qadir, who is the minister (press) in the Bangladesh High Commission in London.

Kafee vows to improve lives of the poor

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of official activities and said the offices of ward councillors would be turned into service hubs.

To curb corruption, he said, details of the budget and expenditures of the city corporation would be available on the internet.

Noting that 83 percent of the city dwell-

ers live in rented houses, he pledged to check hikes of the rents.

He announced to stage a daylong sit-in in front of Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner's office unless the criminals who assaulted women at Dhaka University on Pahela Baishakh are not arrested by Saturday.

Child rape, suicide on rise

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presented the study, while Dr Tofail Ahmed, director-governance, MJF, and Shahana Huda, coordinator-media and communication, MJF, spoke.

The report further said 394 children were murdered last year. Among them, 25 children were killed due to family feuds, 14 for ransom, 17 by robbers, eight by

friends, nine due to love-related matters, six due to family enmity, and three for land disputes.

It also said 400 children were abducted last year, but only 280 were rescued. There was no follow-up for the rest of them.

The study was based on six newspapers -- Prothom Alo, Ittefaq, Jugantor, New Age and The Daily Star.

Mahi for safe neighbourhoods

FROM PAGE 3

The son of former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury alleged that his rivals did not do any homework while preparing their respective manifestoes.

Referring to the fact that the ruling party-backed candidate Annisul Huq expressed

sadness at Mahi's comments that the former's manifesto lacks substance, Mahi said Annisul Huq was new in politics. He said there was nothing to take the opponent's reaction personally.

"A city mayor must be a politician," he added.