

WEATHER
FORECAST

| YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES | DHAKA | MYMENSINGH | CHATTOGRAM | SYLHET | RAJSHAHI | RANGPUR | KHULNA | BARISHAL | COX'S BAZAR |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | H 27.4 L 14.1 | H 26.4 L 10.6 | H 28.1 L 12.3 | H 28.0 L 14.0 | H 25.6 L 10.0 | H 27.0 L 12.5 | H 27.0 L 10.1 | H 26.7 L 09.3 | H 28.3 L 15.0 |

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. The sun sets in the capital today at 05:35pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.



Artistes of Yunnan Minzu Village Plateau Art Troupe from China put up a scintillating performance at the National Theatre Hall auditorium of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), in a programme organised to mark the Chinese New Year. BSA and the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka organised the event.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

UNREST IN RMG SECTOR Ensure no one is harassed: Shajahan to factory owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, convener of Garments Workers' Coordination Committee, yesterday urged readymade garments factory owners to accept and implement the revised wage structure for workers that came after eight days of unrest in the sector.

"The problems in the RMG sector can be solved through dialogue," he said at a press conference arranged at Shadhinota Hall in Segunbagicha yesterday.

Shajahan called the press brief following the agitation across the RMG sector that started on January 6 over the disparity in the wage structure.

"Factory owners should try to find out the reasons behind the dissatisfaction among workers, instead of trying to dig

up local and foreign conspiracies behind this," he said at the press conference.

"These problems can be solved through discussions with the trade union and participatory committee at the factory level, Shajahan said.

"We would like to call upon the garment factory owners to be considerate towards their workers and to ensure that no one is harassed," he added.

He said there is a disagreement between RMG workers and owners on the salary structure of the new wage board which was put into effect on December 1, 2018.

RMG workers rejected the pay structure in certain grades as the salaries were not consistent with current market prices.

After nearly one and a half months of protests, the government has revised the pay structure for the garments

industry workers, giving raises between Tk 15 to Tk 786.

WHAT WAS THE ISSUE?

The workers alleged that the monthly wage in the seventh grade increased to Tk 8,000 from Tk 5,300 as per the gazette published by the government last year but the salaries of workers in other grades did not increase at the same rate.

The salary hike for entry-level workers was more than that of their senior operators, who have been working for over seven to eight years. Major disparity in the salary hike was noticed for third and fourth grade workers, as they also received a smaller raise than that of entry-level workers.

In most of the grades other than the seventh, only Tk 500 was raised in the new salary structure, whereas an entry-level worker's salary had increased by

Citizens' dialogue on Feb 6: Oikyafront

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Oikyafront will hold a citizens' dialogue in the capital on February 6, demanding re-election after cancelling the results of the 11th parliamentary election.

"We had earlier announced to hold the citizens' dialogue. We had booked a hall for January 28 accordingly. This date has been rescheduled. Our leader Dr Kamal Hossain will go abroad for health check-up. We'll hold the dialogue on February 6 after his return," said leader of the coalition ASM Abdur Rob.

He was talking to reporters after a meeting of the Oikyafront Steering Committee at Dr Kamals' Motijheel chamber.

Rob, also president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), said they together with people from all classes and professions will continue their movement to make sure that people get back their voting, democratic, human and citizen rights. "We don't want to announce any programme hurriedly out of desperation. We'll announce well thought-out programmes gradually."

About the absence of any BNP representative -- including its secretary general

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'USING MONEY TO INFLUENCE POLLS' Prime accused Apu sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Mia Nuruddin Ahmed Apu to jail in a case filed for allegedly instigating violence and distributing money to influence the December 30 national election.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shahidul Islam passed the order after CID Inspector Ashraf Islam produced Apu before the court after expiration of the five-day remand.

The magistrate also rejected a petition filed by the defence counsel seeking bail for Apu.

In yesterday's forwarding report, Inspector Ashraf said Apu gave important information about the allegations brought against him.

Rab members arrested Apu on January 4 from United Hospital in the capital, where he had been

undergoing treatment since December 24 last year.

Earlier on January 10, the former assistant personal secretary to BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman was placed on a five-day remand in connection with the case.

Four persons including Apu, a Jatiya Oikyafront candidate in Shariatpur-3, were accused in the case filed with Motijheel Police Station.

On December 25 last year, Rab detained three persons -- Joyнал Abedin, Alamgir Hossain and Ali Haider -- in Dhaka with Tk 8 crore in cash and several cheques worth around Tk 10 crore.

