



PHOTO: STAR

Rickshaws, buses and other vehicles plough their way through the rainwater-filled road in front of the Mouchak Market in Dhaka. Yesterday was a day of driving rain that scaled the summer heat down much across the country.

### Cloudburst takes the edge off heat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy showers swept countrywide yesterday, taking the edge off a 12-day hot spell that claimed 20 lives.

Much of the country will experience more rains by tomorrow, as the monsoon fans out, said a weathercast yesterday.

Although life in the capital remained at a standstill for hours on end, the cloudburst amid scorching summer heat came as a relief.

Yesterday's highest rainfall was recorded at 133 millimetres in Feni, followed by 93 millimetres in Dhaka from 6:00am to 6:00pm, said the Met office.

The highest temperature was measured at 34.4 degrees Celsius in Syedpur, while both Teknaf and Srimangal hit the lowest at 23.0 degrees.

Temperature in Dhaka climbed down to 26.2 degrees Celsius yesterday from 34.8 degrees Wednesday thanks to the showers.

Temperature may remain unchanged in most areas of the country, said weathercasters.

## Saarc FMs to meet July 9 to remove roadblock to summit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a delayed move to break the stalemate over holding the 12th SAARC summit, foreign secretaries of member-countries of the 7-nation forum will meet on July 9-10 in Kathmandu.

"This move to hold the Standing Committee meeting is quite significant as it is an introduction to holding of the SAARC Summit," Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury said.

Speaking at the weekly press briefing yesterday, the foreign secretary expressed the optimism that the summit would take place this year in Islamabad.

The summit scheduled for January this year was postponed due to a conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

Shamsheer said though the Standing Committee meeting would mainly discuss some administrative matters, the stalled SAARC Summit and its possible timing are likely to come up at the meeting. He however did not elaborate.

Replying to a question whether Bangladesh's foreign policy is going to have a new dimension, he said "Looking East" would definitely remain on top of the foreign policy objectives.

He said Bangladesh will simultaneously continue its efforts to strengthen the SAARC and gear up its activities, keep its focus on Palestine and Iraq issues and launch a massive campaign to secure the office of the OIC Secretary General. "We are yet to finalise when we will send our ambassador in Baghdad... We are

now watching the situation."

Asked about Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri's 3-day visit to Bangladesh from June 18, the foreign secretary said both Dhaka and Jakarta are working to finalise details of the four programme.

Megawati had visited Bangladesh in 2001 as Vice President.

Shamsheer said she expressed her desire to visit Bangladesh again. Indonesia is economically very sound and there is a scope to enhance cooperation, he mentioned.

"This visit is also a reflection of Bangladesh's current 'Looking East' foreign policy. It is highly significant

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### Bangladeshi army man to lead UN observer team to Cote d'Ivoire

UNB, Dhaka

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Brig. Gen. Abdul Hafiz of Bangladesh to lead the UN military observers' contingent in Cote d'Ivoire (MINUCI), according to an information received yesterday.

The decision of the appointment of Gen Hafiz to the post of Chief Military Liaison Officer of the MINUCI, effective Wednesday, was communicated to the president of the UN Security Council.

The UN secretary-general also informed the Security Council president that Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, China, India, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Tunisia and Uruguay have agreed to provide military liaison officers for the initial group of 26 officers.

MINUCI was established last month to help guide efforts to implement a French-brokered peace accord reached in January that calls on the government, rebels and political opposition to share power in a transitional government until elections in 2005.

The new mission includes a military component to complement the operations of the French and the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The task of the military liaison group includes advising the secretary-general's Special Representative Albert Tevoedine, on military matters, monitoring the military situation, including the security of Liberian refugees and establishing links with the French and ECOWAS forces.

### Serena sent packing

AFP, Paris

Fourth seed Justine Henin-Hardenne shocked US defending champion and top seed Serena Williams 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 in an epic 2hr 20min semifinal Thursday to book a meeting with fellow Belgian and second seed Kim Clijsters in the French Open women's singles final.

Clijsters earlier beat unseeded Russian Nadia Petrova 7-5, 6-1.

## Woman suicide bomber kills 18 in Russia

REUTERS, Moscow

A woman suicide bomber ambushed a bus carrying Russian air force pilots near rebel Chechnya on Thursday, blowing it up and killing herself and at least 17 others, government officials said.

The attack was the third in three weeks by women suicide guerrillas fighting for Chechen independence and came on the eve of a Russian parliament vote on a partial amnesty for rebel fighters designed to improve prospects for a Kremlin peace plan.

The attack occurred in Russia's North Ossetia region, bordering Chechnya, after the bus carrying the pilots and a group of civilians attached to the air force stopped near a railway crossing on the outskirts of Mozdok.

"A terrorist-suicide woman blew it up," defense ministry spokesman Nikolai Deryabin said.

"At the present moment we have 18 people killed, including the suicide woman, and nine wounded. The condition of two of those in hospital is very serious," emergency ministry official Vladimir Ivanov, reached by telephone, told Reuters

## Barisal hospital without water for 10 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Water supply to Barisal General Hospital has remained cut off for past 10 days causing immense sufferings to about 150 patients.

The hospital gets water from two pumps placed at the heart of the city. However, both pumps went out of service on May 26 after developing electrical problems.

The pumps could not be reactivated as these were severely damaged, sources said.

The Public Works Department (PWD), when informed, installed an old pump on June 2 that went out of

from Mozdok. Officials said the woman tried to board the bus, which stopped to take on workers, and then detonated the bomb when she was unable to do so.

In Moscow, Russia's prosecutor general told President Vladimir Putin, who vowed to crush the Chechen rebellion when he took office in 2000, that 16 people had been killed. About 12 others were wounded.

Efforts would be launched to find out where and how suicide fighters - a relatively new phenomenon in Chechnya -- were being trained, Vladimir Ustinov said in a televised encounter with Putin. "We will locate their training centers and trace their funding sources," he said.

Eight servicemen were among the dead, including four air force officers, officials said.

Putin, who will seek re-election early next year, has been pushing a peace plan for Chechnya following a Kremlin-organized referendum in March that locked the region into Russia.

North Ossetia is the springboard for Russian military operations in

### Saifur set to place budget on June 12

BSS, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will place the national budget for the fiscal 2003-2004 in the Jatiya Sangsad on June 12.

It would be the ninth budget to be placed by Saifur and the second of the coalition government.

According to Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat, everything is set for the budget to take place and eighth session of the eighth parliament to begin at 7:00pm on June 10.

The Parliament Advisory Committee will meet on June 10 to finalise the proceedings of the session.

Members of Parliament have submitted 1,634 questions to the parliament secretariat, of which 96 for the prime minister and 1,538 for ministers.

The secretariat has received four bills till yesterday. The bills are Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (amendment) Bill 2003, Bangladesh Sericulture Board (amendment) Bill 2003, Bangladesh Silk Research and Training Institute

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### Hazari's men threaten Feni AL leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Suspended leaders of the Awami League and its student chapter Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) staged a demonstration against the district AL leadership in Feni yesterday.

The demonstrators loyal to former AL lawmaker Joynal Hazari also allegedly threatened Aziz Ahmed Chowdhury and Abdur Rahman, district AL president and general secretary, with death for disclosing to central leaders the names of the attackers of a party meeting.

The 'Hazari men' thwarted the May 31 meeting in Feni in the presence of AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

An AL Central Working Committee meeting in Dhaka on Wednesday suspended nine leaders of the AL district unit and directed the BCL and the Jubo League, another front organisation, to suspend 10 others for the same incident.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A BIG IRONY: Members of the Federation of Ramna Park Workers Association carry a pro-environment banner on World Environment Day yesterday after littering a concrete bench in the Ramna Park with breakfast paper boxes.

## Iraq tenders to sell 1st post-Saddam oil

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq on Thursday tendered to sell its first crude since the fall of Saddam Hussein and said it aimed to clinch term supply deals by the end of June.

Returning to the international market nearly three months after the US invasion, Iraq's state oil marketing organisation SOMO called for bids for 10 million barrels of crude held in storage at export terminals. The oil will be loaded between June 17-30.

After the open tender is awarded next week, direct contracts with oil companies should follow by the end of this month, Iraq's chief oil marketer, Mohammed al-Jibouri, told

Reuters.

"The tender is just a one-off. We want to export our oil on term contracts," Jibouri, head of SOMO, said.

"Hopefully we will start signing contracts after the barrels are emptied out of storage."

SOMO called for bids by noon EDT on June 10 for eight million barrels of Kirkuk crude stored at Ceyhan in Turkey and two million barrels of Basrah Light at the Iraqi Gulf port Mina al-Bakr.

It said bids preferably should come from refiners, cutting out middlemen who dominated Saddam's sales roster under the now-defunct United Nations oil-for-food program that operated under sanctions.

Under oil-for-food, Iraq exported over two million barrels per day (bpd), accounting for some four percent of globally traded oil.

Having put back its targets for resuming exports several times, Iraqi oil authorities are now aiming to quickly reach exports of a million barrels per day.

But sustained looting and lack of security at oilfields in the south of the country threatens that timetable.

SOMO's tender switches payment for Iraqi crude back to US dollars, despite the steep decline in the value of the dollar versus the euro since Saddam ordered payments be made in euros in late 2000.

### Phone shop attacked at Shahbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of miscreants attacked a phone-fax shop at Aziz Cooperative Super Market at Shahbagh, injuring at least four persons including two leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Wednesday night.

Seriously injured in the head, Mohammad Jahangir, an employee of the market, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) immediately after the incident.

The other injured are Shamsuzzoha Sumon, JCD Dhaka University (DU) unit assistant general secretary, Ashraf Babu, JCD DU unit international secretary and shop manager Mohammad Soleyman.

Sources in the market said an unknown young man from the shop No. 75 named Wave Business System came to the phone-fax shop Meem International to make a call from the cell phone at about 10:15pm. After making the call, he was leaving without paying.

When Soleyman asked him to pay the phone bill, he refused to pay. Later, the young man along with six others ransacked the shop and looted cash and pre-paid mobile phone cards, owner of the shop Kazi Moniruzzaman Monir said.

He said the miscreants also attacked JCD leaders Sumon and Babu when they protested their act and asked them to pay the phone bill.

Later, Monir demanded punishment to the attackers. Additional police have been deployed at the market, as the situation there is tense. No case was filed.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
June 6		6-44 pm
June 7	5-10 am	

  

Prayer Timings		
June 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation