

LIFTING OF EMERGENCY

Advisory council to decide

LGRD adviser tells Sherpur meet

UNB, Sherpur

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Anwarul Iqbal yesterday said the Council of Adviser will take the decision on whether emergency will be lifted or not considering the overall situation.

The adviser faced a barrage of questions on emergency, prices of essentials, power outage, fertiliser crisis, stagnation of development activities and repair of infrastructure at a view exchange meeting at the DC's office.

The meeting was part of gathering opinions from different sections of the people at five districts before the Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed's visit to

Mymensingh on February 25.

Anwarul Iqbal wanted to know from the leading farmers and entrepreneurs attending the meeting about inputs for boro cultivation, power supply, food situation, employment, small and medium factories and flood control measures. He sought suggestions to resolve the problems facing the people in the district.

Shamsheer Ali, a farmer, told the adviser that several thousand acres of land could not be cultivated in Nalitabari and Ithenigati upazilas for want of irrigation facility.

Manirul Islam sought immediate employment measures for thousands of poor living in the char areas. Hakim Babul wanted the

administration take effective measure to check rise in prices of essentials, which is waning popularity of the government.

Aborigine leader Kopenra Nakrek demanded repair of infrastructures damaged by the flooding in Nalitabaria upazila and measures for protection of life and crops from wild elephants.

Power outage and upazila election also came up for discussion at the meeting.

The adviser said their demands and views will be placed before the advisory council.

He said the Election Commission will decide if the parliamentary and upazila elections be held simultaneously.

Job seekers asked not to go abroad thru' illegal channels

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment has asked the job seekers not to go abroad through illegal channels.

A ministry spokesman said the government is making all-out efforts to explore new job markets for legal Bangladesh expatriate workers.

"At this time illegal migration will adversely affect reputation, and it must be avoided. This will only jeopardise the government's efforts," the spokesman added.

125 policemen leave for Congo to join UN mission

UNB, Dhaka

A 125-member contingent of Bangladesh police left here for Congo on Friday night to join the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Monuc.

The team, led by Police Super Meer Shahidul Islam, left Zia International Airport by a UN chartered flight.

The contingent will replace the member of BANFPU-2 in Congo. Assistant Inspector General of Police (UN Desk) M Ekramul Habib and other senior officials were present at the airport to see them off, says a Police Headquarters' press release.

ST SCHOLASTICA'S SCHOOL Celebration of 125th founding anniversary begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The two-day celebration of 125th founding anniversary of RNDM Mission and St Scholastica's Girls' School began here yesterday.

Reverend Archbishop of Dhaka Paulinus Costa was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony held on the school premises.

On the first day, sisters of the mission celebrated 125th anniversary of the arrival of RNDM founder Mother Euphrasie Barbier in Chittagong who established here the first centre of the mission in Asia in 1883.

Archbishop Paulinus said mission sisters had played a great role for the development of the distressed children in the region through their service and dedication by establishing and conducting school, hostel and orphanage side by side preaching the holy teachings of Jesus.

He hoped that the sisters would continue their work to build fraternity and harmony among all and foster among the students the spirit of honesty, justice, love and humble service for all.

RNDM Superior General Sister Maureen McBride said, "Today we celebrate the vision and courage of our founder. On this day we honour the woman of faith who founded this mission and loved the people of this land."

Mentionable, Euphrasie Barbier of France along with five companions Sister Marie du Sacre-Coeur, Sr Marie de la Nativite, Sr Marie St Stanislaus, Sr Marie Philippe and Sr Marie St Veronique arrived in Chittagong on March 24 of 1883 in an Austrian ship to establish the first RNDM mission in India.

Soon they set up a school for poor children, an orphanage, a hostel for young widows and a school for young ladies.

St Scholastica's Girls' High School has now become one of the best schools in the port city, said the Headmistress Sr Mary Palma.

RNDM have also established five high schools, 10 primary schools, four free primary schools, two orphanages, nine hostels and five clinics in different parts of the country while they are carrying out different social, pastoral and spiritual works, she added.

Missing



Nazira Faruq Mukta, a housewife, has been missing since Friday morning when she went out of her house at Pallabi in the city, says a press release.

The 56-year-old woman, who is mentally ill, went out of her house at around 10:00am to visit her sister's house but did not return. She even did not go to her sister's house on that day.

Mukta is five feet and two inches tall and her hair is black.

Her husband Md Omar Farooq has filed a general diary with the Pallabi Police Station.

Anybody knowing the whereabouts of Mukta has been requested to call at 90041000 or 01711622287.



Participants of a memorial meeting pay floral tribute to eminent playwright Selim Al Deen at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Selim Al Deen Smriti Parishad organised the meeting.

Krishna idol seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized an antique idol of Lord Krishna in North Jatrahari area in the city on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab members raided a house and seized the statue made of black stone. The idol weighs 10 kg and is 20 inches tall.

The Rab also arrested two suspected smugglers -- Haji Tuhin alias Khan, 29, and Biswajit Banik Bilu, 26.

Iftekhar leaves for Tokyo today

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury will pay a three-day visit to Tokyo to discuss bilateral cooperation with his Japanese counterpart Kumura, official sources said.

He will leave for Tokyo this morning at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart.

Drilling at Semutang gas field soon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for energy and power Dr M Tamim yesterday said drilling at the Semutang gas field in Khagrachhari would begin soon.

"Bapex (Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Co. Ltd.) has already been instructed to take initiatives to start drilling at the gas field," he said, adding that the work would begin after getting approval from the Executive Committee for National Economic Council (Ecnec).

Dr Tamim said this while speaking at a view exchange meeting with local administration and business community at the Chittagong Circuit House. He also said the government is contemplating to increase the price of compressed natural gas (CNG) in line with the continued price hike of fuel in the international market.

Dr Tamim said the issue of gas import from Myanmar is still at the very initial stage.

He said the country presently reels under a shortage of around 100 million cubic feet (mcf) gas supply a day against the daily demand for 1835 mcf.

The government has no immediate solution to gas and power crisis, Dr Tamim said, adding that it has taken medium- and long-term plans to improve the situation.

He also said the government would not give permission to set up any new big industries such as fertiliser plant because of the gas crisis.

Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI) President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, BGMEA First Vice President MA Salam and senior officials of Power Development Board (PDB) and Bakharabad Gas System Limited (BGSL) also spoke.

College student commits suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student allegedly committed suicide at his house at East Sheikhdi in the city's Jatrahari area yesterday.

The body of Sazzad Hossain Tipu, a B.Com second-year student of Shaheed Suhrawardy College, was found hanging from a bar with a scarf in his bedroom, his elder brother Golam Mostafa said.

The family members broke open the door after they saw through the window the body of Tipu hanging in his room.

Jatrahari police recovered the body at around 2:00pm and sent it to Sir Salmulla Medical College morgue for autopsy.



Ahmad Sharif's anniversary of death today

Today is the ninth death anniversary of Dr Ahmad Sharif, an eminent writer and scholar, and former professor at Bangla department of Dhaka University, says a press release.

On the occasion, Swadesh Chinta Sangha organises a memorial lecture and award giving ceremony at RC Majumdar auditorium of Dhaka University at 4:00pm.

Comrade Ajay Roy will deliver a memorial lecture on problems of our leftist movement.

Dr T Hossain, first health secretary of the Bangladesh government and Comrade Aziz Meher will be given the 'Dr Ahmad Sharif Memorial Award'.

JAN 27 ATTACK AT RU Punishment to JCD cadres demanded

RU CORRESPONDENT

A group of students of anthropology department of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday demanded exemplary punishment to Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres who attacked a fellow student on January 27.

The students met RU Proctor Enamul Haque and Student Adviser Faridul Islam Pintu at their offices and placed their demand.

On January 27, a group of JCD cadres led by Arafat Rahman Ashik, Ashish, Rana, Robi and Rajib stabbed Ekramul Haq Hira, a fourth year student of anthropology department, with sharp weapons as he tried to prevent them from taking away his computer, cellphone and money from his mess near the campus.

Later, Hira filed a case against them with Mother Police Station.

Anthropology department students yesterday urged the authorities to immediately arrest the JCD cadres who are moving freely on the campus.

They said the cadres are also involved in various crimes and that if they are not punished, they will again attack general students.

Later, the students told reporters that Student Adviser Pintu assured them of taking action against the cadres.

Banker Mamun's 2 books published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two books of banker and columnist Mamun Rashid were published on the occasion of Amar Ekushey.

