



## Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country today. Light to moderate fog may occur over land area and moderate to thick fog over the river basins during morning. Met office said adding night temperature may fall by 1 to 3 degree Celsius. Mild cold wave may sweep over country's Northern part during the period, it added. Country's highest temperature 28.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and the lowest 10.2 degree at Syedpur. **The sun sets in the capital today at 5.17 pm and rises on Monday at 6:38 am.** Highest and lowest temperature and humidity in the main cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.8	14.0	88	66
Chittagong	28.8	17.0	90	72
Rajshahi	25.2	11.5	85	85
Khulna	24.2	14.2	82	78
Barisal	25.0	14.0	91	90
Sylhet	28.0	13.0	64	60
Cox's Bazar	26.7	19.5	88	74

## Human chain demanding release of Shahriar Kabir today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human chain will be formed in front of the Jatiya Press Club today demanding unconditional release of Shahriar Kabir. Sixteen organisations will take part in the programme beginning at 11 am, said a press release of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote. The organisations are Supreme Court Lawyers' Association, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ), Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, Mohila Parisad, Federation of University Teachers' Association, Dhaka University Teachers' Association, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists', Sammilita Samajeik Andolon, Projomo '71, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Bangladesh Street Drama Parisad, Bangladesh Abritii Samonnyo Parisad, Jatiya Kabita Parisad, ADAB, Karmachari Nari and Ain O Shalish Kendra.



A token hunger strike organised by conscious youths was observed at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday demanding release of Shahriar Kabir.

## 52 murdered in city

**FROM PAGE 1** The December victims include 23 alleged muggers, two businessmen, four small traders, two cloth traders, four unidentified men and women, two JCD and Jubo Dal activists, four housewives, a garment employee, a cattle trader, a car driver, two college students, a school student, a bank employee, a government employee, a bus passenger, a pedestrian, a terrorist and a new-born. Of the killings, nine took place in Sutrapur, five each in Demra, Dhanmondi and Shyampur, four each in Mirpur and Tejgaon, three in Kotwali, two each in Pallabi, Ramna, Motijheel, Kafur, Khilgaon, and a terrorist and a new-born. Of the killings, nine took place in Sutrapur, five each in Demra, Dhanmondi and Shyampur, four each in Mirpur and Tejgaon, three in Kotwali, two each in Pallabi, Ramna, Motijheel, Kafur, Khilgaon, and a terrorist and a new-born. Of the killings, nine took place in Sutrapur, five each in Demra, Dhanmondi and Shyampur, four each in Mirpur and Tejgaon, three in Kotwali, two each in Pallabi, Ramna, Motijheel, Kafur, Khilgaon, and a terrorist and a new-born.

## 2 cops arrested

**FROM PAGE 1** Following the interrogation, the arrested persons confessed that the two traffic sergeants nicked Tk 25 lakh from the booty. An identification parade was organised at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police headquarters yesterday in which Sergeant Babul was identified for the offence and later he was arrested. Police also kept an eye on a number of other suspect policemen and later arrested Jahangir. Police also recovered Tk 12,200 lakh from the sergeant. A gang of robbers looted Tk 25 lakh from Abu Naser, general manager of Aijk Group of industries, at Road number 7 in the Dhanmondi area on December 15 morning. After the robbery, the dacoits set off for Gazipur in a microbus. When they reached Shaabag area, two on-duty traffic sergeants stopped the car. The robbers immediately ran away and after searching through the vehicle, the policemen found a carton full of money. The sergeants then asked the driver to take them to Panthakujia near Banglamotor. One of the sergeants went to a nearby shop and brought a polythene bag, put Tk. 35,000 in it and handed it over to the driver. The policemen nicked the rest of the money.

## Babul murder

**FROM PAGE 1** was expecting three guests. As per her directive, Belera opened the door in the morning and then went back to bed. At about 7:30am, she woke up hearing gunshots and found two strangers standing at the gate. Then she went to the living room and found Rahman lying in a pool of blood. Fahad, the victim's son, told the magistrate that he, his sister Babi and their mother were asleep in the bedroom when three men came into the house at 7am. Two of them entered the bedroom and ordered their mother to give the key's to the almira. As their mother (Hira) refused to oblige, they dragged her and forced her to give them the keys. After a while, he heard gunshots. He told the court that the two men took away a gun, and valuables from the almira and that he recognised one of them whom he had seen at a nearby park while he went there with his cousin Liton, the main accused in the case. Farhad said he remembered Liton talking to that man at the park. He however did not know the man's name. Babi told the magistrate that she saw two people in the bedroom in the morning. She said her cousin Liton used to come to their house sometimes and would spend hours together with their mother. Farhad, Babi and housemaid Belera were kept at the DB office to be handed over to their close relatives. Investigation Officer of the case Inspector Wahiduzzaman told The Daily Star that victim's brother came to take the kids but they refused to go with him, as they wanted to stay with their maternal grandmother in Pabna. Wahiduzzaman also said that Belera, along with the kids, would also be sent away to her native village in Pabna. Zahidur Rahman, statistics assistant at the Survey Department of the Bureau of Statistics, was shot dead by gunman at his Taj Mahal Road in the city's Mohammadpur area on Friday. Victim's brother Badiur Rahman Bulu filed a case with Mohammadpur police accusing Hira and Liton for the murder. The case was later shifted to the DB on the same night.

## A commendable action

**FROM PAGE 12** DB officials and the chairman of the board, Milon asked the registrar, deputy registrar and accounts officer for an explanation about the whole affair. But now could give any satisfactory answer. The state minister then told the police that a section of the board officials might be involved in the incident and asked them to properly investigate the malpractice. Lalbagh police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ruhul Amin made a brief investigation and suspected that Registrar Prof Kazi Shahid Mostafa and Sub-Assistant Engineer Abdul Matin might have links with the tender snatchers. The OC told the state minister that a police force was sent to the board office as per a request of the board. But the policemen deployed on the board premises told the state minister that the sub-assistant engineer asked them to stay in a room. The engineer also allegedly entertained the constables. The state minister instructed the police to immediately arrest the tender snatchers and also to interrogate the board officials. He also instructed Chairman of the Board Prof Matur Rahman to form an inquiry committee and issue show-cause notices on the officials responsible for the misdeed. A case was filed with the Lalbagh police station.

## Leather Liton

**FROM PAGE 12** nickname Leather Liton. He also said he was organising secretary of Pochottor Ghatak Dal Nirmul Committee and convener of Hazaribagh thana BCL. He said he had left for Kolkata as soon as the Caretaker Government took over and came back just four days before the October 1 election. Liton said he feared attack from his enemies including political rivals. He was produced before the CMM's court yesterday with petition for a ten-day remand for interrogation while the court granted remand for two days. A top DB officer also said a petition for Liton's detention for three months will be lodged.

## Indo-Pak tension

**FROM PAGE 12** "We're keeping close observation on the developments," the Foreign Minister said. Asked if the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan might stall next month's SAARC summit in Kathmandu, he said, "We don't think so, we haven't got any hint that it might jeopardize the SAARC summit." Khan said Nepal is putting a lot of efforts to hold the long-due summit as scheduled for January 4-6. In reply to a question about the possibility of Bangladesh's joining international forces in Afghanistan, the Foreign Minister said, "If we're approached, it will be given due consideration for peacekeeping." "Our stand is always on blue-helmet operation under the UN peacekeeping mission... Our commitment to world peace against terrorism has received international appreciation," he said. In reply to a question about his meeting with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw during his just-concluded UK tour, he said the meeting was fruitful. Asked about Tony Blair's visit to Dhaka, he said the British Prime Minister may visit Bangladesh early January, but the date had not yet been fixed up.

## Tofail on re-export

**FROM PAGE 12** party was in power. Referring to India's long-cherished demand for transit facility, Tofail said the Awami League government did not concede as it viewed that the arrangement would not be beneficial for Bangladesh. He recalled that the post-75 BNP government gave railway and waterway transits to India, which were renewed later by Ershad government and again by 1991 BNP government. "We had agreed to consider transshipment, because we found it economically rewarding for us. It would benefit our transport sector and help develop road and other infrastructures," he said. Tofail noted with regret that BNP now quickly agreed to the Indian proposal, which it vowed to resist even at the cost of life. He disagreed with Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury that it is simply a re-export arrangement, not transit or transshipment facility to India. How carrying Indian goods from one Indian trader to another Indian trader through Bangladesh territory can be called 're-export', wondered Tofail. The former commerce minister recalled that following hectic negotiations Indian Prime Minister had declared in Dhaka that his country would allow duty-free access to 25 categories of Bangladeshi items to help reduce the huge trade imbalance. But India never implemented it. Because, he added, India always tried to tag the transshipment issue to duty-free access of Bangladeshi items although it was agreed to be on non-reciprocal basis. Earlier, Khasru told UNB that under the new arrangement, Bangladeshi traders will import Indian fruits and vegetables from one point through LCs and re-export those to other bordering states. Bangladeshi carriers will carry the goods from one point to another. The re-export arrangement, initially for six months from next month, will yield at least 10 per cent benefit to Bangladesh, he informed.

## Araihazar still tense

**FROM PAGE 1** the spot about one hour after the attackers left. Aguandi village is only six km from Araihazar thana headquarter and is linked with a pucca road. During a visit to the village yesterday, several families were seen sitting helplessly on homesteads in the open. The villagers alleged that the "terrorists" looted whatever they had and even took away poles of some of the demolished houses. Nazron, an elderly woman, said she was at her house when the attackers destroyed it, uprooted the poles and took away the chicken and the small quantity of rice she collected by begging. Now she has nothing to eat. Fatema, 30, wife of Joz Mia, said the miscreants looted valuables including her gold ornaments. They uprooted the tubewell and demolished the bathroom. Tajul Islam, an weaver said they destroyed his handloom and looted valuables and 20 maunds of rice. Some of the villagers alleged that the attackers were led by Abul Pradhan, Danial dacoit and Afa dacoit, known as supporters of local MP Ataur Rahman Angur. Joz Mia alleged that the MP's elder brother Khosru was present in Araihazar thana during the attack. When contacted, Ataur Rahman Angur told The Daily Star, "I do not know Danial or Afa dacoit. The attackers have no connection with

## Tariff cut

**FROM PAGE 12** (MOPT) had moved to reduce tariff rates after foreign operators refused to settle accounts with the BTTB due to higher call charges. Foreign operators and BTTB settle accounts for calls coming to the country and generated to the network of overseas operators after every three months. Call charges have been reduced globally as a result of dramatic improvement in telecommunications technology but Bangladesh is yet to take the advantage in its stride. The BTTB had snapped connections of some Internet service providers (ISPs) late last month for non-renewal of license and on allegation of call termination. A section of the ISPs had long been involved in illegal call termination causing huge revenue loss to BTTB in USD calls. Meanwhile, Total Accounting Rate (TAR), the amount shared equally by the BTTB and foreign telecom firms through which calls are routed, has also been reduced to 0.20 SDR (special drawing right) from 0.50 SDR. Call charges to the United States during peak hours have been slashed to Tk 40 per minute from Tk 60. The BTTB officials said the charge for European countries had been reduced to Tk 30 from Tk 50 and that for South Asian countries to Tk 20 from Tk 30 a minute. Calls made during off-peak hours will have a 25 per cent discount.

## US control

**FROM PAGE 12** nate its interests in the Middle East and Asia. He said Israel provides a bastion through which the flow of oil can be ensured. Similarly, the fate of Central Asia will also be hinged on its oil resources, so far as the US is concerned. Speaking about the Middle East, he said "As long as Arabs have oil and gas, there will be no peace in the region". Responding to interventions Dr. Selim said, the events of September 11 affected the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. He said Hamas has done much damages to Arafat's peace process. Extremists often work in tandem and become allies. Hamas by its spate of terrorist activities is acting as an ally of Israel. Israel, he said is unable to survive without the backing of the United States. Dr Selim felt that the melting pot in the modern world has proved to be a salad bowl where people mix without necessarily evolving towards a common culture. Major General Sikder M Shahab Uddin, director general of BIIS delivered the welcome address.

## Friendship Bridge

**FROM PAGE 12** opment of road communication and the BNP government in 1991-96 took up a massive programme for development of this sector. She mentioned that during 1991-96 period of BNP 80 per cent work of the five-kilometer long Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge was completed. More than 300 other bridges including Meghna, Gumti, Mahananda, Atrai, Sheola and Dhaleshwari, thousands of culverts and several thousand kilometers of roads were constructed by the past BNP government, she said. She called upon all, irrespective of their party affiliations, to work together for socio-economic emancipation of the common people. She lauded the construction firm, China Hilog Ziang International Economic and Technical Corporation, for completing the project before the stipulated time. The Prime Minister thanked the Chinese government for its assistance in development and hoped that the bilateral relations would be further strengthened in the days ahead.

## Karzai sworn in as PM

**FROM PAGE 1** and friends. Forget the painful past," he said. As he finished his speech, he smiled, nodded and bowed slightly as the crowd erupted in a thunderous ovation. He swore in the other 29 members of his Cabinet including two women who stood behind him on the dais. Karzai paid homage to Rabbani, with whom he has sharply disagreed in the past, telling him: "I must say Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar," as the audience shouted in unison. He concluded the formal ceremony by handing Rabbani the written agreement of the transfer of power, a unique scene for Afghanistan where power has been seized in war and coups since the ouster of the monarchy in 1973. The 30-member government faces the staggering challenge of rebuilding a nation whose citizens are largely unprepared for a long, hungry winter and whose coffers were left empty by the ousted Taliban regime. Karzai, a 44-year-old Pashtun tribal leader, immediately promised to address the issues of free expression, women's rights and the battered education system. As a Pashtun, Karzai represents Afghanistan's dominant ethnic group, and his appointment as prime minister was seen as a balancing of the northern alliance's grip on the most important ministries. The Westernized Karzai is also a figure with whom the Americans are comfortable; he and the US military worked closely in the siege of Kandahar, the southern Afghanistan city that was the Taliban's stronghold. A drum roll sounded as Rabbani arrived and strode a red carpet past an honor guard of smartly dressed Afghan soldiers and an audience of 2,000 Afghan and foreign dignitaries. Cleric Barkat Ullah opened the proceedings with Quran recitations in a haunting voice, and everyone then rose to sing the national anthem. The speakers and crowd repeatedly paid tribute to Ahmed Shah Masood, the legendary guerrilla leader who led the battle against Soviet occupation in the 1980s, then the Taliban, before he was assassinated by a suicide bomb on Sept 9. A huge portrait of Masood was draped behind the podium. Rabbani called Masood "the great hero of this Islamic jihad." He also thanked the international community for its backing, saying his country is "thirsty for peace." "In this very important moment, our fate is going to be decided," Rabbani said. "I thank the great God, who gave us the power that we could present a united front once again. This is a historic moment that has not been witnessed in the last century." As leaders prepared for peace, US forces hunted down al-Qaida and Taliban leaders, with warplanes destroying a convoy that the Pentagon said was carrying top members of the two groups. But an Afghan official said it was taking tribal leaders to the inauguration. A Pakistani news agency reported 65 dead in the airstrikes. The Pentagon said there were casualties in the attack near the eastern town of Khost, but did not say how many. Khost lies to the southwest of Tora Bora, which was one of al-Qaida's main bases until an assault by Afghan fighters backed by US airstrikes and special forces drove out the group's fighters. The convoy destroyed by US air strikes had opened fire on US aircraft just before it was bombed, a US diplomatic mission official in Kabul said. "We apparently had evidence that this convoy had al-Qaida forces. We circled the convoy," said the official, who declined to be identified. "I'm told by Centcom (Central Command) that we were fired on twice by the convoy using anti-aircraft missiles, which they took as a hostile act and proceeded to attack the convoy," he said.

## Move to file anti-dumping suit

**FROM PAGE 1** sign that our entrepreneurs are also moving ahead to use this tool," said Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). With the multi-fiber agreement (MFA) is nearing expiry in 2004, the Indian government has taken a policy to capture a sizable share of the international textile and clothing market and earmarked 25,000 rupees along with different incentives for development of its backward and forward linkage industries. However, in the present context, the Indian textile industry can not utilise its full capacity due to quota and GSP restrictions. In the circumstances, the local industry sources said a good number of Indian textile companies have been dumping their products in Bangladesh so that Bangladeshi textile units wither away due to huge losses. "We have a good market as our readymade garment (RMG) industry, which earns more than US\$5 billion annually, developed tremendously. In line with the RMG growth, our entrepreneurs have invested in textiles. But now, the unethical practice of the Indian textile industry has pushed our whole industry to the verge of ruin," said Jahangir Al Amin, a member of BTMA and Director of Shamsul Al Amin Group.

## Indo-Pak troops trade fire

**FROM PAGE 1** A Pakistani military official also accused India of moving huge numbers of troops to the border with Pakistan and their disputed Kashmir boundary "in a very aggressive posture". "Indian troops in massive numbers have advanced from their peace locations to forward areas during the last 12 hours along the Line of Control and the international border," he told AFP on condition of anonymity. The official said Pakistan had established counter-measures including increased surveillance and monitoring on the border and beefed-up defences along the Line of Control, the unofficial Kashmir frontier. "We have taken precautionary measures keeping in view the heavy Pakistani build-up at a number of places in various sectors from Kashmir to Rajasthan along the international border and the Line of Control (LOC)," an Indian army spokesman told AFP. India also reiterated its demand for arrest of the leaders of the Pakistan-based militant groups it has blamed for last week's suicide attack on parliament and said it was awaiting "meaningful action from Islamabad." "Of course, we want them to be apprehended. They have engaged in criminal activity. They have indulged in terrorism, they have instigated activities against our state and our democracy," Indian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Nirupama Rao, told reporters, in Delhi. Pakistan said it regretted India's decision to recall its ambassador, but did not intend to respond in kind. Indian Home Minister L K Advani said the decision to withdraw the ambassador from Pakistan was a carefully measured step to make Islamabad "pay the price" for failing to crack down on militants. "We said all options were open and we weighed the situation," Advani said in an interview published yesterday in the Hindustan Times. US President George W Bush said Friday that the United States was "very much involved" in defusing tensions between Pakistan and India sparked by what he denounced as a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament. "A flare-up in that region could really create severe problems for all of us that are engaged in the fight against terror," he told reporters. Bush urged President Musharraf to crack down on militants accused to attacking India's parliament. "As President Musharraf does so, he will have our full support," Bush said. The move followed the release of