

WEATHER
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA
H 33.2 | L 22.8

MYMENSINGH
H 31.0 | L 21.3

CHATTOGRAM
H 31.4 | L 23.3

SYLHET
H 32.0 | L 19.6

RAJSHAHI
H 32.2 | L 20.3

RANGPUR
H 30.6 | L 20.5

KHULNA
H 33.3 | L 23.5

BARISHAL
H 33.0 | L 22.4

COX'S BAZAR
H 31.5 | L 23.0

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:31pm and rises tomorrow at 5:57am.

DU 'GHA' UNIT ADMISSION TEST Authorities admit 'digital forgery', publish results

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday admitted that the question paper of "Gha" Unit admission test was leaked via "digital forgery", but published the result anyway.

Vice-chancellor Professor Akhtaruzzaman announced the result at the Central Admission Office of DU at 3:30pm.

"Though an allegation of question leak had surfaced, it's the university authorities' success that they nabbed the perpetrators. We will dig deep into the matter to identify others," said the VC.

Prof Akhtaruzzaman, however, found a distinction between the leak of "Gha" Unit question paper and the leaks in previous years.

"It is being said that the question paper was leaked at 9:17am on the day of the exam. Previously I heard of questions being leaked a day or two prior to the exam. We have gradually narrowed the gap [between the start of exams and leak of questions]," he said.

Earlier on Monday, hours after issuing a press release on publishing the results on Tuesday, the DU authorities issued another press release saying the result has been postponed as per directives of the VC over allegations of question paper leak.

Law enforcers have found evidence that hand-written question paper of "Gha" Unit admission test was leaked 43 minutes prior

to the exam, and circulated by two admission information centres in Bogura.

Six people, including an admission seeker and his father, were arrested on Saturday in connection with the incident.

The VC seemed unwilling to label it as "question leak", and called it "digital forgery".

"We have received the probe report and they have found proof of digital forgery. If you [journalists] want to call it 'question leak', you may. But it was digital forgery," he said.

He also ruled out the probability of retaking the test, saying that they do not have any right to play "games" with the future of thousands of students.

Around 26 percent admission seekers have obtained pass marks in the test held last Friday, which is the highest pass rate in this unit in the last five years.

Meanwhile, Akhtar Hossen, a third-year student of DU's law department, yesterday started a hunger strike in front of the Raju Memorial sculpture, demanding a retake of the "Gha" Unit admission test.

'Pragatishil Chhatra Jote', an alliance of left-leaning students' organisations, at a press conference held at Madhu's Canteen of the university yesterday demanded cancellation of the exam and resignation of DU Social Science faculty dean Sadeka Halim, who was the coordinator of the exam.



Motorbikers stand on a zebra crossing, looking for a chance to take an unauthorised U-turn on the Panthapath-Karwan Bazar intersection. To avoid traffic jam, bikers often take the left lane from Panthapath-Tejgaon link road towards Banglamotor and then snake through the wrong side of the busy intersection. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Kamal Hossain's aim is to remove Sheikh Hasina from power: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikya Front Chief Dr Kamal Hossain's aim is probably not going to power but rather just to topple Sheikh Hasina's government, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"Tarique Rahman, who is now the acting chairman of BNP, will operate the Oikya Front from London and Kamal Hossain formed the unity accepting his (Tarique) leadership. His [Dr Kamal Hossain] objective is not to assume power but to remove Sheikh Hasina from power," he said.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, made the remarks while talking to reporters after visiting a newly-constructed building of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in the capital's Banani area.

Dr Kamal, also president of Gono Forum, has shut the door after inviting former president Dr AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury [to

Jatiya Oikya Front], he added.

Terming the unity "fragile", the Awami League leader said, "Such unity will never work and their efforts will go in vain soon as it is an attempt to mix oil and water."

Dr Kamal Hossain formed Gono Forum after leaving Awami League, and he thought thousands of people would join his party; but the countrymen didn't respond, he said.

"Now, Kamal Hossain is isolated from people and the newly-formed unity would not get any response from them either," he added.

Regarding a note of dissent from Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukder, Quader said the President formed the Election Commission through a "search committee".

He (President) had sought lists of names from the political parties. As per the lists, Mahbub Talukder was nominated as EC from BNP. The EC could take a decision on the basis of majority, he added.

No hike in gas price now: BERC

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) yesterday announced their decision of not enhancing gas price, "considering the overall situation".

The regulatory body made the announcement from a press conference at the commission office in the city.

"In the present situation, we find no reason to raise the price of gas," said BERC Chairman Monwar Islam while briefing reporters.

He said distribution companies appealed for a price hike, calculating the import of 1,000 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of liquefied natural gas (LNG). But currently, the supply of LNG is 300 mmcf.

Secondly, he said, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has given a supplementary duty waiver on the import of LNG. "That's why we don't allow the raising of gas price," he said.

Commission member Mohammad Abdul Aziz, however, said the government would have to provide Tk 3,000 crore in subsidy to distribution companies so they can cover the loss they would incur due to the import of LNG. He said the commission would ask the government to provide Tk 1,400 crore from its short-term support fund.

He also said the commission will consider a price hike when 1,000 mmcf LNG will be supplied to the national network.

Earlier, all eight state-owned downstream entities in gas sector -- six distribution companies, one transmission and an LNG marketing company -- had appealed to the BERC, seeking an average 75 percent hike on the existing gas prices for different consumer groups, except for households and commercial connections.

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'ATTEMPTED LAND GRABBING, EXTORTION'

Case filed against Zafrullah, others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Days after a general diary (GD) was filed against Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury over remarks "tantamount to sedition" made in a TV programme, a case has been filed against him and some others allegedly for attempting to grab a piece of land and demanding extortion.

Mohammad Ali, a resident of Harirampur upazila of Manikganj, filed the case accusing Zafrullah and three other named and three to four unnamed persons with Ashulia Police Station on Monday night.

However, Dr Zafrullah told The Daily Star that Gonoshasthaya has owned the land for over 35 years and has legal documents.

In the case statement, the complainant said he and his partners bought the 4.24-acre land in Mirzanagar area of Puthalia Union. They have fenced the land and planted trees.

But the accused have been trying to grab it for a long time, it said. They had broken the fence, felled trees and dug up soil several times. Eight GDs were filed with Ashulia and Savar police stations over the incidents.

The case statement said the accused were pressuring the complainant to sell the land at a low price. On October 14, three accused -- Delwar Hossain, Saiful Islam Shishir and Awlad Hossen -- with three to four unnamed persons entered the property when the complainant and his partners were present. They asked him to hand over the land to Gonoshasthaya as per the direction of Dr Zafrullah or pay Tk 1 crore.

As he refused, they threatened him and his partners and damaged materials worth Tk 8.5 lakh, said the case statement.

Contacted, Rezaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said they are investigating the matter.

When asked, Dr Zafrullah said, "The land is owned by Gonoshasthaya Kendra and we have a plan to construct a hostel there. His [complainant] claim is false."

Meanwhile, regarding the GD filed with Cantonment Police Station, Deputy Commissioner (media and public relations) Masudur Rahman of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they have begun investigation in this regard, as per permission from court.



A group of photographers hold placards and raise their cameras, from a human chain demanding release of arrested photographer Shahidul Alam.

PHOTO: STAR

Cameras raised in solidarity

Photographers form human chain
demanding Shahidul Alam's release
DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of photographers yesterday staged a demonstration on the campus of Dhaka University, demanding immediate and unconditional release of acclaimed photographer Shahidul Alam.

Around 100 photographers formed a human chain at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture under the banner of "Shahidul Alam Er Muktir Dabitey Alokchitribando".

The participating photographers also raised their cameras in the air for two minutes as a symbol of solidarity with Shahidul Alam.

Prominent portrait photographer Nasir Ali Mamun said, "Shahidul Alam didn't only enrich our photography industry, but also raised his voice or extended his support during any logical movement in the country."

Another photographer, Taslima Akter Lima, said freedom of expression is a citizen's basic right. But Shahidul Alam was arrested for practicing the right under the much controversial section 57 of the ICT Act.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

A potential godsend for livestock farmers

Scientists invent new vaccine for foot
and mouth disease

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of researchers of Bangladesh has brought good news for livestock farmers of the country, as they have invented an effective, low-cost trivalent vaccine for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) that affects cattle and sheep.

