



A schoolboy and a youth walk through accumulated rainwater on the street, soaking in the showers that brought respite to Khulna city dwellers yesterday after an extended spell of heat and humidity. The photo was taken from Shibbari intersection around noon.

Rain after 20-day heat wave brings relief to Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

It finally rained in Khulna city yesterday after twenty days of continuous heat wave, bringing relief to city dwellers from sweltering summer heat and dust.

The city's temperature was recorded at 34.8 degree Celsius yesterday, a sharp three degree drop from the previous day.

Yesterday's light shower gave the city dwellers some respite from heat and dust. According to Khulna Met Office, rain began yesterday around 12:05pm and ended after one hour.

Amirul Azad, senior met officer of Khulna, told The Daily Star, the last time Khulna experienced rain was on June 6.

On June 16, the temperature was 38 degree Celsius while the average temperature was 35 degree Celsius in the last twelve days, Amirul said.

"The temperature will continue to fall slightly over the next two or three days," he added.

People roamed around the city in the rain, taking in the natural beauty. Samridhi Swasty, a second-grader and her mother Doly Kundu were seen walking in the rain at Boyra. Doly said, "I just picked Swasty up from school and we are enjoying the rain. The weather is nicer than previous days."

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Man held in Sylhet over death of wife

He claimed suicide, police suspect murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A housewife was allegedly killed by her husband at Akhalia in Sylhet on Wednesday night, who police said may have tried to cover up her death as suicide.

The deceased is Farida Parveen, 24. She lived with her husband Rubel Ahmed and two sisters-in-law -- both of them minors.

Rubel brought Farida to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital on Wednesday night, claiming she tried to kill herself. Doctors declared her brought dead.

However, upon complaint from the victim's family yesterday morning that she might have been murdered, police recovered the body from the hospital in the afternoon, and sent it for autopsy.

Police also detained Rubel from the hospital, while Farida's father Abdul Matin filed a murder case with Jalalabad Police Station accusing Rubel and two unnamed persons, said Okil Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Rubel's father is an expatriate and his mother lives in their village home. He was unemployed, and was trying to go abroad for work, said Okil.

"She got married to Rubel a year ago. Since then, they have been having family problems over many issues including dowry, and was also tortured by her husband," alleged Farida's uncle Sujon Miah.

"She spoke to her parents around 9pm and everything seemed normal. At 11pm, we came to know that she died at the hospital."

Okil Uddin said, "Rubel's family claimed that she died SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

CHITTAGONG COLLEGE 46 accused in case over attack on BCL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A case was filed with Chawkbazar Police Station in the port city early yesterday, in connection with Wednesday night's attack on Subhash Mallick Sabuj, general secretary of Chittagong College unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

A total of 31 named some 15 unnamed BCL activists of Chittagong College were accused in the case filed by the victim, said Nizam Uddin, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police Station.

Sabuj was hacked in Chittagong College hostel gate area around 9.30pm on Wednesday, allegedly by rival BCL activists.

He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and was undergoing treatment at casualty ward of the hospital, said Mahmudul Karim, president of the same unit of BCL.

After the incident, BCL activists vandalised some 12 businesses in Chawkbazar Gulzar intersection area, said eyewitnesses.

BCL leaders and police, however, claimed that no vandalism took place.

"Our activists expressed agitation in the area after the incident," said Mahmudul, adding, "They did not do any vandalism."

He claimed that the attack on their general secretary was carried out by their rival group over establishing dominance in the college and adjacent area.

The OC said no one was arrested till yesterday afternoon in connection with the case.

'Rehabilitate rickshaw pullers first'

BILS suggests proper planning before limiting their number

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 1.5 million rickshaw pullers in Dhaka and their families are dependent on the occupation and 60 percent of city dwellers use rickshaws for commuting, according to a study by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) yesterday.

These rickshaw pullers are deprived of their rights due to a lack of policy, the study said, claiming that the government wants to limit their number without a proper rehabilitation plan.

Khandoker Abdus Salam, co-author of the study "Organising the Informal Economy Workers: A Study of Rickshaw Pullers in Dhaka City", presented it at BILS' seminar hall in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Data were collected recently from surveying 200 rickshaw pullers from Badda, Hazaribag, Jatrabari and Shajahanpur areas; 20 garage owners; two city corporation executives and two traffic police.

Salam, also a programme consultant of BILS, said most rickshaw pullers living in the city come from northern parts of the country, including 36 percent from Rajshahi and 22 percent from Rangpur. On an

average, they earn Tk 13,382 a month.

"Among them, 54 percent have loans and 94 percent do not receive any assistance," he said.

Salam said 95 percent rickshaw pullers are harassed by law enforcers, passengers, transport workers and rickshaw owners. He said 96 percent of them hire rickshaws on rent from garage owners and 20 percent do not receive any facility from there.

He said there is no provision of providing driving license to rickshaw pullers and for this, they frequently face various constraints.

Also, he said, 94 percent of rickshaw pullers suffer from diseases including fever, cough, pain, weakness, jaundice and diarrhoea, and they go to quacks for treatment or purchase medicine from pharmacies without prescription.

He urged the government to introduce a proper policy for rickshaw pullers until their rehabilitation.

Lawmaker Shirin Akhter, vice chairperson of BILS, said the government should think about their training, housing, fixing the fare, health insurance, welfare fund and rehabilitation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DEATH OF ABRAR

Court order on charge-sheet July 25

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detectives had said they did not find any other accused in further investigation of the case filed over death of Bangladesh University of Professionals student Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury in a road accident on March 19.

