



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia till 6pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, Met Office said

Highest temperature 36.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Raishahi and the lowest 20.7 degree at Srimangol

The sun sets in the capital at 6:22pm today and rises at 5:33 am tomorrow

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major

cities and towns ye	esterday were:			
City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Dhaka	34.2	26.8	72
Chittagong	32.0	22.0	80	66
Rajshahi	36.3	24.5	77	65
Khulna	35.5	27.2	78	70
Barisal	33.0	26.8	89	87
Sylhet	28.5	21.0	78	82
Cox's Bazar	33.3	26.0	82	73

in B'baria road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

3 killed, 15 hurt

Three persons were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway yesterday. The dead were identified as Litu

Sarker, 28. Rubel Chandra Sarker, 13. and Joydev, 28. Two of them died on the spot while another on way to hospital. They all hailed from Durgapur under Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj district.

According to witnesses and hospital sources, the accident occurred as the driver of the bus lost control over the vehicle and fell into a roadside ditch at Islampur under Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila at noon. The bus was carrying a bridal party from Raipur in Narsingdi to Madhabpur in Habiganj. The injured were admitted to Brahmanbaria hospital No case was filed in this connection

till yesterday evening.

ISD activist shot dead in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police recovered the body yester-

Mahathir, a veteran Muslim leader

who was a strong opponent of the US

plans to attack Iraq, said he still

people would help solve problems,"

by the US against Syria over its alleged

"We don't believe that the killing of

Questioned on perceived threats

believed the war was unwarranted.

day morning and sent it to Kushtia

General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Mahathir

FROM PAGE 12

some business.

FROM PAGE 12

49 balls that featured two boundaries Jacques Rudolph gave another impressive performance making a 64-

ball 37. Earlier, skipper Saurav Ganguly scored 61 to help India reach their modest total

The Indian skipper who was back in the side after not playing against Bangladesh on Wednesday, hit six fours and a six off 83 deliveries.

He was out when he hit a full toss from spinner Paul Adams straight to Shaun Pollock at long-off.

The left-hander, who made his 52nd one-day half-century in 233 matches, hit some characteristic shots through the off-side early in the innings and looked good for his 23rd century.

Besides, Mohammad Kaif contributed with a 49-ball 30 and Dinesh Mongia added 29 runs from 46 balls.

Kaif was given a life when the Hyderabad player batting on 16, was dropped by Jacques Rudolph at midwicket.

None of the Indian batters felt comfortable batting first against South African pace bowlers Allan Dawson and

Security guard of a brick field murdered in Rupsha

SA's sweet revenge scalps

a lively pitch. But right-arm Ntini extracted good pace and bounce from the pitch to dismiss Gautam Gambhir Sanjay Bangar and Ajit Agarkar.

Sehwag on the arm and had he to be rushed to a local clinic for precautionary X-rays. He was batting on 14 at the

(SCOREBOARD ON PAGE 13)

say ready for Kashmir talks

REUTERS, Srinagar

India and Pakistan said yesterday they were ready for peace talks over war-torn Kashmir ahead of the latest round of US shuttle diplomacy to ease tensions between the nuclear rivals

Speaking from behind bulletproof glass in the first public speech in 15 years by an Indian prime minister in Kashmir's main city, Atal Behari Vajpayee, told a mainly hand-picked crowd of 10.000 he wanted talks with Pakistan as well as

Makhaya Ntini who shared seven

Dawson took 4-49 and Ntini 3-37 on An activist of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was murdered at village Ujangram in sadar upazila at midnight on Thursday.

According to police, Sifat Ali, 38, son One of his deliveries struck Virender of Mokkel Ali of village Ranjitpur in the same upazila, came under attack by the cadres of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) while he was returning home from Jhoudia riding a motorbike. The outlaws stopped his motorbike

But with his team in trouble the in and shot him point blank. He died on form opener returned to bat against the spot. doctor's advice but added only 11 runs.

