



Yesterday's somewhat unexpected rain brought with it sufferings like power cuts, waterlogging and heavier-than-usual traffic. However, it also brought relief to the city residents, who have been dealing with the scorching summer heat amidst Ramadan for the last few days. These two friends, held captive in the middle of the road due to the sudden rain, portray the same duality as they are seen enjoying a moment of laughter. The photo was taken at Nilkhet.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CASE AGAINST  
TARIQUE, WIFE  
HC defers  
hearing on  
15-yr-old rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday deferred till May 29 the hearing on the rules questioning filing and initiation of a corruption case against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, his wife, and her mother.

The HC issued the rules 15 years ago and also stayed the trial proceedings.

The bench of Justice Md Nazmul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo passed the order after the petitioners' lawyer Kayser Kamal prayed for the adjournment.

Kayser told the HC bench that they need time to take preparation for placing arguments on the rules.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik opposed the adjournment prayer, saying the rules need to be heard soon as those have been pending for long 15 years.

On September 26, 2007, ACC lodged the case with Kafrul Police Station against Tarique, now in London, his wife Zubaida Rahman, and her mother Iqbal Mand Banu for amassing assets worth Tk 4.82 crore through illegal means and concealing information in their wealth statement.

Empower river  
commission

Says former NRCC chief on protecting waterbodies



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though parliament has been passing many bills, they did not bother to enact the NRCC law, alleged Mujibor Rahman Hawlader, former chairman of National River Conservation Commission (NRCC), yesterday.

He made the remark at a seminar titled "Dialogue on empowering NRCC to comply with court order to protect rivers" in the capital, organised by Waterkeepers Bangladesh.

The former NRCC boss said they drafted the law in 2020 but the draft law has remained immobilised since then. In the meantime, the parliament has passed many bills except the NRCC law.

"The draft law was prepared to make NRCC a stronger and independent entity so that it can protect the territorial integrity of rivers," he said. He also alleged that many did not want NRCC to be formed.

"The river governing bodies (ministries dealing with rivers) did not want the commission to be formed. It was the river activists and the media who created public opinion in favour of it. At one stage, the High

RECOMMENDATIONS	
●	Enact NRCC law
●	Make commission stronger, independent
●	Appoint qualified people
●	Shun nepotism

Those who got appointed must be bold and ready to speak out. They must be on the fields to see the real condition of rivers.

MUJIBOR RAHMAN HAWLADER  
Ex chairman of NRCC

Court intervened to form the commission," he said.

He suggested appointing qualified people to the commission to rule out nepotism.

"Those who got appointed must be bold and ready to speak out. They must be on the fields to see the real condition of rivers. When I was the chairperson, I managed to make a list of 63,000 river grabbers from deputy commissioners across the country."

He also alleged that NRCC is often neglected when it comes to funding allocation.

Mujibor Rahman alleged that the water resources ministry could not declare floodplain areas of a single river yet.

"This is creating more scope for grabbers to prey upon the waterbodies.

Prof Ahmad Kamruzzaman of Stamford University said the government has taken many initiatives to protect rivers. "But in reality, the initiatives fell flat due to its inefficiency."

"Our initiatives fall flat because we don't have well thought out, modern scientific river policy. We must enact the law soon so that NRCC gets stronger in its endeavour," he said.

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HC summons  
five DCs over  
air pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned the director general of Department of Environment and deputy commissioners of Dhaka and four other surrounding districts -- Gazipur, Manikganj, Narayanganj and Munshiganj -- directing them to appear before it on May 17 and explain why illegal brick kilns were not shut down despite its repeated directives.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaul Islam and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim passed the order following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh seeking necessary directives.

During hearing, HRPB lawyer Manzill Murshid told the HC that the DG of DoE and DCs have earlier submitted compliance reports to this court, saying that they have been shutting down illegal kilns.

But, it has been said in a newspaper report on April 19 that some illegal brick kilns, which were shut down earlier, are now running at Dhamrai in Savar, adjacent to Dhaka, and those are causing serious air and environment pollution, he said. The situation in other districts is similar.

On March 1, the HC directed the government to shut down the operations of all the illegal brick kilns in Dhaka, Gazipur, Manikganj, Narayanganj and Munshiganj in 15 days.

Some relief,  
some sufferings

STAR REPORT

After the scorching summer heat during the last several days, Dhaka finally saw a gush of much needed, though unexpected rain yesterday.

Around 6:45am -- shortly after sunrise with most city dwellers asleep after Sehri -- dark clouds started hovering all over the sky, accompanied by a cool wind delivering the message loud and clear: a storm is on its way.

The rain was crucial in dropping the city's temperature. However, waterlogging and heavy traffic brought with it huge trouble for the commuters, mostly office- and school-goers.

The 70km-per hour speedy nor'wester, with an average speed of 55km-per hour, also snapped electricity lines in some parts of the capital, interrupting the supply.

A few areas in the capital, including Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Azimpur, Farmgate, Khilgaon, Banasree and Badda, faced load-shedding or power outages for one to two hours, according to residents.

However, the fire service control room did not receive reports of any major damage. Duty officer Lima Khanam informed a few trees were uprooted in the Chandrima Udyan area.

Md Abul Kalam Mallik, a meteorologist at Meteorological Department, said a maximum of 60mm rainfall was recorded in Rangpur.

The daytime temperature dropped by one to two degrees Celsius across the country. The weather department recorded a 44mm rainfall between 6:30am and 8:30am and predicted light to moderate showers in large parts of the country, including Dhaka, in the next 48 hours.

Peaceful  
coexistence an  
uplifting sight

Says US ambassador-at-large on Bangladesh's religious harmony



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US is heartened to see Bangladeshis from different faiths peacefully coexisting, but there are some elements that try to create divisions and conflicts, said US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain yesterday.

"By and large, from my observation, for example, I see Hindus and Muslims are living together peacefully," he said, after holding a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam at the foreign ministry.

Hussain, the first Muslim-American to ever hold the post, arrived in Bangladesh on Sunday for a four-day trip, visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, met leaders of Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad and interacted with students in Dhaka.

Asked about his statement on violence against Hindu community during Durga Puja celebrations last year, he said he was very concerned about that, but at the same time was encouraged to see a strong statement from the government. Asked who are trying to create divisions, he said that's a question for law enforcers to investigate.

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People laugh  
when BNP talks  
about democracy  
Says info minister

BSS, DHAKA

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said people of the country laugh when leaders of BNP, which was born undemocratically, talk about democracy.

The minister was talking to reporters after addressing a views-exchange meeting with the committee members of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at the secretariat in the city.

He said BNP leaders, including Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, got into trouble by giving example of Pakistan's democracy. For this, they are now talking the opposite.

Replying to a query over BNP's movement after Eid, the minister said BNP has been giving such threats of movement for the last 12 to 13 years. In the meeting, the minister extended his congratulations to the newly elected DRU committee members.



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At Moghbazar Wireless Gate, a train passes by behind a row of rickshaws, which remain standing scarily near the track, creating a scope for accidents. The tendency to cross railway tracks even when the level-crossing bars have started coming down has become all too common amongst people. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NEW MARKET CLASH  
BNP questions  
'police inaction'

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday questioned the "inactive role" of police in stopping the day-long clashes between shopkeepers and Dhaka College students in the city's New Market area that killed a courier service employee.

"One person was killed and several others were seriously injured in a series of clashes between students and businessmen in the New Market area on Tuesday. My question is why the police played an inactive role. A police officer said they were inactive for strategic reasons," he said.

Speaking at a programme at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan, Fakhru wanted to know the explanation of the "strategic reasons" behind the law enforcers' inaction to stop the violence.

BNP arranged the programme to provide assistance and gifts ahead of Eid to the family members of the party leaders and activists who were killed, tortured and made disappeared.



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