

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 31.5 L 24.4

CHITTAGONG H 31.8 L 24.2

SYLHET H 24.9 L 22.1

RAJSHAHI H 31.0 L 21.7

KHULNA H 32.3 L 25.0

BARISAL H 31.3 L 22.8

RANGPUR H 28.5 L 20.5

COX'S BAZAR H 32.0 L 24.0

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions till 6:00pm today. Day temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over Northwestern part, said Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:16pm and rises tomorrow at 5:46am.



Pedestrians do not own the footpaths of Sylhet city anymore. If one wants to take a walk in the city, she or he may get the impression that the footpaths were meant for setting up makeshift shops. The hawkers even did not spare the important places like, clockwise from top left, the front of the Deputy Commissioner's (DC's) official residence, Sylhet City Corporation, the district judge's court, Sylhet Head Post Office, and Hasan Market. It is alleged that business is going on there because of indirect support of the local administration and police in exchange for money.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Sylhet city pedestrians pushed off footpaths by street hawkers

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Only a few years back, footpaths of Sylhet city were rarely occupied by illegal makeshift shops, but the scenario has changed.

Now it is hard to find any road or footpath without hawkers as business on footpaths thrives every day, making the pedestrians suffer terribly.

In the main city areas, including greater Bandarbarazar, Zindbarazar, Chowhatta, Sobhanighat, Amberkhana, Shibganj and Mirabazar, it is seen that hawkers are running their business in makeshift structures built on the footpaths, forcing the pedestrians to walk on the road risking their lives.

"I was heading towards Chowhatta from Zindbarazar on foot but I could not walk on as the footpath was fully occupied by hawkers. When I asked a trader to make way, he urged me to take the road!" said Debjiyoti Debu, 30, a private job holder.

Not only that, some drivers also park

their vehicles illegally on the roads making the situation worse still.

Pedestrians say this scenario is quite common in the areas, and even Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) parks its vehicles everywhere, defying the traffic rules.

The situation has reached such a level that not only the pedestrians, but the conscious residents of the city are also seeing it as alarming.

Hawkers have also occupied the footpaths in many government office areas including Sylhet judge's court, Sylhet post office, Customs Office, SCC, and police posts.

Indirect support of the district administration, SCC, and police towards the footpath grabbers and their indifference to controlling it make the situation worse, said Faruk Mahmud Chowdhury, president of the Sylhet chapter of SHUJAN, a civil society organisation.

Several hawkers' rights organisations in

connivance with some corrupt politicians occupied the footpaths and a portion of the roads and rented them out to hawkers, he added.

Authorities like SCC and local law administration are responsible for the situation, he said, adding that they should take necessary steps as footpath grabbing is becoming rampant day by day.

Not only the citizens, owners of different business institutions are also facing several problems for the makeshift shops, said Salah Uddin Ali Ahmed, president of the Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

"We arranged a lot of roundtables, seminars and sent a number of letters to the authorities concerned, but they are not responding to the problem," he added.

A hawker, sitting in front of Sylhet post office, said they have to pay Tk 40 to Tk 200 to the leaders of hawkers' rights organisations depending on their business and the

space they get on the footpath.

The leaders told them that the money is distributed among different levels of the higher authorities, he said.

Rokib Hosen, a local hawkers' leader, said these poor hawkers have nowhere to go. That's why they help them set up businesses on the footpath without disturbing the pedestrians, he added.

However, denying the allegation SCC Chief Executive Officer Enamul Habib said the eviction of the footpath grabbers is not possible by SCC alone. A joint operation with police and the district administration is necessary, he told The Daily Star.

Rahmat Ullah, additional commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said police are aware of the situation and trying their level best to make the footpaths free from hawkers.

To solve the problem permanently they need cooperation from SCC and the district administration, he added.

BNP's Mirza Abbas freed on bail

UNB, Dhaka

BNP leader Mirza Abbas was released on bail from jail yesterday. He was freed from the prison cell of Birdem hospital around 7:00pm, said Senior Jail Super Jahangir Kabir of Dhaka Central Jail.

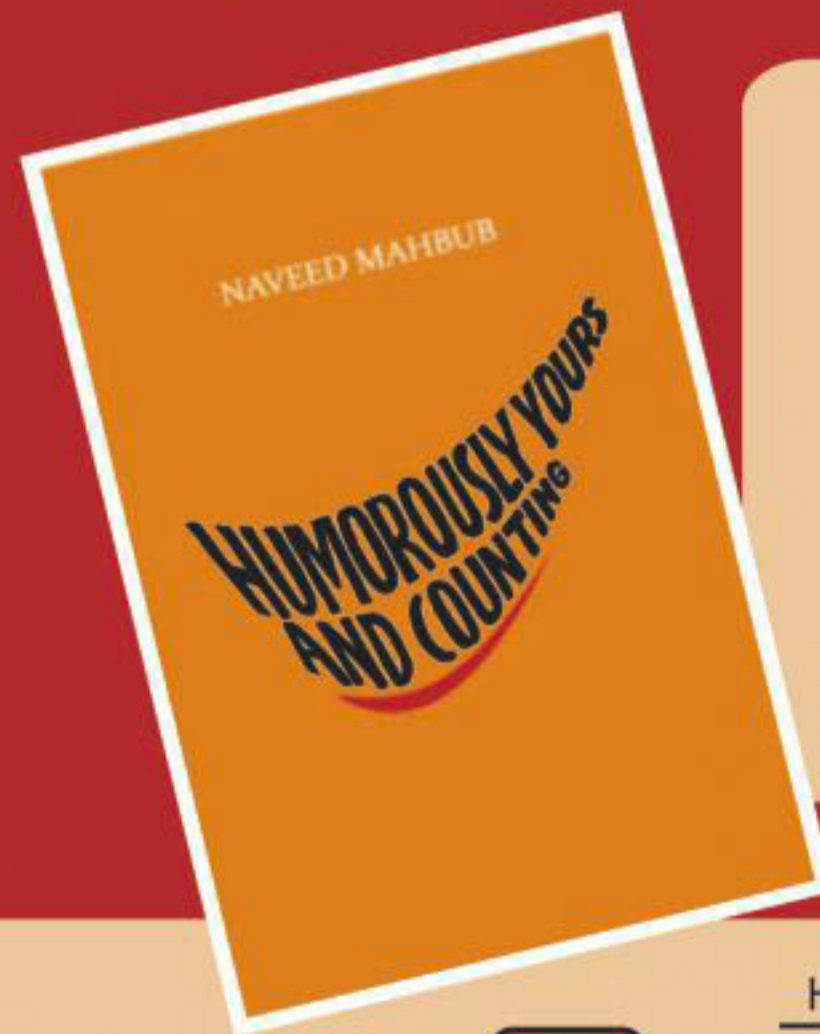
The Supreme Court on March 31 upheld a High Court verdict that granted bail to the BNP leader in a graft case filed by the Anti Corruption Commission for irregularities in allocating plots. On March 6, 2014, the ACC filed the case with Shabbagh police over corruption in plot allocation among journalists when Mirza Abbas was the housing and public works minister.

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Online media registration deadline extended to Apr 17

BSS, Dhaka

The government has extended the deadline for online news publication registration and submission of certifications till April 17.

The extension was made following requests from journalists concerned, said an official release yesterday.

Earlier, the last date for submission of registration forms was March 31. Now the forms can be submitted till April 17.

Educate youths about

FROM PAGE 3
report on war heroines, broadcast on December 19, 2015.
Dhaka University Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said juniors learnt a lot about journalism from Bazlur. Greeting the awardees, he said, "They did not witness the Liberation War. They conducted investigations and through their reports helped the new generation learn about the Liberation War."

Liberation War Museum trustees Dr Sarwar Ali and Ziauddin Tariq Ali, jury board member Nawazish Ali Khan and Maj (retd) ASM Shamsul Arefin also spoke.

Khaleda will surrender

FROM PAGE 3
The court directed the officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station to submit reports by April 27 on execution of arrest warrants. Detectives on May 19 last year pressed charges against Khaleda and the others, mostly her party men, for allegedly carrying out subversive activities through a petrol bomb attack on the passenger bus on January 23 last year.

One person was killed and 30 others were injured in the attack, one of many bomb attacks that the country had witnessed during the BNP-led 20-party alliance's three months' blockade.

CREDIT RATING REPORT

(Upgraded from AA- to AA in the Long Term Rating and ECRL-2 in the Short Term Rating remains the same)



Corporate HQ

2/F HRC Bhaban, 46 Kawran Bazar C.A., Dhaka-1215

ONE Bank Limited has been rated by the Emerging Credit Rating Limited (ECRL) on the basis of Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2015. The summary of the rating is presented below:

Date of Declaration	Valid Till	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating
March 10, 2016	March 09, 2017	AA	ECRL-2
March 31, 2015	March 30, 2016	AA-	ECRL-2

Long Term AA means:

Commercial Banks rated AA have very strong capacity to meet their financial commitments and is generally in a position to withstand adverse developments in the economy, business and other external conditions. These institutions typically possess a good track record and have no readily apparent weaknesses.

Short Term ECRL-2 means:

Commercial Banks rated in this category are considered to have strong capacity to meet its financial commitments in a timely manner. However, it is somewhat susceptible to adverse development in the economy, business and other external condition.

By order of the Board,

John Sarkar

ADMD & Company Secretary