India, Pakistan

failing which we don't want to even think of it.'

omy except for providing aid such as ' I cannot bear such suffering food and medicines, and perhaps anymore and I cannot survive this way," grumbled Baset Ali, driver of a Asked about newspaper reports three-wheeler in a queue at a Banani that the national Petronas oil comfilling station. "It is already 6 pm now pany president Mohamad Hassan and my entire day's income is only Marican would be asked to help in the about Tk 350. I have to stop plying the rebuilding of Iraq's oil economy, vehicle after an hour and give its owner Mahathir said: "Such an offer should Tk 450 as daily deposit.' In utter frustration, her said, " I only come from the United Nations,

is taken in this regard.

vehicles," said Bhakto.

He mentioned that a clash between

"We have continued our service

Mosharraf Hossain termed

only for taxi cabs and other CNG

for CNG three-wheelers immediately.'

queues were two to three kiolmetres

drivers of CNG-run three wheelers and

employees at the station left some

equipment damaged a few days ago

Bhakto.

FROM PAGE 12

book shops and a couple of drama theatres act as multi-dimensional points of attraction for different types of

of Pahela Baishakh at Ramna Batamul

They usually exist for a certain period.

Such civic spaces, be they desig-

nated or spontaneous, conceive the

value and emotion of our urban public.

They reflect the image and quality of our

life, enhance social interaction and

consolidate our cultural and traditional

have to wait five to six hours a day at a station this month, the Army Welfare CNG filling station every day. I do not Trust has not renewed the lease and see an end to this. What shall I do in closed the station till a further decision such a situation?

Garment workers shout slogans in a procession in Dhaka yesterday, demanding May 1 as their holiday.

CNG stations

Many other drivers narrated The other one -- Southern similar plight. And they appealed to Automobile Gas Station at Tejgaonthe government to increase the stopped service about 15 days ago. ber of gas stations without further We will not supply CNG to any fourstroke three-wheelers any more," said Another problem of the drivers is its Managing Director Monoranjan

that owners of three-wheelers are allegedly violating the government directive regarding the amount of daily deposit for the vehicles. "As far as I know, no owner takes

than Tk 400 as daily deposit although the government-fixed amount is Tk 300," said Nurul Islam, a driver

"We are being compelled to pay the Bhakto's attitude 'very negative' and increased amount as the owners said, "I hope he would resume service threaten us that if we refuse to do so, they would engage other drivers," he Meanwhile, in the past few days long queues of vehicles were seen at different CNG stations. Some of the

The government in a circular had asked the owners to take Tk 300 as daily deposit and warned of stern action if they violated it. Route permit of vehicles will also be cancelled if the

A senior official of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority said, "Although we have asked drivers to lodge complaints against owners violating

Encroachment on civic space

food shops, apartments, sari shops, premises, when there is a heavy concentration of people in observance of any people with different needs.

less wanting in some of our civic spaces For example, in the important civic spaces, such as Shahid Minar, and TSC

Above all, it is felt that in the interest of the city dwellers, the prime need is to ensure adoption of appropriate measures to keep the existing civic spaces free from encroachment of any kind or

Technicals are pickup trucks carry-

Arab TV shows new footage of Saddam

Saddam

as saving.

mosque

US-led war, but there have been

doubts whether the images are truly

corroborated a report from a man

who described himself as a former

Iraqi army officer. He told Reuters

earlier this week he saw Saddam at

about that time outside a mosque in

the same northern Baghdad district.

per quoted witnesses on Thursday as

saving Saddam had arrived at around

noon near the Azamia mosque in a

convoy of three cars, accompanied by

his younger son Qusay and his body-

guard, Al Amin Abd Hamed Hamoud.

broadcast by Abu Dhabi TV. It said he

delivered a half-hour speech from

atop a car, telling the gathering: "I am

fighting alongside you in the

trenches," Hayat quoted one witness

Witnesses told Hayat the Iraqi

leader and his entourage departed

about 12 hours before a US air raid on

the area which they said destroyed

part of a graveyard behind the

lepartment of shipping for distributing

the container cargoes between local and

The report mirrored the images

London-based Al-Hayat newspa-

The latest pictures, however,

REUTERS, Dubai

Arab television network Abu Dhabi TV broadcast footage yesterday of what it said was Saddam Hussein saluting a throng of chanting supporters in Baghdad on April 9, the day the capital fell to US forces.

