

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 32.6 L 23.4	H 33.1 L 24.6	H 30.3 L 19.8	H 37.2 L 20.9	H 34.0 L 23.5	H 32.8 L 24.3	H 27.8 L 20.4	H 32.5 L 22.7

Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:23pm and rises tomorrow at 05:30am. Country's highest temperature 37.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Rajshahi and lowest 18.6 in Mymensingh.

BNP's Rizvi, Falu charged with arson

40 other 20-party alliance activists also accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mirpur police yesterday pressed charges against 42 leaders and activists of BNP-led 20-party alliance, including Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Ahmed and Mosaddak Ali Falu, in an arson case.

The accused also include BNP Standing Committee Member Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, and leaders Amanullah Aman, Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, and Maruf Kamal Khan.

Forty BNP men, including Rizvi and Falu, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, are now in jail while the others including Rafiqul and Shimul Biswas are absconding. The investigation officer of the case appealed to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka to issue arrest warrants against the 28 fugitives. The court will pass order on May 5. According to the case statement, the accused instigated the alliance men in torching a bus at the capital's Mirpur-1 on January 28 during their anti-government movement.



An effigy of perpetrators who sexually assaulted some 20 females near the Suhrawardy Udyan gate near Teacher-Student Centre at Dhaka University during Pahela Baishakh celebrations on April 14 being burnt at the base of Shontrash Birodhi Raju Sharok Bhaskorjo yesterday by students of the economics department demanding arrest and exemplary punishment for the culprits.

PHOTO: STAR

MASS MOLESTATION ON PAHELA BAISHAKH

Home boss, police trying to cover it up

Alleges Chhatra Union; declares fresh programmes; agitations escalate countrywide

DU CORRESPONDENT

Agitations against mass molestation of females on Dhaka University during Pahela Baishakh celebrations escalated in the capital and elsewhere in the country yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, declaring fresh programmes at a press conference at Modhur Canteen at DU, Bangladesh Chhatra Union President Hasan Tarek alleged that the state minister for home affairs along with police is trying to cover up the incident of molestation.

He said one week has passed after the incident but police could not arrest any molester though video footages, still images and other evidence are available. "The state minister has kept his eyes closed," said Tarek adding that the people of the country will not accept any attempt of protecting molesters and covering up the incident.

The fresh programmes are torchlight procession from the DU Raju sculpture at 6:00pm today; mass rally across the country tomorrow; a views-exchange meeting on sex assault and injustice and candlelight vigil at DU TSC and elsewhere in the country on Saturday; one hour class boycott from 11:00am in all educational institutions across the country on Sunday, anti-sex harassment campaign on April 27-29 and students' rally at district level on April 30.

Students of DU economics department burnt effigies of molesters before the Raju sculpture at TSC. They demanded immediate punishment for the culprits and measures to beef up security on DU campus specially on the days of special occasions.

Students from several departments of the university formed in front of human chain organised by the law department in front of Manal Shahid Minar. Later, they brought out a protest procession on the campus. Hundreds of general students joined the procession.

Bangladesh Supreme Court Lawyers Association at a human chain organised by its female lawyers also announced continuous protest programmes across the country until punishment of the perpetrators are given.

People from all walks of life under the banner of Barisal alliance for preventing torture against women formed a human chain in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall in Barisal city yesterday.

They also brought out a protest rally in the city and handed over a memorandum to the district administration to send it to the prime minister and the state minister for home affairs demanding measures to stop such violence against women. About thirty socio-political, development and rights organisations took part in the events.

Nari Jogajog Kendra (NJK), a platform working to promote women's rights, formed human chains in Nilphamari, Mymensingh and Chittagong and submitted memorandums to the respective deputy commissioners demanding exemplary punishment for the offenders and stopping all forms of violence and harassment against humanity.

Some 30 to 40 rowdy youths assaulted and molested around 20 females for about an hour at the Suhrawardy Udyan gate near TSC on Dhaka University campus on April 14.

