



## Thundershower likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Noakhali and Comilla during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35 degree Celsius was recorded at Mongla and the lowest of 20.4 degree at Srimangol.

Th sun sets in the capital at 6:17 pm today and rises at 5:44 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	34.0	23.0	74	51
Chittagong	33.2	23.7	73	62
Rajshahi	33.5	23.2	80	64
Khulna	34.2	23.4	76	-
Barisal	33.6	27.4	79	69
Sylhet	30.0	21.1	70	66
Cox's Bazar	34.0	23.8	78	69

## BJPA team meets President

A five-member team of the Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BJPA) called on President AQM Badrudduja Chowdhury at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday and discussed their professional hassles, says a press release.

The photo journalists made some proposals to solve their problems.

The proposals include stopping police repression on the photo journalists; allowing them to cover all national and state programmes; access to parliament, Bangabhaban, cantonment and the Prime Minister's Office for covering important programmes; including two photo journalists in the media team of the heads of state and government; and introducing Ekushey Padak and Independence Award for the photo journalists.

The President assured them that he will look into their problems.

The delegation members included Md Salahuddin, president of the association, Aftab Ahmed, Rafiqur Rahman, AKM Mohsin and Mir Ahmed Miru.



PHOTO: STAR

A five-member team of the Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BJPA) called on President AQM Badrudduja Chowdhury at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday and presented him with a souvenir of the association.

## Cloning

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who also chaired the UK Royal Society's working group on therapeutic cloning, told the magazine that such a pregnancy would be "grossly irresponsible given the current state of knowledge, even aside from any ethical issues."

Antinori claims to be able to screen the embryos to reduce the risk of abnormalities but Gardner said, "There's no way you can do it—you could only spot gross changes in chromosomes or in the number of chromosomes." There can be single gene defects, he added, and problems with imprinting, which can lead to cancer as well as malformations.

"The chance of a live birth of a normal child is very hard to assess," said Gardner. Studies on other mammals, including sheep, cows, mice and goats, have had limited but variable success, he noted, and there is a very high rate of embryo loss and early death.

Richard Nicholson, editor of the UK-based Bulletin of Medical Ethics, told New Scientist that the report of the pregnancy strengthens the need for international legislation to ban reproductive cloning. Although the practice is banned in some countries, such as the UK, it is still legal in many—including the US, where the Senate is currently debating cloning legislation.

"We need an international law to prevent mavericks like Antinori doing something that the vast majority of the public and responsible scientists say they do not want to have done," Nicholson said.

## Padma Bridge

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training centre, which in course of time may be upgraded to an university.

The ADB official also showed interest in poverty alleviation programmes and self-employment projects, particularly rearing of the world famous black goat.

Shibuichi expressed his satisfaction at the lessening of traffic congestion and environment pollution in the capital following government measures.

Referring to the PM's interest in CNG conversion of vehicles, the ADB official said the bank would provide assistance in setting up CNG filling stations along Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

The prime minister in this regard sought assistance in setting up similar stations on the highway connecting Dhaka with North Bengal.

## Saifur

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As a case in point, Saifur said the Awami League government took up an integrated health programme with an outlay of Tk 15,000 crore. But the project did not have the approval of the ECNEC and lacked transparency at every level.

"A former bureaucrat, who used to receive Tk 20,000 a month as a secretary, was included in the project with a Tk 3 lakh per month salary. Thus, he received several crore taka from the health project and later, spent the money on his election campaign," Saifur mentioned.

Besides, he alleged that an assistant personal secretary of former finance minister SAMS Kibria, who used to receive Tk 14,000 as monthly salary, was also transferred to another project with Tk 1.75 lakh monthly salary. He also mentioned two other persons, close to the Awami League government, who received huge amounts from different government projects.

Speaking at the function, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said the government is now preparing a poverty reduction strategy programme to be considered as part of the next five-year plan.

"We are now in a vicious cycle and the reasons are all known to us," she said. "The country has no option but to explore the potentials of export-oriented industries for economic development," the prime minister said.

# Death of residential areas

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on 20 feet of their plots, facing the main road, subject to payment of a conversion fee of Tk 15 lakh for each plot. This was done to rid the interior of Dhanmondi residential area of illegal commercial activities. Considering the existing infrastructure and civic amenities, none was allowed to build any residential complex for more than 10 families on each plot.

But on January 10, 1996, a ministerial meeting changed the face of this residential area. The meeting decided that each plot owner could build apartment blocs to accommodate up to 20 families or more. It also declared Road-2, Satmasjid Road and Sheikh Kamal Swarani commercial areas. Official sources claimed that this was also done to 'save' the residential character of the area. All commercial houses were expected to shift their businesses to the commercial section of the area.

"But due to lack of concern of the authorities, nothing could be saved. On the one hand, Rajuk embarked on approving plans for big shopping complexes on the fringes and on the other, new businesses moved into the residential area," said a ministerial source.

An official source mentioned that the 10-family restriction was first violated in 1985 by an influential retired colonel at Road-4, who was

also a close relative of the then works minister. He was followed by a top official of the foreign ministry, who built a structure near Abahani playground defying the existing law. The two then influenced the authorities to change the law altogether.