The state-run channel said the pictures were taken in the northern Aadhamiya district, and that the tape had been obtained by its Baghdad correspondent from undisclosed sources

A US intelligence official said the United States would be looking at the tape to determine whether Saddam, the Ace of Spades in a pack of cards depicting most-wanted Iraqis, had indeed survived weeks of relentless bombing of the capital.

"We will be reviewing the tape to determine whether it is authentic or not. At the moment we don't know," said a US intelligence official in Washington, adding that the United States did not know whether Saddam was alive or dead.

Several tapes of the elusive leader, who is reported to have several "doubles," have been produced during the

Local ship owners

FROM PAGE 12 ing would reach around two billion dollars by the year 2008, he claimed.

dictory views regarding the ordinance.

The officials at the Principal Office of

the Mercantile Marine Department

(POMMD) observed that trade would

not be affected if the ordinance is

On the other hand, the Chittagong

Port Authority (CPA) officials said that

there should not be any protection for

local flag carriers is not workable

because it would create huge stockpiles

of cargo at the port," said a CPA high

He said the protection to the local

vessels would create stalemate at the

port because the local ship owners are

not capable of carrying all the contain-

"The ordinance giving priority to

anybody in a market economy.

implemented properly.

foreign flag vessels is not being imple-"The entire shipping business in the mented due to lack of guidelines. country will go under the control of the The authorities are still confused as foreign companies and they will dictate to how they can split the cargoes by 60 us," said Shah Alam, vice-chairman of per cent for foreign vessels and 40 per

cent for the local ones The foreign companies would also The POMMD held a meeting with all impose various extra charges like stakeholders in the business on congestion surcharge, bunker sur-Wednesday for evolving a mechanism charge on Bangladesh ports on petty for sharing cargoes. grounds as they did in the past, Shah But according to sources, the MLOs

were not ready to give 40 per cent of The two implementing authorities of cargoes to local ships. the government, however, gave contra-

Sundarbans FROM PAGE 12

ers' neck is the loan they borrowed from loan sharks during the hilsa season. The manajans are desperately realising their money.

"I gave them Tk 500,000 in loans. Now I have captured 200 fishing boats as the borrowers may flee without repaying me," said Lutfar Rahman Sana, a mahajan of Joymuni village. Besides, the prices of essentials

have rose to new heights. "Low-quality kerosene sells at Tk 30 and soybean oil at Tk 60 per liter and coarse rice at Tk 20 per kg in the regions," said Abu Taher of Chalitabuniva

Meanwhile, in view of the fall in

Aman procurement drive in the last

because of delayed launching of the

lran not worried

"I believe it is only through talks and

cooperation that difficulties can be

Iran, Saddam's Iraq and North

Late last month, US Defense

Korea were last year labeled an "axis of

evil" by US President George W Bush.

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld accused

Tehran of interfering in the Iraq war

by allowing hundreds of Iran-based

Shiite Muslim opposition fighters to

cross the border. Iran denied the

guns, two pipe guns, one shotgun, 16

The then officer-in-charge of

case against 18 inmates of armed

of the Jessore Detective Branch submit-

ted a chargesheet against 15 out of 18

on June 17, 1997, with mention of eight

Judge Mahmudul Kabir of the

tribunal in his verdict said the

chargesheeted were acquitted, as the

charge against them was not proved

Six accused were present in the

The acquitted people include Pagla

court when the judge handed down the

verdict. Nine others were tried in

Selim and Bombay Mithu -- two

chargesheeted accused in the Dainik

Janakantha Journalist Shamsur

people as prosecution witnesses.

Investigation Officer Shahidul Islam

rebellion under the Arms Act.

Jail revolt case

Meanwhile, the latest order by the

"It has made our lives miserable." he said

quoted as saying

FROM PAGE 12

allegation.

FROM PAGE 12

bevond doubt.

Rahman murder case.

absentia

solved," Kharazi said.

On Thursday night, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina visited the Pabla residence of Farzana Afrin Rumi and demanded exemplary punish-BOGSOA. ment to those who hounded Rumi to commit suicide. Hasina, consoled the

PHOTO: STAR

parents and other family members of Speaking at a gathering there, she called upon all to join hands against terrorists and build up a movement against the BNP-Jamaat government for what she termed 'its failure to

Farzana case

He alleged that the accused tried to

abduct his parents from a bus when

they were returning to Daulatpur on

April 16 night after burying Rumi at

FROM PAGE 12

Kamrul Islam

protect the life and property of peo-Lawmakers Shaikh Helaluddin and

Talukdar Abdul Khaleque and Khulna city AL president Advocate Manzurul Imam were with her during the visit.

Meanwhile, Khulna unit of 'Ban gladesh Mahila Ainjibi Samity' alleged that the indifference of Daulatpur Police Station encouraged the accused to hound her.

order is not complied with, the circular

the government order, we have not received any complaint so far.'

their Pirojpur hometown. Tormented by the accused, Rumi, 19, committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan in her bedroom on Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rezaul Gazi, 45, security guard of a brick field at Nandanpur under Rupsha thana was murdered allegedly by the cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) on Thursday night.

Witnesses said some armed cadres of PBCP dragged Rezaul out of a makeshift house at the brick field at around 10 pm and stabbed in the chest and abdomen. He died on the spot.

Two persons have been taken into custody as suspects. They are Noor Nahar, 34, and Shahidul Islam.

Police said Noor Nahar is wife of Rafiqul who masterminded the murder.

A case was filed with Rupsha police station.

Kumaratunga FROM PAGE 1

prominently at the talks. Regional and global issues of common concern would also come up at the meeting. Besides, the two leaders would discuss how to make the SAARC more effective.

Kumaratunga will also meet the Sri Lankans staving in Bangladesh.

She will meet the press at Hotel Sonargaon before leaving Dhaka at 8:00 pm tomorrow.

Foreign ministry sources said Kumaratunga's visit would help both the countries explore new avenues of cooperation to expand and strengthen bilateral relations in economic and other fields

"It is an important and significant visit," Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury said. It will reinforce the existing relations between Dhaka and Colombo, he added

The two countries have deep friendly relations without any contentious issues between them.

The volume of bilateral trade was US\$ nine million last year with Bangladesh's import bill being a little over six million dollars.

Sri Lanka's investment in Bangladesh stands at around US\$ 90 million, mainly in sectors like readymade garments, hotel and insurance.

Kashmiri grouj In Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali reacted positively to Vajpayee saying: "We welcome it, we appreciate it."

ment, Jamali said Pakistan had always said talks were the only way to resolve issues, including the Kashmir dispute.

added

Bush adviser steps down over looting of

museum. sources said Thursday.

Property, a position he had held since

the looting of Iraq's National Museum of Antiquities and the destruction of countless artifacts that document the cradle of Western civilization have troubled me deeply, a feeling that is shared by many other Americans," he wrote.

Sullivan said that it was not prevented "due to our nation's inaction."

Baghdad's museum, which housed one of the world's great collections of artifacts from early Mesopotamian on Friday in the upheaval following US troops' entry into the city.

anonymity that two other members, Gary Vikan and Richard Lanier, were also quitting.

"On the main issue (of Kashmir)

Iraqi museum

President George W. Bush's cultural advisory committee have stepped down in protest over the United States failing to stop the looting of Baghdad's

Martin Sullivan said he was resigning as chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on Cultural

1995. "The reports in recent days about

Calling the looting a "tragedy,'

vilizations, was ransacked by looters

A source close to the advisory committee told AFP on condition of

Muslim countries.

ne said.

