

WEATHER
FORECASTYESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA 30.8 | L 16.8 MYMENSINGH 28.3 | L 15.1 CHITTAGONG 29.0 | L 18.0 SYLHET 29.2 | L 15.5 RAJSHAHI 30.4 | L 14.0 RANGPUR 28.0 | L 14.4 KHULNA 31.0 | L 17.5 BARISAL 31.5 | L 16.4 COX'S BAZAR 30.5 | L 18.0

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Night and day temperature may rise slightly over the country, says Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:00pm and rises tomorrow at 6:21am. Country's highest temperature 32.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Jessore and lowest 11.8 in Sreemangal.

Pro-AL RU
teachers scuffle
at press
conference
RU CORRESPONDENT

The pro-Awami League teachers of Rajshahi University split into two groups and scuffled with each other yesterday over holding of a press conference to reveal "irregularities of the administration" in buying a guesthouse for the university in Dhaka.

The pro-AL Teachers' Association called the conference at 3:00pm in Zuberi Building, but after more than one hour of altercations, pushing and manhandling, it was foiled.

When the convener of the association Prof Rokib Ahmed started to read a written statement, some teachers opposed the content of the statement and alleged that they did not know beforehand what was written there.

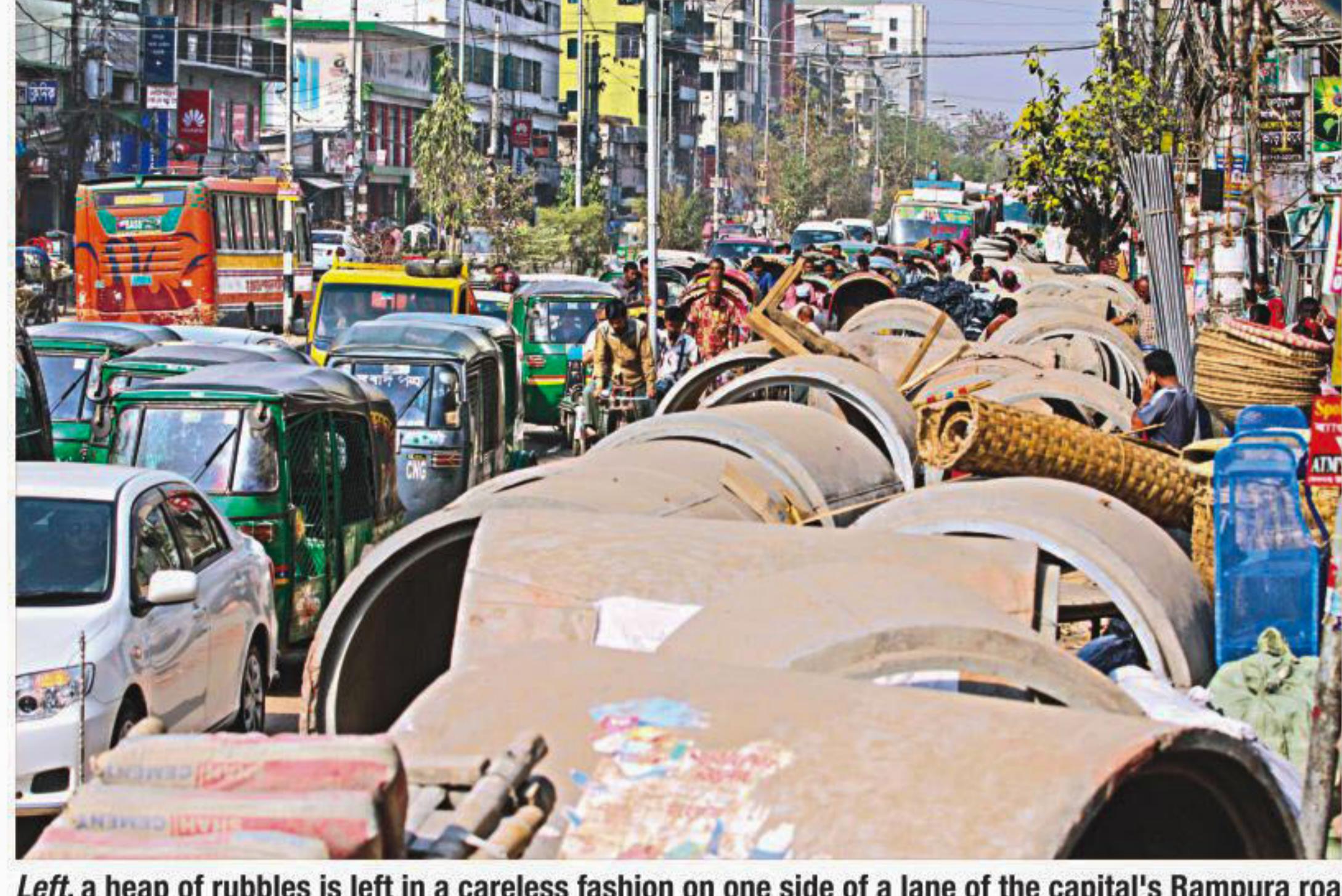
Prof Sultan-UL-Islam said the president and the general secretary wrote the statement without taking the mandatory approval from the association's steering committee.

