

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 35.4 L 25.8	CHITTAGONG H 34.0 L 26.5	SYLHET H 35.1 L 25.7	RAJSHAHI H 36.0 L 25.0	KHULNA H 34.5 L 23.8	BARISAL H 35.5 L 25.8	RANGPUR H 35.4 L 23.0	COX'S BAZAR H 33.4 L 26.5
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Day temperature may rise slightly and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:43pm and rises tomorrow at 5:11am. Country's highest temperature 36.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Rajshahi, Ishwardi and Tangail and lowest 22.6 in Chudanga.

Extremists' backbone broken

Claims Mahmood Ali
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Termining the recent violent attacks in the country isolated, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday said the situation was under control now because the backbone of the extremists had been broken.

In recent months, several people including a professor and an LGBT activist were killed in attacks, which were reportedly committed by extremists.

"Some offshoots conducted a few isolated attacks, but police have prevented many more from happening and successfully rounded up perpetrators," he said.

The minister made the remarks when the newly appointed Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Nur Ashikin Binti Mohd Taib met him.

Mahmood Ali said the extremists' backbone had been broken, and they were no longer capable of going for concerted attacks.

Welcoming the new envoy, the minister invited Malaysian investment to the economic zones being set up in the country for mutual benefits.

He assured the high commissioner of all-out cooperation from his ministry.

Ali said the relations between Bangladesh and Malaysia were very close and excellent, and the people-to-people contact was also satisfactory.

Referring to the two countries' cooperation in international forums, including the UN, NAM and OIC, he noted that there was a bright prospect of enhancing bilateral trade further.

In this regard, he particularly mentioned the fast growing pharmaceutical sector and hoped that export of pharmaceuticals to Malaysia would be increased significantly soon.



From left, a deadly fire ripping through a residential building in Nimtoli of Old Dhaka on June 3, 2010, after it originated in a stove and was fuelled by chemicals stored illegally in the house. The fire killed at least 124 people. A vendor of seasonal fruits Mamun Miah lost three family members including his seven-year-old son Baishakh whose picture is hung on the wall of his shop. His hopes to see justice for his loss have been fading away as years pass by.



PHOTOS: FILE, SHAHEEN MOLLAH

SIX YEARS OF DEADLY NIMTOLI FIRE

Is hope for justice fizzling out?

AKRAM HOSEN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Six years into the Nimtoli inferno, families of the Old Dhaka neighbourhood feel that they were denied justice because nobody was penalised for storing the flammable chemicals in a residential building that caused the tragedy, killing more than a hundred people.

A few weeks after the fire, a case was filed against the chemical trader, whose warehouse was apparently responsible for running a business without a licence. But no legal procedure holding him accountable for the loss of lives was initiated.

"Seeing the person responsible for the tragedy brought to justice would have given me some solace although nothing can compensate for the loss of your house and six family members in one night," Mohammad Ripon, who was lucky to be away from home when the fire broke out, told this correspondent during a visit to the site recently.

"My life had fallen apart on that day. So many of the people with whom I grew up in the neighbourhood were burnt alive. I would like to see some people held accountable for this," he said.

On June 3, 2010, the Nimtoli fire killed at least 124 people, mostly women and children, and injured more than 200.

According to fire fighters, the fire started from a stove in a building that housed a combustible chemical depot on the ground floor. When the fire came in contact with the chemicals it engulfed eight residential buildings and some 20 shops in a few minutes.

About two weeks later, Mohammad Enayet Hossain, warehouse inspector of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence, filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Mohammad Ohidullah Mazumder, owner of the chemical warehouse.

In the case statement, complainant Enayet Hossain said Ohidul had been running the chemical business without a licence from the authorities concerned for a long time.

When contacted, complainant Enayet said he was present during one hearing of the case but he did not know what happened later.

Contacted by this correspondent, court officials said the persons who were dealing with the case were transferred elsewhere. They added that the papers regarding the case could not be

found.

Md Gulzar, owner of the building from where the fire originated, said he rented a ground floor room out to Ohidul, about a year before the deadly fire.

"Ohidul had said he rented the room to store plastic. He didn't tell me he was going to store inflammable substances. After the fire, I gave law enforcers a copy of the deed of renting. His address was there. But nothing was done to him afterwards," he said.

Deputy Commissioner of Lalbagh Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Maruf Hossain Sorder said he did not know about the case and promised to look into the matter.

