

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 31.6 L 21.0	H 35.5 L 23.5	H 32.3 L 20.0	H 27.6 L 19.8	H 32.5 L 21.3	H 33.0 L 20.0	H 28.0 L 18.9	H 35.3 L 25.2

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Khulna divisions and the region of Comilla till 6:00pm today, said Met Office. Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sunsets in the capital today at 6:08pm and rises tomorrow at 6:07am.

Nation pays tribute to Rafiq Azad

The poet laid to rest at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard

The nation yesterday paid the last tribute to the "poet of love and rage", Rafiq Azad, who had left his pen briefly and taken up arms for the freedom of his motherland in 1971.

Born on February 14, 1941 at Guni village in Tangail's Ghatail upazila, the 75-year-old breathed his last on Saturday after fighting for life for 58 days following a brain stroke.

Around 10:00am yesterday, his body was taken to the Central Shaheed Minar, where Sammlito Sangskritik Jote organised a tribute ceremony.

A guard of honour was performed in front of the coffin of the freedom fighter around 10:30am.

The crowd comprising cultural personalities, poets, ministers, politicians, and freedom fighters, observed one minute's silence in his honour.

"He had taken part in the Liberation War. Even after the war, he had continued to hold on to the spirit of struggle in establishing the rights of people," said Asaduzzaman Noor, minister of cultural affairs, adding that Rafiq Azad was a life-long fighter who spoke for people.

Azad's wife Dilara Hafiz, four sons Rahul, Rajib, Abboy and Ovinna Azad, friends and relatives were present at the ceremony. Around 12:15pm, his body was taken to his former workplace Bangla Academy where he worked from 1972 to the mid-1980s.

The coffin was kept at the Nazrul Mancha under the old banyan tree on the Academy premises.

His colleagues, friends, and fans gathered around and paid tribute with flowers. Finance Minister AMA Muhith also paid homage to the poet there.

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People of all walks of life pay tribute to poet Rafiq Azad, in presence of his family, by laying flowers on his coffin as he lies in state at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. Inset, police perform a guard of honour for the freedom fighter. The poet whose work was known as an expression of love and anger was laid to rest at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR, BANGLAR CHOKH



CENTRAL BANK SCAM BNP now wants PM's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Initially seeking the finance minister and Bangladesh Bank governor's resignation over the around \$100 million of the central bank being stolen by hackers recently, BNP yesterday demanded that the prime minister do the same shouldering the responsibility.

BNP Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed made the demand at a press conference at the party's Naya Palatan central office in the capital.

"I, on behalf of BNP, demand that the stolen money be recovered and those involved punished. Bangladesh will not get any respite only through the resignation of the finance minister and the governor," he said in a written statement.

"The resignation of the prime minister alongside the duo can ensure the liberty of the country, its people and democracy," he said.

Rizvi said such an incident took place as the

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GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

Bangladesh's community clinics could be a model

Says 12th Int'l Congress on AIDS in Asia and Pacific on closing day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Global leaders and activists in the fight against AIDS consider Bangladesh's community clinics as an opportunity and a possible model to reduce HIV infection as part of a global agenda to eliminate the virus by 2030.

There are some 11,000 community clinics at the grassroots level meant to provide maternal and neonatal, family planning and nutritional services and establish linkage with the medium and tertiary level hospitals.

Adopting a "Dhaka Declaration" on the closing day yesterday, the 12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) said it recognises Bangladesh's community clinics as a model to provide services to reduce maternal mortality and "as an opportunity to reduce mother to child transmission of HIV as well".

The congress emphasised greater integration of HIV response with regular health systems, mainstreaming it in development programmes. It requested donors, governments and

bi-lateral and multi-lateral organisations to invest adequately.

ICAAP acknowledged that resource generation for AIDS response should not be an exclusive responsibility of developing countries.

"Rather, it should be a global shared responsibility for which resources should be allocated based on the relative vulnerability of societies, rather than prevalence rates alone and accordingly cooperate for such resource generation," said Bangladesh's

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DU VC Arefin gets SUSWM World Peace Award

UNB, Dhaka



Siddique was given SUSWM World Peace Award for his outstanding contribution to enlighten society by distributing knowledge and rendering humanitarian services aimed at establishing peace in the society, according to a message received in Dhaka from Kolkata yesterday.

