

Season's first Kalbaishakhi hits the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The season's first Kalbaishakhi hit the capital and some other parts of the country last afternoon.

Known in English as the "nor'wester", it struck around 4:30pm. Accompanied by light rainfall, it disrupted the lives of city dwellers for around an hour.

It started with a strong breeze, covering city streets with dust, signalling the coming inconvenience to pedestrians.

The wind whizzed at nearly 52 kilometers per hour on average across Dhaka, while it reached about 80 km/hr near Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, said meteorological office sources.

The average rainfall in the capital was 24 millimetre, Shamsuddin Ahmed, director, Bangladesh Meteorological Department told The Daily Star.

The official also said they forecast several moderate or strong nor'westers with moderate rain and lightning hitting the country's North, North-East and middle part this month.

Other than Dhaka, yesterday's storm also hit at least 11 other districts, including Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur,

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A waste collection area of Dhaka South City Corporation has turned into a makeshift parking spot. Bikes and even a horse cart was seen occupying the area during daytime, hindering the actual purpose of the facility. This photo was taken from the capital's AHM Kamruzzaman Sharani.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS Activists urge govt to ensure demarcation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Green activists yesterday urged the government to ensure demarcation of the country's rivers based on a court verdict.

Besides, they urged authorities concerned to conduct eviction drive in an unbiased manner and keep the rivers free from the clutches of grabbers.

They raised the demands during a press conference at the capital's Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), Waterkeepers Bangladesh, National River Alliance and Jatiya Nodi Rokkha Andolon jointly organised the press conference ahead of International Day of Action for Rivers, which will be observed worldwide today, according to a press release.

Some 50 programmes in observance of the day have been dedicated to recently deceased columnist and green activist Syed Abul Maksud, said the release.

On the occasion, organisers demanded stopping faulty river management, and restoration of flow and navigability of dead and earth-filled rivers by dredging.

Besides, leasing out of riverbanks has to be stopped, they also demanded at the event.

The green activists demanded the land ministry, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, city corporations, municipalities, urban development authorities, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, and the River Commission follow river-friendly policies rigorously.

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Country has become a 'factory to produce rich people': Menon

Workers Party criticises AL for 'moving away' from four principles of Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh, a major part of the ruling alliance, yesterday criticised Awami League's position on four fundamental principles of Bangladesh -- which were introduced by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The criticism came at a seminar titled "Bangabandhu and the Four Fundamental Principles" on the occasion of Mujib Year at Engineers' Institution of Bangladesh (IEB) in the capital.

Party leaders alleged that AL shifted its stand from those basic principles -- democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism.

They also raised question as to why the audio of one of the speeches by Bangabandhu was playing in the parliament with some words missing from it.

Bangabandhu Chair Professor of Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) Syed Anwar Hossain mentioned the fundamental principles as "songs of the old days" in his keynote paper.

"Bangabandhu returned to the country on January 10, 1972 and said that the foundation of the state would be democracy, socialism and secularism. Later, by adding nationalism, the four basic principles were

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Moin Hossain Raju remembered

DU CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning organisations yesterday remembered Moin Hossain Raju, an activist of Chhatra Union who was gunned down on Dhaka University campus, where the Anti-Terrorism Raju Memorial Sculpture is situated now, on March 13 in 1992 while protesting terrorism in the name of student politics.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri and Shaheed Moin Hossain Raju Sangsad placed floral wreaths at the base of the memorial as a tribute to Raju.

Bangladesh Juba Union, different units of Chhatra Union, including Jagannath University, also paid homage to the memorial on his 29th death anniversary.

Later, Chhatra Union arranged a discussion at DU Madhur Canteen.

"We are taking oath imbued with the spirit of Raju to continue our fight against terrorism," said Foez Ullah, president of Chhatra Union. Foez demanded inclusion of March 13 in the DU calendar as Anti-Terrorism Raju Day.

Among others, Abdullah Mahmud Khan, a close associate of Raju, addressed the programme.

Public good over relaxed life

Barishal couple start library with all their savings

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

They gave up the common thinking of enjoying a relaxed retired life. Instead, they chose to do something worthwhile, not just for themselves, but for people around their community.

To implement the idea, the couple spent all of their retirement funds to establish a library so that people can read books and enlighten themselves.

"We think the habit of reading books is one of the key ways to enlighten one's soul and conscience," said Nazrul Haque Nilu, a former professor of political science department at Banaripara Degree College in Barishal.

Driven by that spirit, Nilu and his wife, Mahamuda Begum Manu, a former teacher of Saheed Ziaur Rahman College in Barishal, set up a library at Kawnia area in the city, all out of their own pocket last year.

Those who frequent the library are full of praise. Talking to The Daily Star, Enayet Hossain Shiplu, who visits the library regularly, said, "I think the library is helpful because I can get multiple types of books including history, novel, science fiction and others."

Nilu, who retired in 2017, is currently

serving as the district unit president of Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB).

The couple accumulated all of their savings and retirement benefits and built a three-storied building at Nilu's ancestral home in Mansabari Lane of Kawnia.

The library is situated on the first floor while the third floor is also dedicated for the purpose. The couple lives on the second floor.

But it was expensive, and just their retirement funds wouldn't get the job done. So they resorted to selling their land to come up with Tk 1 crore the project required, Nilu said.

And then, after all of the planning and execution, and hard work, the "Nilu-Manu Trust and Public Library" now stands proudly for Barishal's readers' to indulge in.

But then there are variable costs to cover as well.

"We spent almost all of our money to construct the building and set up the library. But there needs to be a flow of money every month to pay utility bills, to buy news books and to appoint cleaners, guards and librarians," said Manu, who retired last year.

