

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHITTAGONG	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 18.0 L 09.5	H 18.8 L 06.5	H 23.1 L 10.8	H 23.5 L 08.8	H 18.0 L 05.3	H 21.2 L 04.9	H 20.5 L 08.6	H 21.5 L 06.8	H 24.5 L 13.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the country during midnight till morning and it may continue at places till noon, says Met Office. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5:28pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.** Country's highest temperature 25.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Teknaf and lowest 2.06 in Tentulia.

Militant hideout: A house owner's curse

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and JAMIL MAHMUD

The Taj Manzil of Kalyanpur in Dhaka saw a drastic change in last one and a half years after nine suspected militants, who had holed up there under the guise of tenants, were killed in police operation codenamed "Storm 26" on July 26, 2016.

Known as "Jahaj (ship) Building" for its ark-like front view, each floor of the six-storey building was once occupied by many tenants -- mostly singles. The rent of house was reasonably high in a neighbourhood that mainly consists of housing for low and lower-middle income groups.

After the house owner Atahar Uddin Ahmed and his wife Momtaj Parveen were implicated in a case filed over their alleged "sheltering of militants" in the aftermath of the Operation Storm 26, most old tenants of the building have moved out fearing police harassment.

Before the incident, monthly rent for a flat in Jahaj Building ranged from Tk 12,000 to Tk 13,000. Now, even though the house owner has slashed the rent down -- from Tk 4,000 to Tk 5,000, nearly half of the building still remains vacant, according to locals and the caretaker of the building.

Despite several attempts, the correspondents were unsuccessful in speaking with Atahar's family members in person.

They were able to reach his wife, Momtaj, over phone recently when she said that they

had to relocate from their house to avoid police harassment.

Commenting on the tenant situation, she said, "The incident [Operation Storm 26] left the tenants perplexed" and now most people are holding off renting this place.

Meanwhile, they are also being more cautious in verifying a prospective tenant's information and renting out the flats to married couples only, she also said.

In the early hours of July 26 in 2016, a fierce gun battle ensued after police stumbled upon a militant den in the building while conducting a block raid in the area.

The law enforcers evacuated all tenants of the building, with four flats on each floor, before neutralising nine suspected militants.

Later, the law enforcers picked up the house owner couple along with several tenants of the building for questioning.

Police then filed a case against the couple and their four other family members -- currently on bail, accusing them of harbouring militants, concealing information and obstructing duties of the police, according to court sources.

One of the building's few tenants, Tuku Mia, a local furniture shop owner, said he had been living in a two-bedroom flat with his family on the second floor of the building since July last year and the tenants of the building face visits and interrogations by police oftentimes.

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Ebteday madrasa teachers, some with their children, continue their sit-in for the eighth consecutive day yesterday in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club, demanding nationalisation of all registered madrasas.

PHOTO: STAR

Killers rehabilitated?

Convicts roaming freely in Malaysia; active in social media



MUNTAKIM SAAD

On January 8, 2012, Jahangirnagar University student Zubair Ahmed was mercilessly beaten and stabbed by a rival group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists on the campus. After fighting a losing battle, he succumbed to his injuries the next day (today). Since then, six years have passed.

But, much to the frustration of the family of the victim, four convicted killers, who fled the dock of a Dhaka court on February 23 in 2014, are yet to be put behind bars.

The convicts -- Khandaker Ashiqul Islam alias Ashiq, Khan Mohammad Rois alias Shohan, Mahabub Akram and Ishtiaque Mehboob alias Arup -- escaped justice, sensing that their bail would be denied. However, no case was filed in this connection.

After quizzical vanishing from lower court, the four accused have been absconding after obtaining visa, passing through the immigration and finally flying overseas.

While the law enforcement agencies are mostly in the dark about their whereabouts, The Daily Star has found that all four are roaming freely in Malaysia and maintaining a good lifestyle there. The convicted killers are now hanging out together in night clubs and resorts and going to the movies, according to their own Facebook posts.