Neither the court nor police could provide the address or a phone number for Ohidul.

Visiting the area, this correspondent met a fruit vendor, Mamun Miah. In his shop a young boy's portrait hangs on the wall.

"That is my seven-year-old son Baishakh. He was burnt to death in front of me. I was also burnt but I survived," he said. "The hope that the man responsible for this would be brought to justice has begun to fade away."

Govt to hold nurse recruitment test today

Case filed against 1,400 demonstrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite Wednesday night's clash between police and nurses at least 50 nurses were injured after cops charged batons and used water cannons to disperse them, when the latter tried to enter the health minister's Dhanmondi residence with a demand for postponing and revising their recruitment process, the government will hold the tests for the recruitment of 3,616 senior nurses today, according to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare press release issued yesterday afternoon.

The tests will be taken but with a slight change – a multiple choice questions (MCQ) test and a viva-voce will be held instead of the 1,000-mark written tests, it said.

"We will gather at Dhaka Nursing College around 6:00am today and declare our next programme," Nahida Akhter, secretary general of Bangladesh Basic Graduate Nurses Society, told this correspondent over phone yesterday.

Meanwhile, police yesterday filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing around 1,400 unidentified nurses for "preventing the law enforcers from carrying out their duties" at the capital's Dhanmondi the day before.

Two nurses were arrested, said Nur-e-Azam, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, adding, the nurses hurled brick chips at them, leaving 10 cops injured.

The nurses claimed that police charged batons and used water cannons to disperse them leaving at least 50 of them injured. Around a hundred outsiders carrying sticks and iron rods joined police and beat them up, they claimed.

Some nurses also claimed that a three-month pregnant unemployed nurse, Salma Akter, suffered a miscarriage during the police action.

"Salma was hit at her abdomen. Since then she was bleeding," Nahida Akhter told The Daily Star by phone.

This paper visited a number of hospitals that night and contacted a few more yesterday, but could not verify the claim.

Meanwhile, different socio-political and rights organisation condemned the police action, demanding that the government bear the treatment cost of the injured and conduct a proper investigation.

Ain o Salih Kendra, Bangladesh Jatiyatadabi Dal, Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association, Bangladesh Nurses Association, Communist Party of Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Trade Union Federation, were among the organisations.

Unemployed nurses have been demonstrating since early April protesting a PSC circular of March 28 on recruiting 3,616 senior nurses in public hospitals, which says applicants below 36 and attaining Bachelor of Science and diploma in nursing had to take an exam.

The nurses said the exam prerequisite was unjust because those who attained the educational qualifications a few years back and approaching the age might be left out.

Meanwhile, our Sylhet Correspondent reports: Nurses working in Sylhet city yesterday protested the attack on the unemployed nurses' by observing a daylong work abstention and brought out a procession demanding justice in front of Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar.



Two different demonstrations are taking place in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club simultaneously. From left, ICT teachers demanding their inclusion in the monthly pay order (MPO) scheme. A student of Medical Assistant Training School with the slogan "Education is our Right" written on his upper body, demanding, among others, creation of new posts and establishment of a diploma education board. The photos were taken yesterday.



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

WAR CRIMES Testimony recording against nine Jessore suspects ends

Investigators allowed to quizz Narail suspect at safe home; condemned Kishoreganj man appeals to SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convicted war criminal Shamsuddin Ahmed yesterday filed an appeal with the Supreme Court challenging the death penalty handed to him.

He submitted a 475-page petition through his lawyers seeking acquittal of the war crimes charges for which he was convicted and sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal-1, his lawyer M Masud Rana told The Daily Star.

He said 28 grounds were mentioned in the appeal for which the SC could consider his acquittal prayer.

Masud said the SC would later fix a date for hearing the appeal.

The ICT-1 on May 3 found five Kishoreganj Razakars including advocate Shamsuddin guilty of abduction, torture and killings during the Liberation War in 1971 and handed down death sentences to four of them and jail until death to the other.

"All the five convicted accused persons by virtue of their membership in local Razakar Bahini were knowingly and culpably engaged in committing the horrendous activities constituting the offences of killing, abduction and other crimes against humanity," the ICT-1 said in its judgment.

