

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA MYMENSINGH CHATTOGRAM SYLHET RAJSHAHI RANGPUR KHULNA BARISHAL COX'S BAZAR

H 27.0 L 18.3 H 27.7 L 13.3 H 25.5 L 19.5 H 27.0 L 16.9 H 27.2 L 12.0 H 27.6 L 13.0 H 26.0 L 16.0 H 25.5 L 15.3 H 34.0 L 21.4

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy to cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6:00pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:14pm and rises tomorrow at 6:34am.

Nation celebrates Victory Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation is set to celebrate the 48th Victory Day today, marking the most precious day when the country was liberated from the Pakistani occupation forces after a nine-month war.

On this day in 1971, Bangladesh was born as an independent country under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and for the supreme sacrifice of three million people and the honour of hundreds of thousands of women.

Last year, the celebration reached new heights, following Unesco's recognition of Bangabandhu's historic March 7 Speech as part of the world's documentary heritage.

Unesco on October 30 announced the prestigious

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A curious little girl tries to get the feel of the red circle inside the national flag when a street hawker holds out one to her. With the nation poised to celebrate Victory Day today, thousands of people have been buying the national flag. Inset, A vendor has a miniature one planted on the top of his basket. The photos were taken on Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

RUDE BEHAVIOUR WITH JOURNALIST
Kamal Hossain faces the music

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Kamal Hossain continued to be on the receiving end of criticism from leaders of ruling Awami League, AL-led 14-party alliance and distinguished personalities, surrounding his rude behaviour with a journalist on Friday, regarding his position on Jamaat-e-Islami.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, AL joint general secretary Jahangir Kabir Nanok, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, former chief information commissioner Prof Golam Rahman, Air Commodore (retd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, former Inspector General of Police Nurul Anwar, DU professor Anwar Hossain, Justice Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, among others yesterday joined the criticism against Dr Kamal, also president of Gonoforum.

One of the main architects of the country's constitution, Dr Kamal Hossain on Friday reacted angrily to some reporters' queries regarding his position on Jamaat.

After paying tributes to martyred intellectuals at Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the city's Mirpur, the eminent jurist faced a barrage of questions from the media.

But Dr Kamal apparently lost his cool when one of the reporters drew his attention to some Jamaat leaders' participation in the December 30 polls despite the cancellation of its registration with the Election Commission.

The Oikyafront leader said he would not say anything about the issue at the Memorial, but reporters kept asking questions.

As a journalist repeated the question, Dr Kamal, visibly shaking in anger, said, "No question arises at all. [These are] useless talks."

Facing a volley of questions from reporters, he said, "Shut up. Just shut up."

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Obaidul Quader yesterday said in Feni that Dr Kamal Hossain exposed his "real character" by using an Urdu word with a journalist.

"He [Dr Kamal] couldn't hide his real character through using the old Pakistani word 'Khamosh'. Though he talks about principles, his real nature has got exposed to people," Quader said.

Dr Kamal has proved with his arrogance that he is the proponent of spoilt politics, he said.

"BNP and Oikyafront have become desperate seeing the popularity of Boat [the electoral symbol of Awami League]. So, Dr Kamal turned more reckless than a reckless driver. Now the country is seeing the mass surge of Boat and the Sheaf of Paddy [electoral symbol of BNP-led Jatiya Oikyafront] is nowhere," he added.

Speaking at a discussion in the capital, Prof Arefin Siddique alleged that Dr Kamal is now showing his true

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Gono Oikya pledges to scrap Article 70

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bobby Hajaj-led Gono Oikya has pledged to introduce a two-chamber parliament and scrap Article 70 of the constitution to ensure freedom of expression of lawmakers, if voted to power in the December 30 national election.

It made the pledge in its nine-point election manifesto unveiled yesterday at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

According to Article 70, lawmakers lose their seats in parliament if they vote in the House against the party that nominated them.

While reading out the statement, Bobby Hajaj said they do not want any kind of division among the countrymen due to political ideologies, adding that everyone who believes in country's independence and sovereignty is Bangladeshi.

He said legal action would be taken against those who term others "neo-Razakar" or "anti-independence".

In its manifesto, comprising a total of 122 pledges, the party said it would work

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Ganosamhati unveils electoral manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ganosamhati Andolon yesterday unveiled its election manifesto, pledging to build the country free from fear, through establishment of an effective democracy and ensuring people's freedom of expression.

The left-leaning political party also assured to build Bangladesh as a prosperous country through ensuring development of all citizens, and providing more emphasis on education, health and banking sectors, if it is voted to power.

The manifesto was unveiled at a press conference organised by the party at its office in Dhaka.

Speaking on the occasion, the party's chief coordinator Zonyade Saki said they portrayed their vision and outline in the manifesto which is very necessary to be implemented considering the country's current situation.

"The manifesto is implementable although our party doesn't have the opportunity to do so as we are parti-

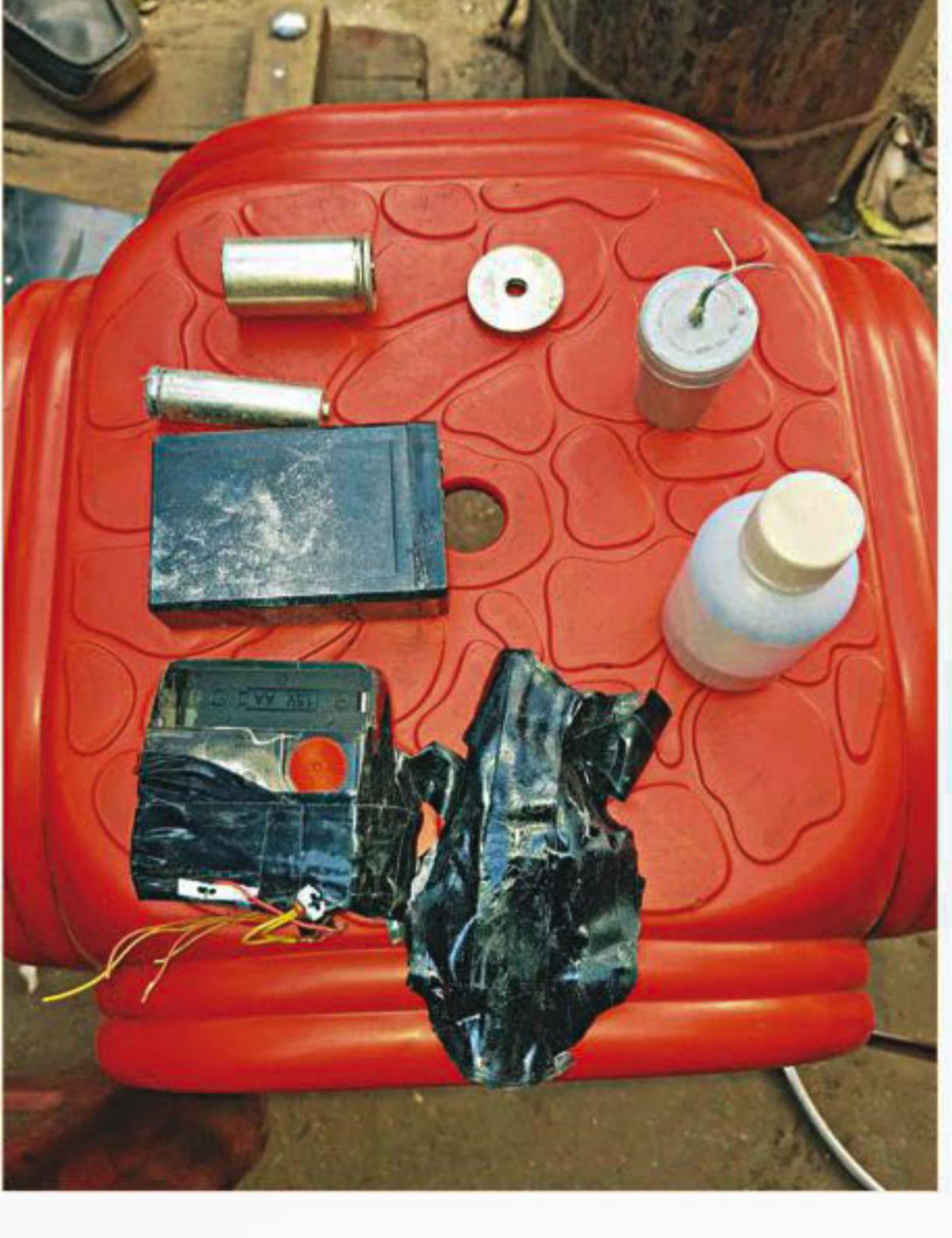
pating in the election from three constituencies. In future, we will compete in all 300 constituencies," he added.

Ganosamhati is a component of Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), a coalition of eight left-leaning parties.

As the party is not registered with the Election Commission (EC), its candidates are participating in the parliamentary election in Dhaka-12, Chattogram-10 and Pabna-1 constituencies with the symbol of "spade", which belongs to LDA's component Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh.

About campaigning, Saki said the upcoming polls is going to be one-sided, considering the campaign and attack on oppositions.

"The ruling party men didn't allow our party activists to campaign in the constituency [Dhaka-12] from where I am competing. Even police barred us from opening a polling office there," Saki alleged.



Equipment and ingredients for making bombs and firearms were seized by police from a shop in Dholakhal yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Explosives, gun-making tools recovered from Dholakhal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered two improvised explosive devices (IED), gun powder, and bomb-making materials from a shop of a market in Old Dhaka's Dholakhal area.

In a daylong drive, Wari Division police also recovered tools and materials used for making firearms from another shop of the same market. Later, the bomb disposal unit of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police defused the explosives, according to witnesses.

Police failed to arrest anyone in the incident, but suspect that the explosives were gathered for subversive activities ahead of Victory Day and national elections.

Meanwhile, officials of CTTC unit, requesting anonymity, said the dice and bullet shells recovered from the shops have similarities to those recovered earlier from banned militant

outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad Bangladesh (Huji-B) dens.

This kind of techniques are mainly seen among Huji-B bomb making experts, but they did not find any evidence of the militant group's involvement in it yet, the officials added.

Rahmatullah Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC, said their experts are analysing the materials recovered from the shops.

Witnesses said around 9:30am, a team of Wari police started searching the shop named "Ekram Motors" of Sattar Market on Goalghat Lane of Dholakhal. It took around three hours to recover the explosives, witnesses said.

Acting on a tip-off, local police started the drive in Dholakhal since Friday night, and finally found the explosives in the morning, said Mohammed Farid Uddin, deputy commissioner of Wari Division police.

"We first discovered explosives at a shop named 'Ekram Motors' and

informed the bomb disposal unit of CTTC around 1:00pm," he said, adding they later found the firearm-making materials from another shop of the market named "Nadim & Brothers".

The bomb disposal unit defused the IEDs, that CTTC sources said were ready to be detonated and were as powerful as grenades, around 1:45pm.

"We are suspecting that miscreants might be hoarding and making the arms and explosives for subversive activities ahead of Victory Day and national election," the DC said.

However, further investigation is required before making any definitive comments. "We have already started investigating to solve the mystery and determine the sources of explosives," DC Farid added.

A case was filed in this regard, while shop-owners Ekram and Dipu are on the run. Several shop owners of the market said the owners did not open their shops regularly.

Work impartially, and don't talk to media
Polls observers told at workshop

UNB, Dhaka

Local election observers have been advised to work without influence of political parties, and not to interact with the media during the December 30 polls.

Speakers at the "Election observers training workshop" yesterday also asked them to remain alert against vote rigging.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Md Akhtaruzzaman, chief guest at the programme at Jatiya Press Club, asked observers to maintain rules and regulations.

Election Monitoring Forum (EMF), which organised the workshop, said the goal was to train all observers.

EMF Executive Director Prof Mohammad Abed Ali said it was not possible to visit all the polling stations. "Some stray incidents might occur but we cannot use them to make the national election questionable," he said.

Observers from 25 EMF organisations and

26 NGOs from India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Japan, Canada and Australia will observe the polls, Abed Ali said.

"So, we have to be careful and honest," he said.

The EMF executive director told local observers to avoid interacting with the media during polls. "We will set up monitoring cells to keep in touch with the media. If you see any irregularities, contact them," he said.

Last month, the Election Commission had also advised the election observers to shun the media on the day of polls.

"They must stay at polling stations like statues, even if there are irregularities," EC Secretary Helaluddin Ahmed had said.

Justice M Abdus Salam, president of SARC Human Rights Foundation; retired Supreme Court justice Shikder Mokbul Hoque, and EMF member Mohammad Iqbal, among others, spoke at the workshop conducted by Rakib Al Mahmud.

VICTORY DAY
Gates, banners banned on way to Nat'l Memorial

BSS, Dhaka

The government has imposed a ban on erecting gates, displaying or hanging posters, banners and festoons on both sides of Dhaka-Aricha highway from Ghatoli to the National Memorial at Savar, ahead of Victory Day today.

Directives were also issued to keep both sides of the highway clean, said an official handout yesterday.

The government has also urged people to remain alert so that the flower garden on the memorial premises do not get damaged in any way, in the process of paying homage to the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War, by placing floral wreaths at the National Memorial.



To keep the road free, so many "no parking" signs are put up on this road that they themselves have become a cause of obstruction. Meanwhile, cars are still seen parked on the other side. The photo was taken from the capital's Dhanmondi Road 5 yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN