



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Khulna and Barisal divisions with moderately heavy falls at places over Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions today.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country. Met Office said.

Country's highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and the lowest 23.5 degree Celsius in Dhaka.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.50 pm today and rises at 5:17 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	32.8	23.5	90	85
Chittagong	29.6	26.0	90	89
Rajshahi	31.4	25.8	89	85
Khulna	33.7	27.0	84	80
Barisal	32.4	25.4	90	93
Sylhet	32.4	25.5	96	95
Cox's Bazar	32.5	26.0	91	92



Businessmen of Nawabpur and Suritola parade down city streets yesterday, protesting the spiralling trend of violence and extortion in the areas.

Flood: Serious turn

FROM PAGE 1

Sariakandi upazilas in the district.

In Sirajganj, at least 40 thousand people of 16 villages of Sadar Upazila of the district are passing their days in panic, as floodwater has submerged fields and houses.

The flood triggered by the onrush of water of the Jamuna upstream, accompanied by torrential downpour, over the last week caused breaches in the flood protection embankment at Soliabari and Shimla points.

The upazila administration sources told BSS that at least 500 affected people of 100 families have already been evacuated to safer places from the embankment areas.

Executive Engineer of the Water Development Board Mojibur Rahman said the turbulent waters washed away 150-metre embankment (groins) at Soliabari point and 25-metre embankment at Shimla point under Sadar Upazila.

The water board officials said that 75 feet shank of Shimla solid spur and 100 feet of Enayetpur solid spur have already been washed away by strong currents.

Over 200-millimetre rains have been recorded in Sirajganj over the last 72 hours. The revetment project to protect the Sirajganj town and its adjacent areas is under threat.

Unprecedented is the flood in the five upazilas of Noakhali. Thousands of people in Sadar, Chatkhal,

Begumganj, Hatiya and Companyganj upazilas lost their homes, crops, cattle and belongings to floods.

The flash flood situation in the northeastern Meghna basin is likely to remain unchanged, as most rivers in the basin recorded further rise, said UNB yesterday.

The bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said light to moderate rainfall at most places and heavy rainfall at one or two places have been recorded over the last 24 hours ending at 9.00am yesterday.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Padma recorded a rise at all points. Most rivers in the Meghna basin registered a further rise. The Surma River in Sunamganj was flowing three centimetres above the danger mark yesterday morning.

The rivers in the southeastern hill basin recorded a rise and fall. Of 46 monitoring stations, one point is flowing above the danger mark, 30 points recorded a rise and nine points recorded a fall in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday, the bulletin added.

In the Brahmaputra basin, the Brahmaputra recorded a rise of 15 centimetres at Chilmari, and the Jamuna a rise of six centimetres at Bahadurabad, five centimetres at Sirajganj and ten centimetres at Aricha.

The Teesta recorded a rise by 18cm more at Dalia and five centimetres at Kaunia. The old Brahmaputra rose by 13cm in Jamalpur and 18cm in Mymensingh.

In the Ganges basin, the Padma marked a rise of 19cm at Pankha, 32cm at Rajshahi, 35cm at Hardinge Bridge, 18cm at Goalando and 11cm at Bhagyakul.

The Mahananda registered a rise of 15cm at Chapainawabganj and the Gorai 11cm at the Gorai Railway Bridge. In the Meghna basin, the Surma recorded a rise of six centimetres at Sunamganj and a slight rise at Sylhet but receded slightly at Kanaighat.

The river was flowing three centimetres above the danger mark at Sunamganj yesterday morning. The Manu recorded a rise of 20cm at the Manu Railway Bridge and 28cm at Moulvibazar, the Khowai 84cm at Habiganj, the Someswari 14cm at Durgapur and the Meghna marked a slight rise at Bhairab Bazaar.

The bulletin said the rivers in the Brahmaputra and the Ganges basins are likely to mark a further rise in the next 24 hours till 6.00am today.

However, the rivers will flow below the danger mark. The rivers in the Meghna basin will mark a rise and fall during the period.

BNP, AL look reluctant

FROM PAGE 1

Khandaker Abdul Haq said. But this time no such committee has been formed, he mentioned.

The seventh parliament had formed such a special committee in its maiden session as the formation of standing committees took 16 months. The House had also developed a practice of getting the bills scrutinised by the standing committees. Excepting a few, almost all the bills were referred to the committees.

According to constitutional provisions, the parliament can appoint from among its members the standing committees including those on various ministries to examine draft bills and other legislative proposals, review the enforcement of laws and propose such enforcement and examine any other matter referred by parliament.

Sources in the ruling BNP said the party has now planned to form 38 standing committees, keeping the opposition's quota blank. They however admitted it would look odd.

Formation of these bodies is being handled by Leader of the House and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

"We wanted to form the committees in the current budget session of the House, but the main opposition party is yet to come up with its list of members to be included in the bodies," Chief Whip of the House Khandaker Delwar Hossain told this correspondent.

While the BNP blames the opposition for not giving the names of its nominees for these bodies, the AL says the ruling party is unwilling to 'accommodate proportionately' its lawmakers in the posts of chairman of the committees.

Asked whether the opposition would be invited afresh to give the names of their nominees, Delwar replied in negative and said he might remind his opposition counterpart.

With 58 seats in the 300-member parliament, the AL has been asking for 'proportionate shares' both in the posts of chairman and member of the bodies.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid recalled that during the AL rule, an accord was reached with the then opposition BNP, offering it proportionate share in the posts of chairman. But instead of availing the facility, the party boycotted the parliament till the expiry of its tenure.

He further said chairmanship of one of the 44 then parliamentary committees was awarded to an opposition lawmaker belonging to Ershad-led faction of Jatiya Party. "Now, we are in the opposition bench and we want our due share in the committees, both for chairmanship and membership," he added.

Brushing aside the opposition demand, the chief whip of the House said the House has no convention of having committee chairman from the

opposition. "It is not a matter of demand, it can only be settled through discussion."

Earlier, Delwar had written to Shahid seeking names of their nominees for the committees. In response, Shahid said the opposition should be given chairmanship of at least 10 out of a total of 49 standing committees (some not on ministries).

The opposition chief whip recalled that during the AL rule, parliamentary rules of procedure were amended allowing non-minister lawmakers, instead of ministers, to head standing committees to ensure transparency.

However, the ruling party sources said before bargaining for the posts of committee chairman, the opposition should come up with the names of their lawmakers, saying whom they wish to get in which committee.

Criminal hurt

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form a separate group recently, which angered Ripon, the gang leader.

Both groups are involved in extortion and the shootout was a sequel to rivalry over establishing supremacy in the area.

Shipon is now under police protection at the hospital. Some of his associates went to see him at the hospital but fled as soon as police went to interrogate him.

There are several cases pending against Shipon with the Sabujbagh Police Station.



Villagers wade through floodwaters on the submerged National Highway 52 as they make their way to safer ground on Thursday in Samarajan area of Dhemaji district, in Assam state. Dhemaji district has been cut off from the rest of the state after National Highway 52 was submerged when the Jadhral river breached its banks.

AL to join

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Asst Publicity Secretary Abdul Mannan were also present at the press conference.

About another remark of the prime minister on bomb blasts during the Awami League's rule and blaming them on the AL, Nasim said his party lawmakers would reply to the allegations in parliament.

Nasim questioned the legality of the committee formed to investigate the incidents when the chargesheets of some cases had been submitted.

"One of the charge-sheeted accused in the Udichi bombing case is now in the government," he told newsmen.

Nasim accused the government of trying to divert the Udichi, Naryanganj, Ramna Batamul and other bomb-explosion incidents to a different track by implicating AL leaders and workers in the bombing charges.

Nasim alleged the Awami League joined the parliamentary session on June 24, but was not allowed to discuss the major issues in the House compelling them to walk out.

He described as unfortunate the removal of 20 ASPs after completion of training at the police academy and said they would raise the issue too in parliament.

India to screen

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committing guerilla strikes in parts of Tripura and other northeastern states."

Meanwhile, the local police in Assam and the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) would soon be launching joint patrolling of the international border with Bangladesh to prevent infiltration.

"The modalities for joint patrolling are being worked out and we are confident such a move will definitely pay rich dividends in our fight against checking infiltration and movement of separatists on the border," BSF officer P K Dey said.

Intelligence reports say Pakistani militants are also trying to enter India via Bangladesh.

"Our troops are on full alert and we cannot ignore such reports. We take reports of Pakistani terrorists trying to enter India through the unfenced borders in the northeastern region very seriously," Dey said.

Assam police are soon to set up several outposts along the international border to act as a second line of defence — the BSF is entrusted with the task of manning the border.

Intern doctors

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of injuries suffered in a road accident. He died due to alleged lack of proper treatment.

But Ruhul Amin, the son of the victim, in a statement yesterday refuted the intern doctors' allegation. "There was no untoward incident between us and intern doctors. After hearing the news of my father we were in deep shock," he said.

He however said he received the body of his father after 12 hours of his death.

LA shooting

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Islamic extremist organisations, are planning to hit Israeli targets outside (Israel). And an airport is a preferred target," he told Israel's Army Radio.

However, he later told Reuters he did not have evidence to prove a terror link.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres vowed that Israel, with US help, would track down those responsible for the shooting.

But officials in the United States said the motive for the shooting was not immediately known and Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn said it was an "isolated" incident.

"There is no indication of any terrorism connection in this matter right now," FBI spokesman Matthew McLaughlin said. "At this point it's too early to rule out anything."

El Al, Israel's national airline, probably has the toughest security precautions of any airline, developed in response to a series of attacks by Arab and Islamic militants on its operations during the 1960s and early 1970s.

El Al said its measures had prevented a "great tragedy" in Los Angeles and it had no plans to alter its operations.

Shadow cabinet

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had planned for a shadow cabinet but problems within the party scuttled the move.

BNP's move failed because of a dilemma in the party that getting a 'portfolio' in the shadow cabinet might turn into a 'natural claim' for that particular portfolio when the party goes to power.

AL also has the same problem now, a party leader acknowledged. Despite all the odds, the party chief is determined to form a shadow cabinet, the sources said.

Ashuliya

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on the environment. The Water Development Board (WDB) has reportedly conducted studies in the area and found out that Ashulia is a vital flood-flow zone. If the low-lying area is filled up for construction, it will, in all likelihood, cause flood in the city as well as threaten the Uttara dam.

Widespread agitation is afoot to protest the filling up of low-lying areas at Ashuliya. In view of this, the government has issued orders prohibiting such filling-up of low-lying areas in and around the Dhaka City, although it has provoked strong protests from land grabbers of the Jamuna Group in the face of firm police action.



Models on a fashion parade arranged by the Glamour Media at a city hotel yesterday.

6 held on charge of car lifting in Chittagong

BSS, Dhaka

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested six persons suspecting them to be members of a car thief gang from Bajrakona under Bakolia thana in the city early yesterday.

DB team of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) also seized a dismantled microbus from a workshop in the same area.

Acting on a tip-off, a DB squad raided the workshop and picked up Mosharraf Hossain, Abdus Salam, Jane Alam, Helaluddin, Alam and Sahadat Hossain when they were dismantling the microbus.

Police suspect that the microbus was stolen from somewhere and the arrested were dismantling it to change its original shape.

The arrested could not produce any document of the vehicle or confirm the name of its owner, police said.

In another drive, a team of Kotwali police on Thursday recovered a huge quantity of stolen goods and arrested five persons in connection with thefts at Toshiba Showroom at Jamal Khan Road and Fancy Jewelers at Chawkbazar in the city.

Based on the confession of three thieves, police rounded up two more alleged thieves and recovered looted goods, including television, refrigerator, cassette disk and gold ornaments from them.

Sp's death

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interrogate the wife of Bashar, the officer refused it, saying the wife and her daughters were interrogated.

The officer said the case may turn into a murder case if any family member calls it a homicide and gives details.

Police officials said they contacted some police officials at Faridpur and came to know that the husband and the wife used to quarrel over trivial matters.

Another source said the police seem to have stalled the probe into SP's 'suicide' to hide the dark side of their own lifestyle.

Khairul Bashar, 45, SP of Faridpur, allegedly shot himself dead with his service pistol at his apartment of Ramna Tower in the capital in the early hours of Wednesday.

BCL leadership

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Since then, BCL activists had been demanding a new leadership in its DU unit but the council was delayed by the AL policymakers, they claimed.

After AL's debacle in the last parliamentary election, the policymakers felt the necessity of a strong student body at DU, they said.

AL now wants a strong BCL unit at DU because student politics there always plays a significant role in national politics.

The last council of BCL's DU unit was held on October 14 1998 when M Sazzad Hossain and AKM Azim were president and general secretary of the organisation respectively.

Aspirants are lobbying with influential AL leaders and campaigning on the DU campus.

The names widely discussed on the campus for posts of president and general secretary are those of Alamgir Hasan, Delwar Hossain, Hemayet Uddin Himu, Chowdhury Saifunnabi Sagar, Ilius Hossain Bannu, Bipul Sarkar and Pankaj Shah.

Councils of the two city units of BCL (North and South) will also be held at the same venue on July 8.

The council of BCL's central unit was held in April this year when its president and general secretary were elected for the first time in the organisation's 55-year history.

BB discusses

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the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) of the central bank would identify the individual or the company as a defaulter till the defaulted amount is realised. The banks would have to report to the CIB about the defaulters until the defaulted amount is realised, it said.

According to the amended Bank Company Act, there is no legal bar to recover defaulted loans even if written off, whatever it is in other laws.

The board of directors of banks would decide to write off the defaulted loans but in case of present and former directors, banks would have to take approval from the central bank.

17000 villages flooded

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and also told them to be ready to assist the civil authorities at short notice," said Sarkar. "The army is on standby in vulnerable places."

Sarkar said the state administration was worried the rising water pressure would lead to embankments crumbling or dams bursting.

"We have asked the district administration, police and disaster management teams to adopt precautionary measures to prevent the breaching of embankments," said the minister.

Assam Health Minister Bhumidar Barman said he had sent teams of doctors to Kerala and other flood-hit districts to prevent the outbreak of water-borne diseases.

"Teams of paramedics have fanned out to various parts of Dhemaji district to control diseases like stomach ailments. Adequate stocks of medicines and food supplies have also been sent to the flood-hit areas," said Barman.

N K Vasu, the park warden of Kaziranga, home to the almost-extinct one-horned rhinoceros, said the swollen Brahmaputra river and its tributaries had flooded the low-lying national park forcing the animals to migrate to higher ground.

"There has been a steady movement of animals from the park to safer areas with the floodwaters already submerging the lowlands inside the sanctuary," Vasu said over the telephone.

Flash floods triggered by monsoon rains in India have already killed hundreds of people. The worst-affected states have been Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The annual monsoon rains first hit the southern coast of Kerala in June and spread across the rest of the country over the next three months.

The state meteorological observatory in Bihar's capital, Patna, forecast heavy rains over the weekend in Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand.

"A low-pressure area is developing over the eastern states of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal and is likely to cause heavy rains in the next 48 hours," said R K Mukopadhyay, director of the Patna Meteorological Observatory.

"The southwest monsoon has peaked and it will continue to lash most parts of the country,"

Power privatisation leaves New Delhi blacked out

AFP, New Delhi

The transfer into private hands of power supply in the Indian capital New Delhi has been marked by lengthy blackouts amid a sweltering heatwave, sparking anger among consumers and allegations of sabotage and corruption.

Large areas of Delhi have been plunged into darkness since the handover of the distribution to the private firms, Tata group and Bombay Suburban Electricity Supply (BSES), on July 1, media reports said.

Some reports claimed state employees handling the power distribution were deliberately sabotaging the lines to protest the handover, although the Delhi state government blamed the cuts on a demand overload due to the hot weather.

Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dixit urged residents to be patient and said the private firms would need at least a month to improve the power situation, where nearly half the supply is lost to theft and inefficient infrastructure.

The Hindustan Times newspaper said the acute power shortage situation was due to the new management trying to get to grips with the rickety state power system.

"The distribution companies (BSES and Tata) do not have a clue about the job they have taken on. They don't know their turf, their infrastructure and people are not in place," the newspaper claimed.

"They have done zero homework — not even a basic feasibility study."

A blackout Thursday night sent angry residents on to the streets in a number of suburbs. The Times of India newspaper said. Some held demonstrations while others seethed in silence, it added.

Industry officials said it was not so much lack of will as the gigantic task confronting the private firms which is causing the headaches.

The Delhi debacle mirrors the kind of problems being experienced generally in India's power sector.

"In Delhi, power theft is rampant across user groups including households and small and medium industries," an industry official said on condition of anonymity.

Poorer areas of the city are marked by hundreds of cables dangling illegally and dangerously from the main grid and leading into private homes — mostly shanties.

"While the Delhi Vidyut Board (the state supplier) has appointed vigilance inspectors who visit localities to crack down on power theft, these illegal connections are then restored in no time," he said, adding that lack of tough laws allowed such pilferage.

The estimated 50 per cent of the electricity lost in distribution to Delhi is much the same position all over India, except for the 10 and 20 per cent distribution losses respectively in the cities of Mumbai and Kolkata.

Since the supply of power in those two cities is already in private hands, industry officials said the privatisation in Delhi is likely to lead to an improvement over the long term.

"Rampant power theft implies a large number of consumers are paying nothing for electricity while consuming as much as they want," the official said.