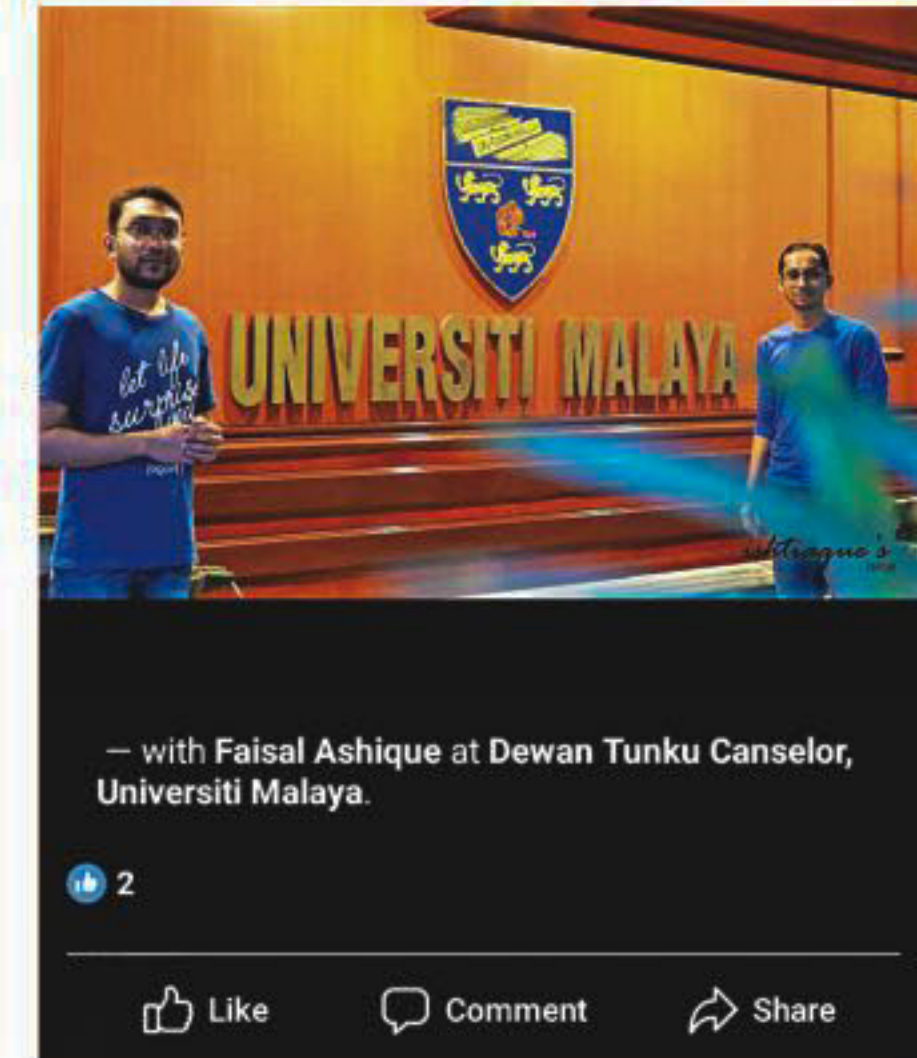
The newspaper checked with some classmates of the killers. The classmates confirmed that the Facebook accounts are run by the fugitives -- Ashiq, Shohan, Akram and Arup.

On December 31, Arup on his Facebook account posted a "Happy New Year" selfie with Akram, saying that he is feeling pity for the Bangladeshis as the authorities have banned rooftop party on 31st night.

On November 25, Ashiq, Shohan and



Ashiq Shohan Arup Akram



Shohan and Ashiq in a Facebook screenshot on the left. Another screenshot on the right shows three of the convicts including Arup, Shohan and Ashiq. The photos were posted from Malaysia.

Arup were seen at a programme, "Bangladesh Students' Night", at Dewan Tunku Canselor Hall at University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, according to the Facebook post of Arup.

Shohan, who was handed down death sentence for the murder, wrote on his Facebook recently that he is "feeling chill" at Zouk Club, a dance club in Kuala Lumpur.

Besides, all the four condemned killers were seen in a group photo taken at a cineplex in Kuala Lumpur last month. The Daily Star has collected screenshots of



online activities of the killers.

The Daily Star recently contacted the officers-in-charge of the local police stations at the permanent addresses of the fugitives.

Shahid Ullah, the OC of Amtoli Police Station, said they did not receive any warrant against Shohan, reports our Patuakhali correspondent.

Imdadul Haque Sheikh, the OC of Jhenaidah Police Station, echoed the same about Arup.

Asked about Akram, OC Anwar Hussain of Sudharam Police Station in Noakhali

yesterday said they received a warrant, but the accused had already fled the country.

"I will send a non-execution report of the warrant tomorrow [today]. We could not arrest him because he is now staying in Malaysia," he added.

About Ashiq, the OC of Shailakupa Police Station said Ashiq went abroad after the verdict was pronounced. "We will arrest him as soon we trace him in Bangladesh," said the OC, reports our Jhenaidah correspondent.

The killing of Zubair, an honours final-year student of JU English department and also a BCL activist, triggered huge uproar in and outside the campus. The university authorities filed a murder case on January 9, 2012.

On February 8, 2015, the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka awarded capital punishment to Rashidul Islam Raju of philosophy department, Ashiq, Shohan and Zahid Hasan of zoology department, and Akram of government and politics department.

Six other students of the university were given life term. They are Arup of philosophy, Najmus Sakib Topu of biochemistry and molecular biology, Kamruzzaman Sohag of philosophy, Avinandan Kundu of statistics, Mazharul Islam of history, and Shafiu Alam Setu of statistics.

The high court on January 2 started hearing of the death references and appeal of the convicts.

With the killers still roaming freely abroad, Zubair's family demanded that the law enforcement agencies bring them back immediately.

With tears rolling down, Zubair's father Tofael Ahmed, who is in his 60s, said he had buried all his hopes six years back.

"I wanted my youngest son to be a high government official. But I received his battered and lifeless body instead," an emotional Tofael recently told The Daily Star in his Patuakhali's Khepupara residence.

His mother is still in deep shock and

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MARRYING WOMAN FORCEFULLY DMP official to be investigated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A probe committee will be formed to investigate the allegation against DMP Additional Commissioner Mizanur Rahman for marrying a woman forcefully and torturing her, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday.

"We are now busy with police week programmes... I will try to talk to the IGP tomorrow [today] about the allegation," the minister told The Daily Star.

The police officer allegedly picked up Morium Akter Eko, 25, in front of her Panthapath residence on July 15 last year and married her.

Morium also alleged that she was framed in a false case in which she had been in jail for three weeks. She received bail a week ago.

Morium said she became acquainted with the police official through one of his friends and gradually developed a good rapport with him.

At one stage, Mizanur started making "indecent proposals" to her. On July 15, he said he wanted to apologise for his misdeeds.

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ROHINGYA-BANGLADESHI MARRIAGE

Writ petition seeking validity rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition seeking its order on the government asking it not to harass or arrest a man for marrying a Rohingya woman.

The court also ordered the petitioner Babul Hossain from Singair upazila in Manikganj to deposit Tk one lakh as fine for wasting the valuable time of the court.

The bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice JBM Hassan issued the order after holding a hearing on the petition.

The petitioner's son Shoeb Hossain Jewel, 26, married Rafisa, 18, a Rohingya girl of Kutupalong refugee camp at a local mosque on September 14 last year after being refused by the marriage registrar.

Ever since, they have been on the run, and changed their location many times as police is conducting drives against them.

In this situation, Babul Hossain filed the writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the law ministry's

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