



## Heavy rains, storms forecast for entire week

### Schools open today after heatwave closures

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) forecasts heavy rainfall with thunderstorms across the country this week, starting on Tuesday and lasting through Saturday.

"As per the analysis of mathematical model of rainfall index, Bangladesh is likely to witness heavy to very heavy rainfall with thunderstorms starting May 6 [Tuesday]. Rain is expected to bring some respite from the intense heatwave battering the country since April 1," BMD Meteorologist Dr Abul Kalam Mallik told BSS yesterday.

The heaviest rain is expected in the northeast and central parts of the country, including Sylhet and parts of Mymensingh and Dhaka. The southwest and northwest regions will also see rain and thunderstorms, he added.

Mallik also advised people to avoid staying outdoors during hailstorms, emphasising the dangers

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Amid the ongoing heatwave battering the nation, kind individuals and organisations are handing out cold drinks to offer some relief, especially to those working tough jobs in different areas of the capital. The photo was taken yesterday at the Mohammadpur bus stop.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Govt policies promote graft in banking sector

### Say speakers at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of the banking sector in Bangladesh has turned fragile, and policies and rules are framed in a way that promotes corruption, said analysts yesterday.

"Policy measures are being taken in the banking sector to promote corruption," said Hossain Zillur Rahman, a former adviser to a caretaker government.

The views came at a seminar on Bangladesh's politics and economy, organised by The Dhaka Forum at the BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka. Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the Bangladesh Bank, moderated the discussion.

Hossain Zillur said an analysis of how politics and the economy fared in the last 15 years is needed.

Development programmes have now become loan-dependent and the cost is increasing because of high inefficiency. The third is the deterioration of accountability as a whole, he said.

"There is also a lack of accountability."

Hossain Zillur said a new reality has emerged in politics. The ruling class gives priority to development over democracy. Some say that development has taken place despite the prevalence of corruption. Power has become centralised, he added.

According to the economist, it has become necessary to discuss the effect of inefficient economic governance.

"In my opinion, Bangladesh is being directed towards a future that is unacceptable and unethical and goes against the spirit of the Liberation War."

Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the economy has been passing through a difficult phase.

"We earlier mentioned that the main challenge was

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## 'Excesses by executive magistrates worrying'

### Legal experts say civil servants lack understanding, training for such work

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Legal experts have expressed worries about the growing abuse of power by the executive magistrates.

Such incidents of abuse are taking place due to their ignorance of legal and judicial procedures and lack of proper training which is a very bad sign for the society, lawyers say.

Two recent incidents of excesses by executive magistrates have brought the issue to the fore again.

On March 5, Sherpur's Nakla Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sadia Ummul Banin sentenced journalist Shafiuzzaman Rana, Nakla correspondent of Bangla daily Dosh Rupantor, to six months in prison on charges of misbehaving with the government official and her office staffers.

On March 14, Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Assistant Commissioner (land) Abdullah-Al-Noman Sarkar, along with his staffers, confined five journalists to his office for about 40 minutes and threatened to jail them following an altercation over recording video inside the land office.

The High Court in 2017 had declared unconstitutional the rules

**"They do not have the mindset for carrying out judicial duties. Whenever they get powers to conduct mobile courts, they forget their limitations under the law."**

Barrister Hassan MS Azim

under which executive magistrates run mobile courts. However, they are still being allowed to conduct mobile courts following a stay order from the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 2018.

Barrister Hassan MS Azim, who moved cases against the rules under which mobile courts are run, said the executive magistrates are not trained to adjudicate disputes under the judicial procedures. Rather, they are trained to implement the orders of their superior officers, he added.

"They do not have the mindset for carrying out judicial duties. Whenever they get powers to conduct mobile courts, they forget

their limitations under the law," Azim said.

Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan, a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court, said, "Some magistrates are conducting mobile courts against adulteration of food which is good. But some others are abusing their power which has a very bad impact on the society."

Khurshid, also the editor of the Dhaka Law Reports, stressed the need for proper training of the executive magistrates immediately through the Judicial Training Institute to end abuse of power.

As the executive magistrates had been abusing power frequently, the HC stepped in on several occasions to seize their authority.