Speaking to reporters in parlia-

Pakistan's stand remains the same But once talks start there ... could be flexibility from both sides," he

(Earlier story on page 9)

AFP, Washington The chairman and two members of

In a letter to Bush dated Monday,

coming days

oursuit of weapons of mass destruc-Another type of civic space has tion and support for terrorism, evolved around national historical Mahathir said: "They cannot hit at the events. For example, we may mention terrorists so they hit at all these Shahid Minar premises, Bangla Acedemy Book Fair, and the celebration

RAT member FROM PAGE 12

One RAT member met Iqbal and assured him of 'negotiations on the matter' and he was taken to the RAT office on Thursday night. The RAT officials arrested Igbal and handed him over to the DB.

homogeneity. It is felt that the more DMP top officials said that there people find out civic spaces, the more were many complaints against the AC interaction would take place leading to and he was arrested on the basis of the greater exchange of views, values and attitudes

In another development, police In this context, we may underscore arrested Javed Parvez, a cousin of Iqbal, certain aspects of the city's civic spaces. from south Goran vesterday morning. It may be emphasised that the element Police said Javed used to introduce of security is an important factor in the himself as the private assistant of the environment of civic spaces. AC and play a role in criminal activities Unfortunately, this element is more or

US team to look for WMD

FROM PAGE 1

that Iqbal was involved in.

complaints.

to find them on its own, but will have to offer rewards to Iragis to draw out information on where to look.

The report was in line with state ments earlier by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon.

"It is not like a treasure hunt," he said. "The (United Nations weapons) inspectors didn't find anything, and I doubt that we ill. What we will do is find the people who will tell us."

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix said his inspectors could give credibility to any discovery of banned weapons made by US or British troops.

American marines expect to vacate the Iraqi capital no later than April 22 when the US army will move in and secure control of the city, said military sources yesterday.

A 30,000-strong taskforce from the Fourth Infantry Division is expected to flow into Iraq from Kuwait over the

IRAO's NEIGHBOURS MEET

Stunned by the swift US-led takeover of Iraq, neighbouring states gathered in Saudi Arabia yesterday to weigh a response as a diplomatic row prewed between Washington and the United Nations over economic sance

Opening the conference, Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal of host

Saudi Arabia said: "We categorically reject the recent threats against Syria, Al-Jazeera reported. which was present at the meeting.

He said US threats against Svria 'will only lead to a new cycle of trouble and violence in the region.

"We call on the United States to opt for dialogue with Syria," Prince Saud told the participants before they headed into closed-door talks.

The regional meeting in Riyadh, the first such forum on postwar Iraq, was being attended by foreign ministers from Turkey, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt and Bahrain.

None of these countries was on good terms with Iraq during Saddam's rule, but with a political vacuum opening at the heart of the volatile region, all want a say in what comes

The meeting reflected regional concerns that Washington intended to stamp its indelible print on a post-war Iraq and dominate the transition ocess to a democratic regime.

DEMONSTRATION

Thousands of Iraqis demonstrated against the US occupation of Iraq yesterday, the second Muslim day of prayers since the regime's collapse.

At morning prayers, Sheik Ahmed al-Kubeisy rejected the troops' "occupation" and said American soldiers should leave the country soon, before

nt occasion, acts of lawlessness often take place. Such situations under mine the popularity of those places.

Another important point is that there are tremendous possibilities for developing the lakes like Crescent lake, Ramna lake, Gulshan lake and

30 Iraqi fighters Dhanmondi lake. There is a proposal for shifting the FROM PAGE 1 destroyed eight technical vehicles and Dhaka Central Jail, now located in a captured over 30 enemy prisoners," he heavily congested area in old Dhaka, to a said at a news conference more spacious site near Shafipur in Gazipur district. As and when that ing heavy machine-guns. project gets under way, a big area in the heart of the city will be available. It is for the town planners to consider whether, instead of utilising the land released for commercial or residential purposes. which will further add to the existing congestion, the area could be used for a means to fight," pointing out, however, properly designated civic space. This that the fighting was sporadic and "not facility, if created, will go a long way in

meeting an urgent need of the city command. populace suffering under the suffocatnorth of Baghdad ing pressure of the rapidly expanding

thousands detained in the month-old Iragis expel them, Arab news channel war, a US defence official said vester-

In the centre of the city, the dav Ministry of Information was in flames. Those released were determined to apparently ignited by looters. Soldiers be noncombatants, he said, meaning surrounded the ten-storey building as they did not engage in hostile acts looters tried to carry away a few last during the war and were not part of a prizes. A recording played over army military force. Taking into account the release loudspeakers, warning people in

Arabic to leave the area "immediately coalition forces now hold 6.850 prisor there will be consequences". oners who were on the battlefield, he Elsewhere, a contingent of five **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

help recover the stolen antiquities.