"With Dhanmondi's status changing in 1996, Rajuk grabbed the opportunity of using Dhanmondi as example and declared many roads in Gulshan, Banani, Uttara and other residential areas of the city commercial areas," the source noted.

General Secretary of the Institute of Architects ASM Ismail told The Daily Star that to save the character of the city's residential areas, land use must be clearly defined.

"Unless land use is specified, we cannot control such invasions and protect the city from rapid degradation," he said.

## Jubo Dal men

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oration of her condition.

Father of the victim told this correspondent that he avoided government hospital fearing harassment. He alleged that the miscreants were threatening to withdraw the case filed by him on March 31 accusing the four.

# Proposed JS bill

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secretariat. A person who has been expelled by the parliament will also be considered as a stranger.

Although Article 39 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of thought and conscience, and of speech, the proposed law considers publication of reports about documents, statements or debates of a parliamentary committee which have been prepared for presentation in the House as a punishable offence.

Article 39 provides, "(1) Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed. (2) Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign countries, public order, decency, morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence - (a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression (b) freedom of press -- are guaranteed."

The proposed law also considers publication of confidential decisions, reports, documents or proceedings of the parliament as a punishable offence, which is contradictory to another provision of the Constitution.

Reads Article 78(4) of the Constitution: "A person shall not be liable to proceedings in any court in respect of the publication by or under the authority of parliament of any report, paper, vote or proceeding."

Article 36 of the proposed Act provides that if a person, organisation or head of the organisation goes against any of the provisions, the person, organisation or the head of the organisation will be considered as offender under the law and would face jail terms varying from two to seven years or a fine ranging between Tk 1 lakh and Tk 5 lakh or both.

As the bill defines a person other than MPs and parliament secretariat officials as a 'stranger', the parliament or the Speaker under this act may expel any working journalists from the parliament any time.

It also proposes empowerment of the House and its Speaker as magistrate to summon anyone and issue warrant of arrest against the 'offenders' under this Act. According to provisions of the bill, the speaker with the approval of the House would have the authority to hand down punishments including jail terms and fines to the offenders.

The bill suggests in the warrant of precedence of the state, an MP would enjoy the status of a Supreme Court judge and he/she would be entitled to use a flag inscribed with the monogram of the parliament in the car and the residence.

The proposed legislation has given the lawmakers immunity against criminal charges and has empowered the speaker to punish strangers in the parliament for misconduct, as defined by it.

Defamatory comments in the

House or in the meeting of a parliamentary committee about the president, speaker, Supreme Court judges or MPs or a subjudice matter have also been made punishable offences in the bill.

Passing remarks that may offend or insult an MP, seditious comments and any obstruction to the functioning of the parliament are stated as punishable offences.

The proposed law prohibits arrest of lawmakers on their way to and from the parliament for attending a session unless they face charges for sedition or affecting public safety. No MP should be forced to appear before a court when the parliament is in session, it further says.

The speaker will have the authority to issue warrant of arrest against an offender or in cases, order arrest without any warrant.

"This bill is meant to inflate the ego of the MPs who are not quite happy being just people's representatives. They want to be like the members of the House of Commons," observes a media analyst.

"This (bill) seems contradictory to the fact that our MPs have over Tk 8 crore telephone bills in arrears for years and that they shamelessly misuse the MP Hostel and that they are already a privileged class by all definitions."

# Hartal passes off

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was observed against such a back-drop.

In the capital, business houses, shops and shopping malls remained closed and all modes of transport except state-run BRTC buses and rickshaws stayed off the roads due to the hartal. However, in the afternoon, some minibuses plied with small number of passengers.

Classes were not held in educational institutions. Banks transacted business on a limited scale, keeping their gates closed. Attendance at the Secretariat was less than normal.

Air, train and launch services were normal. However, quoting railway control room, a UNB report said pickets halted Bahadurabad bound Teesta Express and confined the 'loco-master' at Nandina Station in Jamalpur district for more than hour at around noon.

Putting on bulletproof vests and helmets, scores of riot police took position around the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city from early morning. They virtually sealed off all entries to the party office. Other than police, only newsmen were allowed to go on the road in front of the office.

Despite repeated refusal by police, some 100 leaders and workers of AL tried to bring out a procession but failed. Then they staged a sit-in near the party office in the afternoon. The leaders included Motia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Abdur Razzak, Abdur Razzak, MP, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, city mayor Mohammad Hanif, Mirza Azam, MP and Ahsanullah Master.

They briefly spoke there denouncing the government's 'denial of the fundamental right' to assemble and bring out processions. When they tried to convince police officials on duty, they (police) argued that for the sake of maintaining law and order, AL leaders and workers could not be allowed to bring out procession.

At one stage, police officials warned the AL leaders that if they do not disperse immediately, their gathering would be declared an unlawful assembly.

When asked whether the government banned processions, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Ruhul Amin replied in the negative but said, "We are restraining them (AL) from bringing out procession as a precautionary measure so that no incident of law-break happens."

As pro-hartal activists coming from different directions tried to near the AL office, police chased them. Pickets then damaged two minibuses near Golap Shah Mazar. A few minutes later, one round of gunshot was fired near Osmany Udayan. Police swung into action and picked up two persons from Zero Point area.

Several bombs were exploded in the district court area and Chawkbazar area in the old part of the city. Rickshawpuller Nazrul and passenger Rashed were injured in a bomb explosion at Chawkbazar at about 8 am. They were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

At around 10 am, police chased and dispersed a pro-hartal procession brought out by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of AL.

## Chittagong

The day-long hartal called by the main opposition party passed off with no report of untoward incidents or arrest of pickets in the port city yesterday.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports that normal life was disrupted due to the hartal.

At around 11.00 in the morning, police intercepted an AL procession as it moved just a few yards from the city AL office at Darul Fazal Market near Rezauddin Bazaar and sent the leaders and activists back to the party office.

The leaders included party central leader and former ambassador Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, city unit leaders advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul, Khaleque-uz

Zaman and advocate Iftekhar Saimul Chowdhury.

All motorised transports kept off the city roads. Only rickshaws plied freely. Air service and train communication were normal although number of passengers was less than normal.

Activities at Chittagong port were, however, disrupted greatly. Delivery of goods outside the port area remained fully stopped. Some loading and unloading work inside the jetties continued.

A section of leaders and activists of the ruling BNP brought out an anti-hartal procession in Bohadderhat area under Chandaonga thana in the morning.

## Sylhet

Our Staff Correspondent in Sylhet reported that 20 people including four policemen were injured in a clash involving activists of ruling BNP, opposition Awami League and police at Jagannathpur upazila headquarters in Sunamganj district during the hartal hours.

Police said the clashes ensued when activists of AL and its front organisations brought out a procession and ransacked some offices to stop work.

Four of the injured, all of them Awami Juba League activists, were admitted to the upazila health complex.

Police arrested four Juba League activists during the clash.

## Narayanganj

Our correspondent in Narayanganj reported partial observance of the hartal in the river port town yesterday. Some buses plied on Narayanganj-Dhaka road and a small number of shops remained open. Educational institutions remained closed on the day. Adamji Jute Mills operated as usual.

## Magura

Police arrested three leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League including its Magura district unit president yesterday on charge of halting traffic movement on Magura-Dhaka highway.

They were produced before the district magistrate's court. The district unit president was granted bail while two others were sent to jail custody.

## Gopalganj

A UNB report says 10 people including three policemen were injured in clashes between police and pickets in Gopalganj. A police pick-up van was damaged during the clashes.

## BCL body

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Hasan Tuhin, Alak Bonik and Shah Mostafa Alamgir have been named organising secretaries of the student body.

The other officer bearers are, Abdul Alim (publicity secretary), Quamrul Hasan Khokon (office secretary), HM Masud Dulal (publication secretary), MA Momin Patwari (social welfare secretary), Tareq Uddin (library secretary), Mizanur Rahman Sajal (cultural secretary), Shahajan Shishir (sports secretary), Anisur Rahman Litu (law secretary) and Masum Iqbal (information and technology secretary).

The committee also includes 10 assistant secretaries and 113 members.

## Shahriar

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for screening of the video cassettes in presence of the lawyers and the accused.

Shahriar Kabir was arrested at Zia International Airport on his return from Kolkata on November 22 last year.

Police also seized his passport and some video cassettes.

Later, a sedition case against Shahriar Kabir was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on December 8 last year.

# Trade talks tomorrow

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authorities applied the 'non-cooperation' clause against the Bangladesh to impose the additional duty.

Against this backdrop, two top chamber of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) yesterday urged the Indian government to accept Bangladesh's demands.

"The trade and industry feel that such non-tariff and para-tariff imposition is not only unfortunate in the sense that Bangladesh is an important market for India to the extent of nearly US\$ 2 billion, but it is against the spirit of SAARC regional cooperation," said MCCI President Tapan Chowdhury and DCCI President Matur Rahman in a joint statement.

However, the two chambers hoped that both the countries would 'genuinely endeavour to find some solutions to the serious imbalance of trade against Bangladesh'.

Earlier, the scheduled commerce secretary-level meeting was postponed twice, once in December last and then again in January this year. The December meeting was postponed at the last moment as the Indian side declined to attend it due to differences of opinion over the

meeting agenda. And the last time, the Indian side did not show any specific reason for not being able to attend the meeting.

## Health Day

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efficiency of health services and make them easily accessible.

"We have attached importance to develop the health sector by increasing financial allocation," she said.

The government has taken up elaborate programmes to observe the day.

A colourful procession will be brought out from the Jatiya Press Club at 8 am. It will terminate at the Engineers' Institution after parading the main thoroughfares.

Film actors and actresses will take part in a charity football match at Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at 4.30 pm.

Other programmes of the day include band show, cultural programme, display by scouts and bodybuilding show.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain will attend the programmes as chief guest, said an official hand-out.