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## HEAT WAVE

## Black gowns not mandatory for judges, lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to the ongoing heat wave across the country, lawyers and judges of lower courts are now not required to wear black coats and gowns in courts.

The decision came after Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique held a meeting with other Supreme Court senior judges yesterday, said a notification in this regard.

According to the directive, male judges and lawyers in all courts of the country can wear white neck bands and black ties with white full shirts. Women lawyers can wear white sarees or salwar-kameez.

The directive will come into effect from today and will continue till further notice, it said.

The decision was taken on the request of various bar associations of the country due to the ongoing heat wave across the country, the notification said.

Earlier, lawyers placed the request to the bar council to make wearing black coats optional during summer considering various health risks due to the intense heat.

They made the appeal after lawyer Shafiul Alam, a member of the Dhaka Bar Association, died on May 11.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Amid a sea of vibrant greenery, a butterfly delicately sips nectar from a sweet-scented blossom. Its wings beat softly, as if in sync with the gentle rustling of leaves in the breeze. This photo was taken in Khulna's Khalishpur area recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Stop illegal earth filling at Hatirjheel

## Speakers tell discussion on Dhaka Elevated Expressway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The illegal filling of a portion of Hatirjheel waterbody in the capital must be stopped immediately, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They also said the government must investigate and take action against the authorities of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway in case of any violation of the law on their part.

Speakers alleged that the authorities of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway project were filling the Hatirjheel waterbody in Eskaton with sand. A portion of the lake was filled to construct pillars for the expressway.

Despite concerns raised by urban development experts, environmentalists, and rights activists, government agencies such as Rajuk and the Department of Environment (DoE) have failed to take necessary action to prevent the filling, they said during an online discussion, titled "Planning Impact of Elevated Expressway on Hatirjheel", organised by Institute for Planning and Development (IPD).

They highlighted the potential environmental impact of the elevated expressway construction and the violation of water conservation law.

Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder, dean and chairman of the Department of Environment Science at Stamford University, said Hatirjheel has been recognised as the "lungs of Dhaka" by the High Court, as it helps mitigate flooding and reduce air pollution in the city.

"However, the recent earth-filling of a portion of the lake by the Dhaka Elevated Expressway authorities' puts it and the surrounding areas at risk of waterlogging," he said.

He also criticised the lack of necessary permissions obtained by the Dhaka Elevated Expressway authorities from Rajuk and the DoE, and the failure of other government offices to stop the filling.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

**The recent earth-filling of a portion of the lake by the Dhaka Elevated Expressway authorities' puts it and the surrounding areas at risk of waterlogging.**

Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder  
Stamford University

## Colonial laws still being used to muzzle voices

## Speakers tell roundtable



Speakers at a roundtable on "Sedition Law and Press Freedom in Bangladesh", organised by the Law Desk of The Daily Star at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the country's constitution guarantees freedom of press and expression, some British-era and post-independence acts, which had a colonial legacy, are still being used to control public, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

The Sedition section of the 1860 penal code, the Official Secrets Act of 1823 and the Digital Security Act (DSA) are examples of such legislations. It is time to challenge the sedition law, which has already been an issue in India and Pakistan due to its direct contradiction with their respective constitutions.

The roundtable, titled "Sedition Law and Press Freedom in Bangladesh", was organised by the Law Desk of this newspaper at The Daily Star Centre.

Section 124A of The Penal Code 1860 mentioned that anyone who by spoken or written words, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the lawful government, can be accused of committing sedition.

"Though this particular law is not being used by the government as a tool of oppression, the existence of the law itself is like a sword hanging in the balance... It encouraged [the government] in many ways to enact new laws like the Digital Security Act," said Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam.

He said the courts in Bangladesh always seek examples of neighbouring countries which had inherited the British-era penal code. However,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## DU admission tests conclude

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for undergraduate programmes at Dhaka University for the 2022-23 academic session concluded yesterday through the business studies unit exams.

The admission tests for fine arts (Cha), arts, law & social science and science (Ka) units were held on April 29, May 06 and 12, respectively.

According to the DU authorities, a total

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING		MAY 14	
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib
4:45	12:45	5:00	6:36
4:45	1:15	5:15	6:40
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			



Students queuing up to enter an exam hall at Dhaka University. The admission test for undergraduate programmes for the 2022-23 academic session concluded yesterday through the business studies unit exams.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Five burnt as cylinders explode at refill centre

## Shop had no valid papers, necessary equipment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people including a child were burnt in an explosion at an unauthorised gas cylinder refill centre in Savar yesterday morning.

The injured are: Billal Hossain, 30, the owner of the refill centre, Shariful Islam, 22, Nurnabi, 18, Sohag, 6 and Maha Alam, 26.

The injured were first taken to a local hospital. Four of them except Alam was later admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Brun and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## Call 999 for help during Mocha: PHQ

UNB, Dhaka

Police headquarters yesterday requested people to contact the nearest police station or 999 for availing of any services related to cyclonic storm "Mocha".

Meanwhile, Mocha has intensified further over the east-central Bay and adjoining area after moving north-northeastwards yesterday.

It is likely to intensify further, move in the same direction and cross Cox's Bazar-North Myanmar's coast between 6:00am to 6:00pm today, according to Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) opened a control room yesterday to deal with issues related to Cyclone Mocha. The control room can be contacted at +8801552 202854 and +8801552 202886, said a press release.

## Dhaka air most polluted

UNB, Dhaka

With an air quality index (AQI) score of 186 at 9:03am yesterday, Dhaka's air ranked as the worst among cities around the world.

India's Delhi and Nepal's Kathmandu occupied the next two spots, with AQI scores of 176 and 172.

An AQI between 151 and 200 is considered "unhealthy" while between 201-300 "very unhealthy", and 301-400 "hazardous", posing severe health risks to residents.

AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, is used by government agencies to inform people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on five criteria pollutants -- Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2 and Ozone.

## Discussion, joint efforts the key

## Emphasises Shahriar Alam in resolving regional issues

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam yesterday said Bangladesh wants to walk together with the countries in the region by resolving the issues through discussion and joint efforts.

He also laid emphasis on sharing good practices among the partner countries as Bangladesh seeks cooperation in the region. The state minister was talking to reporters after three separate bilateral meetings with the assistant minister for foreign affairs of Australia, vice minister for foreign affairs of Japan and assistant minister of UAE on the sidelines of the 6th Indian Ocean Conference in Dhaka.

Shahriar claimed Bangladesh has emerged as 35th largest economy in the world under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He said Bangladesh seeks support from its partners in terms of extension of duty-free benefits till 2029.

Responding to a question, the state minister said the government is looking into the agreements and signed joint communiques with Japan during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit there so that follow up is done quickly on the targets.