

**WEATHER FORECAST**

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 28.4 L 21.4	H 26.5 L 18.4	H 29.0 L 21.0	H 28.1 L 18.5	H 30.5 L 18.5	H 28.8 L 18.5	H 30.5 L 20.7	H 29.6 L 19.5	H 29.0 L 20.2

Rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at one or two places in Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka and Chittagong divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country, says Met Office. Night and day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:57pm and rises tomorrow at 6:27am.



President Abdul Hamid with members of the newly constituted Election Commission led by Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Comilla city polls March 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election to Comilla City Corporation and by-election to Sunamganj-2 constituency will be held on March 30, announced the Election Commission (EC) yesterday.

For Comilla city, March 2 is the deadline for submitting nomination papers which will be scrutinised on March 5 and March 6, and the last date for nomination withdrawal is March 14.

This will be the first city corporation election under the new EC led by Nurul Huda.

"We will stay at neutral position in conducting the polls, I hope these will be competitive polls. When any election is held in a competitive manner, the chance of irregularities becomes lower," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda said at a press conference at Election Commission Secretariat's media centre.

Rakib Uddin Mandal, regional election officer of Comilla, will act as the returning officer (RO) and nine other district and upazila level election officers will act as assistant returning officers (AROs) in the Comilla city polls.

Over 2.07 lakh voters are expected to cast their votes for electing a mayor and 36 councillors of Comilla city. There will be 65 polling stations and 421 polling booths in the election, according to EC's documents.

For Sunamganj-2 by-election, the deadline for nomination submission is March 2, while nominations will be scrutinised on March 5 and the last date of withdrawal is March 13.

The constituency fell vacant after the death of political doyen and Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta on February 5.

Regional election officer of Sylhet will act as the RO, while two other upzila level election officers will act as AROs. There are over 2.52 lakh voters and 110 polling stations in Sunamganj-2 constituency.

## 'TORTURE BY POLICE' HC asks Baufal ASP, OC to appear Feb 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of an incident of police torture on an accused -- Hafizur Rahman Bijoy -- in the office room of officer-in-charge of Baufal Police Station in Patuakhali on February 12.

It issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain as to why the alleged incident of torture on Hafizur should not be declared illegal and why they should not be ordered to compensate the tortured victim.

In the rule, the court also asked the authorities to show causes why appropriate legal action will not be taken against the police personnel who were involved in the incident.

At the same time, the HC summoned assistant superintendent of police (ASP) and Baufal Circle Saiful Islam and OC of Baufal Police Station Azam Khan Faruki, directing them to appear before it on February 27 to explain their

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## Strike spikes beef prices in capital

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Beef sold at Tk 500 a kilogramme around the customers with butchers hiking prices by Tk 30 to Tk 70 following their six-day strike and a weekly meatless day on Sunday.

Meat sellers reasoned that traders in the city's only permanent cattle market at Gabtoli took advantage of low supply to raise bovine prices, creating a domino effect. Gabtoli traders blamed it on rising cattle rearing costs.

Meat traders also say that demand for beef dropped for the price rise. One manager of a restaurant says he refrained from serving beef thinking customers would not appreciate the sudden jump in price.

However, customers think the strike was an excuse to hike meat prices. The strike enforcers say they seek a stop to "excessive tax collection" by the Gabtoli market lessee and facilities for legal import of cattle from Bhutan, India and Nepal.

Bangladesh Meat Merchant Association Secretary General Robiul Alam, who has a butcher's shop at Rayer Bazar, said the strike was what caused cattle supply to go down at the Gabtoli market.

"We had sold beef at Tk 430-Tk 470

prior to our protest. But now we have no other option but to sell at Tk 500 to meet costs," he said.

"If our demands are met, we can provide the customers with red meat at Tk 300 per kilogramme only," Robiul Alam reinstated yesterday. Butchers at Karwan Bazar, Gabtoli and Mirpur echoed him.

However, one Shamim Ahmed of Shamim Mangshaw Bitan at Mirpur-11 told The Daily Star that he charged Tk 480 yesterday.

Requesting anonymity, a buffalo meat trader in Kawran Bazar alleged that anyone charging below Tk 500 must be dishonestly mixing buffalo meat with beef. Buffalo meat sells at Tk 430 to Tk 450 a kilogramme.

"Almost half of the capital's total red meat supply includes buffalo meat," alleged another trader at the Gabtoli market.

Demand for buffalo meat was low with one Jakir Hossain, whose shop at Kawran Bazar supplies buffalo meat to a number of hotels, restaurants and shops, saying he slaughtered only four buffaloes in the last two days instead of the usual seven to eight every day.

## SC JUDGES' APPOINTMENT HC sets Feb 26 for passing order on president's power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed February 26 for passing order on a writ petition that challenged legality of constitutional provisions allowing the president to appoint Supreme Court judges and control lower court judges' promotions and postings.

The HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Mohammad Ullah said it would examine more statements of the petition as they are involved with constitutional issues.

Deputy Attorney General Tapash Kumar Biswas yesterday said the HC may hold further hearing on the writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond challenging the legality of constitutional provisions that empowered the president to appoint SC judges and control the lower court judges.

## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

### Probe agency finds evidence against 11 Mymensingh men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday said to have found evidence against 11 persons from Mymensingh over their alleged involvement in crimes committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

They were "involved" with Razakar Bahini during the Liberation War and "committed" crimes which include killing of four people, torture on nine, looting, arson, abduction and confinement in Pagla of Mymensingh, agency's coordinator Abdul Hannan Khan told at a press briefing at its Dhanmondi office.

All are from Pagla. Of them, five -- Khalilur Rahman Mir alias Khalilur Rahman, 62, Md Samsuzzaman alias Abul Kalam, 65, Mohammad Abdullah, 62, Mohammad Abdul Malek Akand alias Abul Hossain, 68, and Md Rois Uddin Azadi alias

Akkel Ali, 74 -- are in jail. Samsuzzaman, Abdullah and Rois fled the area after the war and have been living in Pabna, Dhaka and Rajshahi respectively.

The agency, however, did not reveal the names of the other six as arrest warrants are yet to be sought against them.

Sanaul Huq, the co-coordinator of the agency, said Khalilur is a supporter of Jatiya Party while Samsuzzaman and Rois were involved with Jamaat and Malek with BNP. Abdullah was not involved with any political party, he said.

Meanwhile, Manowara Begum, the investigation officer of the case, handed over the probe report and other documents to the Chief Prosecutor's Office yesterday. Receiving the documents, Prosecutor Rezia Sultana Chaman said they will press charges if they found the documents satisfactory after scrutinising those.



Khalilur Rahman, Abul Kalam, Abdullah, Abul Hossain, Akkel Ali

## March 14 fixed to start closing arguments in case against 6 Gaibandha men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday fixed March 14 to start hearing the closing arguments in the case filed against six Gaibandha men over committing crimes during the Liberation War in 1971.

The tribunal fixed the date after defence counsels declined to provide defence witness in the case. Earlier of the day, the tribunal recorded the testimonies and cross-examinations of the two investigation officers of the case.

Of the accused, Abu Saleh Md Abdul Aziz Mia, 65, a former Jamaat lawmaker and alleged commander of local Razakar force, Ruhul Amin alias Manju, 61, Abu Muslim Md Ali, 59, Najim Huda, 60, and Abdur Rahim Mia, 62, are on the run while only Abdul Latif, 61, is now in jail.

## Fakir Alamgir's 67th birthday today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 67th birthday of Fakir Alamgir, a leading exponent of Gono Sangeet, songs of the masses, in the country.

To celebrate his birthday, Bangladesh National Museum will organise a felicitation ceremony and solo concert at its auditorium on February 24.

Alamgir played an important role as a member of Kranti Shilpi Gosthi and Gono Shilpi Gosthi during the mass upsurge in 1969.

During the Liberation War in 1971, he joined the Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra as an artiste and inspired freedom fighters with his soulful rendition of numerous patriotic songs, says a press release.

In 1976, Alamgir formed Wrishiz Shilpi Gosthi, a musical platform which took Gono Sangeet to a new height and reached to the mass people across the country.

He is also president of Gono Sangeet Samannay Parishad.

In his successful career, Alamgir received several awards including Ekushey Padak, Sher-e-Bangla Padak and Bhashani Padak.

Son of Hachen Uddin Fakir and Begum Habibunnesa, Alamgir was born on February 21, 1950 at Kalamridha village in Faridpur's Bhanga upazila, the release added.

## Crime, only a fence away

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

With complete disregard to the plainclothes policemen, the two men are taking heroin under the passenger shed. There is no fear in their eyes, and the law enforcers seem to care little about what is going on the other side of the tin fence, only suggesting that both parties are pretty much known to the situation.

The incident was photographed by a local youth, in Rajshahi city's drug-prone Guripara area, around 11:30am Sunday.

Requesting anonymity in fear of retribution, the youth said policemen regularly gathered at the shed, and in the name of conducting anti-narcotics campaigns, they did financial dealings with the drug peddlers using certain tactics.

"They go to the scene and give money to the known drug addicts for buying drugs. Then they ask them where they got the drugs and take the addicts to the drug sellers. Sometimes they make arrests, sometimes they negotiate," he told The Daily Star.

The youth said the policemen on Sunday gave two drug addicts money and let them take drugs behind the tin fence.

Quoting witnesses, he said the local residents saw similar gatherings of police in the area a few days ago when the policemen negotiated with a drug peddler and left the area without arresting anyone.

The photo of the two policemen sitting on a concrete bench and the two addicts, including one amputee, taking heroin behind a tin fence in front of the cops was supplied to The Daily Star.

One of the cops, Assistant Sub-inspector Morshed Alam of Rajpara Police Station, who was seen wearing a

green shirt, denied seeing the drug addicts.

"Everything does not come to one's notice," he said. "Some drug addicts never care for the policemen. Some of them pass night at the shed with mosquitoes biting them. They don't care for anything."

A second policeman, Assistant Sub-inspector Masud Iqbal, was seen in the photo in a long sleeve polo shirt. "We usually take rest at the shed. I did not know there were drug addicts," he said.

The single-hand amputee is seen in the area round the clock, and he was never arrested for being a disabled man, said Masud.

He said, "I will quit the job of police if anyone can prove I did anything wrong. Some people of the area are angry with me for leading repeated police operations."

ASI Alam said there were two more policemen with them at that time -- ASI Rafiq and constable Monir.

They were not seen in the picture.

Police later arrested one of the two drug addicts identified as Jalal, 40, of the city's Dharampur area.

In the last few months, the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) made nearly 200 drug peddlers of the city surrender and rehabilitated 50 of them.

Md Sorfaraj, an assistant commissioner of RMP, said police were engaged in an anti-drug campaign in Guripara area. "We sometimes locate drug sellers by asking the drug users."

He said he did not know whether the policemen gave money to the drug addicts to buy drugs.



Two men take heroin under a passenger shed while two plainclothes policemen sit back on a bench on the opposite side of a tin fence, in Rajshahi city's drug-prone Guripara area Sunday.

## Man gets life term for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A Gazipur court yesterday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for killing his wife on 29 June, 2010 over family feud.

It also fined the convict, Mainuddin, 63, of Gobindakalinogor village of Sherpur, Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one more month in prison.

Nazmunnahar Swopna, 48, died after Mainuddin hit her with a brick at their house in Tongi Poschim Arichpur area of Gazipur.

## 3 'JMB men' held

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) claimed to have detained three operatives of banned militant outfit Jamaat'ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Kanchpur and Mograpara in Sonargaon upazila of Narayanganj yesterday.

They are Md Mostafa, 25, of Muktagacha of Mymensingh, Abu Raihan alias Himel, 24, of Phulbaira of Mymensingh, and Shariful Islam alias Shaheen, 21, of Dhamrai of Dhaka district.

At a press conference in Narayanganj, Rab-11 members claimed that they seized seven jihadi books, 46 leaflets, five sharp weapons, five crude bombs, and bomb making materials from them, who had admitted their involvement with JMB during primary interrogation. Rab officials suspected that the trio were planning to carry out subversive activities ahead of Ekushey February. The detainees follow the path of JMB founder Shaikh Abdur Rahman. They had been operating organisational activities in their respective areas after disguising their identities and holding pseudo names.

## JnU teacher suspended over sexual harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jagannath University (JnU) authorities suspended a teacher yesterday following an allegation of sexual harassment of a female student of the university, says an education ministry press release.

The authorities formed a probe committee following the education minister's order. Final steps will be taken after completion of the investigation.



Traders invite buyers through loudspeakers at Hemayetpur Bazar, outside the capital, offering to sell vegetables at lower prices compared to the prices in the kitchen markets. Five kilogramms of potato sell there at Tk 70 and 5kg of onions at Tk 100. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN