

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAHI	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 27.6 L 16.2	H 27.0 L 13.5	H 26.8 L 15.6	H 28.2 L 14.6	H 27.0 L 11.8	H 28.0 L 12.6	H 27.2 L 13.2	H 27.5 L 12.5	H 28.0 L 16.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. Light to moderate fog may occur at places over the country during late night till morning. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:12pm and rises tomorrow at 6:31am.



Transparency International Bangladesh forms a human chain in front of TSC at Dhaka University, marking International Anti-corruption Day yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Demonstrate that corruption is a punishable offence

TIB calls on govt, ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday urged the government and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to be more watchful and demonstrate that corruption is indeed a punishable offence.

Without effective response from the government and ACC, the fight against corruption will fail, said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. Raising questions over the sincerity of bringing corrupt people to justice, especially those in positions of power, and empowering ACC in this connection, he said, "We don't see that happening."

Iftekharuzzaman made the remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of an anti-corruption cartoon and photography exhibition at Drik Gallery in Dhaka. The exhibition will continue till December 13.

TIB also handed over prizes among winners of the 13th Anti-Corruption Cartoon Competition 2018 and 4th

Anti-Corruption Photo Competition 2018.

To mark International Anti-corruption Day, TIB also formed a human chain in front of Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) in the morning.

Speaking at the programme, Iftekharuzzaman said, "There are various important places, which are conducive to corruption. During the road safety movement, it was seen that a workers' leader in charge of an important ministry. Although many promises were made to resolve this issue, these were never delivered."

He also said the possibility of enforcing the anti-corruption acts has been reduced because of some contradictory laws like ICT Act and Public Service Act.

At the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition, he said, "The Digital Security Act has become a weapon not only against freedom of expression but also against the anti-corruption movement."

"The Digital Security Act has unfortunately created a context in which people feel insecure to raise voice and are forced to exercise self-censorship. We call upon the government to really reconsider this law and amend it as soon as possible."

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Danish Ambassador Winnie Estrup Petersen said corruption disproportionately affects the poor, particularly women and minority groups.

The cartoons and photographs in the exhibition are a treasure of information on the nature and impact of corruption that will provide a strong collective voice for change, she said. "It is my strong conviction that this important event will create greater awareness and motivation among the young generation to say 'no' to corruption."

Anders Öhrström, deputy head of mission, Embassy of Sweden, and Dr Luke Mukubvu, governance and institutional adviser (PFM and service delivery), DFID Bangladesh, were

SEE PAGE 5 COL 8

Increase number of reserved seats in parliament

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) yesterday alleged that all political parties that came to power since independence did not take any adequate initiative for the social and political development of women.

The women's rights activists also placed their 21-point demand which included direct election of women and increasing the number of reserved seats to 100 from 50.

They made the demands from a rally on "Political empowerment of women and holding a free and fair election" held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital.

"The Awami League-led government did not keep its own promise made in the election manifesto and Sheikh Hasina also broke her promise made in several speeches by not taking initiatives to hold direct election for women," said Ayesha Khanam,

president of BMP.

She alleged that the 17th amendment of the constitution, which allows reserved seats for women in the parliament for another 25 years without the provision of election, will hamper progress.

"The government may succeed in economic development but without ensuring political rights of women, it will not be sustainable," she added.

She alleged that female parliament members, in reserved seats, cannot play a bold role as they have no constituencies and the parliament is dominated by male politicians.

"I know that women have no legal barrier to participate in the national elections from the 300 general seats but it is quite difficult for women candidates to get nominations from their respective parties as getting nomination depends on money and muscle

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

VNSC teacher Hasna gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College teacher Hasna Hena, who was arrested on charge of "provoking the suicide" of ninth-grader Arity Adhikary, got bail yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah passed the order considering her age and that there was no specific allegation against her, court sources said.

Hasna Hena, 51, was arrested by the Detective Branch (DB) of police on December 5. She was sent to jail the next day by a Dhaka court.

Arity's father Dilip Adhikary filed the case with Paltan Police Station on December 4, a day after she died by suicide, after

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

NIKO GRAFT CASE Hearing on AG's petition deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred the hearing on the prosecution petition seeking permission to produce an FBI agent and two members of Canadian police in court to testify in the Niko Graft case, till January 3 next year.

The court also asked all the 11 accused, including BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, to appear before it on the day.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of the Special Judge's Court-9 of Dhaka passed the order after Khaleda's lawyer Abdur Rezak Khan submitted a time petition saying that they would file written objection against the prosecution's pleas.

ACC Public Prosecutor

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

HOLEY ARTISAN ATTACK CASE Three more prosecution witnesses testify

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three more prosecution witnesses yesterday testified before a Dhaka court in connection with a case filed over the terrorist attack in Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka.

So far, four prosecution witnesses testified in the case filed over the attack in the upscale café in Gulshan's diplomatic zone.

The witnesses Chef Samir Barai, Security Guard Md Nur Alam and Driver Abdur Razzak Rana, testified before the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Majibur Rahman recorded their statements and the defence counsel cross-examined them.

In his statement, Samir said at 7:00pm on July 1, 2016, he heard gunshots and blasts outside while he was cooking dishes in the kitchen.

"I took shelter in the washroom. The following day, army rescued me from there," he added.

Security guard Nur Alam said around 5:45pm five to six persons forcefully entered

the restaurant.

"After a while, I heard gunshots and later fled the scene and took shelter in Lake View Clinic," he added.

Rana, the third prosecution witness, and a driver for Jica said that at 7:00pm he was waiting outside the Holey Artisan Bakery after dropping off four Japanese nationals there.

"At around 9:00pm, a bomb exploded", he recalled.

The tribunal fixed December 17 for the next hearing of the case.

Earlier in the day, all the six accused were produced before the court.

They are Jahangir Alam, Rashed, Sohel Mahfuz, Mizanur Rahman, Hadisur Rahman Sagor and Rakibul Islam while two other accused -- Shariful Islam Khaled and Mamunur Rashid Ripon are on the run.

On July 23 this year, Inspector Humayun Kabir of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit, pressed charges against eight persons for their alleged involvement in the case.

On November 26 the tribunal framed charges against the eight.

Formulate comprehensive human rights action plan

Activists urge government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights defenders yesterday demanded that the government develop a comprehensive national action plan incorporating all recommendations received from international bodies for protection of human rights in the country.

They also stressed on implementation of international and national human rights obligations, to improve the country's human rights situation.

They were speaking at a programme at The Daily Star centre, marking the International Human Rights Day being observed today. It was organised by Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB), a platform of 20 human rights organisations.

Zakir Hossain, a steering committee member of HRFB, placed an 18-point demand to political parties, urging them to adopt a "zero tolerance" policy in case of extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance and death in custody.

He also urged political parties not to use law enforcers for political gains, and to keep children away from political activities.

Sheepa Hafiza, coordinator of HRFB and executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra said these are not demands of HRFB only,

but also people of the country.

Mentioning that the country saw highest number of extrajudicial killings this year, she also urged to end the "culture of impunity" and bring law enforcers involved to book.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said the state has to remain aware so that no incident of human rights violation and attack on religious or other minority communities take place ahead of the national election.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) said the action plan must be in line with national policies and laws.

"Except a few issues in some international treaties, all other subjects are already mentioned in our constitution. If we just follow the constitution, we do not need anything else," she said.

A book titled "Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Bangladesh 2018", published by HRFB, was unveiled at the programme.

Shahanara Monica, director (United Nations Wing) of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Tamanna Hoq Riti of HRFB, among others, spoke at the programme.

Ziaur 'not allowed' to visit his father Aatur Rahman's grave

CITY DESK

Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, a former lawmaker, has alleged that he was not allowed to visit his father Aatur Rahman Khan's grave, situated near the parliament, without a "gate pass" on Saturday.

As it was the death anniversary of his father Aatur Rahman Khan, former prime minister and a veteran national leader, Barrister Ziaur said he and his son went to the graveyard along Manik Mia Avenue.

He said an Ansar member asked for a "gate pass". When Ziaur informed that he wanted to offer prayers at his father's grave, the Ansar member replied he needed to seek instruction from his superiors.

A police personnel appeared and inquired if he had a gate pass, said Ziaur. He said he gave the policeman his identity and also mentioned the particular graveyard he intended to visit. The policeman was unmoved and suggested that Ziaur proceed to their office and obtain a "pass", otherwise he was unable to allow them entry.

"There are only about seven graves there and this is not the first time I faced this situation, but it was the first time I was refused entry without a 'gate pass' from some authority...", said a frustrated Ziaur.

Correction

In our report headlined "Army more developed, smarter now: President," published on December 9 on page 3, the name of the army chief was wrongly mentioned as Abdul Aziz. The army chief's name is actually Aziz Ahmed. However, the report we ran was from news agency UNB. Still, we regret the inadvertent mistake.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with winners of Begum Rokeya Padak 2018 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: PID

Be responsible towards family

PM to women

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the country's women to be responsible towards family and society while trying to realise their rights.

"Your [women] rights have to be realised but there shouldn't be any unrest in the family in the name of realising rights," she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing a programme marking Begum Rokeya Day, and conferring Begum Rokeya Padak 2018 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

She said everyone has responsibilities to family and society, and everyone should understand those. "There should be a sense of proportion... this is the most important virtue."

Sheikh Hasina asked the women of the country to look after their families while attaining their respective positions at the workplace.

Recalling the great role played by women during the Liberation War,

Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken various steps for women's emancipation and their development alongside rehabilitating those who suffered brutalities in the hands of Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators.

Following in the footsteps of Bangabandhu, she said, her government paid special attention to the development of poor, marginalised and underprivileged women to expedite their empowerment.

Hasina said her government appointed the first woman secretary, superintendent of police, officer-in-charge of police and justice, and they all were doing excellent job.

Hasina also mentioned the increment of maternity leave to six months, setting up of daycare centres to help working mothers, inclusion of mother's name mandatory in documents, enactment of Family

Violence (prevention and protection) Act, Child Marriage (Prevention) Act, construction of hostels for working women, VGD programme in 4547 unions and community clinic for rural women.

The Ministry of Children and Women Affairs organised the programme with State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroze Chumki in the chair.

Zinnatun Nesa Talukder, a recipient of the Rokeya Padak 2018, also spoke on the occasion. Four other winners of the prestigious award are eminent Professor Zohra Anis, Shila Roy, Rama Chowdhury (posthumous) and Rokeya Begum (posthumous).

The Prime Minister handed over the medals, cheques of Tk 2 lakh and certificates among the winners and their family members.

The government introduced the award in 1995 to honour Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a pioneer of women's rights movement in undivided Bengal.



Speakers at a discussion on "Implementation of Bangladesh's International Human Rights Obligations" at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR