



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Sylhet divisions during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Chittagong and the lowest of 11.2 degree at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:05 pm today and rises at 6:13 am 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	31.6	15.8	37	34
Chittagong	33.8	17.3	56	61
Rajshahi	31.8	13.8	52	50
Khulna	32.8	16.6	60	53
Barisal	31.8	16.0	61	62
Sylhet	32.1	15.6	53	38

HR convention

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be required for the games.

After discussing the matters, the meeting decided to shift the dates from March 15-16 to April 11-12. The venue of the convention will however remain unchanged.

Sources said that about 80 per cent of the preparatory works for the convention has already been completed and the remaining 20 per cent would be finished within a couple of days.

Following the change in dates, the meeting ordered the relevant sub-committees in charge of the convention to complete the rest of the work by March 20. The printing of the lists and photographs of participants of the convention including affected families and individuals has already started.

Sources said the alliance convention would address allegations put forward at the Awami League sponsored convention held recently, adding that both the government and the alliance are currently investigating the AL allegations.

The meeting was informed that many of the allegations and cases featured at the AL convention can be attributed to the tenure of the caretaker government and do not concern the alliance as far as shouldering responsibility is concerned.

Meanwhile, the meeting expressed grave concern at the serious deterioration of law and order situation and observed that the role of law-enforcing agencies seems very ineffective.

The meeting observed that the law-enforcing agencies have yet not taken any decisive action to give relief to the common people or discourage terrorists and criminals from their activities.

It observed that despite the fact that the government has virtually given a free hand to law-enforcing agencies to bring criminals to justice, police have largely failed in taking effective steps to curb terrorism, killing, extortion and other sorts of crime.

It observed that certain vested quarters are involved in the recent incidents of violence and that these terrorist activities are being carried out in a planned way, adding that such violent activities have increased manifold since the AL chief Sheikh Hasina's return from USA.

The meeting urged the government to publicise reports of intelligence agencies. It also decided to

form a co-ordination committee headed by the secretaries general of the four parties to give field-level feedback to the government from time to time.

The next meeting of the four-party alliance would be held on March 13 to review progress of convention-related matters and to finalise the dates for a countrywide cleanliness drive set tentatively for March 22-24. The government and the four-party will jointly launch the drive.

BNP leaders Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdus Salam, Syed Emran Saleh Prince and Kazi Abu Bashir, Jamaat leaders Abu Taher and Jashimuddin Sarkar, Bangladesh Chowdhury, BRAC chairman Fazle Hasan Abed, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Attorney General Hasan Arif and BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed.

Railway bills

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crore, Brahmonbaria CSD Tk 222.16 crore, Akhaura CSD Tk 398.86 crore, Kishorganj CSD Tk 563.02 crore, Ashuganj CSD Tk 415.93 crore, Tejgaon CSD Tk 470.78 crore, Narayanganj silo Tk 2.04 crore, Bangladesh Agriculture University Tk 452.93 crore, Bangladesh Police Tk 68.24 crore, Karnaphuli Paper Mills Ltd, Chittagong, Tk 6.70 crore, Dhaka City Corporation Tk 4.73 crore, Kumudini Welfare Trust Tk 6.17 crore and Agrani Bank, Chittagong, Tk 2.68 crore.

In the western zone, the highest amount of Tk 10.32 crore is due from Syedpur municipality as licence fee.

Some senior railway officials told this correspondent it is very difficult to realise the dues because more than 80 per cent of the amount is due from government organisations and autonomous bodies.

They said the principal amount of outstanding bills is around Tk 96 crore and the total amount consists of compound interest and fine.

Sources said officials who attended the inter-ministerial meetings mentioned that many of the defaulting organisations have already ceased to exist and there is hardly any scope to realise the dues from them.

According to a report by the BR, its gross earning fell to Tk 341.49 crore in fiscal 1999-2000 from Tk 37426 crore in 1998-99.

Resist acid attacks

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players, NGO workers and others -- were present at the rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The programme started with a chorus song "Amra karbo Jai" (we shall win) rendered by the acid victims. The participants carried banners reading "stop acid attack, save women" and chanted slogans demanding an end to such crimes.

Former chief adviser of caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman inaugurated the rally as the chief guest.

He expressed concern that repression on women is increasing alarmingly in the country. A social movement must be built up to stop such repression, he noted.

Attorney General Hasan Arif said snail's pace in the entire system and threats to witnesses by the accused mainly delay sentences in acid attack cases.

He said he will take steps to set up two cells to monitor incidents of acid attack and rape.

Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said acid attack not only distorts physical appearance of the victim but also affects the mind of the victim.

Chairman of BRAC Fazle Hasan Abed said although law provides for severe punishment for repression on women, the culprits escape penalty due to legal loopholes and 'negligence' by the law enforcing agencies.

He said BRAC will give legal assistance to the acid victims.

Kutubuddin Ahmed, President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters

said BGMEA will arrange jobs for acid victims in garments factories to rehabilitate them.

National professor Kabir Chowdhury and his daughter Meher Kabir, who were not present at the rally, donated Tk 10 lakh to the Acid Survivors Foundation for the welfare of the victims.

Noted actor Rajib, who is Managing Director of the FDC, said FDC would give financial and technical assistance if any producer makes film depicting the plight of acid victims.

Rajib, an acid victim, said without the help of men, it is not possible to stop incidents of acid attack on women. She demanded severe punishment of the criminals.

"The culprits have destroyed my life. Shall I get back my normal life again? No more acid attacks on women to ruin their life," she said in an emotion-choked voice.

The others who addressed the rally included Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Anwarul Islam Chowdhury, Director General of Shilpakala Academy Mustafa Jaman Abbasi, actors Razzak, Ali Zaker and former captain of National Cricket team Aminul Islam Bulbul.

At the end of the rally, the Islam Group was allowed to get out of a criminal offence (fraud) it committed only because it promised to repay the full amount with interest.

Later, a procession brought out from the Saheed Minar premises marched up to the Jatiya Press Club.

End.

Police yet to unearth clue to Harun murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, KHULNA

Two-hour pen-down strike was observed by local journalists yesterday as part of a seven-day programme announced jointly by Khulna Press Club, KUJ and MUJ protesting the murder of Dainik Purbanchal reporter Shaikh Haroon-or-Rashid.

Harun was shot dead on Saturday evening near Mujgunni Nessaria Madrassah at Khalishpur.

Journalists will hold a protest rally today, the concluding day of a seven-day programme.

Meanwhile, there is no headway in the investigation of the murder case. Police interrogated three persons arrested in connection with the murder but could not unearth any clue of the murder.

Women's Day

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Coalition, Aparajeyo Bangladesh and World Food Programme, took part in the rally.

In the afternoon, BGMEA in association with UN Population Fund arranged a colourful rally followed by a discussion in the city's Malibagh area.

BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed and UNFPA acting representative Nurul Ameen led the rally attended by more than 500 garment workers with the slogan "Ensure actual rights of women workers."

Acid Survivors Foundation and Prothom Alo jointly arranged a rally which was inaugurated by Justice Habibur Rahman.

The rally was addressed, among others, by Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Anwarul Islam Chowdhury, BRAC chairman Fazle Hasan Abed, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Attorney General Hasan Arif and BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed.

2 fire incidents

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control by about 5 am.

It was yet to be ascertained how the fire originated, they said.

However, some sources said the fire originated from a mosquito coil in a shop and engulfed surrounding areas. Other sources said a cigarette butt left by someone caused the fire.

In the other fire, nearly 300 shanties were gutted at the TB slum in Argaon area.

The fire originated from electric ar short circuit at about 5 am, fire brigade sources said.

Seven fire fighting units from three fire stations doused the fire by about 6:30 am.

When contacted last night, the duty officer at Mohmmadpur thana said police evicted the slum dwellers a few days ago.