The discovery was revealed by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at a press conference held at International Mothers Language Institute yesterday.

He said a 17-member research team led by Prof Mohammad Anwar Hossain of department of microbiology at Dhaka University found out the genome of three serotypes of the virus that cause FMD in Bangladesh.

The team identified the three serotypes -- O, A and Asia 1 -- circulating in Bangladesh, during their six year-long research work from 2012 to 2018 under the project "Higher Education Quality Enhancement", he said.

Based on the genomes, they prepared the vaccine for FMD, he said.

A total of 5.51 crore domestic animals like cows, sheep, goat and buffaloes were infected by FMD last year, which is a huge economic loss for the country, said Nahid, adding that Bangladesh annually faces a loss of \$125 million due to FMD.

Prof Anwar, also vice-chancellor of Jessore University of Science and Technology, said though there is a supply of locally-manufactured and imported FMD vaccines, there is still a big deficit of it in Bangladesh.

He requested the prime minister to take initiatives to build a pilot-scale incubator to take the innovation to user-level technology to make the vaccine available.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

JOURNO FARHAD MURDER HC commutes death of convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death sentences of two convicts in the sensational murder case of journalist Farhad Khan was commuted to life imprisonment by the High Court yesterday.

Deputy Attorney General Moniruzzaman Rubel told The Daily Star that the death sentences of the convicts -- Nazimuzzaman Yon and Razu Ahmed -- were commuted to life imprisonment as the two were very young when they murdered journalist Farhad Khan and his wife Rahima Khanam. The court also took it into consideration that the convicts have been in jail since 2011.

However, the government will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, seeking tougher punishment for the convicts, Moniruzzaman added.

The HC bench of justice Md Ruhul Quddus and Justice ASM Abdul Mobin delivered the judgment after hearing the death reference and appeals filed by Yon and Razu in the case challenging the lower court verdict.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Honing skills to counter violent extremism

Australia offers course for officials

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Australian High Commission in Dhaka held a networking event to celebrate the achievements of nearly 80 alumni who have completed courses on "Countering Violent Extremism" under the Australian Government's "Australia Awards" programme.

The government officials -- from a range of agencies including the Bangladesh police and ministries of home affairs, law and finance -- completed the course at Australia's University of Queensland.

The course provided practical skills and knowledge to deal with cyber threats, and to detect, investigate, disrupt the financing of terrorism. It also enabled scholars to ana-

lyse international legal frameworks and compliance mechanisms.

Over the last five years, Australia has supported over 200 officials from Bangladesh to strengthen their skills and knowledge to counter violent extremism and to connect them with the relevant institutions in Australia.

Speaking at the event, Australian High Commissioner Julia Niblett said, "Violent extremism is a global challenge that affects us all. Australia is pleased to provide capacity building through this course as an important element of our contribution to countering violent extremism in Bangladesh."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Feeding the poor to raise awareness

Procheshta Foundation marks World Food Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golapi Begum, a slum resident in Dhaka's Tejgunipara area does not remember the last time she and her family had biryani.

But yesterday was different for her family, as non-government humanitarian organisation Procheshta Foundation offered them biryani to mark World Food Day (October 16).

Since morning, Golapi and one of her sons waited in a long queue in Tejgunipara expecting to get the food. "Four of us will share the three packs of biryani for lunch. It's a matter of great joy for us to have such food," said an elated Golapi, thanking the organisation.

"We live hand-to-mouth, so having

biryani is very expensive for us. I cannot remember the last time we had it," added Golapi.

Ikram Uddin Abir, founder and president of Procheshta Foundation, said they distributed free food among 2,000 people in the slum, located on both sides of the railway track from Tejgaon Railway Station to Mohakhali.

"Our intention was to raise awareness among people so that they don't waste food, and instead, distribute their extra food among poor people," said Abir.

The foundation also distributed food among around 1,000 underprivileged people in other parts of the city, distributed leaflets containing awareness messages and organised a discussion at Bishwa Sahitya Kendra.