On Tuesday, Investigation Officer Kazi Shariful Islam, an inspector of police's Detective Branch, said he submitted a petition on April 30 seeking permission for further probe.

As he did not find any other accused and evidence, he appealed to the court to accept the previous charge sheets. Metropolitan Magistrate Debdas Chandra Adhikary yesterday set July 25 whether to accept those.

On April 25, Shariful pressed charges against Nani Gopal Sarker, owner of Suprobhat Paribahan, and three staffers -- driver Sirajul Islam, conductor Yasin Arafat and helper Md Ibrahim -- in connection with the case. All the accused are in jail.

They were charge-sheeted for death of Abrar and for the attempted murder of college student Synthia Islam Mukta.

On March 19, a bus of the transport company ran over and killed Abrar near Dhaka's Bashundhara Residential Area, after it had hit Synthia in Shahjadpur.

Following the incident, Abrar's father Brig Gen (ret) Arif Ahmed Chowdhury filed a murder case with Gulshan Police Station.

Humayun Kabir Balu's 15th death anniv observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The 15th death anniversary of Ekushey Padak recipient and journalist Humayun Kabir Balu was observed yesterday in Khulna through elaborate programmes.

Wreaths were placed on his grave at Basupara and food was distributed among orphans at noon. Members of Khulna Press Club (KPC), Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) and Metropolitan Union of Journalists placed wreaths at his press club memorial.

Prayers and a milad mahfil were held after a discussion meeting at 11am at KPC to commemorate the journalist. KPC President SM Habib chaired the discussion.

Another discussion meeting was held at KUJ office with Mahendra Nath Sen, vice-president of KUJ, in the chair.

Balu was editor of local "Dainik Janmabhumi" and president of Khulna Press Club (KPC). He was bombed to death on June 27, 2004, while entering his office-cum-residence on Haji Meher Ali road under Sadar thana of Khulna city.

'Will go on hunger strike if demands aren't met'

Says BCL post-deprived faction

DU CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) -- who failed to get posts in its new committee -- yesterday gave a 24-hour ultimatum to BCL's president and general secretary to fulfil their four-point demand.

The faction also said they will go on a hunger strike unto death from today if the demands aren't met within this time.

They made the declaration at a press conference held at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture, where they have been staging a sit-in programme since May 26.

Their demands include dropping controversial leaders from central committee and replacing them with leaders who did not get posts, meeting the prime minister, publicly disclosing identities of the 19 controversial leaders and trial of the attacks on them in Madhur Canteen and Teacher-Student Centre (TSC).

"Chhatra League president and general secretary have remained oblivious to our demands since the beginning. We will go on hunger strike if they do not fulfil our demands within the next 24 hours," Murad Hayder Tipu, former programme and publication affairs secretary of central committee, said in a statement.

BCL on May 13 announced its full-fledged 301-member central committee, touching off controversy and demonstrations by some of those who could not make it to the new committee. On May 19, the post-deprived faction went on a hunger strike which was called off within a few hours considering the month of Ramadan.



Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal along with police high-ups, guests and awardees of the Bangladesh Police Women Network award, at the International Convention Centre in Chattogram. Ten personnel from various levels of the law enforcing agency were awarded in six categories at the event.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



GOOD INITIATIVE MARRIED BY NEGLIGENCE... The idea was to transform the otherwise unused space underneath port city's Bahaddarhat flyover into a green haven. Chattogram Development Authority took this initiative of planting trees in Ek Kilometre area. But some wood traders have occupied the space and started to use it as storage. The trees are also dying amid lack of proper care by the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Doa mahfil for Toufiq M Seraj today

CITY DESK

A doa mahfil (prayer ceremony) for late Dr Toufiq M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech (Pvt) Ltd and associated companies, will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

All of his relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

Toufiq, also former president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Planners and Bangladesh Tennis Federation, died on a Qatar-bound flight from Dhaka on June 21.

Two students among six dead in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and two injured in road accidents in four districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Cumilla, a bus fell into a ditch beside Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Tamta area of Daudkandi yesterday, leaving two women dead.

The deceased are Rowshan Ara, 60, from Mithilapur in Burichang; and Anika Tahsin, 20, a medical college student, said police.

In Dinajpur, two people were killed and a woman was injured as their motorcycles collided head-on in Phulbari upazila yesterday.

Jalal Uddin, 55, from Adampur village and a teacher of Chawkiapara High School, died on the spot. Mehedi Hasan, 20, from Dakkhin Kristapur village, died on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, said police.

Locals took injured Ferdousi Ara, wife of Jalal, to M Abdur Rahim Medical College

Hospital.

In Jashore, a truck ran a college student over on Jashore-Chaugachha road at Salua Bazar in Chaugachha upazila on Wednesday night, leaving her dead on the spot.

The victim -- Sharmin Sultana Tama, 26, wife of Masudur Rahman -- was attending master's final examination from Government Michael Madhusudan College in the town.

Her uncle Tauhidur Rahman said the accident happened immediately after she had fallen off her husband's motorbike. They were returning from Jashore after the first examination, he said.

Meanwhile in Gopalganj, a man was killed and another injured as a bus and a motorbike collided on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Dumuria area of Sadar upazila yesterday.

Sayem Mahamud, 25, a madrasa teacher from Kahlapur village in Bagerhat, died instantly, said police.

The injured was taken to Gopalganj General Hospital.