The State Department is recruiting

police officers to help restore order in

Iraq. There are about 150 openings in

the short term, but the State

Department says 1,000 more slots will

marines was guarding a looted labora-North of Baghdad, US troops tory near the Ministry of Health for a attacked an airfield after an third day yesterday; they said they unmanned surveillance plane caphave been told anyone who enters tured images of paramilitary fighters could catch diseases because of broken bottles. A sign in Arabic who appeared to be loading ammuniwarned, "Danger, Danger Keep Out. tion into pickups, intelligence officers The ground is infected with HIV, said US troops found about 1.500

cholera, polio and other diseases." unmarked graves in the northern city of Also Friday, opposition leader Ahmad Chalabi and his Iraqi National Kirkuk, but it was not immediately clear Congress followers set up makeshift whose corpses they held. Interpol announced vesterday it is headquarters at two neighbouring social clubs in the affluent Mansour sending a special team to Iraq to help track down pillaged art treasures. FBI district, guarded by US armoured agents also have been sent to Iraq to

vehicles and elements of the new Free Iraqi forces. Ousted President Saddam Hussein's sons, Oday and Qusai, once belonged to the clubs. WAR PRISONERS FREED

Coalition forces released more than 900 Iraqi prisoners, beginning the process of sorting through the

doings of anti-social elements, requir-**Grains** import ing exercise of constant vigilance in order that the atmosphere of these areas is not vitiated in any manner.

official.

Alam said.

FROM PAGE 1

criteria in the tender schedules Some officials pointed out that these government food stock, efforts are on to bidders also quoted high prices. The make the on gong domestic wheat lowest offer for wheat supply was US\$ procurement drive a success. 179 per tonne. But in state-to-state bilateral negotiations, Bangladesh had season virtually failed partly due to earlier received offers as low as 130 US production shortfall and mainly

dollars per tonne for wheat. The division already had exchanged This time the government is avoidfire with enemy forces near Taii on Thursday, killing several troops and ing state-to-state deal fearing political capturing 100 others, Brooks said earlier. backlash and allegations of corruption, "There are some elements out there they said.

that still want to fight and that have the Meanwhile, quoting an official of the Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Service Corporation (PASSCO), a organized under some overarching foreign news agency reported yesterday that Pakistan is likely to sign a deal with Samarra is nearly 120 kilometres Bangladesh shortly for supply of one lakh tonnes of wheat at US\$ 130 per tonne

> "The deal is in progress and hopefully it will be finalised in a week or so," the official said.

"PASSCO offered a price to Bangladesh which is even less than it has been offering to local buyers just to tap a new market for Pakistani wheat," he was

Bechtel FROM PAGE 12

repair power generation facilities

daggers and some arrows in a search on electrical grids, municipal water the jail. systems and sewage systems The deal includes a provision for Kotwali Police Station, CA Halim, filed a

the rehabilitation or repair of airport facilities, and the dredging, repair and upgrading of the southern Iraqi port city of Umm Qasr. The contract may also involve

responsibility for the repair and

reconstruction of hospitals, schools,

ministry buildings and major irriga-

tion structures, as well as restoration of

subcontractors on some tasks and to

"engage the Iraqi population", USAID

Bechtel was expected to work

"The capital construction contract

s part of USAID's planned reconstruc-

tion assistance to the Iraqi people,

aimed at helping maintain stability,

ensure the delivery of essential ser-

vices, and facilitate economic recov-

ery," the government agency said.

essential transport links.

said.