

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 33.2 L 18.0	MYMENSINGH H 31.3 L 17.5	CHITTAGONG H 31.3 L 17.0	SYLHET H 30.8 L 17.5	RAJSHAHI H 31.3 L 13.4	RANGPUR H 30.0 L 15.7	KHULNA H 33.2 L 19.0	BARISAL H 33.4 L 15.7	COX'S BAZAR H 33.0 L 19.0
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Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Day and night temperatures may rise slightly, says Met Office. **The sun sets in the capital today at 6:02pm and rises tomorrow at 6:18am.** Country's highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Ishwardi and Chuadanga and lowest 13.7 in Sreemangal.

SSC EXAM Eight held over question leak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday arrested eight people, including a schoolteacher, for their alleged involvement in leaking multiple choice questions (MCQs) of the Secondary School Certificate examinations online.

The gang used to leak questions by taking snaps of the question papers usually around 30 minutes before the start of the exams, said Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of the detective branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

"They used to solve the MCQs within 10 minutes and upload them on their Facebook group from where the students got the answers right before the exam," he told a press briefing at DMP media centre.

The question papers were leaked either during transportation from the DC office to the exam centres or from the centres to the sub-centres, he said.

The eight were held in the capital and some other districts. After printing at the BG press, question papers are sent to the deputy commissioner's (DC's) office in the district headquarters and then to the exam centres.

The arrested eight are Rafiqul Islam, an English teacher of Kamalapur Sher-e-Bangla Railway High School, Jahirul Islam alias Shuvo, Liton Mia, Tarikuzzaman Himel alias Abir, Ariful Islam Arif, Ontor, Romon Hossain alias Mahir, and Rajib Ali.

Rafiqul, who was also an invigilator, would take photos of the questions, while Jahirul solved them and posted the answers on their Facebook group named "Admin Post"

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A gridlocked Farmgate as people go about their daily business on the last workday of the week yesterday, around 3:30pm. This was the scene after an uncalled-for transport strike put normal life on hold for more than a day and a half till 2:00pm Wednesday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HC grants bail to female prisoner languishing in jail over 7yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to a female prisoner, Sumi Akter Reshma, who has been languishing in jail for more than seven years in a murder case.

It ordered the lower courts concerned to finish the trial proceedings of the killing cases against two other female prisoners -- Razia Sultana and Shanaj Begum -- in three months.

If the trial courts cannot finish their trial proceedings, the courts will consider their bail upon submission of bail petitions, the HC said.

The HC also rejected the rule issuing bail for another female prisoner -- Rani alias Nupur -- in a murder case against her, as the trial court is now recording statements from witnesses of the case.

Sumi from Narayanganj, Razia from Gazipur and Rani from Mymensingh have been in the jail since 2009 in three separate murder cases, and Shanaj from

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BNP calls gas price hike illogical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the recent gas price hike would adversely impact on all the industries and economy of the country.

"The price hike is illogical because the gas companies were already making profit," BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told a party sit-in at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, protesting the hike.

The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission on February 23 raised gas prices for all consumers by 22.7 percent and decided to implement the hike in two phases.

As per the new prices effective from this month, households using double burners would pay Tk 800 instead of the current Tk 650, while those using single burners would pay Tk 750 instead of Tk 600. The prices are supposed to be further increased by Tk 150 each from June 1.

But the High Court on Tuesday stayed for six months the government decision to raise the gas prices from June 1. It also questioned the legality of the move to increase the prices in two phases.

The government is taking such "anti-people" decisions because it has been alienated from the people, said Fakhru. BNP senior leaders Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, and Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, among others, spoke at the event.

New law will encourage child marriage: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special provision of the newly passed Child Marriage Restraint Act, which permits underage marriages under "special circumstances", will encourage child marriage, BNP said yesterday.

In a statement, BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said the law would block the progress the country made in establishing the rights of women and children.

He said there was no necessity to keep the special provision because the country's people had already "accepted" 21 and 18 as the marriage age for men and women respectively.

He demanded revocation of the provision of the law, passed in parliament Monday.

The provision permits parents, or guardians, to marry off their children below the ages under "special circumstances". It also does not specify any age ceiling in those "special" cases.

ATTACK ON PATIENT'S SON

4 Bogra medical college interns penalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internship of four interns at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College in Bogra has been frozen for six months after a probe found evidence of their attack on son of a patient.

"Their role was proved in the attack," Health Secretary Sirajul Islam told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday. After the completion of the penalty, they can resume their internship, he added.

A group of interns allegedly beat up Rouf Sarkar, 35, son of a patient admitted there, twice over a trifling matter on February 19.

The cardiac patient, Alauddin Sarkar, 65, of Sirajganj was undergoing treatment at the medical college hospital. As he felt cold, his son Rouf asked an intern to show him the switch of a fan for turning it off by calling her "sister" since he thought she was a nurse, said Bina, 30,

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Public trust a major challenge for EC

Ex-CEC Shamsul Huda tells roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gaining public confidence is one of the major challenges for the new Election Commission, said former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday.

"Currently, the reputation of the EC is at a very low level," he said, adding, the commission must work neutrally to uplift its image and gain public confidence.

Huda was speaking at a roundtable titled "Challenges for the New Election Commission" organised by Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (Shujan) at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

The former CEC suggested the new EC maintain a good relationship with all the stakeholders, mainly political parties. "The EC should not do anything unilaterally."

He opined for introducing a separate cadre service for election officials to strengthen the EC.

Former election commissioner M Sakhawat Hussain said holding the 2019 parliamentary election fairly is the top challenge for the new EC. He suggested updating some electoral laws for holding the next election fairly.

The commission also works for ensuring one-third representation of women in the political parties' leadership by 2021. Presenting a paper, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said people lack confidence on the EC because of

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Suranjit's wife files nomination paper for by-election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Five aspirants, including Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta's wife Joya Sengupta, have filed nomination papers for the March 30 by-election to Sunamganj-2 constituency.

Joya was nominated by the AL. The four others are Sheikh Mohammad Jahir Ali of Jatiya Party, Salehin Chowdhury Shuvo of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Ambia), Aminul Islam of JSD (Inu), and independent candidate Syed Ali Mahub Hossain.

The constituency fell vacant after Suranjit's death on February 5.



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir speaks at a sit-in in the party organised at the capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, protesting the recent gas price hike. PHOTO: STAR

Accused flees Ctg court before verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An accused in a gold smuggling case fled from a Chittagong court before delivery of a verdict yesterday.

The convict, Belal Uddin, 35, of Fatikchhari upazila, who was on bail, informed the court of his presence in the morning, said court sources. Around 2:00pm, the case documents were produced before the court for pronouncing the verdict.

When the court asked whether the accused was present, Belal could not be traced out. Later, showing him absconding, the court sentenced him to six years' imprisonment. Belal was arrested on March 31, 2015 at the Chittagong airport along with 19 gold bars.

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SC adjourns BGMEA building demolition hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned the hearing until March 5 of a review petition against its order for demolishing the 15-storey "BGMEA Complex" in the capital.

On the same day, the court will resume hearing of the petition filed by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) authorities, seeking three years' time for demolishing the building.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha

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Prime accused dodging arrest

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Police are yet to submit a charge sheet in a case filed for the murder of Nasim Ahmed Sohel, an MBA student of Premier University Chittagong, although a year has elapsed.

Police could not even arrest prime accused and Sohel's classmate Md Ibrahim Sohan, who was expelled after the murder.

Sohel was stabbed to death on the campus on March 29 last year over a feud between two factions over controlling a farewell and freshers' orientation programme, according to other students and police.

Sohel was a member of the executive committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong city unit.

Police arrested eight accused so far but four of them were freed on bail.

Victim's father Abu Taher said the accused, after getting bail, started threatening to harm Sohel's brother if they did not withdraw the case. The accused are also threatening those who helped them with the case.

"I think police have pressure from influential quarters because the CCTV footage clearly showed who were involved in the murder," he added.

Mithun Mallick, vice president of BCL Chittagong city unit, said they would give tougher programme from mid March if the charge sheet was not submitted by then.

Denying the allegation of having any external pressure, investigation officer Sub-Inspector Humayun Kabir said they conducted several raids to arrest the main accused but failed. "The charge sheet would possibly be submitted within a week or two," he said.



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