Another teacher, Prof Foyzah Ahmed, left the conference, raising the same allegation.

Though the conference was stopped, the statement was supplied to the journalists.

The statement says, the administration was engaged in corruption in buying the guesthouse, but it does not elaborate on the issue.

Convenor Rokib Ahmed said, "We met the VC previously about purchase of the guesthouse on February 15, but we did not get a clear picture from the meeting."



Left, a heap of rubbles is left in a careless fashion on one side of a lane of the capital's Rampura road, right beside the divider. On the other side of the same lane, right, pipes are piled up for development works, clogging the lane further. This creates traffic jam in the area almost every day, making passengers suffer for hours. The photo was taken around 3:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: ENAMUL HAQ

Ruling party thuggery
continues at RU

Leaders, activists again foil job interview

RU CORRESPONDENT

As part of their long-running campaign to get party people recruited, the ruling Awami League leaders and activists yesterday foiled a viva voce at Rajshahi University.

They staged a "sit-in" before the vice chancellor's residence, where the exam was scheduled to start at 4:00pm, and drove away candidates. Seven applicants arrived there to attend the exam for a post of public relations officer.

Around 3:00pm, 50-60 leaders and activists led by Motihar Thana AL general secretary M Alaudin gathered before the VC's residence, demanding cancellation of the exam.

AL leader M Elias Hossain said, "We want jobs for the people who uphold the ideology of the Liberation War. But the authorities were providing jobs only to the relatives of the employees and the BNP-Jamaat men. We will not let it happen."

The "sit-in" continued till 6:10pm.

An applicant said he arrived in time following a call from the authorities, "but some people there asked me not to enter the building and forced me to leave the place."

VC M Mizanuddin said, "We wanted to maintain transparency and follow certain rules in recruitment, but the outsiders tried to stop it." Asked, what steps they can take, he said, "The law enforcers are supposed to maintain law and order." But police said they could act only on receiving complaints from the university authorities.

Demanding jobs for party people, the local AL leaders and activists have been staging what they called "protests" since April 2015. They stormed the VC's office and threatened him on April 20, 2015, foiled a viva voce on December 21, 2016 and two days later, stopped three recruitment tests, forcing candidates out of exam halls, and padlocked the university main gate on February 6, and besieged the administrative building on Saturday.

Cabinet okays
recognition
of Kosovo as
independent
country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday officially recognised Kosovo as a sovereign and independent country.

The cabinet approved a foreign ministry proposal in this regard.

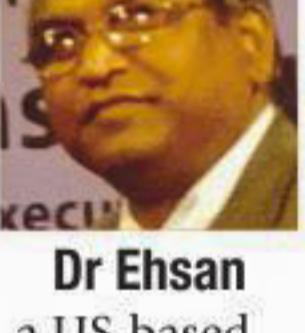
With the approval, Bangladesh has become the 114th country to recognise the independence of Kosovo, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shahid Alam told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting at the secretariat.

Kosovo declared its independence on February 17, 2008 from Serbia. Immediately the US, the UK, Germany, France, and Australia, among others, recognised Kosovo as an independent country.

Dr Ehsan given
humanitarian
award

CITY DESK

Dr Ehsan Hoque, founder and executive director of Distressed Children & Infants International, a US-based NGO, was given an award by ATN Bangla for his contributions to humanity.



Dr Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of ATN Bangla and ATN News, presented the award to Dr Ehsan in Dhaka on January 22, says a press release.

Mahfuzur said Dr Ehsan works for the underprivileged populations and has provided thousands of children with primary education and free healthcare.

Up for grab, both
new and old

MATHEWS CHIRAN

There are broadly two groups of buyers -- one preferring new books and the other searching for old favourites. For both the Ekushey book fair is the place to be.

Anamika Sarker, a student of musicology at Dhaka University, belongs to the first group, always interested in new ideas and fresh thoughts that make up the content of the new books.

"When writer Humayun Ahmed Sir was alive, I used to wait for his new arrivals. I still wait for the book fair to come as it brings much joy and festivity," she said.

She bought "Dekha Hobe Bijoye", an essay collection by Ahsan Rony.

An admirer of Humayun Ahmed, she also picked up his Oranya and Joshoa Brikher Deshe.



Another student of DU, Mahia Hasan Meem, was browsing the stalls with her friends to see the new arrivals.

"I prefer new books of new writers to those of veteran writers," she said, explaining that it would encourage new writers to write something new and help Bangla literature flourish.

For new writers, one sale means a lot because it means their hard work is paying back and is being accepted.

"I feel so lucky and inspired to see my books being bought by the youths. It encourages me to write more," said the young writer Ahsan Rony.

"Dekha Hobe Bijoye" contains essays of 22 young leaders from different sectors. Priced at Tk 150, it is available at Sahos Publication.

While some prefer new books to old ones and vice versa, there is a third group who want to collect both at the same

time. To them, any book unread is new and it does not matter in which year the book was published.

Rafee Shams, who runs a voluntary organisation, bought a couple of Zahir Raihan's collected novels and Selina Hossain's "Opekka". To him, old books are preferable because of their reliability and quality.

Books of Rabindranath are still popular because they are immortal and legendary. This sort of write-ups of the past is acceptable to all," he said.

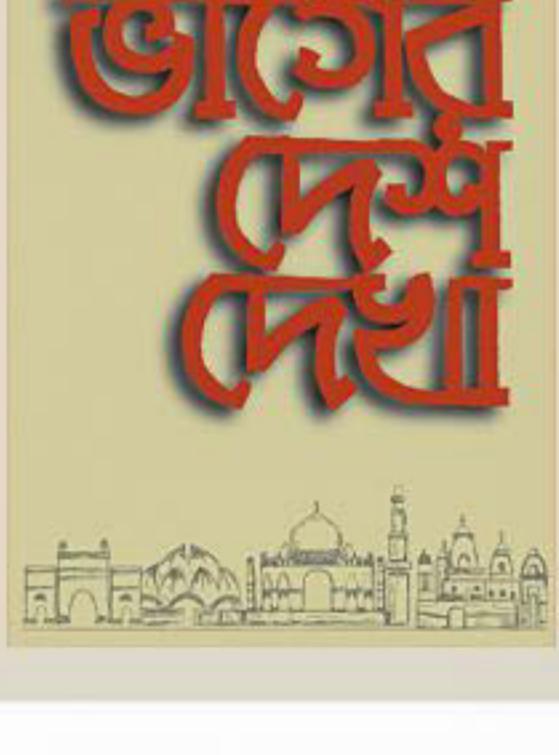
He said people often did not want to read works of new writers because their quality was not guaranteed.

Srijoni Publication brought out some favourites including Liberation War based novel "Juddher Dinguli" by Moshirul Rahman, "Kabiler Bon", a novel by Altaf Mahmud, children's book "Science Club" by

Ahsan Habib, the Bangla translation of the classic "The Old Man and The Sea" by Ernest Hemingway, "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens, and poetry book "Jara Atmahata Korechilo" by Mizanur Rahman Kallal. One favourite is young writer Nahid Imran Shaon's travelogue "Bhager Desh Dekha" (Touring a truncated country), available at Prokriti.

Moshirul Rahman, owner of Srijoni Prokasan, said, "Youths are buying new books more than old novels or short stories." Echoing him, publisher Showkat Ali Tara of Samagra Publication said, "Old classics are always on sale, especially at the book fair. But youths prefer the new."

The number of new books which arrived this year was 3,311. It was 3,444 last year, 3,700 the year before, 2,959 in 2014, and 3,070 in 2013.



Smoke billows out of a tin-roofed shoe factory on Samad Road in the capital's Jatrabari after a fire broke out there around 11:20am yesterday. A total of 11 firefighting units brought the fire under control after three hours of frantic effort. But they were trying to completely put out the flames till filing of the report as of 10:30pm.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Ctg regional
round of youth
fest held

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong regional round of Bangladesh YouthFest was held in the BBA faculty auditorium of Chittagong University yesterday.

Bangladesh Brand Forum organised the event to inspire the undergraduate students to prepare themselves to contribute to the country's economy.

CU Vice Chancellor Prof Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury as the chief guest inaugurated the daylong programme of which media partner was The Daily Star.

The programme includes idea competitions, inspiring talks, discussions, and skill workshop.

A total of 150 ideas were submitted at the festival. Of those, 29 ones were presented before the judges.

Around 15 motivational speakers -- including Elita Karim, a singer and the editor of The Star Weekend, The Daily Star; Sumdany Don, chief inspirational officer at Don Sumdany Facilitation & Consultancy; Salaiman Sukhon, head of marketing of Aamra Networks Limited; Ayman Sadiq, founder and CEO of 10 Minute School; Osama Bin Noor, co-founder of Youth Opportunities; Arif R Hossain, co-founder of Aamrai Bangladesh; and Partha Barua, a singer and media personality -- shared their experience on the occasion.

SC gives two
more weeks for
gazette on code
of conduct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday gave the government two more weeks to publish a gazette notification on the disciplinary and conduct rules for lower court judges.

An eight-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha passed the order while hearing the Masdar Hossain case, known as judiciary separation case.

It also adjourned the hearing of the case till March 14. During yesterday's hearing, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam sought the time for resolving the issue.

The lower judiciary was officially separated in November 2007 but the disciplinary rules for lower court judges are yet to be finalised. The government had drafted the rules and sent those to the SC for its opinion. The court revised the draft rules in the light of the 1999 verdict in the separation of the judiciary case.

Fully separate
judiciary from
executive body

Demands a lawyers' platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Bar Association of Bangladesh (NBAB), a lawyers' organisation, on Sunday placed a five-point demand including "complete separation" of the judiciary from the executive body.

NBAB President Advocate Shah Khasruzzaman raised the demands at a press conference at Law Reporters Forum office on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises.

He requested the government to deposit one percent of the court fees to the benevolent fund of the lawyers, and to transfer the power of providing legal aid to the poor from the district judges to the district bar associations.

He also stressed the need for lawyers' unity to establish the rule of law, and independence in their profession.

NBAB leaders, including Advocate Sheikh Akhterul Islam, were present at the function.

JS body suggests
imposing 1pc
eco-tax on
companies
using polythene

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended imposing one percent eco-tax on the companies which are using polythene to package and market their products.

The parliamentary standing committee on environment and forest also recommended taking legal actions against producers, sellers and users of polythene as it was banned decade ago to protect the environment, said a member of the parliamentary watchdog after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The committee also asked the finance ministry to take necessary steps to introduce eco-tax.

Residents of Tikatuli, Ramkrishna Mission tell consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka's detailed area plan (DAP) must offer locality-based civic amenities, said inhabitants of Tikatuli and Ramkrishna Mission area during a public consultation yesterday.

They demanded widening of all roads including Aubhoy Das Lane and KM Das Lane, solid waste disposal facilities, water pumps, drainage services, and hospitals in DAP.

They also demanded accurate demarcation of the Rose Garden heritage building premises in the plan for its conservation.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), custodian of Dhaka's master plan, along with the local ward councillor, organised the consultation on the proposed new DAP.

The existing DAP mistakenly proposed a road across the Rose Garden, said DAP project director Md Ashraf Islam. Therefore, public participation is essential for a flawless and practical plan for development, he added. Only a participatory plan can reflect public aspirations, he said.

Local ward councillor Moinul Haq Monju said unauthorised buildings were identified in his locality and he asked Rajuk to remove such buildings, taking along local people.

Shah Alam Chowdhury, relevant development control director of Rajuk, and the DAP consultants were present at the public discussion.

With the 15-year term of the existing DAP expiring in 2015 and leaving most of its vital recommendations on wetland and flood flow zone conservation unimplemented, Rajuk embarked on making a 20-year DAP in March 2015 for the period from 2016 to 2035. Though the plan was supposed to be ready by April this year, Rajuk extended the deadline till December.

Imran's anniversary
of death today

CITY DESK

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Imran Rahman, former managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank Ltd.

An alumnus of BAF Shaheen School, Mirzapur Cadet College and Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University, Imran died in Toronto, Canada at the age of 45.

On this occasion, Qurankhwani and destitute feeding programme will be held in the capital.

Relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the third death anniversary of Sheikh Nurul Islam, a former government official.

A milad and a doa mahfil will be held after the Maghrib prayers at 2/101, Eastern Corner, 10/A Circuit House Road, Ramna, in the capital.