Gazi Abdul Mannan, 88, commander of a local Razakar camp, Nasiruddin Ahmed, 62, an army captain who was sent into forced retirement, his brother Shamsuddin Ahmed, 60, and Hafiz Uddin, 66, of Karimganj upazila in the district were given the death penalty. Azharul Islam, 60, of the same upazila, was sentenced to jail until death.

Only Shamsuddin, a lawyer of a Kishoreganj court, is now in jail while the rest are on the run.

JESSORE CASE

The ICT-1 yesterday completed recording the testimony of the investigation officer of the case filed against nine Jessore men including a former Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP lawmaker Shakhaw Hossain over their alleged involvement in crimes committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

Abdur Razzak Khan, the 17th and last prosecution witness in the case, gave a detailed description of his activities during the investigation. He also exhibited several documents which he collected and the prosecution submitted to the tribunal as their evidence in the case.

All accused are from Keshobpur upazila in Jessore. Apart from Shakhawat, now involved in Jatiya Party politics, the others are: Billal Hossain Biswas, Ibrahim Hossain, Sheikh Md Mujibur Rahman, Kazi Ohidul Islam, Aziz Sardar, Aziz Sardar, Lutfar Morol, and Abdul Khaleq Morol.

Of them, Shakhawat and Billal are in jail while Lutfar Morol died of old age complications on May 6. Six others are on the run.

After Razzak's testimony, the defence started cross-examining him before the three-member tribunal led by Justice Anwarul Haque adjourned the case proceeding until June 7.

NARAIL CASE

Meanwhile, the tribunal allowed a prosecution petition for interrogating two war crimes accused from Narail Abdul Wahab 70, of Fulbar village and Omar Ali Sheikh, 60, of Barasula village in Narail Sadar upazila by the investigation agency at its "safe home."

The two can be interrogated for one day on June 8 and 9.

Barisal BCL blocks BM college, highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) units in Barisal blocked Government BM College Barisal's main entrance and the Barisal-Patuakhali highway at Amtala yesterday protesting the murder of an activist and indictment of the city unit president.

Rejaul Islam Reja died after he and four of his friends were hacked in front of Barisal Polytechnic Institute around 9:30pm on May 27. His brother filed a case with Kotwali Model Police Station against 14 people including the president, Md Jasimuddin.

Students were seen jumping over the walls to enter the college during the blockade from 11:00am to 12:30pm. Police cleared the one in the highway after around an hour at 6:30pm.

Principal SM Emanul Hakim said exams and classes were held as usual. The district unit president, Abdur Razzak, claimed that the entrance was kept open.

RAPE OF GIRL IN INDIA Bangladeshi scholar gets life term

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi PhD scholar of Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan yesterday was sentenced to life term imprisonment by a West Bengal court for raping and blackmailing a minor student of a higher secondary school, who also hails from Bangladesh.

Md Safiqul Islam, hailing from Sirajganj, was tried in a special court under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, reported PTI.

Safiqul, the local guardian of the class XII student, took her to his rented house in the area on August 5, 2014 and raped her, said Syed Samidul Alam, the government lawyer.

He also recorded the heinous act on a mobile phone to blackmail her, Alam added.

She gathered courage to lodge a complaint on December 5, 2014, the lawyer said.

Safiqul was also ordered to pay a fine of Rs 10,000, he said.

GRAFT CASE AGAINST KHALEDA Hearing adjourned till June 23

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing of trial proceedings till June 23 in Zia Charitable Trust graft case filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The order came in the presence of Khaleda after her lawyer filed a time petition.

During the hearing, Khaleda's lawyer Abdur Rezak Khan told the court that their client filed an appeal with the Supreme Court on June 1 against the High Court order that rejected his client's plea to cross-examine the investigation officer of the case. The matter is now pending. So they prayed for adjournment.

While Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol opposed it saying that there was no stay order to continue trial proceedings.

On April 7, the High Court cleared the way for a lower court to continue the trial against Khaleda after rejecting her petition seeking cancellation of the proceedings.

Cut economic, social cost

FROM PAGE 8

irrational migration costs.

Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque expressed deep concern over the environments being faced by Bangladeshi workers in war torn countries like Libya, Iraq and Syria. He underscored the need for concerted efforts of government and civil society to ensure safe

migration.

The RMMRU founding chairperson, Tasneem Siddiqui, chairing the programme, observed that migrants endured a lot of economic and social costs that was not always acknowledged.

Jabed Ahmed, additional secretary to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare And Overseas Employment, also spoke.