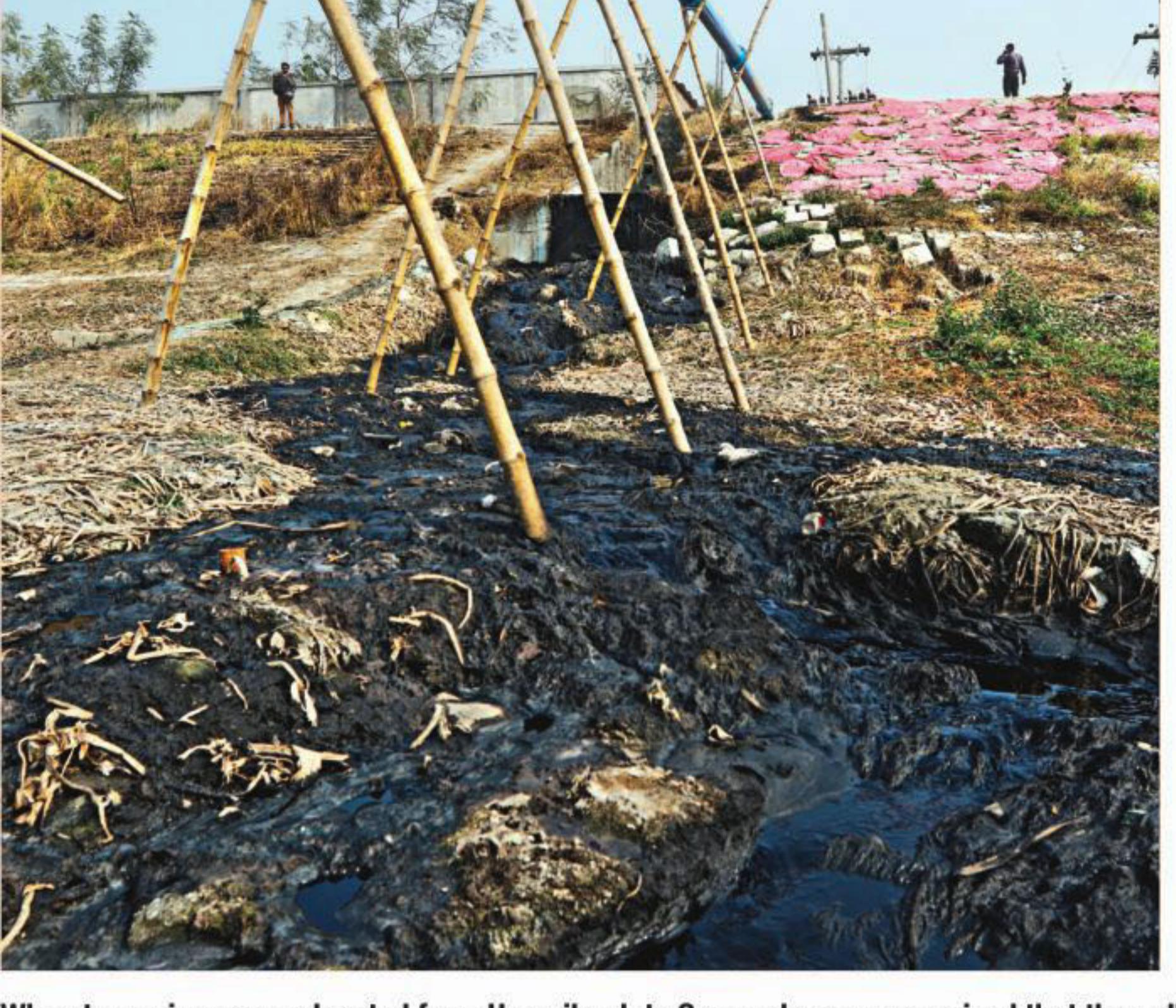


WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

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

H 26.7 L 13.8 H 25.7 L 11.2 H 26.8 L 14.5 H 26.5 L 13.1 H 24.8 L 09.8 H 26.0 L 10.5 H 26.2 L 11.8 H 26.6 L 10.2 H 26.2 L 15.8



When tanneries were relocated from Hazaribagh to Savar, alarms were raised that the pollution would shift as well, from Buriganga to Dhaleshwari. The fear is slowly becoming real. In Hemayetpur, the Dhaleshwari water has turned pitch black as untreated liquid waste ends up in the river through this opening, left. The photos were taken yesterday.



Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today. UNB said quoting the Met office. Moderate cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Panchagarh & Kurigram. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:33pm and rises

ASSAULT ON COLLEAGUE Garment workers blockade road, smash DNCC vehicles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Garments workers blockaded a road at Shalehopur area of Savar on Dhaka-Aricha highway for four hours yesterday, following a Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) staffer's assault on a female garment worker.

