



WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country and day temperature may rise slightly, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 36.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and the lowest 22.0 degree at Srimongal and Syedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:24pm today and rises at 5:28am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.2	24.7	72	58
Chittagong	33.5	26.5	71	76
Rajshahi	35.6	22.8	78	--
Khulna	36.0	26.5	70	70
Barisal	34.4	25.5	80	78
Sylhet	33.8	23.6	67	65
Cox's Bazar	34.5	25.6	68	76

Criminal shot dead by his rivals at Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

A top criminal of the town was shot dead by his rivals on Wednesday night.

The victim, Ismail Hossain, 26, was a chargesheeted accused in several cases, including a murder case, police said.

Sources said Ismail had a quarrel Tuesday with another criminal, Sayed, over sharing of toll money and Sayed allegedly called him out of his Parba Bamundi house at 8:30pm.

Later, Ismail was shot dead in Birpur area at about 9:30pm. He was shot in the head and chest. Police recovered the body at 2am and sent it to Sadar Hospital morgue.

Shamsuddin Ahmed Sarker, father of the victim, filed a murder case with the local police. The main accused, Sayed, was arrested yesterday from the town.

Attack on Jamaat office at Mongla: 12 BNP men sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

BNP and Jubo Dal activists attacked Jamaat office at Mongla Wednesday evening, leaving three Shibir men injured.

The injured are Shagor, 28, Mizan, 28 and Siraj, 25. Shagor is the general secretary of Mongla College unit of Chhatra Shibir.

A case was filed with Mongla police station on Wednesday night accusing 12 leaders and activists of BNP and Jubo Dal.

Jamaat and Shibir leaders have condemned the attack and demanded arrest of the FIR-named accused.

Schoolboy stabbed to death in Mymensingh

UNB, Mymensingh

A schoolboy was stabbed to death allegedly by his uncle at Bashail village in Gafargaon upazila Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Akram, 15, son of Moznu Mia of Hatirkhola village and a student of Gafargaon Islamiya Government High School.

Police said Akram was stabbed by his uncle Saiful while going to school. He died on the way to hospital. Local people caught Saiful and handed him over to police.

Family feud might be the reason behind the killing, police said.

DCC contractor

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person called on the land phone and told me that they had sent him to Allah. The man informed me to collect my husband's dead body from our family graveyard," said Lucky, sobbing at her residence.

Safu's body was found at the graveyard adjacent to his residence early in the morning. At first, the relatives were unable to identify him as his head was cut off. They however managed to identify him seeing his clothes.

Mirpur police searched for the head all over the graveyard but failed to find it. Later, they sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

"Symptoms indicated that the assailants slaughtered Safu with a sharp weapon and left the body in the graveyard. No blood or any weapons were seen at the graveyard," said police.

Relatives took the dead body from the DMCH yesterday afternoon after the autopsy and buried him at their family graveyard after Magrib prayers.

The victim's wife filed a murder case at the Mirpur Police Station yesterday but did not accuse anybody. Police could not arrest anyone till 7:00 last evening.

Ekhlas Molla, vice president of City BNP, told The Daily Star it was not a

Housewife killed by miscreants in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A young housewife was stabbed to death and her husband injured by unidentified miscreants at village Betsandi under Biswanath upazila Wednesday night.

Local people and police said a gang of miscreants entered the house of Abdur Rahim at midnight. They stabbed Rahim and his wife Maya Begum. Maya died on the spot. Hearing scream of Rahim, local people rushed to the spot and sent him to hospital. The reason behind the attack could not be known.

Police arrested three people in this connection.

BNP men

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residence at around 11.45pm on Wednesday.

They swore at him and damaged furniture and other household goods, the OC further complained.

The five men asked the OC to withdraw the rape case. Otherwise, they said they would transfer him from the police station within 24 hours with the help of Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Haq, the complaint letter further alleged.

OC Nurul Amin later told The Daily Star that the incident occurred as he was recording the rape case on Wednesday. He also alleged that most of the attackers were drunk.