On Apu's instructions, the trio was distributing money to influence the national election and instigate violence, Rab claimed.

Traffic guidelines for AL's celebration rally on Jan 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DHaka Metropolitan Police has drawn elaborate traffic guidelines to ensure smooth flow of vehicles during Awami League's election victory celebration rally on Saturday (January 19).

The day will be marked by a mega rally at Suhrawardy Udyan, with the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at 11am.

GUIDELINES DETAILED BY DMP

People coming from Gabtoli via Mirpur Road-Science Lab-New Market will have to get off at Nilkhet and move towards the venue on foot. Their buses will be parked at Mall Chatter of Dhaka University and by both sides of the Nilkhet-Palashi road.

People coming from Uttara via Airport Road-Mohakhali-Moghbar-Kakrail Church-Rajmoni crossing-Nightingale-Paltan-Zero Point or via Khilkhet flyover-Badda-Gulshan-Rampura Road-Mouchak

flyover-Malibagh-Shantinagar-Rajmoni Crossing-Nightingale to Paltan-Zero Point will have to get off at Paltan-Zero Point and move towards venue on foot via Doyel Chatter. They will park their buses in Motijheel area.

People coming from eastern regions via Jatrabari and southern regions via Postogola and under the Mayor Hanif flyover will have to get off at Gulistan and go to the venue on foot via Zero Point-Doyel Chatter. They will park their buses in Motijheel/Gulistan.

Those taking Mayor Hanif flyover will disembark in Chankharpul and move towards the venue on foot via Doyel Chatter. Their buses will be parked on the Gymnasium field of DU.

People coming via Babubazar bridge will get off at Golap Shah Mazar and walk to the venue via High Court-Doyel Chatter.

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'Judiciary has seen degradation'

Attorney general stands by his earlier statement
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday said he still stands by his statement that "judiciary has seen degradation".

"I stand by my earlier statement made during the felicitation of Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain in February last year," the attorney general told the media in reply to a query by journalists.

He, however, refused to make a public statement on the state of graft and irregularities within the judiciary.

Mahbubey Alam told reporters that as the attorney general of the state he cannot make a statement about

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Almost the entirety of one side of the Manik Mia Avenue is packed in a traffic gridlock around noon yesterday. Regular commuters said it is quite unusual for the road -- one of the widest in the city -- to be this jammed.



While DMP's traffic discipline programme is on, buses are still racing each other to pick up passengers, often dangerously brushing against each other. It is this kind of reckless behaviour that cost the lives of two students last year that sparked a nationwide demonstration for road safety. These two buses started racing each other near the InterContinental Dhaka, and the photographer followed them to Banglamotor, where he took this picture.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Biman cuts Hajj flight fare by Tk 10,000

UNB, Dhaka

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday reduced the fare of Hajj flights by Tk 10,191.

Pilgrims willing to go to Makkah will have to pay Tk 1,28,000. Last year, the national flag carrier carried half of the pilgrims from Bangladesh.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Sheikh Md Abdullah made the price cut announcement after an inter-ministry meeting with Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry in Dhaka.

"The fare has been reduced after considering the welfare of the pilgrims," he said, adding that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is very sincere about it.

Sheikh Md Abdullah said his ministry would provide all sorts of assistance for proper Hajj management.

TIB STUDY ON IRREGULARITIES IN NAT'L POLLS Cause for heartburn for both govt and EC: Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday lauded the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) study over irregularities in the December 30 national election and said it was a "cause for heartburn" for both the government and the Election Commission.

"The government's ministers and the Election Commission have been failing to hide their faces in shame as TIB has unveiled the absolute truth about vote rigging," BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed said yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office in Dhaka, Rizvi said now their [the government and EC] efforts to conceal the truth has gone in vain as people are informed of everything that transpired the day before national election.

TIB, in its study on Tuesday, said electoral

irregularities like stamping ballot papers the night before the polls and ballot stuffing by capturing booths on election day happened in 47 out of 50 constituencies that were surveyed at random.

Rizvi, also the spokesperson of BNP, said different international organisations have come up with reports on vote rigging in the December 30 national election while several democratic countries termed the election questionable.

"They did not recognise the fake election; they even demanded investigation into the allegation of vote rigging. World leaders have also described the election as the worst in history," the BNP leader said.

Mentioning that people sacrificed their lives for the country's independence, Rizvi said they [people] will do the same, if necessary, for the sake of their voting rights and democracy.