

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	KHULNA	BARISAL	RANGPUR	COX'S BAZAR
	H 31.6 L 26.8	H 26.0 L 25.2	H 33.7 L 25.7	H 33.6 L 27.4	H 31.0 L 26.0	H 30.4 L 26.0	H 33.6 L 26.6	H 29.5 L 25.5

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind will likely occur at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Dhaka and at many places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Sylhet with moderately heavy to heavy falls in the next 24 hours. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:36pm and rises tomorrow at 05:32am. Country's highest temperature 34.1 degree Celsius was recorded on Tuesday in Sayedpur and the lowest 23.8 degree Celsius in Teknaf.

Charges pressed against 8 'JMB members' in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police filed a charge sheet against eight alleged members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday for planning to carry out sabotage on a train and killing dozens of ruling party men in Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur on June 21.

Of the eight, four are in a Dinajpur jail and one was killed, said Faridul Islam, sub-inspector of the detective branch of police in Dinajpur, who filed the charge sheet to the senior Judicial Magistrate court of Krishna Chandra, said Abu Sayeed, a court inspector.

Safiu Islam, 21, alias Sohan and one of the Sholakia attackers is also an accused, said police. Sohan was killed during a gunfight with the law enforcement members on August 5.

Galib, 23, alias Galibur Rashid of Dewangram, Faruki Azam, 25, alias Abu Nayem and Md Mozahidul Islam, 23, alias Maftus of Pouspara, and Jahirul Islam, 30, of Chakbanarashi village, are in jail, said Faridul, also the case's investigation officer.

The rest are on the run, he said, adding, the arrested JMB men confessed to their crimes before the court.

Faridul said they were planning to attack a train in the upazila.

Police arrested three of them with six crude bombs, three sharp weapons, jihadi books and leaflets from Dangapara area, near the Indian border in Hakimpur, he said, adding that they were also planning to kill several top ruling party men.

A case was filed on June 21.



Female traffic sergeants, who have been recruited early this year, learning to ride scooters. The photo was taken on the Dhaka University campus yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MOVE TO CONVERT PDB INTO COMPANY Now Ctg staff join protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Staff of the Chittagong office of Power Development Board (PDB) applied for leave from yesterday to Thursday protesting the government's move to convert it into a company.

Around 1,800 PDB staff of Chittagong, under the banner of PDB Shramik Karmachari-Karmakorta Oikya Parishad, started the three-day "mass leave".

Contacted, Md Maniruzzaman, senior assistant director of PDB, Chittagong zone, said the movement is almost symbolic. Although the staff applied for a three-day leave, most of them were present yesterday, he said, adding that emergency services were open.

Contacted, member secretary of the parishad's Chittagong zone Prabir Kumar Sen, also a superintendent engineer of Chittagong PDB, told The Daily Star that the government has already declared to convert PDB Rajshahi and Rangpur zones into companies and formed a committee to convert the Chittagong zone. The protest started following the decision, he said.

Marginalised, ethnic minorities discriminated from public services

Speakers tell Research Initiatives, Bangladesh seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communities of ethnic minorities and those marginalised in the country are facing discrimination in getting public services because of the lack of accountability and transparency in activities of agencies concerned, speakers told a seminar yesterday.

Although the constitution guarantees equal rights for all and non-discrimination when it comes to benefiting from services such as social safety net programmes, only influential people can enjoy those due to the absence of proper monitoring and implementation of laws, they observed. It is important to ensure massive awareness campaigns so that those deprived can be conscious and

vocal against "state-patronised" discrimination, the discussants added.

Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) organised the seminar on "Vulnerable Groups' Access to Social Safety Net Programmes through Participatory Action Research and Right to Information Act" in the capital.

Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury said it was more urgent to bring a change in politics before going for social reforms. "There is no accountability in Bangladesh. Corruption, violence and different irregularities are increasing. The country's image is being maligned before the international community," he said. "If we cannot change the existing exploitative nature of the state, the discrimination will not be

eliminated," he added.

Rights activist Hameeda Hossain said women and those being marginalised faced discrimination because influential people denied them their rights.

RIB Executive Director Meghna Guhathakurta presented a keynote paper on working with 1,500 people of ethnic minority communities and those marginalised in Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Rajshahi, Jessore and Satkhira to see how they benefited from social safety net programmes and whether they used the RTI act. RIB President Shamsul Bari chaired the seminar while Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir and former information commissioner Sadeka Halim also spoke.

Govt plans to boost cultural activities at edu institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to take an action plan to increase cultural activities at different educational institutions.

Asaduzzaman Noor, cultural affairs minister; Nurul Islam Nahid, education minister; and Mostafizur Rahman, primary and mass education minister; along with cultural activists, educationists and writers held a meeting at the cultural ministry yesterday to set up the plan.

