

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 34.0 | L 26.1

CHITTAGONG
H 33.4 | L 22.2

SYLHET
H 34.5 | L 21.5

RAJSHAHI
H 36.4 | L 26.5

KHULNA
H 35.5 | L 23.5

BARISAL
H 35.0 | L 23.4

RANGPUR
H 28.8 | L 24.2

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.5 | L 21.3

Rain is likely to occur at a few places/at one or two places over all the division till 6:00pm today. Mild heat wave sweeping over Rajshahi, Pabna, Satkhira, Jessore and Kushtia may continue, said Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:39pm and rises tomorrow at 05:12am.

Prothom Alo journo Mizanur gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to Prothom Alo journalist ABM Mizanur Rahman who was allegedly tortured in police custody, in two cases filed on charge of assaulting lawmen and demanding extortion.

In response to two bail petitions filed by Mizanur, Baufal correspondent of the daily, the court also issued two rules upon the government to explain in four weeks why the journalist Mizanur should not be granted regular bail in the cases.

The HC bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Md Khasruzzaman granted the bail till disposal of the rules.

Deputy Attorney General FR Khan told The Daily Star that the government will not appeal to the Supreme Court against the bail.

Police arrested Mizanur from Kalaiya Bazar area around 8:00pm on March 17 on charge of assaulting Halim, assistant sub-inspector of Baufal Police Station, and preventing police from discharging duties.

Later, policemen allegedly tortured the journalist physically and mentally in their custody at night. When Mizanur became senseless, police took him to Baufal Upazila Health Complex at night but returned with him without treatment as some journalists rushed to the hospital hearing the incident.

Police produced Mizanur before a Patuakhali court, which ordered to send him to jail the following day.

Denying the allegation of police, Mizanur's father Abdus Salam after the incident alleged that plainclothes law enforcers tried to kidnap his son as his reports on irregularities of police and ruling party men got published in the media.

Police later filed a case against Mizanur on charge of extortion, he said.

Rafique-Ul Haq and Shahdeen Malik appeared for Mizanur.

Following a writ petition, the HC on March 24 issued a rule upon the government and the police authorities to explain why inhuman physical and mental torture on Mizanur in police custody should not be declared illegal.

Mojaheed's lawyer finds PWs biased, evasive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A defence counsel yesterday told the Supreme Court that the witnesses against Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed in three crimes against humanity charges were of a tender age, biased and evasive and their statements were unbelievable.

Therefore the conviction and sentence handed down in the charges of abducting and killing eminent journalist Serajuddin Hossain, confining Ranjit Nath, and killing composer Altaf Mahmud, Jahir Uddin Jalal, Badi, Rumi (son of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam), Jewel and Azad are liable to be scrapped, said SM Shahjahan.

International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)-2 sentenced Mojaheed to death for abducting and killing Serajuddin, and merged this offence with the charge of killing intellectuals and professionals.

It sentenced the Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general to life imprisonment in the charge of killing Altaf, Jalal, Badi and Rumi and to five years' imprisonment in the charge of confining Ranjit during the 1971 Liberation War.

According to the verdict, Mojaheed had led a "death squad" named Al-Badr that worked as an auxiliary force of the Pakistani occupation army.

Election Commission needs reconstitution

Says SHUJAN accusing the incumbent of failing to prove credibility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission must be reconstituted as the incumbent has failed to prove its credibility in past several elections including those in three city corporations on April 28, Sushashoner Janney Nagarik (SHUJAN) said yesterday.

The voters hoped for fair and competitive elections in Dhaka and Chittagong cities after three months of political crisis, but they grew "very frustrated" for EC's failure to ensure free and transparent polling, it said in a written statement.

"We think it is urgent to form a strong commission following the constitution," Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of the civil society organisation, told reporters at a press conference on "DNCC, DSCC and CCC elections: What types of representatives we have had" in Sagar-Runi Auditorium of Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Asked about the impact of the "controversial" elections, he said it would possibly affect the country's politics as the people wanted an end to the culture of violent politics.

"Radical groups arise in countries where democratic practices remain absent. We don't want to face such groups. So, it is essential to continue the democratic system and fair elections in the country," he

observed.

Dilip Kumar Sarkar, central coordinator of SHUJAN, mentioned the reports of irregularities in the three city elections, prepared by monitoring groups like the Election Working Group, Transparency International Bangladesh, Ain o Salish Kendra, Asian Human Rights Commission, and the UN, USA and UK.

"The recently held three city corporation elections, which witnessed contradictions and irregularities, can never be acceptable. So, we must be vocal to bring huge reforms in the existing election system and Election Commission," he said in a written speech.

He made recommendations for enactment of law for formation of search committees, which will seek out honest, efficient, and intrepid persons as election commissioners, and for bringing positive changes in fixing the qualifications of candidates.

Analysing the affidavits of the newly elected city corporation representatives, he said 75 percent of them were rich and businessmen, around 42 percent had no educational certificates, one of the three mayors faced cases, 13 percent of the councillors faced cases, and 10 percent of the representatives faced bank loans.

GRAFT CASES AGAINST KHALEDA Hearing adjourned till June 18

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned till June 18 the hearing of Zia Orphanage and Zia Charitable Trust corruption cases filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and eight others.

Judge Abu Ahmed Jamadar of the Special Judge Court-3 passed the order in presence of Khaleda Zia in response to a petition filed by the defense seeking more time for cross-examining Harun-ur-Rashid in Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

Harun is a deputy director of the Anti Corruption Commission and also plaintiff of both the cases. The court completed recording statement of Harun.

Khaleda's counsel Khandaker Mahbub Hossain also submitted a petition for expunging statements recorded by the court in absence of the BNP chief in Zia Orphanage Trust graft case but the court rejected the plea.

Mahbub said, "We will go to the high court challenging the rejection order."

Earlier at 10:54am, Khaleda appeared before the court at the makeshift court in the capital's Baksibazar Alia Madrassa.

Advocate Sanaullah Mia represented BNP leader Tarique Rahman in his absence while four other accused, including BNP leader Kazi Kamal, were present yesterday.

NEWS IN brief

ACC, TIB join hands against graft

UNB, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding with Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to fight corruption.

ACC Director General Dr M Shamsul Arefin and TIB Executive Director Dr M Iftekharuzzaman signed the agreement at the ACC conference room in the capital.

Under the two-year agreement, the ACC and TIB will cooperate to conduct joint advocacy programmes, research and prevention activities to create awareness among people about the adverse impacts of corruption. Iftekharuzzaman said TIB would help ACC conduct researches and launch campaign to check graft in the country.

Mirza Abbas denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday denied bail to BNP leader Mirza Abbas in two cases.

Now there is no legal bar to arrest Abbas, Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star.

The bench of Justice Md Ruhul Quddus denied the bail after hearing two petitions. The cases were filed on charges of vandalism and setting fire to vehicles on last December 29 and January 4 this year. On April 15, an HC bench of two justices gave split order on the petitions, which were later sent to the chief justice who assigned yesterday's bench.

Sust female student sexually harassed by peer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A student of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) sexually assaulted a female student on the campus and also slapped her with his sandal when she protested on Sunday evening.

Acting Proctor Md Emdadul Haq said Rifat Adnan Papon, a student of BBA, has been served with an order to show cause by tomorrow, after the victim had submitted written complaints to the proctor as well as the centre for prevention of sexual harassment yesterday.

Blogger Ananta Bijoy murder case goes to CID

UNB, Sylhet

Police Headquarters yesterday directed Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) to hand over the blogger Ananta Bijoy Das killing case to Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as no breakthrough has yet been made.

Blogger Ananta, an activist of Sylhet Gonojagoron Mancha, was hacked to death by assailants in broad daylight at Subidbazar Bankalpara in Sylhet city on May 12. He used to blog for "Mukto-Mona", founded by blogger Avijit Roy who was killed two and a half months ago.

On May 13, his brother filed the case against four people.

'Mugger' killed in police firing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged mugger was killed and another injured as police fired on them in the capital's Jatrabari early yesterday.

Sohel, alias Natat Soheli, 28, a prime accused in the case filed for killing Billal, a police informer, in May was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said police.

Some seven muggers hurled crude bombs at a patrol police team when the cops raided Kutubkhali to arrest the gang, said Jatrabari police, adding that the two received bullets when we retaliated with fire.

Injured Sajib is undergoing treatment at National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor).

JU goes on 61-day vacation today

BSS, JU

Jahangirnagar University (JU) is going for a 61-day vacation from today on the occasions of summer, Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr.

The academic activities will remain closed till July 25 while administrative activities will remain closed from May 30 to June 4.

Prime Bank organises blood donation programme

CITY DESK

Prime Bank Ltd arranged a voluntary blood donation programme on Wednesday on its Head Office premises as part of corporate social responsibility and the month-long activities marking its 20th anniversary, said a press release.

Managing Director of the bank Ahmed Kamal Khan Chowdhury inaugurated the programme organised jointly with Bangladesh Thalassaemia Hospital.



Bangladesh Garo Chhatra Sangathan stages a demonstration in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding exemplary punishment for perpetrators who gang-raped an indigenous woman inside a running microbus in the capital's Kuril area on May 21.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

ILLEGAL MIGRATION THROUGH BAY

Govt orders vigilance boost

Dhaka to press resolving Rohingya issue at May 29 Thai regional meeting; tells envoys in Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to ensure safe return of Bangladeshi trafficked migrants

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has ordered the home ministry and other authorities concerned to intensify vigilance at the border, especially along the sea, to halt any sort of illegal and risky migration from Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Dhaka will emphasise resolving the crisis concerning Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar at a May 29 special regional meeting Thailand is hosting in Bangkok to address the flow of illegal migrants through the Bay of Bengal.

A highly placed source told The Daily Star that a five-member Bangladesh delegation will propose for a comprehensive approach and mount pressure on Myanmar to settle the Rohingya issue.

In another development, the government asked its envoys in Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to go for extensive coordination for safety, security and safe return of Bangladeshi migrants.

Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque hosted the urgent meeting of the envoys at state guesthouse Meghna last evening.

Regarding the government vigilance order, the local administration, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), police, coastguard and navy have also been asked to set up an all-out barricade and strictly enforce all existing legal mechanism.

Besides, security and intelligence agencies have been advised to keep track of any quarters involved in the malpractice.

A highly placed source told The Daily Star that the Prime Minister's Office has tasked the foreign ministry to coordinate the issue and peacefully resolve the current migration crisis and hold extensive meetings with the countries and international agencies concerned for safety and security of the migrants as well as arranging their safe return upon verification of nationality.

As per the instruction, the foreign ministry yesterday conveyed an inter-ministerial meeting with Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque in the chair. Senior officials from the ministries of home, foreign, welfare and relief, police, BGB, coastguard, navy and intelligence agencies attended.

Meeting sources said the law

enforcing agencies and local administration pointed out the role of local elected representatives and blamed them for the illegal migration.

It is alleged that in many cases the local administration felt embarrassed and could not take action or stop illegal migration, particularly through sea routes, as local ruling party men and elected representatives are directly involved with the illegal activities, sources said.

The meeting also discussed ways and means to resist the voyage of Bangladeshis along with Myanmar's Rohingya using boat.

The inter-ministerial meeting opined that strict enforcement of all legal mechanism could check illegal migration.

Salahuddin's wife, brother

FROM PAGE 3

After disappearing from a residence in the capital's Uttara on March 10, the BNP spokesperson appeared in Shillong, the capital city of Indian's Northeastern state of Meghalaya.

Shillong police said the 54-year-old former state minister was arrested on May 11 after locals reported a suspicious person loitering in the tourist city's GolfLink area.

Police at first admitted him to a mental hospital and later shifted him to Shillong

Civil Hospital on May 12.

Following Shillong Civil Hospital's advice, Salahuddin was shifted to NEIGRIHMS on May 20. Meghalaya police are with him round the clock as he is facing a case for violating the Foreigners' Act.

His wife submitted a petition at a Shillong court on Friday on his behalf seeking bail. The court directed police to submit a report on Salahuddin by May 29.

5 prisoners die in Gazipur road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Six people including five prisoners were killed and 14 others injured when a covered-van rammed a human-hauler carrying 13 prisoners in Masterbari area on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur Sadar yesterday.

Of the deceased three were Shohel Rana, 27, Manik Main, 30, prisoners, and the human-hauler driver Manibullah, 28. The identities of others could not be known immediately.

Bangladeshis to get 100 more

FROM PAGE 3

Yandong was honoured with a crest by DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique.

In her speech, Yandong announced that the Chinese government would provide another 100 scholarships annually to Bangladeshi students in addition to the current ones.

She also said China would provide the Chinese research institute at DU with education materials and accessories worth 1 million renminbi or Tk 1.25 crore and would invite 100 Bangladeshi students to the summer camp titled "Bridge of Chinese Language" on behalf of the head office of Confucius Institute.

"You can enjoy the Chinese culture and hospitality of China's people," she said.

Starting her lecture with a "Shubho Sokal" (good morning) in Bangla, the vice-premier talked about the historical relationship between the two countries and DU's role in strengthening the bond.

She mentioned DU conferring honorary doctorates in law on former vice-chairperson of National People's Congress standing committee Soong Ching Ling and former premier Zhou Enlai, who visited the University in 1965 and in 1956 respectively.

Besides her 34-minute written speech in Chinese, which was translated into Bangla, Yandong was moved by a huge presence of students and spontaneously added three minutes, saying how DU's environment reminded her of her sophomore years.

She also talked about growing trade ties between the countries, and said that in the next five years China would import \$10 trillion worth of goods and make investment of \$500 billion globally.

Eying the investment potential in Bangladesh, the Chinese education ministry has decided to increase the number of Chinese students learning Bangla, she said.