Passengers suffered as a tailback spanning around 10 kilometres was formed on both sides of the highway due to the blockade.

Local and witnesses said a vehicle carrying workers of Bando Apparel Ltd and a waste disposal vehicle of the city corporation hit each other in Shalehopur area at around 8am, prompting an altercation. At one stage, a city corporation worker hit a female worker with an iron shovel.

When agitating workers seized the city corporation vehicle, its driver and other staffers fled the spot leaving the vehicle.

As the news spread quickly, hundreds of workers of the factory blocked the road and vandalised at least five vehicles including two vehicles of the city corporation.

Police rushed to the spot and managed to free the road at around 12:30pm, said Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station.

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'Hizb ut-Tahrir operative' arrested in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Counter Terrorism (CT) unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police claimed to have arrested an alleged operative of banned militant outfit of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the city yesterday.

CT officials said they arrested Fahad Bin Solaiman, 18, son of Mohammad Solaiman, in Chawkbazar area. Fahad is an HSC examinee from Govt Muhammad Mohsin College.

Another of the outfit's leader, Sabqat Ahmed, who was arrested on January 7, mentioned Fahad's name during interrogation while under remand, said Inspector Aftab Hossain of CT unit.

"Fahad, along with Sabqat and other Hizbut men, pasted posters in different areas before the 11th national election, asking people to boycott it [the election]," he also said, quoting Sabqat.

11TH NATIONAL POLLS Petition filed challenging oath-taking of lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, challenging the oath-taking of lawmakers elected in the December 30 polls last year.

Advocate Md Taherul Islam Tawhid submitted the petition to the HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Ashraful Kamal.

Earlier in the day, another HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lytton refused to permit Advocate Taherul to move the same petition before it, saying that the petition is "premature" as all the elected lawmakers are yet to take oath, Barrister Saqeb Mahbub, a lawyer for the petitioner, told The Daily Star.

He also said the writ petition might be filed and moved today before the bench led by Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury.

Barrister AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon appeared for the petitioner seeking permission from the HC benches to file and move the petition before the court.

Citing the petition, Barrister Shanjid Siddique, another lawyer for the petitioner, told this newspaper that oath-taking of the persons elected in 11th national polls violated articles 123(3) and 148(3) of the constitution, as the tenure of the 10th parliament is yet to expire.

Tk 20.76CR CORRUPTION CASE Mirza Abbas, wife get 8-week bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted eight weeks' anticipatory bail to BNP leader Mirza Abbas and his wife Afroza Abbas in a case filed for illegally amassing Tk 20.76 crore worth of wealth.

The court, however, directed Mirza Abbas and Afroza Abbas to surrender before the trial court after the eight-week bail period is over.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice SM Kuddus Zaman passed the order after hearing a bail petition filed by the couple, who were present before the bench.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Shahjahanpur Police Station last year.

Advocate Zainul Abedin, lawyer for the accused, told the court that the case was filed to harass his clients politically, because both of them contested the December 30 general election with BNP ticket.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the commission is yet to decide whether or not it will move a petition at Supreme Court against the HC order of bail.

DEATH OF ARITY Two suspended teachers get ad-interim bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted four weeks' ad-interim bail to two suspended teachers of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in a case filed over "provoking suicide" of ninth-grader Arity Adhikary in December last year.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rashed Chowdhury passed the order after Nazneen Ferdous, acting principal of the school, and Zinat Akhtar, the morning shift in-charge, surrendered before it and sought bail.

Arity was found hanging from the ceiling of her home in the capital's Shantinagar on December 3, hours after she and her parents were allegedly insulted by several teachers of the school.

The next day, her father Dilip Adhikary filed the case with Paltan Police Station, accusing three teachers of provoking Arity's suicide.

The death and the subsequent agitation of students, joined by parents, rocked the 66-year-old institution and prompted the

education ministry and the school authorities to form two separate probe committees.

Besides, the High Court directed the education secretary to form another five-member committee, headed by an additional secretary of the ministry, to look into the matter.

Students boycotted classes and demonstrated for three days, but later withdrew their programmes upon assurance from the government that the persons responsible for the incidents will be brought to justice.

On December 5 last year, detectives arrested Arity's class teacher Hasina Hena, 51, hours after she was suspended by the school authorities. She later secured bail on December 9.

The same day, Nazneen Ferdous and Zinat Akhtar were also suspended, following an order of the education ministry.

In a letter, the ministry also ordered the authorities concerned to cancel the teachers' Monthly Payment Order (MPO) and take legal action against them.

No easy solution to Rohingya crisis: Foreign minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The newly appointed Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen termed the Rohingya influx "a very serious issue" and said there is no easy solution to the humanitarian crisis.

He made the remark while talking to reporters at his office yesterday.

"We will have to face difficulties," he said adding, he has directed the authorities concerned to conduct a study and find what impacts the Rohingya refugees have in our country's social, economic and security system."