Two BNP workers named Mominul and Ibrahim allegedly abducted and took a female Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinee to Bonkeshar area, some 20 kilometres away from Tanore, as she was returning from the examination center on Wednesday afternoon. They also allegedly raped her.

The OC recorded the victim's complaint when she described the incident to him at his office Wednesday evening. The OC had a scuffle with some of the Pouroshobha chairman's men for recording the case.

Sources said these BNP leaders were trying to save some BNP workers who were involved in four rape cases on the very day in different areas under the Tanore Police Station.

When contacted, the Tanore Pouroshobha Chairman Emran Ali Mollah and the Saranjai Union Parishad Chairman Mofiz Uddin denied the allegations.

Death threat

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however, said on Thursday the newspaper owned by Nurul Islam Babul carried a 'fabricated' news item against him and the Board of Investment as well.

"This is yellow journalism aimed to blackmail me. But I will not bow down to such pressure," the Bol executive chairman told The Daily Star.

It became a procession after that as Chinaman bowler Paul Adams ran through the Bangladesh innings. The home team lost their last eight wickets for 76 runs with Adams, making a return to Test cricket after a year in the wilderness, taking five for 37.

Only tail-ender Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza and debutant wicketkeeper Mohammad Salim provided a semblance of resistance with a 26-run tenth wicket stand. Mashrafe smashed 20 off 16 balls with a quartet of boundaries while Salim was unbeaten on 16 with three fours.

With 22 over remaining in the day, South Africa began their innings. Despite some erratic bowling from pace sensation Mashrafe bin Mortuza and some ordinary fielding, Bangladesh managed to remove both Protea openers early.

Tapas Baishya drew first blood in the seventh over by removing captain Graeme Smith who edged an away going ball to Salim who took a superb diving catch.

Mashrafe, bowling with some real pace on a docile wicket, then showed star batsman Herschelle Gibbs his way to the dressing room. Gibbs' mistimed pull was safely guided by Salim who ran a long way towards the square leg before taking it.

Bangladesh could have had a third wicket in the penultimate over of the day when Khaled Mahmud appeared to have trapped Rudolph plumb in front of the wicket. But umpire Billy Bowden disagreed.

Hosts

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the batsmen getting out in a matter of minutes. Javed was trapped leg-before to seamer Alan Dawson for 28. The same bowler then got rid of the dangerous looking Bashar who holed out at point.

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Two killed, 20 hurt in Mymensingh road mishap

UNB, Mymensingh

Two people were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident near Signboard area in Trishal on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said the accident took place when a Dhaka-bound truck from Mymensingh, carrying day-labourers, fell into a roadside ditch just at around 12:30am.

One of the injured passengers, Taher, 40, died on the way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). Eighteen other injured were admitted to MMCH, where Mozammel, 18, succumbed to his injuries.

Police seized the truck but the driver fled away.

Nine staff of Tongi Juvenile Correction Centre suspended

UNB, Dhaka

Nine officials and employees of Tongi Juvenile Correction Center in Gazipur were suspended yesterday for negligence of duties.

Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid while paying visit to the center suspended them in connection with the fleeing of 27 boarders of the center on Monday and Tuesday.

He also asked the Secretary of the Ministry and DG of the Social Welfare Department to file departmental case against the suspended persons.

They are Superintendent Nazimuddin Ahmed, teachers Kazi Nazrul Islam and Abdul Halim, house parent Mizanur Rahman, warders Ahsanullah and Abdul Gani, guards Yad Ali, Siddiqui Rahman and Delwar Hossain.

Hasina blames

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for the law and order slide, saying, "She (prime minister) gets perverse satisfaction by humiliating and torturing people."

"All judges appointed during the then BNP government in 1991 to 1996 completed their tenure unhindered until the end of AL rule, as we didn't interfere in the judicial system," said Hasina.

The High Court is the only place where persecuted people get justice, said Hasina. "For this, the government spread its wings to destroy the higher court."

She urged the lawyers to prepare for a movement to oust the government that she said is responsible for a battered public life and damaged national image.

The prime minister halted the normal flow of development and introduced 'goat economics' as a development paradigm instead, she said.

The AL chief accused the government of marring the development work initiated during the AL rule.

The prime minister's family has plundered about Tk 11,000 crore in public money and smuggled the sums abroad, she alleged.

The programme was addressed by Zillur Rahman MP, Suranjit Sengupta MP, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud, Advocate Abdul Basat Majumdar and Advocate Ojaer Faruk.

Hasina accused the Banga-bandhu Award to advocates SR Pal and Shamsul Haq Chowdhury posthumously at the programme.

Promotion cancelled on gross irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Promotion orders for 296 employees of the Rajshahi Divisional Health Directorate (RDHD) were cancelled after gross irregularities in issuance of the orders had been detected.

The promotion orders were issued during the last one year, but employees who deserved promotion on the basis of seniority and service records were deprived, sources said.

However, the health directorate did not hold anybody responsible for the irregularities.

Following an order from the director general's office early this month, promotions were given to the deserving employees, after cancellation of the previous orders, Dr Reaz Uddin, deputy director of the RDHD, told The Daily Star.

Corrective steps were taken after some of the employees of the RDHD complained that the former RDHD director, Dr Fazlur Rahman, illegally promoted 296 employees.

City still smarting from storm

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avert disasters.

The Met Office's failure to provide proper forecast cost Biman Bangladesh Airlines dear. Five of its aircraft were damaged and engineers say that these would take about three months to repair and would cost crores of taka.

The storm packing a wind speed of 111 kilometres per hour instantly had a telling blow on the city's power system as more than 80 per cent of the city remained in darkness for the best part of Tuesday night.

The Met Office has warned that two more such storms are likely to strike the country.

According to sources at the Power Development Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), the power system remains saturated with more demands than it could handle.

The power system is best suited for 950 MW power, but it is actually handling over 1,100 MW power. As a result, the overloaded system remains highly vulnerable to disruptions.

Power supply services under the

City still smarting from storm

DESCO management zone of Gulshan-Banani also remain very weak as DESCO took over this zone only recently. The DESCO technical staff here have been hired from the Rural Electrification Board and they are not experienced to handle such large-scale problems which often emerge in DESA areas.

Sources said the DESCO could not fully restore the Gulshan-Banani power supplies till yesterday and they were, for some strange reasons, not seeking DESA's technical assistance either.

A resident of Shahadatpur, Baridhara said his area has been suffering from power outage since Tuesday's storm. As there was no power for the last two days, the residents of the area were facing acute water crisis.

PDB sources said power supply remained totally disrupted in Badda and some peripheral areas of the city under DESCO. "Had they taken DESA's help, the problems could have been resolved much earlier," commented a DESA engineer.

Utara sectors 3, 4, 5 and 6 is experiencing irregular power supply and poor

Poverty paper must address aborigine needs

water supply since the storm. Many telephone connections also remained snapped.

Similar situation prevails in Gandaria, Demra, Shyampur, Malibagh, Gulbagh and many other areas of the city.

Many billboards remained broken and uprooted in different parts of the city. These eyesores can be seen all along the Airport Road and Rokeya Sarani.

A resident of Panthapath said on the night of the storm, a huge signboard of a Chinese restaurant flew over to his tin-roof house and broke into it, completely damaging his television.

Trees were the worst to suffer from Monday's storm. About 100 trees were uprooted by the sides of the Airport road and in Gulshan. Some of them even blocked traffic movement for a while.

Most of the recreational spots including the Chandrima Udyan and Ramna Park lost many trees. A few trees on the road-island of Elephant road were also uprooted.

French minister due tomorrow

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French state minister's visit is being considered significant against the backdrop of France's strong opposition to US-led war against Iraq.