For example, the HC on December 6, 2022, ordered the authorities concerned to suspend Gopalganj Assistant Commissioner (Land) Mamun Khan from conducting mobile courts over fining one Liton Mondal after "illegally" seizing his dredging machine, destroying its pipes on September 10, 2022, and later uploading photos of the incident on Facebook.

The HC ordered Mamun to refrain from conducting mobile courts for six months and to return

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## Fire breaks out in the Sundarbans

### Lack of water delaying firefighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A fire that broke out at Chandpai range of East Sundarbans in Bagerhat yesterday afternoon and was yet to be doused for lack of a nearby water source.

The fire originated in Latif's Chila area near Amurbunia patrol post of the mangrove forest around 3:30pm, said Kazi Mohammad Nurul Karim, divisional forest officer (DFO) of Sundarbans eastern division, reports our Bagerhat correspondent.

Mohammad Kayamuzzaman, station officer of Mongla Fire Station, said on information, fire service members from Morrelganj and Mongla stations went to the spot in the evening but could not start work due to lack of water sources.

He said the nearest source was the Bhola river two kilometres away.

"We will start working tomorrow morning," added Kayamuzzaman.

Rana Dev, assistant conservator of forests of Chandpai range of Sundarbans, said forest guards and locals first saw the fire and tried to control it.

District Forest Officer Kazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir and Morrelganj UNO Tareque Sultan visited the spot.

## PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTEST

### Students set up camp at Ireland's Trinity College

### Authority restricts campus access

REUTERS, Dublin

Students at Trinity College Dublin protesting Israel's offensive in Gaza have built an encampment that forced the university to restrict campus access yesterday and close the Book of Kells exhibition, one of Ireland's top tourist attractions.



The camp was set up late on Friday after Trinity College's students' union said it had been fined 214,000 euros (\$230,000) by the university for financial losses incurred due to protests in recent months not exclusively regarding the offensive in Gaza.

Students' union President Laszlo Molnarfi posted a photograph of benches piled up in front of the entrance to the building where the Book of Kells is housed on the X social media platform on Friday. The illuminated manuscript book was created by Celtic monks in about 800 AD. "The Book of Kells is now closed indefinitely," he said in the post.

Trinity College said it had restricted access to the

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## India lifts ban on onion export amid polls in Maharashtra

### No impact on prices in Dhaka

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

India yesterday removed the ban on onion exports subject to a minimum export price of \$550 per tonne, a decision that can help boost the income of a large section of farmers and comes amidst Lok Sabha polls in key producing regions, including the state of Maharashtra.

The government, in a balancing act to protect the interests of consumers, has imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of \$550 per tonne (around Tk 60 per kg) as well as a 40 percent export duty.

Taking duty into account, shipments will not be allowed below \$770 per tonne (around Tk 84 per kg).

"The export policy of onions is amended from prohibited to free subject to MEP of \$550 per tonne with immediate effect and until further orders," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a notification.

India imposed the ban on December 8 last year to control surging retail prices of onion in domestic markets. Consumer Affairs Department Secretary Nidhi Khare told reporters that lifting the ban would not lead to any price rises in retail markets.

"Prices will remain stable. If there is any increase, it should be very marginal," she said, adding that the government is committed to protecting the interests of both consumers and farmers.

Onion prices at Lasalgaon market in Nashik district of

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

UNCERTAINTY HANGS HEAVY... Rozina Begum, along with several hundred garment workers, was shocked to learn about the sudden closure of their factory, Apparels Industries Ltd, yesterday morning. Left without a job and April's wages, Rozina gazes into space and contemplates the future as she and her colleagues gather near the factory close to the Banani rail crossing. Story on page 3.

## Scientists find way to make batteries cheaper

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have found a new way to make batteries both cheaper and more capable, by "doping" them.

The technique adds small amounts of easily available elements to the batteries to dramatically change their performance.

The world has become heavily dependent on lithium-ion batteries, used in everything from our cars to our mobile phones, as well as for storing energy. But they suffer from a range of problems, including their heavy reliance on rare and expensive resources.

Researchers hope that can be approved by moving towards more efficient and sustainable materials in the battery cathodes.

Last year, researchers announced that they had found a new material for that cathode that allows for a high capacity using iron and oxygen reactions. But it brought problems, because charging and recharging those batteries produced oxygen.

Now researchers say that "doping" process could overcome that problem - and lead to the new technology being useful.