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A rickshaw-puller under the scorching sun. —Star photo

Temperature to rise, no possibility of rain

By Raziur Rahman

Power supply was 'almost uninterrupted' in the city yesterday but rising temperature made life unbearable on the sultry summer day.

The temperature is likely to increase by two degrees today with no possibility of rain, sources at the meteorological office said yesterday.

The highest temperature in Dhaka city yesterday was 35.6 degree Celsius, the maximum so far this summer. The country's highest was 38 degree Celsius at Iswardi, the sources added.

Yesterday was a holiday. But people and vehicles on roads and in market places in the city were far less yesterday than on usual holidays due to intolerable heat.

There was only 20 MW load shedding in the city yesterday, the lowest so far this summer, due to over-loading in DESA.

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Armed gang occupies 430 shops at Banga Bazar

By Staff Correspondent

A group of armed people captured about 430 shops at Mahanagar Hawkers Market known as Banga Bazar in the city last night.

The gang led by one Zaker Morol came and occupied the shops, alleged Ruhul Amin, secretary of the Market Association.

The gang fired at the night guards, one of whom was shot, forcing them to open a collapsible.

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Our new numbers

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Inside Today

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The IT Bubble is Bound to Burst

Pratul Bidwai writes from New Delhi
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Business

Domestic gas users vulnerable to leakage disasters

US business in HK to lobby Congress on China pact
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May	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
13		6-33 pm
14	5-16 am	

Prayer Timings

May 13

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Juma	12-15	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-35	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

BNP for consensus on appointment of CEC

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has reiterated that Chief Election Commissioner should be chosen on the basis of consensus and it is ready to discuss the issue with the President.

Sources concerned said six top leaders of the party at a closed door meeting yesterday finalised the reply to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's second letter to Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP chief Khaleda Zia regarding appointment of CEC.

The three-hour meeting held at the official residence of the Opposition Leader ended at around 8 pm.

The reply is likely to be sent to the PM today before Khaleda Zia leaves on a 3-day tour of Kurigram and Nilphamari districts.

The Opposition Leader said in her reply that CEC could be appointed through discussion so that he was acceptable to all.

In this context, she referred to the 13th amendment to the Constitution providing for caretaker government on the basis of national demand, the sources said.

The reply did not dispute the PM's stand that she had the constitutional authority to nominate a person for the post of CEC, to be appointed by the President.

But the BNP chief stressed discussion with the President for reaching an understanding on the appointment of CEC.

"We want to discuss the matter with the President and we want a new CEC to be appointed on consensus to make him acceptable to all," Khaleda was quoted by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as saying.

Earlier, the BNP-led opposition alliance had decided to

discuss the matter with the President, instead of the Prime Minister.

The six BNP leaders who prepared Khaleda's reply are: Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Barrister Najmul Huda, Barrister Aminul Haq and M M Rezaul Karim.

Meanwhile, top leaders of the left-leaning 11-party alliance met the BNP chief yesterday and emphasised appointment of CEC through discussion and on the basis of consensus.

Those who met Khaleda included Rashid Khan Menon, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Khalequzzaman, Morshed Ali, Dilip Barua and Abdus Samad.

The alliance leaders will also meet the Prime Minister today to give their views on the issue.

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7 Indian states join hands to tame insurgency

SHILLONG, May 12: India's seven far-eastern states joined hands here today to try to put down tribal separatist violence which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since the country's independence in 1947, officials said, reports AFP.

Chief ministers of the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland also agreed to give a boost to the sluggish economy of the neglected region.

"From now on we shall be raising a united voice against the common regional problems like insurgency and economic development and resolve to fight these issues jointly," E K Mawlong, Meghalaya Chief Minister said in state capital Shillong.

"We shall be coordinating more frequently and sharing

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The near and dear ones of Faruk wail after he died at DMCH yesterday. Faruk was one of the injured during Thursday's armed attack on a bus at Dayaganj bridge in the city. —Star photo

Another victim of Dayaganj incident dies

By Staff Correspondent

Another victim of Thursday's armed attack at Dayaganj died yesterday, raising the death toll to three.

Kamal Hossain, 32, and Tota, 35 were gunned down and six others injured when a bus carrying the followers of Saidur Rahman Shahid, commissioner of Ward No 83, came under attack on Dayaganj bridge under Sutrapur police station Thursday evening.

Of the six injured, Faruk died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the morning while others, identified as Jahangir Alam, 35, Manu Miah, 28, Mansur Ali, 32, Mostafa, 38, and Sadik, 30, are still under treatment, hospital sources said.

The bus was attacked on the bridge at around 7:30 pm while Shahid's followers were returning to their area after attending a reception hosted for him, sources said.

Shahid was accorded a re-

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Kotchandpur stalemate seriously hit business in greater Jessore

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam back from Kotchandpur

Business and other activities in and around Kotchandpur are being seriously affected as many of Faruq Ahmed Kajol's 'agents' who swindled away crores of taka from people through the Syndicate Bank fled the area fearing attack on them, local businessmen said.

Shops, business establishments and even all educational institutions were found closed at Kotchandpur town. Heads of some educational institutions said they closed their institutions fearing trouble.

The town looked deserted. Investors and their men who deposited money with the Syndicate Bank to earn quick profit were seen guarding residences and business establishments of its agents' and 'sub-agents' so that they can not remove their belongings.

The stalemate in business in Kotchandpur is also affecting nearby Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Mohespur, Kaliganj areas in greater Jessore district, sources said.

A Daily Star team of two reporters and a photographer during its two-day visit to Kotchandpur and nearby areas found that people were scared about the situation in the town. "What will happen next?" was a common question.

Many of the investors were found moving in groups, expressing their anger openly. They said they are ready to go to any extent to realise their money and take on Kajol and his agents' and 'sub-agents'.

Some of them were even blaming journalists for the 'uncertainty' in the area.

Kajol is the main accused in money lending trade and alleged defalcation of more than Tk 1200 crore. Kajol was arrested on Monday and sent to Jhenidah district jail on one

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ALCWC backs PM's move for CEC on consensus

By Staff Correspondent

The Central Working Committee of ruling Awami League at a meeting yesterday appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's political efforts to nominate a person for appointment as Chief Election Commissioner on the basis of consensus, but regretted the Opposition's 'non-cooperation' in this regard.

The meeting gave 'unequivocal' support to all initiatives taken by the prime minister as regards nomination of a new

CEC for appointment by the president.

The ALCWC bitterly criticised Opposition leader Khaleda Zia for as she turned down the PM's offer for discussion on the crucial appointment. It termed Khaleda's behaviour 'unparliamentary'.

Sheikh Hasina, who also heads the ruling party, chaired the meeting, held at Ganabhaban last night.

Referring to Khaleda's decision to discuss the issue with the President, ALCWC said, it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to advise the President on appointment of CEC. "It's a traditional practice in parliamentary democracy," said resolution adopted at the meeting.

"It is now evident that the Opposition is not ready to accept constitutional bindings and fundamentals of democracy."

"It is an ill political motive, designed to embarrass the President and make the institution controversial".

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Humayun Ahmed hospitalised

Humayun Ahmed, the country's most popular writer, was hospitalised after he suffered a mild heart attack early yesterday morning, reports UNB.

"He had an inferior myocardial infarction," said Dr Rakibul Islam at coronary care unit (CCU) of the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Hospital.

He is out of danger, said the physician, but suggested the fans not to crowd around him as he will have to remain under extensive observation for next five to seven days.

He is recovering and his

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BNP won't call hartal in next two months

By Rezaul Karim

BNP has decided not to call hartal and other tougher programmes in the next couple of months.

The main opposition party instead has set its eyes on bolstering the organisational matters and mass campaign programmes to garner people's support.

"Although we are on the streets gearing up the movement to topple the government, we have given special emphasis on organisational matters and taken effective measures to

overcome all organisational weakness," a top BNP leader told the Daily Star yesterday.

He said party chief Khaleda Zia has asked the rank and file to prepare for the upcoming parliamentary polls side by side with continuing the current movement against the "misrule" of the Awami League government.

However, another BNP policy maker feared a volatile political situation over the appointment of a new chief election commissioner. He said

things may get bad if the government appoints the new CEC without consulting the opposition.

"(In that case) we'll have no alternative but to go for tougher action programmes and call hartal one after another," he said.

He said the resignation of Mohammad Abu Hena as CEC evoked worries among the people. He hoped the next CEC would be a consensus candidate.

Party insiders say the BNP

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Nasim's tough stand against criminals

Acknowledging that the city dwellers were scared following the recent double and triple murders in the capital, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim asked the police yesterday to act tough against professional criminals, reports UNB.

"Go for action against the professional killers, hardened criminals at any cost," the home minister directed the top police officials in a meeting that reviewed law and order situation in the capital.

Stressing the need for strengthening the on-going "block raid" in the capital to crack-down on wanted criminal-

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Pak court says coup legal

Army given 3 years to carry out its clean-up drive

ISLAMABAD, May 12: Pakistan's Supreme Court today upheld as legal the October 12 coup that ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif but gave the military three years to carry out its reform plans and to hold elections, reports Reuters.

Chief Justice Irfanul Haq backed military ruler General Pervez Musharraf's argument that it had to seize control of the country because it

was slipping towards chaos under Sharif's second spell in power.

But, in a demonstration of legal independence, he gave the army three years to carry out its planned clean-up of the economy and political institutions after which, he said, elections must be held.

The ruling set the Supreme Court at loggerheads with Musharraf, who has resisted

strong international pressure to put a time frame on army rule and has said only that he wants to introduce "real democracy" when the army's mission is over.

The chief justice said the decision was unanimous among the 12-judge bench.

He said the army coup "is validated by a transitional period on the grounds of state necessity", backing Musharraf's

argument Pakistan was slipping towards disintegration and bankruptcy.

But he said that elections must be held "as soon as possible" and 90 days after a three-year transitional period at the latest. That would place elections some time in early 2003.

It was the first time a Pakistani court had ruled on the legality of the coup and made any

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