Coming to Dhaka from Beijing, Renaud would have exchange of views with government leaders on Sunday. The highest French dignitary to be in Dhaka since installation of the BNP-led coalition government in October 2001, Muselier would address the press Sunday evening and leave Dhaka the next morning.

"This is an important visit not only in the context of bilateral relations but also in the context of present international scenario," Shamsheer Mobin said. "France has not indicated any discussion on Iraq as such but we can understand that French stand on Iraq-question would come up for discussion."

Asked about US threat against those who opposed its war against Iraq, he said, "The French minister's

visit to Bangladesh is an independent matter. We will learn from him France's vision on Iraq and Palestine."

The foreign secretary hinted that the visit would give Bangladesh a better understanding on the issues of expansion of NATO and European Union (EU) and their long-term impact on Bangladesh.

Turning to his Indian counterpart Kanwal Sibal's visit, Shamsheer Mobin said talks with him would be held on April 29 and Sibal would leave the next day.

"Foreign secretary-level talks are a periodic affair. The upcoming talks will cover all issues ranging from border problems to trade and communications including inland water protocol."

On the Indian proposal for free-trade agreement, the foreign secretary said, "Bangladesh will remain in harmony with the international trade regime. We'll see things in the context of WTO and SAPTA."

Evading a direct reply to a question

on India's seeking land transit through Bangladesh, he said, "I'll let you know if there is any discussion on transit issue."

Asked about non-implementation of the decisions of previous foreign secretary-level talks including non-operation of Dhaka-Agartola bus service, Shamsheer Mobin said there has been no changes in decisions taken earlier. But problems relating to physical infrastructure are causing delay in this regard.

In reply to a question, he said there has been no specific proposal from any side on review of Ganges water sharing treaty.

Ask about looting at Bangladesh chancery in Baghdad, the foreign secretary condemned all looting incidents at chanceries, museums and hospitals in Iraq.

He told another questioner Bangladesh has not closed its mission in Baghdad and the question of reopening it does not arise.

Poverty paper must address aborigine needs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recognising the constitutional rights of indigenous people, aborigine leaders and civil society representatives yesterday demanded the inclusion of separate clauses in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

At a discussion on 'National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and indigenous people of Bangladesh' they also demanded active participation of indigenous people in the hilly areas regarding the clause in PRSP.

"There is no specific reflection of the tribes' problems or their solutions in the government prepared draft of the PRSP. Neither did the government take these people's opinion before preparing the draft" said Jotirindro Bodhipriya Larma (Santu Larma), chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and president of Adhibashi Forum, at the discussion.

He said the tribal people are the most deprived and the poorest in the country. If there is no clause about these people how would the PRSP help alleviate poverty of the hilly people?" he said.

Santu Larma said the CHT peace treaty is not being implemented and the people are not getting any results.

Speaking at the discussion organised by Adhibashi Forum and OXFAM, GB,

Bangladesh, Sanjeeb Drang, general secretary of the Forum said the people of the 45 tribal communities were in danger.

In many areas, a vested sector is taking away the lands, forests and houses of these people by force, he said.

Recognising their constitutional and self-governance rights could alleviate poverty and development could be achieved in the area, Sanjeeb added.

Among others political leaders Pankaj Bhattachariya, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Chief of Chakma circle Raja Debashesh Roy, CHTRC members Rupayan Dewan and KS Mong, Dr Sadeka Halim of Dhaka University and Prof. Prashanta Tripathy of Jahangir Nagar University spoke at the discussion.

Bank staffers' murder Employee leader nabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a bank employee leader from Gুলিস্তান area on Wednesday night in connection with the murder of two bank staffers at Dilkusha the previous day.

The arrestee is Abul Bashar Bachchu, a leader of Rupali Bank main branch employees' association.

Bachchu was allegedly not on good terms with Akhteruzzaman, 32, one of the victims.

Akhteruzzaman, a computer section employee of Rupali Bank, and his friend, Munirul Kabir Biduyt, were beaten to death by unknown assailants. Their bodies were dumped at the 18th floor of an under-construction building at Dilkusha Tuesday night.