CNG project

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government decision last month to withdraw autorickshaws from the city from August as part of a World Bank aided project. The Air Quality Monitoring Project of the Department of Environment envisages phasing out two-stroke engine autorickshaws in the country from 2003.

The pilot project was taken as over 60,000 autorickshaws in the city were identified as the principal sources of air pollution in the city. The smoke they emit pollute the air with highly toxic carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon.

Bangabhaban

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cell phones purchased previously were disconnected. Now a total of eight mobile phones are being used at Bangabhaban.

The Ministry of Establishment has given approval to all the cell phones, it said.

Islam Group

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during eight years which will mean Tk 1.19 crore to be charged to profit and loss account thereby having a minimum effect on bank's profitability," the clarification said.

Our reply: The Daily Star report said Islam Group seeks 50 per cent interest waiver from both the banks and that if such waiver is allowed, the banks will suffer the entire amount in income erosion. The amortising process is a clever device to hide the fact that the bank will actually lose the whole amount, but only a part of it will be shown at a time.

Besides, the practice of seeking fresh rescheduling facility from the government itself is unethical and breach of faith since the government agreed not to initiate criminal proceedings against what was clearly a willful fraud and as such a criminal offence committed in 1993 in exchange for solemn pledge that the group would repay the embezzled funds in four year's time under the original terms. The Islam Group was allowed to get out of a criminal offence (fraud) it committed only because it promised to repay the full amount with interest.

Later, a procession brought out from the Saheed Minar premises marched up to the Jatiya Press Club.

End.



The garments workers formed a human chain with black flags in their hands in front of the National Press Club yesterday to mark the International Women's Day.

3 Christians beaten

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Anwar Hossain.

SI Anwar arrested two attackers Abdur Rahman and Nazrul Islam from the spot.

Ashok lodged a complaint with Boraiogram police, accusing eight persons. They are Bisha, Shumon, Saiful Islam, Abdur Rahman, Mahmud, Nashed, Nazrul Islam and Sayeed.

SP of Natore Nazrul Islam and upazila BNP convenor Ekramul Alam visited the house of Ashok and assured villagers of proper investigation and justice.

There are about 80 Christian families in the village.

Local people said the beating incident was sequel to a dispute over marriage of a Christian youth - Shudarshan Gregory - with a Muslim girl -- Munni of Tangai -- about a year ago. After the marriage, the Muslim girl became a Christian and took a new name Agnus Gregory.

One day after their marriage, some people of Pabupara village forcibly took the girl from the house of Shudarshan.

Within a few days, a court in Natore settled the dispute and the girl returned to her husband.

After this, some people of Pabupara village led by some BNP

activists demanded Tk 25,000 from Shudarshan as compensation for their expenses for the case, the local people said.

When asked, BNP leader Ekramul Alam and Ashok Horaiya confirmed the story.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, SP Nazrul Islam said all measures have been taken to avert further violence and police are trying to nab the rest of the accused.

The Prime Minister also criticised the past Awami League regime for politicising all the sectors including the police force. She said changes are necessary to improve the situation and make the administration function neutrally for the welfare of the people.

Pointing at other constraints, Khaleda Zia reminded that the present government inherited a ruined economy. She alleged that the past Awami League government did nothing for poverty alleviation.

"They worked only to stay in power, benefit their family members and party activists," she said adding that the common people did not benefit from the work in the five years of rule.

Khaleda Zia also lashed at the Awami League for staying out of the parliament under the plea of not being able to speak, without even being there in the first place.

Macroeconomic balances

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Programme (ADP) and supplementary budget of the current fiscal (FY02).

The suggestions also include adjustment of the economy at a low equilibrium through consolidation measures and conscious trade-off between economic growth and macroeconomic stability in favour of the latter for the current fiscal year.

The CPD review mentioned that such a trade-off may not be suitable in the medium term.

"While designing such a package, one should not indulge in political point-scoring, otherwise it will confuse us in locating the real sources of the current problems and distract us in identifying the appropriate remedies," Dr Bhattacharya said.

As the source of economic problems are of structural nature it may persist unless remedial actions are initiated, the CPD felt.