RAPID TRANSIT BUS SERVICE

Gazipur-airport stretch to be ready in 2018

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction of the 23km Gazipur-airport stretch of the rapid bus service popularly known as BRT will be completed by end of 2018, said the project's director at a roundtable discussion in the capital yesterday.

Detailed design of the route is set to be completed by this June and the construction is to start after tendering process by end of next year, said Afi Uddin, project director.

He said the 255 million US dollar facility would be built with funding from Asian Development Bank, Agence Francaise de Development of France and the Bangladesh government.

The discussion "Role of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a Traffic Solution for Dhaka City" organised by Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority with support from The Daily Star and a communication firm Expressions was held in The Daily Star Centre.

The deadline also include the time required for construction of a three-km elevated section and six elevated overpasses of the BRT route, said Afi Uddin.

BRT is a transport facility with dedicated, improved and articulated (conjoined) rapid bus service to carry an estimated 15,000 passengers per hour in one direction and will partially resolving traffic congestion and public woes in the capital, according to experts.

It will occupy two central lanes (6.5-

metre wide) of the existing road dedicated for faster bus service.

On the other hand, the 22km long rapid bus service known as BRT-3 stretching from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Keraniganj is currently trying to woo 250 million US dollars to implement the scheme with the detailed design done, said its project director Anisur Rahman.

"While we have not yet got any World Bank guarantee for funding of the 277-million US dollar scheme, we also need strong political support to overcome various physical barriers on the way of the scheme," he said.

The World Bank-funded Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project under which the detailed design of the airport-Keraniganj BRT has been carried out, comes to an end in this June.

Nearly 2.1 million trips take place every day in the capital city of which about 28 percent take place on foot, another 28 percent by public bus, 39 percent by rickshaw while only 5 percent travel by private cars, said Anisur.

While the Gazipur section will have 25 stations, the airport-Keraniganj section will have 16 with an elevated overpass at Mohakhali intersection exclusively for the BRT.

Transport planner and former adviser to DTCA Tanwir Nawaz, and Rajuk Chairman GM Jainal Abedin Bhuiya, among others, also spoke.

SEE PHOTO ONLINE

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE

Explosion caused Hasina's ear injuries

Says Prof Pran Gopal in his deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Prof Pran Gopal Datta, who had treated the then Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina for ear injuries caused in the August 21 grenade attack, yesterday gave his deposition before a Dhaka court.

Pran Gopal, former vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, told the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 that on August 23 of 2004 a personal staff of Sheikh Hasina had called him over the telephone to go to Dhanmondi's Sudha Sadan for the treatment.

On arrival, he found injuries in Hasina's right ear which reduced her hearing ability, he said, adding that he treated and gave her some medicines and later on August 24 advised her to go abroad for better treatment.

"After examining, I opined that the injuries were caused due to bomb or grenade explosion," said the witness.

The court fixed May 4 and 5 for the next hearing and summoned Nazmul Hassan Papon, son of Zillur Rahman, and six other prosecution witnesses to appear before it on that date.

The attack was carried out on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004, killing 24 people including Ivy Rahman, wife of late President Zillur Rahman and injuring scores.

SC upholds Fakhru's bail in vandalism case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court order that granted BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir bail on April 16 for six months in a case filed with Paltan police for vandalising and torching a car in Dhaka.

The SC passed "no order" on an appeal filed by the government seeking stay on the HC order.

However, Fakhru cannot get released from jail, since he is arrested in some other cases, said Additional Attorney General Momtaz Uddin Fakir.

Nasir outlines plans for green, digital

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Nasir said he would chalk out short-, mid- and long-term programmes based on experts' recommendations to get the city rid of waterlogging.

His six-point plan includes restoration of the canals and drains through dredging and widening, removing wastes from the canals, digging new canals, blocking tidal flows from entering the city by building sluice gates in the Karnaphuli river, dredging the river, and implementing the drainage master plan of 1995 after its up-gradation.