"The plan will be implemented by the ministries together," said Noor, adding that they will disclose it through a press briefing shortly. He said culture is not just about song and dance, it is also about creating values among the students. The minister also said they want to go to all educational institutions to spread the message against militancy.

Nahid said movement against militancy is ongoing. They will hold meetings with everyone including teachers, guardians, and prominent personalities on the issue, he said.

Mostafizur Rahman said they are initiating this programme so that children can grow up with values.

AIRLINE 'HARASSMENT' Why won't passengers be compensated

HC asks authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in two weeks as to why they should not be directed to compensate 11 passengers who were allegedly harassed by an airline at Dhaka and Dubai airports in April this year.

The bench of Justice Quamrul Islam Siddique and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by the 11 including Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Director Aminul Huq Shamim.

Petitioners' lawyer Barrister Bodruddoza Badal told The Daily Star that his clients were going to Saudi Arabia for performing Umrah by a flight of the airline on April 4.

But the airline authorities gave boarding passes to only nine of them at the Dhaka airport and did not provide them connecting flights in Dubai to reach Medina the same day, he said.

He said his clients had to suffer a lot at the airports and eventually reached Saudi Arabia the next day.

Secretary to the ministry of civil aviation, chairman of the civil aviation authority and in charge of Dhaka office of the airline have been made respondents to the rule.



Participants singing in unison the national anthem at a programme held by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the capital yesterday, marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

EU reaffirms vow to protect rights of ethnic minorities

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Amidst the observance of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples yesterday, the European Union (EU) has reaffirmed its commitment to promote and protect the rights of ethnic minority communities.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini issued a statement supporting the rights and recognised the communities' unique contributions to cultural diversity. She pointed out that aggression still continues, including killing and abuse of those defending the rights.

"The EU is therefore stepping up its efforts to protect Human Rights Defenders," says Federica, the foreign policy chief of EU.

BNP slams govt move to hike gas price

Warns of agitation, if not withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday warned the government of waging street agitation if the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd does not withdraw its proposal for hiking the gas prices for domestic users.

"We think this proposal is illegal...It will affect the economy and have impact on public lives. We demand an immediate withdrawal of this anti-people proposal," said Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, joint secretary general of BNP.

Addressing a press briefing at BNP's Naya Paltan central office, Alal warned that people will be forced to take to the streets if the government only runs after profits instead of providing services.

During a public hearing by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission on Monday, Titas proposed increasing the gas prices for domestic users by around two-fold.

Mentioning that the gas tariffs were raised 7-8 months back, Alal said there is no chance for hiking it further before a year as per the BERC rules and regulations.

"It's an anti-people proposal," he said.

He suggested the government to curb corruption in the gas sector.

Don't influence cops to release suspected militants: Ctg DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The deputy commissioner of Chittagong yesterday urged the ward councillors of the city and Awami League leaders not to influence law enforcers to release suspected militants from custody.

"We know that for release of militant suspects, political leaders say they are their relatives. Please do not abuse political identity...Rather, help police through providing information about those involved in militancy and let police work independently," said DC Mesbah Uddin.

He was addressing a meeting on forming ward level committees to resist terrorism and subversive activities at his office.

Councillors from ward 1 to 10, officers-in-charge from four police stations, teachers and khatibs from different schools, colleges and mosques and local ward level AL leaders were present.

The DC directed the ward councillors to form such committees within seven days.

"Every committee will comprise highest 101 and lowest 41 members," said the DC, who will approve the committee following recommendation from the city mayor and investigation by the law enforcers and intelligence agencies.



Obituary

CITY DESK

Mamtaz Aksad Banu, wife of late Ali Aksad, president Bangladesh Peace Council, died of a cardiac arrest at the capital's Birdem Hospital on August 4, aged 74.

She left behind one son, two daughters and host of relatives to mourn her death.

Her daughters requested friends and well-wishers to pray for her departed soul, said a press release yesterday.

KIBRIA MURDER CASE Why BNP leader Ariful should not get bail

HC asks govt to explain in 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain in 10 days why suspended Sylhet City Corporation mayor and BNP leader Ariful Haque Chowdhury should not be granted bail in the former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria murder case.

The bench of Justice Syed Muhaammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah came up with the rule after hearing a bail petition filed by Ariful on May 7.

The then opposition lawmaker and Awami League (AL) leader Kibria and four others including his nephew Shah Manzur Huda were killed in a grenade attack on a rally in Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

The case was probed thrice and the investigators also pressed charges thrice against 32 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, while the charge framing was deferred for nine times.

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