

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA	MYMENSINGH	CHATTOGRAM	SYLHET	RAJSHAH	RANGPUR	KHULNA	BARISHAL	COX'S BAZAR
	H 34.4 L 24.5	H 32.5 L 21.0	H 34.1 L 23.5	H 34.3 L 21.7	H 33.7 L 19.8	H 32.5 L 19.2	H 33.5 L 23.0	H 34.0 L 22.6	H 34.4 L 24.3

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country, having chances of rain at one or two places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in the next 24 hours till 6pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. **The sun sets in the capital today at 6:08pm and rises tomorrow at 6:05am.**

DMP to mark traffic week every month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From now on, the traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is going to observe traffic week every month, to encourage people to follow traffic rules and improve traffic discipline.

In line with the initiative, DMP is all set to observe a traffic week from today to March 23.

Improvement of traffic discipline in the capital is now visible due to strict implementation of traffic laws and continuous traffic disciplinary programmes, Additional Commissioner of DMP (Traffic) Mir Rezaul Alam told The Daily Star.

"In order to improve the situation, we have decided to observe traffic discipline week every month in a suitable timeframe," he said.

Although members of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Rover Scout, BNCC, Bangladesh Girl Guides members and students of various schools and colleges were involved with traffic police in previous traffic discipline campaigns, this time police will not involve any volunteers with the activities.

"We will deploy additional police force from the Public Order Management (POM) instead of volunteers, as they are now busy with classes and exams," he said, adding they will try to avoid including volunteers in the upcoming days unless necessary.

Many steps have already been taken by traffic department, including raising traffic awareness by publishing guidebooks and through megaphones at major points, awareness video displays, leaflets, posters, distribution, motivating pedestrians to use

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



A pink cassia tree in full bloom brings colour into the busy metropolitan of Dhaka. Also known as pink shower, this tree flowers during spring. The photo was taken yesterday near Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt reluctant, traders irresponsible: speakers

Discussion held on relocation of chemical warehouses in Old Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of willingness of the government and irresponsibility of traders are the reasons why chemical warehouses in Old Dhaka are still not relocated, resulting in tragedies like the Chawkbazar fire, civil society representatives said yesterday.

To minimise the risk of fire and other disasters in the entire Old Dhaka, they recommended that the government formulate a new design for rearranging the area in a planned manner, keeping heritage sites intact.

They came up with the recommendation at a roundtable organised by Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), a civil society organisation, at Jatiya Press Club in the capital, recalling the Chawkbazar tragedy that claimed 70 lives in February.

"Many people in Old Dhaka construct their infrastructures without following building code, and run business in residential buildings... These are going on through a liaison with government bodies," said noted media personality Muhammad Jahangir.

The entire Old Dhaka, not just Chawkbazar, is prone to fire and other disasters. Therefore, the government should formulate a new design for this area through consultation with relevant stakeholders -- residents and city planners, he said in a keynote paper.

Jahangir, a national committee member of Shujan, also suggested to evict settlements which were built illegally and did not follow proper plan, and to stop commercial activities in residential areas.

Robaet Ferdous, associate professor of Dhaka University, SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

QUESTION LEAK

'Masterminds' out on bail

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Four suspected "masterminds" of a racket who amassed a hefty amount of money allegedly by leaking question papers of various public exams and government recruitment tests, got bail in a money laundering case recently.

Shawkat Akbar, general recording officer (GRO) of Uttara West Police Station confirmed the matter. Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jasim granted their bail on Wednesday, court sources said.

The four accused are: Janata Bank Senior Officer (suspended) Hafizur Rahman Hafiz, Assistant Administrative Officer of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation Mostafa

Kamal, and government job seekers Ibrahim Mollah and Ayub Ali Badhan.

Police tracked down the group following a series of arrests since October 2017, when investigators raided two dormitories of Dhaka University hours before the Gha unit admission test.

In the last one and a half years, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police busted two major rackets with the arrest of 46 members and ringleaders. They were charged in a case with public examination act and ICT act.

Among them, eight people -- who amassed hefty sums of money allegedly by leaking question papers, were charged in a money laundering case filed with Uttara West Police Station on January 7.

Molla Nazrul Islam, special superintendent of CID, said they have found wealth worth crores of taka and the accused could not show any valid source of their income.

The police official said that it was a non-bailable offence and there were no loopholes in the case.

According to the investigators, these organised gangs struck deals with government job and public university admission seekers in exchange for hefty sums, and helped many to cheat their way into universities and government posts in the last four or five years.

The suspects earned about Tk 20 crore. In Hafizur's bank account, officers found "unusual transactions" of Tk 10 crore.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

ENERGY COOPERATION

South Asian countries lagging behind: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian nations are lagging behind in energy cooperation unlike European countries, which needs to be done in a "win-win situation" instead of seeing it through the "prism of politics" for the economic sake of this region, speakers at a conference said yesterday.

Stressing on a better power management system, they opined that governments should come forward to develop a "homogenous grid system" to exchange electricity for sustainable and trustful energy cooperation.

Bangladesh Heritage Foundation (BHF), a Dhaka-based policy dialogue platform,

and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) of India jointly organised the conference at Sufia Kamal auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum in the city's Shahbagh.

Walior Rahman, chairman of BHF chaired the opening session of the conference while Prof Sanjay K Bhardwaj chaired the working session participated by academicians, former diplomats and energy experts from Bangladesh and India.

Termining current energy cooperation between Bangladesh and India as "very well" with "tremendous potential", SD Muni, professor emeritus of JNU spoke of bilateral, trilateral and multilateral aspects of Bangladesh-India energy cooperation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A footpath in the capital's ever-so-busy Bangabandhu Avenue takes a pleasantly surprising look, being free of hawkers clogging up pedestrian's right of way. Dhaka South City Corporation's efforts to free up footpaths from vendors seem to be working, leaving enough room for people to walk through and not having to jaywalk.

PHOTO: STAR

Man held at Dhaka airport with shotgun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security forces yesterday detained a man with a shotgun from the domestic terminal of Dhaka airport, for not following due procedure.

The detainee, Nurul Islam, bodyguard of Probashi Palli Group's chairman, was attempting to pass the domestic terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with the shotgun to board a flight for Jashore around 5:30pm, police said.

Police detained Nurul along with the shotgun for not following due procedure, said Nur-e-Azam Mia, officer-in-charge of the Biman Bandar Police Station.

Earlier on March 11, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) detained a union parishad chairman with a pistol at the domestic terminal of the airport.

DUCSU POLLS DU authorities deny vote rigging allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid continuous students' protests demanding a fresh election to Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu), the university authorities yesterday rejected the allegations of vote rigging and irregularities in the polls held on March 11.

In a written statement, DU authorities claimed that a vested quarter was trying to gain political mileage by destabilising the peaceful atmosphere prevailing in the country and the university.

Meanwhile, protesting students at Ruqayyah Hall padlocked the gates of all administrative rooms including the provost's office early on Saturday, demanding the resignation of hall provost Prof Zeenat Huda and re-election to their hall union.

The girls of Ruqayyah Hall had earlier given a 24-hour ultimatum to the authorities after withdrawing their strike on Thursday night.

"As the ultimatum ended last night, we padlocked the gates around 12am but no one has yet reached out to us. We will not allow any official activity in the hall until a

new provost is appointed," said Srobona Shafiq Dipty, one of the students who observed hunger strike.

She alleged that the hall provost and hall unit BCL leaders were involved in stashing ballot papers during the election, and Common Room and Cafeteria Secretary from Bangladesh Chhatra League panel Lipy Akhter transferred some extra ballots to the hall provost during vote casting.

"We have submitted written complaint about vote rigging, but administration is yet to take any initiative in this regard," she added.

Denying the allegations of vote rigging, Lipi told The Daily Star that a vested quarter is spreading rumours to tarnish the image of Chhatra League.

"Quota [reformist] Nur became VP through this election because his followers voted, yet some leftists are now saying the election was rigged. It is obviously a baseless claim," Lipi added.

Chhatra Union General Secretary, Liton Nandi said that they would declare a fresh protest programme on Monday after the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

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