



## Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today.

Met office predicted little change in the day temperature over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 38.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur and the lowest of 15.5 degree at Tetulia.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6.18 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.41 am.

Maximum and minimum 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	26.4	79	60
Chittagong	32.2	26.2	70	76
Rajshahi	38.6	23.5	75	40
Khulna	34.2	26.4	80	73
Barisal	33.8	25.7	81	74
Sylhet	30.5	23.5	74	70
Cox's Bazar	34.3	24.4	67	77

## Plot: Kumaratunga govt

FROM PAGE 12

(SLMC) party.

Kumaratunga's PA remains in power thanks to the support of the SLMC as well as the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) which was also given a cabinet portfolio.

But it led to a giant 44-member cabinet as Kumaratunga tried to accommodate all the various shades of opinion within the government.

Kumaratunga has asked the nation to tighten its belts and eschew salary increases or concessions for at least six months until the economy recovers from the shocks of high oil prices and huge spending last year on the conflict with the Tamil Tigers. Amid the worsening

economy, opposition groups have banded together despite their differences to demand "democratic reforms."

The Marxist JVP or People's Liberation Front, has allied itself with the right-wing United National Party (UNP) demanding independent commissions to run future elections and control the police.

The UNP and the JVP alone could not bring the government down, but would need the support of at least five ruling party legislators.

Food Minister Reggie Ranatunga has already warned that powerful business interests were trying to overthrow the government.

## Unrealised bills of Titas Gas

FROM PAGE 1

authorities need a magistrate and police to back them up while disconnecting gas lines, sources said.

Sources however informed that there has been no magistrate for over four months now for the three Metro Dhaka zones of Titas Gas.

Due to bureaucratic complexities, TGTDCI has been deprived of about Tk 16 crore in revenue from the textile mills under Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation till December 2000. In the meantime, 20 mills under BTMC have been placed under Privatisation Board and the ownership of workers, said a TGTDCI official.

The government has taken up the liabilities of the mills and the ministry of finance is now supposed to

arrange for payment. However, TGTDCI's repeated reminders to BTMC for payment have not produced any results; BTMC has merely issued letters to the ministry in this regard, said an official.

Similarly TGTDCI is yet to realise about Tk 43 crore from the jute mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation as the beleaguered mills are unable to pay, he said.

A TGTDCI official said that a special task force and monitoring cells under two General Managers have been created to strengthen the revenue collection programme. "Besides, we have sent some more proposals to Petrobangla, which, if approved by the ministry will help us a lot to improve the situation", he added.

## Malpractice in telecom, radio services

# JS passes Bill providing punitive actions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed a bill providing for punitive actions for certain malpractice concerning telecom and radio services.

The Telecommunications Act, 2001 also provides for setting up of an independent commission named Bangladesh Telecommunications Control Commission for controlling the country's telecommunication system and improving services in the sector.

It provides for a maximum of three years' imprisonment or a fine of TK three lakh or both for using telecom or radio services to deliberately transmit a false message or an alarming message to cheat someone.

Anybody found guilty of obstructing telecom or radio system will also be jailed for a maximum of

three years or fined TK three lakh or punished both ways.

Under the new Act, passing filthy, indecent or insulting remarks or issuing threats through telecom or radio services have been made a crime punishable with a maximum of six months' jail or a fine of TK 50,000 or both.

A person will be fined TK 25,000 and jailed for three months in default, if found guilty of irritating someone by making repeated telephone calls without any valid reason.

The Act provides for six months' jail or a fine of TK 50,000 or both for eve-teasing over telephone.

Only first class magistrates' courts or metropolitan magistrates' courts or superior courts will deal with cases of such offences on the basis of written complaints by the inspectors or officials authorised by the commission, the Act says.

The new Act replaces two age-old laws concerning the telecommunication system.

The proposed commission will comprise five members including one to head it as chairman. Its headquarters will be in Dhaka.

Some of the basic responsibilities of the commission will be to install, operate, maintain, improve and increase telecom services, create scope for fresh investment and promote research in telecommunication sector.

It will have the authority to issue, renew and cancel licences for telecom, internet and radio operators, distribute radio frequency, fix tariff and call charges on telecom services and settle complaints against the service providers and take action against the operators found guilty of violating the terms and conditions of licence.

## Sramik Dal leader Shahidul Islam dead

UNB, Dhaka

Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, Dhaka city president of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, died of a cardiac arrest at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICD) in the city last night. He was 50.

The body of Chowdhury has been kept in the mortuary of BIRDEM. His namaj-e-janaza will be held after the hartal, said a press release.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan have expressed deep shock at the death of the Sramik Dal leader.

## Rent-a-car driver shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rent-a-car driver was shot dead at a residence at Gandaria Bhatikhana Mosque lane in the city last night.

Abdur Rahim Mollah, was shot in the head while he was talking with his friend on the roof of the four-storey building at about 8.15 pm.

Mollah's relatives rushed him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

## One stabbed by muggers in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misceants stabbed a block-printing shop employee and snatched Tk 12,000 from him in front of BNP slum in the city's Mohammadpur area early morning yesterday.

Rafiq Uddin Swapn, 35, was stopped by a gang of miscreants and ordered to give up his money while he was passing by the BNP slum at about 5:00 am yesterday.

When Rafiq refused to comply, the miscreants stabbed him and took away the money.

In a critical condition, he was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

## 44 opposition activists sued under PSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A case has been filed under Public Safety Act (PSA) against 44 opposition activists, including Bagerhat district BNP president MAH Selim on charge of perpetrating violence in the district town on Sunday afternoon.

District BCL general secretary Mustafizur Rahman filed the case with Sadar thana on Sunday night.

## Rickshaw passengers mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misceants snatched away money and valuables from several rickshaw passengers east of the Rajarbagh Police Line.

The incident took place at about 8 p.m. and onwards last night.

As soon as their rickshaws reached in front of the Rajarbagh Police Line, snatchers swooped on the passengers and robbed them of cash and valuables, said a witness.

Duty officer of the Motijheel Police said they were not aware of the incident.

## Bill to set up

FROM PAGE 12

tions to the bodies concerned to improve their service and take steps for protection of environment.

Earlier, on September 29, 1998, the Executive Committee of National Economic Council approved the Dhaka Urban Transport Project involving Tk 94,252.50 crore with financial support from the World Bank.

The government then formed the GDTPCB.

# Hartal: One killed, 100 hurt

FROM PAGE 1

DMCH.

Of the four policemen injured in the city, three were at Gopibagh and one was at Chairmamban crossing at Bananai. They were injured when pickets threw bombs on patrol teams. One policeman—Ayub Ali—was critically injured in the Gopibagh incident.

Police ran for safety when pickets hurled several bombs on a police patrol team at Gopibagh. Witnesses said a police constable left his rifle while running for safety, but he got back the weapon later.

Police chased BNP activists and fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets when they threw about half dozen of bombs at police while trying to break a barbed wire barricade on the road near the Kakrail crossing at 4:20 pm.

Former BNP MP Shahjahan Hawlader Sujon and about a dozen party activists were injured in the police action. Police fired at least 20 rounds of tear shells and rubber bullets.

A BNP activists identified as Sumon was caught by police while he was exploding a bomb at a petrol pump near the Marshaya Bhaban. People bear him and handed him over to police.

Pickets damaged six trucks and set fire to an autorickshaw at Mouchak crossing at about 8.15 pm. Pro-hartal activists set fire to a rickshaw at Shaheed Faruq Road at Demra in the afternoon and to a garments factory staff bus on Dhaka-Adamjee Road at noon.

Pickets also exploded bombs at Bangla Motor, Banani, Sutrapur and other parts of the city. Pickets damaged two trucks near Pirjani Mazar crossing and set fire to two autorickshaws, one at

Kazipara near the Bishwa Road crossing and the other in front of Dhaka Match Factory.

A bomb was thrown on a procession of ruling Awami League at Amtali in Mohakhali at about 10:45 am but none was injured. AL MP Rahmatullah was leading the procession.

Police fired tear gas shells when some pro-hartal activists hurled bombs on a patrol team near the Shajahanpur residence of BNP leader and former mayor of Dhaka Mirza Abbas.

Police arrested 33 people from different parts of the city on charge of exploding bombs and damaging vehicles.

Some buses and mini buses were seen plying under police protection on some VIP roads in the city.

Movement of trains and launches to and from the city and flight operations at Zia International Airport were normal. Rickshaws on city roads were in plenty.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj reported that at least 30 people including a police constable were injured in a clash between supporters of the ruling and opposition parties on the Sirajganj-Belkuchi road at Mirpur at about 8 am.

The clash ensued when pickets set fire to a motor cycle and attacked a local leader of Juba League, youth front of AL. Police batoned the rival groups and dispersed them.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reported that pickets set fire to a BRTC bus at Agrabad at 1:30 pm and attacked a passenger bus at Bahaddarhat at around 11 am.

Bombs were exploded at Kazir Dewri, Bahaddarhat, Nimtala, Agrabad and some other areas in the city. None was injured.

## PM to visit Russia

FROM PAGE 1

ambassador, he informed.

"The visit is expected to reinvigorate the ties between the two countries. There is so much to be done in Moscow in the field of trade, commerce and culture," said Hasan, considered one of the country's top-rated diplomats. "Russia is considered a trusted ally and dependable friend of Bangladesh in the backdrop of its friendly role and support during and after the liberation war."

Dhaka and Moscow, according to sources, are expected to tie up close links on defence, which is high on the priority list of bilateral co-operation.

Another source said that military co-operation between Bangladesh and Russia that was "intensive" immediately after independence is likely to get a new lease of life.

An MOU on military and technical co-operation between Dhaka and Moscow was signed during the Russian deputy trade minister's visit in 1999.

Bangladesh procured eight MiG-29s and also purchased some vital ground radar equipment from Moscow some months back. Some more purchases for the armed forces

are learnt to be in the pipeline. Hasina and Putin are expected to discuss prospects for enhancement of military and technical co-operation and in concluding some military deals on a "concessionary arrangement."

Collaboration with Moscow in the energy sector is also expected to receive high priority.

Power plants installed by Russia, like the ones at Ghorasal and Siddhirganj, provide 30 per cent of the country's total requirement. There are already five thermal power stations at Ghorasal and two more are due to be supplied. Installation of 210 MW power-generation equipment is due at Ghorasal and Siddhirganj on suppliers' credit.

Russian scholarships to facilitate students from Bangladesh to study in that country are expected to increase. Some 5,000 students from this country have already completed higher studies at different institutions in the now-defunct Soviet Union.

"I am hopeful that the visit will also lead to more private sector business interaction and interface between Dhaka and Moscow," said Hasan.

# All eyes on elections in five Indian states

FROM PAGE 12

The speculation circles the rounds in political circles is: will a negative result for NDA in the state elections hasten fresh parliamentary polls well ahead of time or will it lead to a realignment of forces and lead to an alternative ruling formation?

The assessment in Opposition camp is that although BJP is not a force in any of the five states, if its ally DMK fails to retain power in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, it is likely to set off more churning in NDA. The Opposition's reading is also that things for the ruling combine might worsen further if BJP and Assam's ruling party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), which are

currently trying for an alliance, fail to prevent Congress party from regaining power in the north-eastern state.

The BJP is aware of the likely fall-outs of the assembly polls in the five states and can barely hide the element of desperation in its bid to strike a tie-up with AGP in the face of fierce resistance by the saffron party's Assam unit.

The elections are of particular importance for Sonia Gandhi, chief of Congress, who wants her party to emerge triumphant not only in Kerala, now ruled by Left Front, and Assam but also on the winning side in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and federally-administered territory of Pondicherry neighbouring Tamil

Nadu.

In Kerala and Assam, Congress is virtually on its own and has sewn up alliances with more dominant regional outfits in other three states - Trinamool in West Bengal and Jayalalitha-led All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

It is the pursuit of this objective that prompted Sonia to align with Trinamool and AIADMK overruling strong opposition from a majority of her party men in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and short shrift given to her party by Mamata and Jayalalitha's parties in matters of seat-sharing. In both the states, Congress had to be content with less seats than it had origi-

nally decided to go for. In West Bengal, Congress had to sacrifice at least 18 of its sitting members of assembly to please Trinamool, something which has made unhappy a large section of party's rank and file in the state.

In Tamil Nadu, Congress is part of a front that has in it a state-based party which openly declares its support for Sri Lankan separatist outfit LTTE, which is seen behind the murder of Sonia's husband and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. In Pondicherry too, Congress is poised to join an alliance where the same pro-LTTE outfit PMK is present.

# Donation for Tipu

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star unit of DUJ.

Medical experts say Tipu has a good chance of returning to normal life, if he is treated abroad. According to an estimate by the experts, the treatment might cost to the tune of Tk 20 lakh.

The Daily Star and Prothom Alo jointly initiated a fund-raising campaign. Readers, conscious citizens and people from all walks of life are requested to contribute to Tipu's treatment so that the young journalist could return to his profession.

With the Daily Star donation, the total amount rose to around Tk 133,900 till yesterday.

On the night of January 25, armed men in Feni abducted Tipu and beat him mercilessly with iron rods, hockey sticks and baseball bats. Later, the goons abandoned

him presuming him dead.

The only fault Tipu did was report on the criminal and inhuman activities of a powerful politician and his 500 or so armed cadres in the locality.

Tipu was Feni correspondent of the United News of Bangladesh (UNB).

Tipu's arm and leg bones have been badly fractured and muscles crushed. Doctors at the Orthopaedic Hospital in Dhaka have already asked the battered journalist to leave the hospital because there was nothing else they could do for him in the country.

The Daily Star appeals to its readers and patrons to donate generously to the fund for which a separate bank account has been opened.

Please see the attached announcement.

## Khaleda has to decide

FROM PAGE 1

hour hartal but never discussed that with us. Khaleda met the President and asked for election in May without any discussion with us. If they call hartal without discussing with us, what is the use of participating in that hartal?

He said, "If any one dreams of going to power, abandoning JP that dream would never come true."

Asked if his party would join parliament session, Ershad said, "To save JP and its election symbol 'plough', we would go to the parliament hundred times, if necessary."

Commenting on Khaleda's statement that the alliance was formed with JP and not its chairman, Ershad said "Though it sounds bad, it is true that a person is a party."

And it is true not only in case of JP but also in case of BNP and AL where Khaleda and Hasina symbolise the parties."

About the prospect of an alliance with JP factioned by Anwar Hossain Manju, he said, "I have heard that a process for this is going on. If benefits JP, such an alliance might be formed."

Ershad said he would hold meetings with policy makers of his party in two days and take decisions regarding JP's joining parliament session and on other issues including that concerning four-party alliance.

He plans to visit Sylhet on April 12 and address the party's extended meeting on April 14, he said.

## List of vested property

FROM PAGE 12

vested property.

Rashed Mosharrar said the good initiatives of the post-independence government to scrutinise the vested property and hand over those to real owners were frustrated by the post-1975 governments.

Shortly after assuming power, the present Awami League government initiated the process and it took four years to broach a draft of the return bill and get it endorsed by the cabinet in January 2001, the minister told newsmen, briefly stating the long way the bill travelled.

Referring to harassment of both Hindu and Muslim landowners by unscrupulous land-revenue people, the Land Minister said, "Muslims will be more benefited by the new bill than the Hindus. Because many Muslims bought property from the Hindus."

As per the bill, the property, not

claimed by any in the tribunals or claims for which are not established, will go to the government for sale or lease.

Co-shares or in their absence the leaseholders will get priority in government auction.

Property earlier released from VP list or for which a decree was obtained from higher court, or permanently leased out by the government to any authorised person or agency, or acquired for public interest will not be included in the new VP list to be furnished by deputy commissioners, the bill clarified.

Once the new list comes out, all the existing VP lists will be automatically cancelled and no further lists will be accepted thereafter, it says.

Land Secretary M Saiful Islam, Joint secretary Nazmul Ahsan and senior officials of land and law administrations were present in the press conference.

# Lalon's shrine

FROM PAGE 1

project, which envisages, among other components, a 500-seat auditorium and a four-story building for office blocs at a cost of Tk 3.55 crore within ten feet of Lalon's shrine.

Following the decision to build the complex, eminent citizens, students, housewives, professionals and people from all walks of life formed a committee to protect the shrine and held numerous protest rallies across the country.

Hundreds of thousands signed the signature campaign in a bid to protect the sanctity of one of the greatest folk philosophers and poets in the region, who died 111 years ago at the age of 117.

The authorities have turned a deaf ear to all appeals, leveraging extra workforce to continue the construction day and night. A visit to the shrine has revealed that 50 per cent of the work on the auditorium is complete. After completing the third floor, workers are now working on the fourth floor of the office, museum and library building on the northeastern side of the shrine.

Two banners have been put up

along the shrine. One praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her contribution to the complex project, and the other said 'the followers of Lalon will resist any conspiracy against the project.'

Lalon has been an inspirational source for millions of followers and admirers. Every year thousands of sadhus, fakirs, singers, bauls and the general public gather at the shrine in small groups. People from all spheres of life have questioned the rationality of building an auditorium on the premises of Lalon's shrine which, they think, would only serve modern artists from Dhaka and other places and greatly discourage the traditional values.

Members of the Lalon Academy, an organisation benefiting from the shrine's earnings and currently engaged in various commercial activities on the shrine's land, have defended the project saying it would enhance the 'prestige' of the shrine. It may be recalled here that the Lalon Academy has failed to carry out any research on Lalon and his works and has rather concentrated on commercial ventures.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate of Films & Publications

112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka

No. 3-47/2000-2001(F/)

## Open Re-Tender Notice

No. 52(F)/2000-2001

Sealed tenders are invited from steel manufacturers for supply of steel rack for storage of film cans required by the Directorate of Films & Publications.

Serial No	Description	Quantity
1	Steel rack (as per specification mentioned in the schedule)	50 Nos.

Tender schedule for the tenderer firms will be available at Tk 400/= (four hundred) only per set (non-refundable) from the Accounts Section of this Directorate from 8-4-2001 to 16-4-2001. Tenders for supply of the above mentioned racks should be submitted by 11-30 am of 17-04-2001 and the tenders will be opened on the same day at 11-35 hours.

DFP-9135-7/4

G-639

Sardar Md Aminul Islam

Deputy Director (Films)

## রাজনীতিবিদদের স্বরূপ অন্বেষণ

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