

Cold wave claims 7 in Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

At least seven elderly people died in severe cold, sweeping the district since Thursday.

There is no weather office here, by an NGO says the mercury oscillates between 9 and 7 degrees Celsius.

The victims are Veua, 70, of Boda, Bewa, 90, of Balavir, Phujan, 75, of Jharbaripara, Budu Mohammad, 70, of Dangapara, Samatu, 80, of Islampur, Bidraha, 80 and Yusuf Ali, 85, of Brahmatla.

Deputy Commissioner Aftab Hasan denied any death from cold. No winter clothes have so far been distributed among the poor and destitutes. The district administration has sent a fax message to the Relief Ministry requesting immediate supply of 10,000 rugs and 20,000 warm clothes for distribution among the poor.

Inhabitants of this district close to the Himalayas have been experiencing a mild cold wave since Thursday with the intensity rising everyday.

2 cops arrested for embezzling booty recovered from terrorists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two traffic sergeants were arrested yesterday for their alleged involvement in the embezzlement of Tk 25 lakh robbed by a gang of terrorists from an employee of Ajik Group at Dhanmondi area on December 15.

Police sergeants Kamruzzaman Bakul and Jahangir Hossain were posted at Shahbagh area during the incident.

Earlier, Dhanmondi police arrested Abul Kalam, the driver of the microbus in which the Ajik Group employee was travelling, and helper Jasim and recovered Tk 30,500 from their possession.

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Indo-Pak troops trade fire along Kashmir border

AFP, Islamabad

Indian and Pakistani troops traded fire over their disputed Kashmir border yesterday, a Pakistani military spokesman said.

The two neighbours also exchanged fire Wednesday, in the first such incident after New Delhi accused Islamabad of instigating last week's attack on the Indian parliament.

There have been some mortar shells and artillery fire across the

Line of Control and the Siachen border from the Indian troops," a Pakistani military spokesman told AFP.

"Pakistan troops retaliated, causing damage to the Indian bunkers," he added.

Tension has mounted between the nuclear-armed rivals since December 13 when the Indian parliament was attacked by five suicide gunmen. India says the attackers were Pakistani citizens from two militant outfits battling

Indian rule in Kashmir.

India announced Friday it was withdrawing its ambassador from Islamabad and closing cross-border transport links in a bid to pressure Pakistan into cracking down on the militant groups.

During a visit to China yesterday, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf slammed India's "very arrogant and knee-jerk" response, but said his government would not retaliate.

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Affected families under open sky at village Aguandi in Arahazar upazila as their houses were damaged by armed terrorists allegedly led by BNP men on Friday. At least 35 houses were damaged in the attack.

Armed gang damages houses, beats villagers in Chandpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed miscreants allegedly belonging to ruling BNP attacked Hapania village in Ashikathi upazila of Chandpur district on Thursday and damaged at least 16 houses and five shops owned by Awami League

supporters, sources there said. They beat women and children, injuring at least 20. Male members of the families fled away as the attack was launched.

A gang of 30 to 35 miscreants armed with lethal weapons swooped on the houses of Munshi, Majumder

and Patwary and some other houses at about 11am.

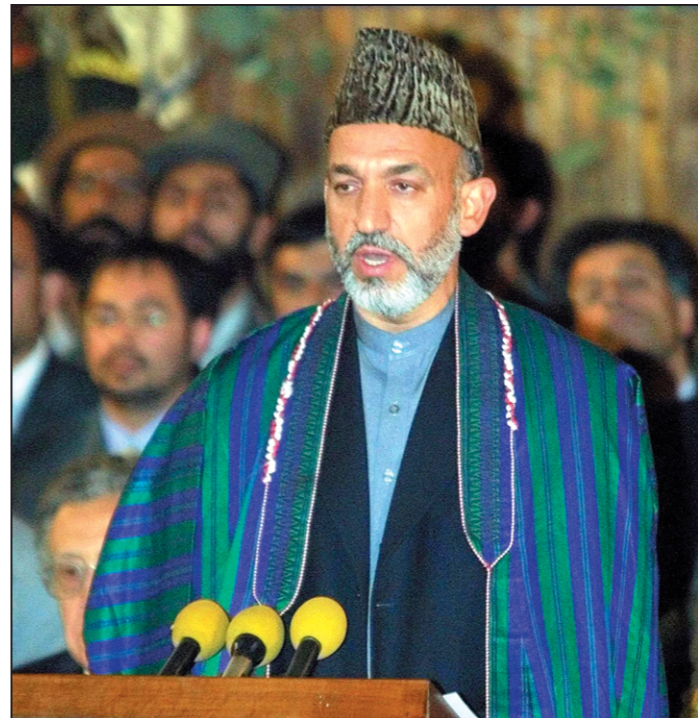
The sources quoted victims as alleging that Moshir Rahman Mashu, son of UP member Lokman Kha, led the gang. The attackers included Kamal Mizi, Milan Khan, Zahir Mizi, Awal Mizi, Shafiq Khan, Khokon Khan and Faruk Khan. Mashu is an identified criminal in the area.

The miscreants also damaged valuables worth about Tk 50 lakh during the rampage that lasted for over three hours.

The sources said a large number of villagers who fled their homes did not return till yesterday evening. A large number of women and children are spending days in the open amid insecurity. A tense situation is prevailing.

They said a case was lodged with Ashikathi thana accusing 20 people.

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Hamid Karzai taking oath as Prime Minister of the new Afghan interim government in Kabul yesterday. (Right) Karzai (back to camera) is congratulated by former President Burhanuddin Rabbani after the oath-taking.

Terrorist attack 200 homeless: Arahazar still tense

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 200 people of 25 families have become homeless following the terrorist attack on Aguandi village in Arahazar upazila on Friday.

About 35 houses were totally demolished by the attackers allegedly belonging to ruling BNP.

Tension is still high as the panicked villagers are apprehending more such attack. A police camp has been set up in the village.

Talking to this correspondent some of the villagers alleged that despite several calls police reached

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Karzai sworn in as PM of Afghan interim govt

AP, Kabul

Hamid Karzai was sworn in as prime minister of Afghanistan's new interim government yesterday amid hopes he can help heal a nation torn apart by decades of war.

Karzai signed the oath of office before Chief Justice Mohammed Qasim in the country's first peaceful transfer of power in decades. He then embraced outgoing President Burhanuddin Rabbani to applause from foreign diplomats and tribal leaders who swarmed to the capital, Kabul, from every province.

"I promise you that I will fulfill my

mission to bring peace to Afghanistan," Karzai, wearing a traditional Karakoli lambskin hat and an Uzbek robe, said in a speech in his native Pashtun and Dari, Afghanistan's two primary languages.

"Our country as a result of the

long war, has been distracted. We need hard work from all Afghans. Bearing in mind all these difficulties, our country is in need of support from the United Nations and all friendly countries. We should put our hands together to be brothers

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Babul murder: Wife placed on 2-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fahima Akhtar Hira, arrested in connection with the murder of her husband Zahidur Rahman Babul, was placed on a two-day remand for interrogation yesterday.

Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Hira before the CMM's court, Dhaka, at 1pm yesterday with a prayer for a three days' remand. After hearing the prayer, the magistrate Nurul Karim Majumder granted remand for two days for interrogation.

Meanwhile, victim's daughter Babli and son Fahad, and domestic help Belera gave judicial statements as witnesses before Magistrate Shafiq Anwar yesterday afternoon.

Belera, who hails from Pabna and had been working at the victim's house for about four months, told the magistrate that Hira had asked her the night before the murder to leave the door open at 7am as she

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Move to file anti-dumping suit against Indian textile industry

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The country's textile entrepreneurs have taken a move to file an anti-dumping suit against the Indian textile industry for selling their products in Bangladesh at throw-away prices.

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), the apex body of the country's textile entrepreneurs, has taken the decision in the face of an uneven competition against the Indian products.

According to local industry sources, India is selling yarn (30s counts) to Bangladesh at US\$1.80 to US\$1.90 per Kg while the freight on board (FOB) price of the same in the international market is US\$2.50. On the other hand, local spinning

mills are selling yarn at US\$2.40 per Kg, BTMA officials said.

"In the face of unethical practices by the Indian textile industry, we have been left with no other option but to go for anti-dumping suit," A Matin Chowdhury, chairman of BTMA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Local industry sources said the Indian textile industry is dumping products in Bangladesh at lower than production cost with the aim to 'capture the market and ruin the local industry'.

As a result, many local textile units are unable to sell their yarn. The BTMA said at least 25 per cent of the total industry production of 400 million Kg yarn has been stock-

iled at different textile units in the country.

Bangladesh imports about 15 per cent of its readymade garment (RMG) fabric requirement from India.

Matin Chowdhury said many Indian textile units have been doing such dumping for the last few months. "But now, it has crossed all limits. We are discussing the issue with legal experts before formally filing the suit. It could take a month or more to go for legal action," Matin Chowdhury said, hoping active support from the government.

The country's leading economists cautioned that the textile entrepreneurs have to be very care

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Road accident kills 7 in Madaripur

UNB, Madaripur

Seven people were killed and four others injured when a truck smashed a rickshaw-van at Sanyashir Char in Shibchar upazila on Bangha-Mawa highway yesterday.

Police said the Jessore-bound truck from Dhaka rammed the van coming from opposite direction at about 10am, killing seven passen

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52 murdered in city in first 3 weeks of Dec

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Fifty-two people were murdered in the city during the first three weeks of December, making it the worst month in many years as to law and order is concerned.

In May this year, some 51 people were killed in the capital while 49 were murdered in November. In 2000, 154 people were murdered in the city with the highest of 32 in August. In 1999, 294 killings took place in 1999 with the highest

number of 31 in August.

According to police records, a total of 241 murders took place in 1998, 193 in 1997, 222 in 1996, 182 in 1995, 121 in 1994, 124 in 1993, 123 in 1992 and 117 in 1991 in the capital alone.

Of the 52 people killed during the last three weeks of December, 21 died in mob beating. Twelve of them were killed for alleged mugging, five for robbery and four others for extortion.

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