Nasir also pledged to set right the messy waste management by building underground sewage tanks and a central network of sewerage pipelines to prevent human waste from flowing into the canals and to

produce biogas from the waste.

Multi-story car parks and a modern public transport system will address the problem of traffic jams, while e-governance at the city corporation, smart cards for payment of taxes and electricity bills, and wifi zones will help its digitisation.

He also promised re-introduction of separate bus services for women and kids and cuts in bus fares for students.

Meanwhile, prime minister's information adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury yesterday urged the people of Chittagong to vote for the candidates of the pro-Liberation forces in the April 28 city election.

He made the call at a views exchange meeting with professionals, organised by Peshajibi Samannay Parishad, Chittagong, at Theatre Institute Chittagong.



Classes lie empty as the Department of Sociology at Rajshahi University (RU) observe a boycott yesterday demanding punitive measures against Awami League lawmaker Omar Faruque Chowdhury and Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Dablu Sarker over their virulent behaviour at the vice-chancellor's office recently. The department declared doing the same today, coinciding with a work abstention announced by The Chairmen Council, comprising heads of RU's 52 departments.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH



One of the around 100 billboards pulled down around Chittagong city yesterday by Chittagong City Corporation as per the Election Commission's directives. The photo was taken at Nur Ahmed Road.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Metraj gov only way to get

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mayors", presided over by BIP President Prof Golam Rahman, in the capital's Planners Tower.

The 15 mayor candidates briefly stated their plans for Dhaka and urged the city dwellers to choose honest candidates possessing moral principles to free the two city corporations from corruption.

The provincial government system is necessary for a safe Dhaka, said Bahauddin Ahmed Babul. Abdullah Al Kafi aimed making a "humane Dhaka".

"If corrupt persons are elected as mayors, then city corporations will not be free from corruption," said Abu Naser Mohammad Naser Hussain.

Bahrane Sultane Bahar questioned how the city corporations would be free from dishonesty when several thousand crores of taka were illegally being spent centring the election.

Sheikh Md Fazle Bari Masud lamented that people would eventually end up electing a corrupt person but still seek development. Anisuzzaman Khokan emphasised the need for proper plans.

The others contestants include Akhtaruzzaman, Moshir Rahman, Moazzem Hossain Khan Mozlish, Kazi Md Shahidullah, SS Akram, Zaman Bhuyan, Zahidur Rahman, AYM Qumrul Islam and Sheikh Shahiduzzaman.

Women

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schoolgirls from stalking.

Katie Croake, deputy chief of Democracy International, expressed disappointment at low participation of women in the upcoming city corporation polls. Prof Zarina Rahman Khan of Public Administration of Dhaka University also spoke.

2.1 lakh

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each for producing Nerica, a drought-tolerant hybrid rice variety, said the minister. She said Nerica which has been proved successful in the country grows in 96 to 100 days whereas local high yielding varieties takes nearly 120 days.

"We expect additional production of 70,000 metric tonnes of rice plus straw worth Tk 231 crore," she said.

HC questions VIP status

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Caab chairman to submit a report by May 12 stating what steps had been taken against officials who provided it.

The rule and order came following a report published in Bangla daily Janakantha on April 9.

Supreme Court lawyer Muntasir Uddin Ahmed placed the daily's report before the HC bench, saying there was a government order barring the war criminal's family members from leaving the country, let alone be provided the VIP status.

The HC fixed May 12 for passing further orders, he told The Daily Star.

The report says Ghulam Azam's wife Afifa Azam, his son's wife Tasnim Anjum and his nephew Lutful Kabir were scheduled to fly to Saudi Arabia and the airport's director, Group Captain Jakir Hasan, provided the privilege hiding their identities from immigration.

Later, intelligence officials informed airport officials about their identities and the three were sent back to their residences, the report said.

The former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer, who had been serving 90-years' imprisonment for masterminding war crimes during the Liberation War, died at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on October 23 last year.