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Two musicians die in highway road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two musicians were killed and six injured as a lorry hit a microbus on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Partha Pratim Guha (50) and Md Hanif (41), said police.

A musical troupe was going to Cox's Bazar from Dhaka by microbus to perform a show, said Sub-Inspector Ishaq Miah of Joraganj Highway Police Outpost. On the way, a Dhaka-bound lorry hit it in Sonapahar around 5:20am.

On information, police rushed to the spot and rescued the injured, said Ishaq, adding that Partha died on the spot while Hanif succumbed to his injuries at Chattogram Medical College Hospital around 7am.

KARNAPHULI RIVER Tk 49cr extra to dredge plastic!

Project to extend 1yr as thick polythene layer slows down work

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The project cost for dredging work in Karnaphuli River has increased by 19 percent, as workers now have to remove a thick layer of plastic waste from the riverbed.

The cost has increased from Tk 258 crore to Tk 307 crore, and the project's deadline would also be extended for an additional year, said sources working on the project.

The work of "Navigability Enhancement Project in Karnaphuli River from Sadarghat to Bakalia Char" started in September 2018 and was supposed to be completed by June 2022, they said.

However, work slowed down after a thick layer of plastics, largely made up of polythene, was found on the riverbed.

A study conducted by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) researchers in June 2019 revealed that the riverbed has a two-to-seven-metre-thick layer of plastic waste, said sources at Chattogram Port Authority (CPA).

"When the project was initiated, 42 lakh cubic feet of waste and earth was supposed to be removed," said

Commander M Arifur Rahman, chief hydrographer of CPA. "Now, after shipping ministry's decision to remove the polythene layer, we will remove 51 lakh cubic feet of waste and earth."

"Polythene dumped into canals ultimately goes into Karnaphuli, forming a thick layer in the riverbed," said Arifur. "We are facing serious problems during dredging due to the polythene layer."

"People must be aware of the bad effects of polythene and should not throw such materials in waterbodies," he said.

CANALS FILLED WITH PLASTICS
Plastics, mainly polythene, are being dumped into waterbodies in the port city indiscriminately, posing serious threat to the environment.

A large part of such wastes goes into Karnaphuli river during high tide every day, and over the years, this formed a thick layer of polythene on the riverbed, said experts.

While visiting last week, this correspondent saw that most parts of canals and drains in different areas of the city were full of plastics.

In many areas, a new visitor might even mistake the canals as landfills, as the thick layer of polythene engulfed the upper part of the waterbodies.

Polythene covered Chaktai canal on KB Aman Ali Road as far as the eye could see.

Locals said this situation did not happen in a few days or weeks. Irresponsible people have been dumping plastics into canals for years, and there is no one to manage the issue.

"Look at the canal...will anybody call it a canal? It has turned into a dumping ground for plastics," said Abdus Shukkur, a resident of Phooltola in his sixties.

"Irresponsible residents dump waste, but the canal's condition wouldn't have been so bad if Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) officials cleaned it regularly," he said.

The same situation prevailed in Birza canal in Rahattarpool area; waste covered the canal right from the culvert. Md Yasin, a resident of the area, said he did not see CCC staffers clean the canal in the past one year.

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Workers now have to dredge out all the plastic at the bottom of Karnaphuli River, which will take an additional year to complete. Polythene dumped by careless residents in canals and drains of the port city over the years and inaction of authorities to clean the waterways resulted in the formation of a thick layer of plastics on the riverbed. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Man burnt to death in Savar

UNB, Savar

A garment worker was burnt to death in a fire at his house at Nagarchar in Rajshulbaria of Savar early yesterday.

The deceased -- Shariful Mollah (32) -- hailed from Bagha upazila of Rajshahi.

When the fire broke out in the morning, Shariful's wife Surya Khatun managed to come out of the house but he was asleep. Locals managed to extinguish the fire and took Shariful to a local hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Shariful used to live with his family at the rented house owned by Atoar Mia of Tetuljhora, said FM Sayed, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station.

His body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the OC.



Despite HC rulings and repeated warnings, cables and wires hung from electric polls keep cluttering up Dhaka residents' line of sight. But beyond just an eyesore, they also pose the danger of short circuits and explosions. This photo was taken from Karwan Bazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Put your own house in order: Fakhru to Quader

UNB, Dhaka

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday asked his ruling party counterpart Obaidul Quader to put his own house in order instead of regularly criticising the opponents.

"The Awami League general secretary talked about BNP even yesterday [Friday] as he's used to make comments (about our party) every day... We get surprised with his remarks. His way of talking is nice. The seat he sits on for talking is also very nice!" he said.

The BNP senior leader said this while inaugurating a blood donation programme at Jatiya Press Club in the capital. BNP's treatment and service committee formed to mark the golden jubilee of the independence in collaboration with Doctors' Association of Bangladesh arranged the event.

Fakhru said Quader used to say BNP has no existence, but he makes derogatory remarks against it every day as he knows about its strong existence.

"You (Quader) should be ashamed of seeing what's happening in your area

in Noakhali's Bashurhat... So, I ask him to put his own house in order before criticising BNP," he said.

Referring to media reports, Fakhru said two people, including a journalist, were killed at Bashurhat in recent clashes between Obaidul Quader's younger brother Quader Mirza and his rivals.

He said police did not take a case when the family members of a victim went to file it against Quader Mirza on Friday. "Because he's not only Quader Mirza, he is the brother of Obaidul Quader, the second most powerful man in Bangladesh. Where's justice and where's the rule of law?" he said.

Fakhru further said the ruling party leaders and activists have been indulging in violence and killing at different parts of the country -- over the sharing of "plundered" money.

"They are looting the assets of Bangladesh and engaging in clashes over sharing of the looted money. Their main target is to loot the entire Bangladesh and making second homes in Canada,

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