Meanwhile, police are still interrogating Sanwar, guard of the under-construction building. They picked him up Wednesday noon, but have not shown him an arrestee.

Motijheel police said last night that they could not make any headway into the murder as they have failed to get any information from Bachchu or the guard.

Unity must to survive

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ehuddin Ahmed, economist Debapriya Bhattachariya, writer Moidul Hasan, Maj. Gen. (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, Brig. Gen. (ret'd) Shakhawat Hossain, Brig. Gen. (ret'd) Shahedul Anam, Prof. Syed Anwar Hossain, former secretary Shah Abdul Hannan, Dilara Chowdhury, Intiaz Ahmed, Salimullah Khan and Journalist Shafiq Rehman. Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman moderated the roundtable, held at Sheraton hotel.

Prof Anisuzzaman said US influence in the world would not reduce in the post-Iraq war period, rather it would 'increase directly or indirectly'. And that is why the government and the opposition should now act very cautiously, he added.

Prof. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said the Iraq crisis must not be termed a war. It was an aggression on a small state by a big one and no small state is now safe from such imperialist assault. The anti-imperialist movement would now spread across the globe, he felt.

He emphasised reducing dependence on US products and boycotting those.

Analysing the Iraq-war in three perspectives -- moral, political and strategic -- Debapriya Bhattachariya stressed more integrated efforts in the globalised world for prosperity. He observed that the impact of the war on

Bangladesh was not that much as was predicted.

Shah Abdul Hannan said there is no alternative for the Third World but to develop their strategies for education, science, defence and communication. They have to do this to come out of the clutches of American imperialism, he said.

Faruq Chowdhury said there have been religious fundamentalists in the country for long. Uncontrolled Madrassah education plays a vital role in the rise of fundamentalists, he said.

The former diplomat said the Iraq war added a new dimension to international politics as well as in politics in Bangladesh.

Shahedul Anam suggested that with the changing world order, Bangladesh should recast its defence policy. War has not ended, it has just started, he noted.

Moslehuddin Ahmed said the Iraq aggression has exposed weakness of the United Nations. "We can no more rely on the UN and need to think of an alternative world forum."

Shakhawat Hossain regretted the failure of secular forces in Bangladesh to protest the US-led war. No political party came forward to say that the war was illegal. But the people have denounced US imperialism, he said.

Key Saddam aides

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States, including names of persons spying for Iraq," said spokesman Jim Wilkinson.

As the United States continued its hunt for Saddam's aides -- and the deposed leader himself -- its patrols along Iraq's border with Iran sparked ire in Tehran, where officials warned US troops not to cross the "red line".

While admitting that seeing US marines along the Iraq-Iran border was "not a new phenomenon" since the start of the US-led war in Iraq on March 20, Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi warned US soldiers not to go further.

"It is clear that we are going to defend our frontiers; the red line passes along the line of our borders," Kharazi said during a joint press conference with visiting French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin.

Kharazi also rejected US accusations that Iran-trained agents were trying to infiltrate Iraq to push Tehran's brand of Islamic government.

US marines have been deployed along parts of Iraq's border with Iran to screen traffic for hostile infiltrators, the US military announced Wednesday.

US Central Command in Qatar said the patrols have been under way in northeastern Iraq since Monday, amid new concern that Iranian agents bent on stirring up anti-US unrest among fellow Iraqi Shiite Muslims might be slipping across the frontier.

"We have well-known channels of communication with Iran and we have made clear to Iran that we would oppose any outside interference in Iraq's road to democracy," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer.

"Infiltration of our borders to destabilise the Shi'a population would clearly fall into that category," he added.

Kharazi also voiced concern over a reported ceasefire deal between Washington and the Iraq-based People's Mujahadeen guerrillas -- an Iranian organisation group deemed a "terrorist organisation" by the United States, the European Union and Iran.