Dr Buddha Priya Mahathera, director of Kolkata-based Siddharth United Social Welfare Mission (SUSWM), an organisation of international repute for rendering humanitarian services, conferred the award on Prof Arefin at a function in Kolkata on Sunday.

Prominent personalities from South Asia who received the peace award are Minister for Parliamentary Reforms and Mass Media of Sri Lanka Karuna Tilleka Gayantha, former Chief Justice of Bhutan Sonam Tbygye and Director General (admin) of Prime Minister's Office of Bangladesh Kabir Bin Anwar.

Zabed Ali irks fellow commissioners

The election commissioner goes to IGP in rare exception of warrant of precedence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an extremely unusual move, Election Commissioner Zabed Ali visited the Police Headquarters yesterday to discuss, as per official documents, security issues concerning the upcoming union parishad polls.

Talking to The Daily Star, other commissioners and officials of the Election Commission (EC) criticised the visit, saying it undermined the EC's dignity.

The four election commissioners and chief election commissioner (CEC) in the EC secretariat rank higher than the inspector general of police (IGP) as per the Warrant of Precedence.

As a constitutional body, the EC has the right to summon security officials to the EC secretariat to discuss any sort of security issue and the latter are bound to oblige, said EC officials.

The EC usually convenes a law and order meeting ahead of polls and places proposals over deployment of law enforcers. The home ministry further scrutinises the plans and takes the final decision.

If the EC feels that further discussions are required, it can again summon the security officials, said EC officials.

Zabed ignored the rules and did not follow official procedures, said an election commissioner.

Another said the CEC and other commissioners had opposed Zabed's move but the latter did not pay any heed. "...it (the visit) is his personal decision," said one election commissioner.

An official at the police headquarters confirmed that Zabed held a meeting with IGP AKM Shahidul Hoque for around half an hour from around 4:00pm.

Zabed was also scheduled to visit the Border Guard

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Students of colleges from across the capital demonstrate on Dhaka University campus yesterday, demanding abolition of the practice of creative methods in higher secondary education.

PHOTO: STAR

MILKY MURDER CASE

Court accepts charges against 18 accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted charges against 18 accused in a case filed over the murder of Riazul Haque Khan Milky, organising secretary of Dhaka city (south) Jubo League.

Accepting the charges, the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Asaduzzaman Nur also issued arrest warrants against six accused who are on the run, said court sources.

The six are Fahima Islam Lopa, Shakhawat Hossain Chanchal, Md Arif Hossain, Md Ibrahim Khalilullah, Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury, Sharifuddin Chowdhury alias Pappu.

Sources said the court also directed the officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station to submit a report on execution of the warrant before the court on April 25.

Twelve of the 18 charge-sheeted accused are now on bail, according to the sources.

Rapid Action Battalion on April 15, 2014 pressed charges against 11 people, mostly Jubo League men, in the murder case filed with the police.

Milky's brother and complainant of the case Rashedul

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Cabinet okays draft law to improve PIB operations

New law allows branch offices

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday approved in principle the draft of the Bangladesh Press Institute Bill, 2016, to give a complete legal shape to the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) and make it more time-befitting alongside improving its operations.

The approval came from the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet held at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing journalists after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam said since the inception of the PIB on August 18, 1976, it has been operating only through a resolution. "So, the government feels the necessity of framing a law and that's why the draft law has been placed before the cabinet."

It also outlines that the main PIB office will be there in the capital while the government will be able to set up its branch offices outside the capital.

The cabinet secretary said there will be a 15-member Board of Directors for the PIB to be appointed by the government for two years with representation from eminent journalists, educationists, public relations experts and representatives from various journalists' bodies.

According to the draft law, he said that the main duties of the PIB would be to provide on duty training facilities to working journalists, mass media personnel, development and communication workers and persons related to media with real focus on training.

The cabinet approved in principle the draft of the 'Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Bill, 2016' following the existing 1979 ordinance of the state-run news agency.

The cabinet secretary said there is no "gross deviation" from the existing ordinance, and the new law is going to be framed more or less following the 1979 ordinance.

"বঙ্গ-সৃষ্টিতে অসাধারণ প্রতিভার প্রয়োজন। ... বন্ধু আবুল মনসুরের হাত-সাহায্যে দেখে বিস্মিত হলাম। ভাষার কান মলে রস সৃষ্টির ক্ষমতা আবুল মনসুরের অসাধারণ। এ যেন পাকা ওস্তাদী হাত।"

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