Momen also mentioned that following the influx, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had made a five-point proposal in the UN general assembly.

"But those proposals were not reflected in our negotiations," he said, urging the international community to step forward for resolving the crisis.

Momen told reporters that he has already asked his ministry to make an impact analysis of the crisis from economic, social and

Take legal action against Shafi

Gonoforum urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gonoforum yesterday demanded that the government take legal action against Hefajat-e-Islam chief Shah Ahmed Shafi immediately for his recent remarks on girls' education.

In a press statement, Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain and General Secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu said his comments were "offensive" and go against women's education, spirit of the Liberation War, and the constitution. Giving wrong interpretations of religion and issuing fatwas, Shafi wants to take the society backwards, they said.

Addressing a rally in Chattogram on Friday, the Hefajat chief made parents promise that they would not send their daughters to school. "At most, you can allow them to study up to class IV or V, so that they can maintain their husbands' accounts and write letters to them," he said.

The comments triggered a firestorm of protest including on social media.

In a separate statement, Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra also demanded action against Shafi, terming his comments "destructive."

'Poush Mela' ends in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A three-day winter festival "Poush Mela" ended in Barishal city on Sunday night.

Jatiya Robindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad (JRSSP), Barishal branch organised the programme on Jagadish Swarast Girls' School premises.

People from different walks of life enjoyed the festival and participated in its programmes ignoring a mild cold wave sweeping over the region.

In the festival, different varieties of winter pitha and toys for children were displayed for sale in stalls.

Besides, the festival featured traditional rural life of Bangladesh.

Models of peasant huts, drying of paddy, preparing of rice with dhaki, cooking of food in clay pots, heap of hay, farmers returning from crop fields and rearing of hens in bamboo coops were also displayed in a stall.



Singers perform at the closing ceremony of a three-day "Poush Mela" in Barishal city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

The closing session of the festival was presided over by Tapankar Chakraborty, former principal of Amrit Lal Mohabitalayya.

Divisional Commissioner Ram Chandra Das, Deputy Commissioner Ajjar Rahman, JRSSP Secretary Uttam Kumar Baral and cultural activists SM Iqbal and Manabendra Iqbal, among others, addressed the programme.

Discussions on traditional and folk life, cultural events and a drawing competition for children were also held.

Barishal city Mayor Serniabat Sadik Abdullah and Kajal Ghosh, district president of JRSSP, had inaugurated the three-day festival on Friday.

Introduce health insurance for elderly

Speakers demand at icddr,b event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to introduce mandatory health insurance for the country's growing elderly population, aged above 60.

The call was made at the fourth session of "Café Scientifique", a platform for open discussion among researchers, government stakeholders and civil society representatives on different contemporary topics.

SHARE Project of icddr,b, in association with Department of Population Sciences of Dhaka University (DU), organised the discussion on "social and healthcare needs of elderly population" on the DU campus in the capital.

Rather than being a burden, the elderly will be able to contribute to the country if they can live a healthy life, the speakers said.

Prof Mohammad Mainul Islam, chairperson of DU's population sciences department, said aging is inevitable and a normal process. In order to make senior citizens self-reliant, the government should provide them with health insurance that will ensure proper health services for them.

Referring to previous studies, Mohammad Mainul Islam, associate professor of the department, said about eight percent of the country's population is aged above 60.

He urged all to change their perception about the elderly and treat them as potential human resources, rather than considering them burden to the society.

Among others, ATM Iqbal Anwar, project director of SHARE; and M Mushtaq Hussain, coordinator of Coordination and Support Centre at Directorate General of Health Services; also spoke at the programme.

PUBALI BANK SCAM Branch manager, two others sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chattogram yesterday sent three employees, including a branch manager, of Pubali Bank Limited to jail for allegedly embezzling Tk 12.85 crore.

Earlier in the morning, the three accused -- Enamul Kabir, 42, branch manager; Ikrumul Reza Rizvi, 24, junior officer; and Chandan Dey, 42, officer (computer) -- were handed over to police by the authorities of the bank's Chawkbazar branch.

Manjurul Islam, deputy general manager (DGM) of Pubali Bank, also filed a case against the accused, said sources at Chawkbazar Police Station.

The DGM, however, refused to speak to the media and hung up the phone when this correspondent called him for his comments.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



At the age of 18, Al-Amin pretty much understands the business. Every day he collects several hundred kilograms of sour plums from five upazilas—Chhatak and Dirai of Sunamganj and Jaintapur, Haripur and Gowainghat of Sylhet. He puts them on sale by the side of Darshandewri-Ambarkhana road in Sylhet city. The teenager said he manages to sell 200-350kg on average every day, to both wholesalers and retailers, and it earns him a profit of Tk 2,000-2,500. The proceeds of the season make up the lion's share of his annual income, he added.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR