



# WEATHER

## T O D A Y

### 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

**FROM PAGE 1**

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 seemed 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

# Resist acid attacks

**FROM PAGE 1**

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 Joi' (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 Garments Manufactures and Exporters

Association (BGMEA), 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.

Runa, 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 Anwarullah 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, noted singers Kumar Biswajit, Ayub Bachchu, Asif and others rendered a song dedicated to acid victims.

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 Mallbagh 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 Anwarullah Chowdhury, BRAC chairman Fazle Hasan Abed, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Attorney General Hasan Arif and BGMEA president Kutubuddin Ahmed.

# 2 fire incidents

**FROM PAGE 1**

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 Agargaon area.

The fire originated from electric an 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 Mohammadpur 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

**FROM P AGE 1**

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

**FROM PAGE 1**

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 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.



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

**FROM PAGE 12**

Anwar Hossain.

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

Ashok lodged a complaint with Boraigram 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 yesterday 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 Chriatian and took a new name Aaguess 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

# Macroeconomic balances

**FROM PAGE 1**

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 deflect 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 said suggesting expediting structural reforms.

"Such an approach to structural adjustment must emerge out of an indigenous process of policy making and dialogue which will need to be underwritten by a political consensus at home," the CPD felt.

Dr Bhattacharya pointed 'historical low revenue effort' as one of the major factors for the current fiscal imbalances. "Following a steady rise in the share of revenue (tax and non-tax) in the GDP from 7.08 in FY91 to 9.49 in FY97, the revenue mobilisation process started to show signs of exhaustion."

# Israeli incursion kills 30

**FROM PAGE 1**

to continue their resistance against the Israelis.

Mefraj, deputy to Palestinian public security commander Maj Gen Abdel Razeq Majaidie, was also a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, an arm of Arafat's Fatah movement.

Earlier a Palestinian gunman infiltrated into a Jewish settlement in Gaza and killed five Israelis, and 10 Palestinians died in Israeli raids, just as U.S. President George W. Bush said he was sending an envoy back to the region to try to stop ever-escalating violence.

"I'm deeply concerned about the tragic loss of life and the escalating violence," Bush said, announcing that special envoy Anthony Zinni would return to the region and work for a truce to end 17 months of conflict, hitting a peak over the last two weeks.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders welcomed the decision. "Prime Minister (Ariel) Sharon values and appreciates the work of General

# Stringent law

**FROM PAGE 12**

ing during the past Awami League regime. She was hinting at the self-declared rapists belonging to the student front of Awami League at the Jahangirnagar University.

She questioned the lack of effective protest against such crimes in the society.

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 AL 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.

# Alleged BNP men

**FROM PAGE 12**

Seema's husband Shahidur Rahman, a hawker, who remains away from house most of the time for business, alleged that the miscreants used to take advantage of his absence to disturb his family frequently.

Seema told this correspondent they had been living on the khas land given to tem by the Adhgram Bhumihin Samity about 10 months ago. Earlier, the land was under the possession of one Abul Kashem Kinu, an affluent person of the area. His sons--BNP workers Majnu and Dulal-- got enraged when the samity gave the land to Seema's family.

Shahidur Rahman said the accused in the case filed by his wife are now frequently threatening them. The accused are moving freely with police taking no action as yet.

On Tuesday night last, a gang entered Shukh Chand's house and tried to kidnap Shahidur and his wife. As they raised an alarm, villagers rushed to the spot and the gang fled.

More than 50 landless families including that of Seema received

# Altaf: Certain quarter

**FROM PAGE 12**

meeting of the Christian Co-operative Credit Union Limited in the city yesterday.

Though the government dealt with the conspiracy with a heavy hand, the quarter is continuing its destructive activities, he added.

Referring to the recent incidents in Gujarat, the home minister said no untoward incident took place in Bangladesh due to government steps. "We ensured security at all temples, Churches and mosques in the country."

He regretted the incident at Foijana Christian village in Pabna and said it was the outcome of personal enmity and family feud. He admitted that some people were injured and houses looted at the village.

He said he has ordered police to arrest the culprits who masterminded the incident. They will be punished.

"Criminals can not survive without support of any influential person. If any criminal is arrested, the influential person comes for-

# Poor coordination

**FROM PAGE 1**

activists have kept themselves away from party and government activities due to the excessive influence of a "new and young group" of people within the government and the party.

A number of senior ministers told The Daily Star that it had become very difficult for them to smoothly discharge their ministerial duties as there is tremendous pressure from the "young group" regarding transfers, postings and various types of lobbying.

They said the "young group" and their friends based in BNP's election office popularly known as 'Hawa Bhaban' always exert their influence in having their chosen men appointed in vital positions, despite their inefficiency and incompetence. As a result, ministerial activities are being hampered seriously.

Moreover, sources said the old friction between hard-liners and moderates still exists and in recent days the conflict between the two factions has increased manifold over policy decisions and implementation of programmes.

They said some ministers and leaders belonging to the hard-line group are also engaged in activities like putting liberal ministers in an awkward position as happened recently in Chittagong when terrorists attended a programme of the

# 11 CA firms assigned

**FROM PAGE 1**

According to sources, there are 475 registered big restaurants in the country and they are paying only Tk 1.50 crore as VAT. The amount would go up manifold if proper monitoring system is established.

Around Tk around 58 crore comes from 44 insurance companies but the amount should exceed Tk 100 crore, they thought.

Fifty-four factories are registered for paying VAT but they pay 'very negligible amounts.'

The government recently imposed 20 per cent regulatory duty on commercial import of cement clinker to stop VAT evasion and discourage import.

Although cigarette manufacturing sector is the highest tax payer in the country, the government thinks the amount can be increased if monitoring system is tightened and smaller factories are also brought under VAT network, a senior official pointed out.

In fiscal 2000-2001, the government received the highest Tk 1515 crore revenue from cigarette manufacturing sector, followed by gas sector with Tk 1040 crore.

In the current budget, initially the target was Tk 20,730 crore revenue earning from NBR sources, but the amount was raised by Tk 500 crore after the BNP-led coalition government came to power.

Addressing a high level meeting recently, the finance minister asked

# Tale of Savar

**FROM PAGE 12**

ence no difficulty in coming to the mainland because of easy availability of small boats till late at night. At the crack of dawn, thousands of people use the makeshift bridge and the ferryboats to come to the city for work.

The Kamrangir Char is a growing suburb with rising business activities of various kinds including small-scale cottage industries. Gas supply to certain areas in the Char has lately begun. In the absence of planned growth, the area is fast assuming the appearance of a stifling ghetto with very little basic facilities. In the existing slum-like environment, the law and order situation always remains a sensitive issue. The sprawling kutcha structures covering most of the Char are subject to fire hazards. All these factors make Kamrangir char deserving of attention by the Dhaka City Corporation.