

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 26.6 L 21.1	H 28.5 L 20.5	H 25.0 L 22.5	H 29.5 L 20.3	H 29.0 L 19.7	H 29.3 L 20.0	H 26.0 L 21.5	H 25.0 L 21.6	H 25.0 L 22.3

Rain or thundershowers with temporary gusty wind may occur at a few places over Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Mymensingh & Rajshahi divisions in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:21pm and rises tomorrow at 6:04am.

Over 34 lakh cases pending in courts

Law minister tells JS
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 34 lakh cases are now pending with the higher and lower courts across the country, according to statistics placed by Law Minister Anisul Huq in the parliament yesterday.

"The total number of the cases pending with the country's higher and lower courts is 34,53,353," he said, in reply to a question from treasury bench MP M Abdul Latif.

He also said the government has taken effective measures for quick disposal of the huge number of cases. Anisul said the present government has brought marked changes in the civil and criminal judicial systems after returning to power.

In reply to another question from Awami League MP AKM Jahangir Hossain from Patuakhali-3, the law minister said the number of cases pending with the High Court is 4,95,415, while that with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is 19,493.



Clockwise from left, As private bus services remain out of operation, a huge crowd scrambles to get into an already packed BRTC bus at Kalyanpur in Dhaka yesterday, the last day of a 48-hour countrywide transport strike. Rickshaws rule in New Market area where very few small passenger vehicles and cars were seen. In Matuail, people travel in a rickshaw-van on an almost deserted road.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, RASHED SHUMON, PRABIR DAS

TRANSPORT WORKERS' STRIKE Lawmaker demands home minister's statement in House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member of parliament from Jatiya Party yesterday demanded that the Home Minister give a statement in the parliament on countrywide anarchy and commuter's harassment during the ongoing nationwide strike of transport workers.

"A child died in an ambulance in greater Sylhet as transport workers during their strike [on Sunday] held the vehicle for around an hour and a half," JP MP Pir Fazlur Rahman said.

He also said transport workers are creating an anarchic situation in the country in the name of transport strike.

What was worse, the transport workers even smeared used engine oil on the faces of drivers and passengers on the road, trying to humiliate them.

The opposition MP also said the police and the home minister's inaction against the transport workers hurt everyone.

"I demand that the home minister give a statement in the House under section 300 of the rules of procedure of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

JSC and JDC examinations to begin on Nov 1

Over 26 lakh students to sit for exams this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 26 lakh eighth graders will sit for Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations on November 1 amid government's various measures to prevent question leak.

Closing down all coaching centres till the end of the exams, opening sealed packets containing question papers 25 minutes prior to the test, and banning mobile phone, smartwatch, digital pen and any digital device within 200 metres of the exam centres are some of the steps taken to ensure that the examinations are held in a free and fair manner.

"I seek cooperation from all and urge the students and parents not to go after questions rumoured to have been leaked," said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at a pre-examination press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday.

He requested the guardians not to put pressure on their children over the exams.

There have been some negative vibes over the test, with some guardians being more concerned about their children scoring well and sending them to coaching classes, he said.

But the overall impact of the JSC-JDC exams is encouraging as the tests not only increased the enrolment of

students but also reduced dropout rates, the minister said.

What is more important, Nahid said, is that girls continued to outnumber boys as the number of the examinees has been on the rise.

A total of 26,70,333 -- 14,46,601 girls and 12,23,732 boys -- have registered from 29,677 schools and madrasas for this year's exams.

Last year, 24.68 lakh students took part in the tests.

"It [the rise in the number] is the outcome of extending the access to education to rural level. The exams will make the students more confident and the students will also feel encouraged

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST GRAFT CASE VERDICT BNP to stage demos in cities today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will stage demonstrations in all metropolitan cities and district towns today, protesting a Dhaka court verdict which awarded the party's Chairperson Khaleda Zia seven years of rigorous imprisonment.

The verdict was passed illegally to keep the BNP chairperson out of politics and elections, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told journalists at a press briefing at the party's Nayapalton headquarters yesterday.

Terming the verdict "dictated", Fakhrul alleged that Khaleda has been convicted as per the government's "desire" to keep her away from the next general election.

"Khaleda Zia has been convicted illegally without any document and witness in a fabricated case, out of political vengeance to keep her away from politics. The dictated verdict was given so that she [Khaleda] can't take part in the upcoming election," the BNP leader said.

He alleged that the government's wish and the ministers' remarks about the case have been reflected in the verdict.

Fakhrul questioned the validity of the verdict, as it was given in absence of an ailing Khaleda Zia.



The transport strike sends the prices of essentials soaring as the kitchen markets did not receive new supplies of vegetables and other perishable items in the last two days. The photo was taken at Karwan Bazar yesterday.

ORPHANAGE TRUST CASE Verdict on 4 appeals today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for delivering verdict in four separate appeals in connection with Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case in which BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

One of the pleas was filed by Khaleda Zia seeking acquittal of the charges; a revision petition was filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) seeking enhancement of Khaleda's jail sentence; two other appeals were filed by convicts Qazi Saleemul Huq and Sharfuddin Ahmed seeking acquittal of charges.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman fixed the date after concluding hearing arguments on the appeals for 32 days.

HC wants to see footage of Shahidul's interview

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought a video footage of the interview given by internationally acclaimed photographer Shahidul Alam to Al Jazeera English during demonstrations for safe roads in August this year.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice SM Mozibur Rahman asked Attorney General Mahbubey Alam to produce the video footage before it on Thursday.

The court passed the order during hearing the rule issued by it earlier over granting bail to Shahidul, who has been in jail for 85 days, in a case lodged against him for "spreading propaganda and false information against the government".

After concluding yesterday's proceedings of the rule, the bench also fixed Thursday for resuming the hearing on the issue.

The HC bench sought the video foot-

age as the attorney general told it that Shahidul has provoked people against the state through giving the interview to Al Jazeera English and posting a status on his Facebook, Deputy Attorney General Dr Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star.

During hearing yesterday, Shahidul's lawyer Barrister Sara Hossain told the HC that Shahidul Alam has been languishing in jail in a case filed on false and baseless allegations.

There is no progress in the proceedings of the case filed against Shahidul, as police have not submitted any charge sheet to the trial court concerned in connection with the case, she said. She added that Shahidul Alam is unwell as he has been suffering from several health complications including eye problems.

Barrister Sara Hossain also argued that Shahidul would not leave the country and he will face the trial if he is granted bail.

ZAFRULLAH'S BAIL HC passes dissenting order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday delivered dissenting order on a bail petition by Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury in an extortion case. Justice Muhammad Abdul Hafiz granted four weeks' anticipatory bail to Zafrullah, while Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim rejected the petition.

The petition and order will be sent to the Chief Justice for decision, said Additional Attorney General Momtaz Uddin Fakir. The CJ will assign another bench to hear and dispose it, he added.

A case was filed by Kazi Mohibur Rob on October 24, accusing Zafrullah and his cohorts of attempted land grabbing, trespassing, stealing fish from pond and fruits from trees and demanding Tk 2 crore in extortion.

It's 'killing by negligence'

JU teachers say about Pranto's death

JU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and students of Jahangirnagar University yesterday demanded cancellation of license of the real estate company responsible for the accident causing the death of first-year philosophy student Mahmud Bin Ashraf Pranto, and accused three hospitals of negligence.

The 21-year-old died from injuries after an iron bar fell on him from an under-construction building in Dhanmondi on Friday. Shanta Holdings Ltd, the construction company, did not keep any metal safety canopy around the building.

Speaking at a press conference at the philosophy department, the teachers spoke against "negli-

gence" of the three hospitals where Pranto was taken immediately after the accident.

Chairperson of the department Prof Mostofa Nazmul Mansur Tamal said Pranto was denied admission at Medinova Diagnostic Centre. Then he was taken to Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital and Bangladesh Medical College Hospital, but both referred him elsewhere. "He was denied proper care at the hospitals. They showed negligence," he said.

Pranto was eventually taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was declared dead.

Quoting the on-duty doctor, Prof Tamal said Pranto "died due to excessive bleeding". "It's not a normal death. It's simply a kill-

ing. The negligence of the developer company and the hospitals are to blame for this killing."

The university administration and the victim's family may jointly sue the developer company and the hospitals soon, said Prof Tamal.

Earlier, more than 250 teachers and students took part in a mourning procession parading the campus streets.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Sangskritik Jote, and Chhatra Front expressed solidarity with the demands raised at the press conference, while Meherpur District Students Association formed a human chain at the university's Central Shaheed Minar.

Ensure EC's freedom to hold a fair election

Says Raushan Ershad in last session of parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, last night in parliament, called upon the government to ensure that the Election Commission can work freely towards holding the 11th national election in a fair and participatory manner.

She was speaking in the last session of present parliament.

The opposition leader also urged the government to ensure the security of minority communities, so that they do not come under attack or their lands and assets are not grabbed during the election period.

Earlier, participating in the discussion, ruling alliance and opposition MPs including Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, and Chief Whip ASM

Feroz termed the present parliament as the most effective and vibrant in the parliamentary history.

They also said the present parliament was very fruitful due to the constructive role and cooperation between the ruling and the opposition bench to fulfill people's desire.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the concluding sitting of the last session, said the 10th parliament was active and effective as opposition MPs participated in various parliamentary business including question answer sessions and parliamentary standing committees.

According to the parliament secretariat, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present 338 days and the opposition leader was present 242 days out of total 410 sittings in the 23 sessions of 10th parliament.