The books titled 'Bangladesh Swapna Dekhe' and 'Keno Jamini Na Jete Jagala Na' were published by Maola Brothers and Samaj Adhayan Kendra, Chittagong, respectively.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government, and eminent researcher Dr Anupam Sen have written the forewords to the books.

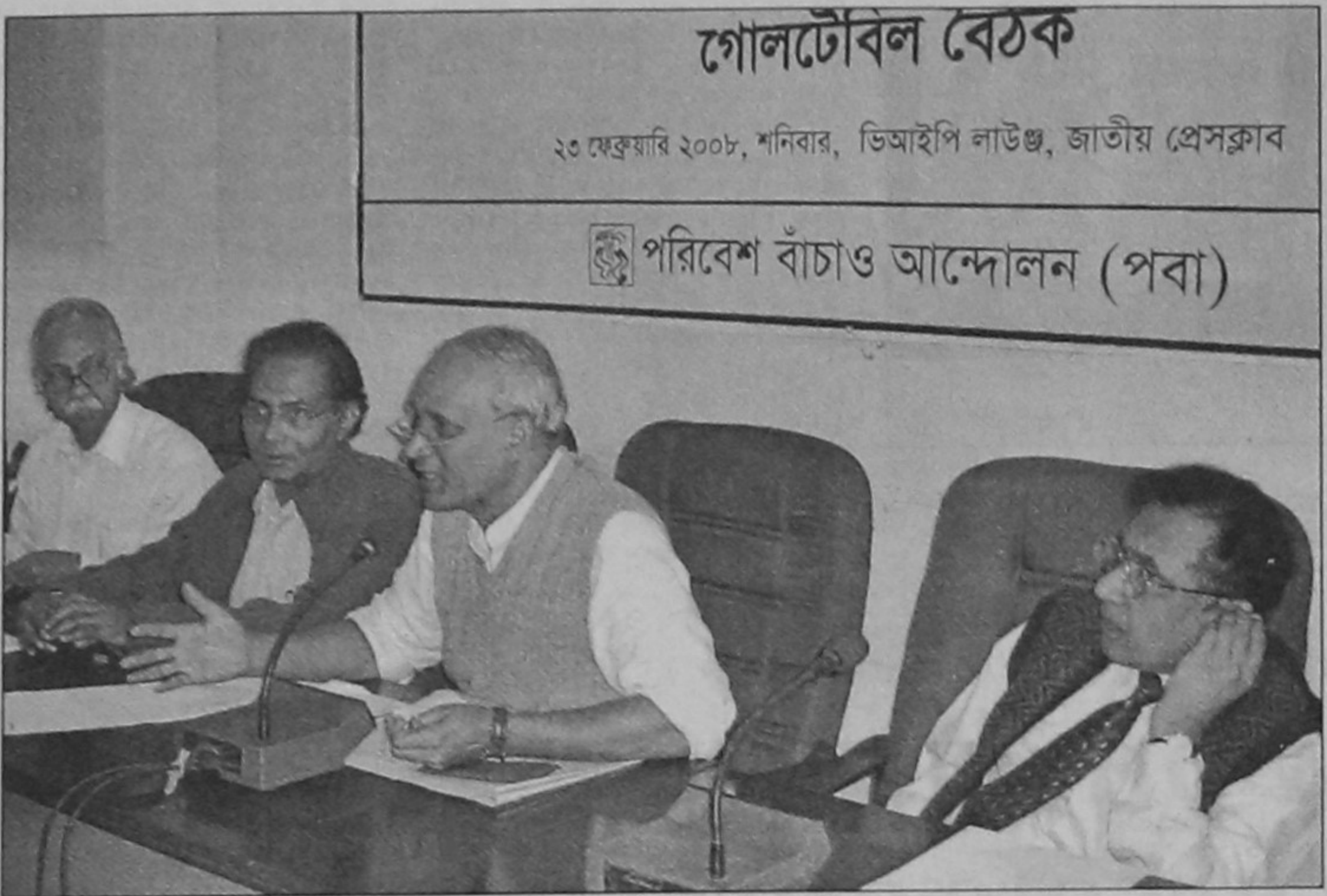
The books are compilations of articles on contemporary economic issues written by Mamun Rashid and published in various national dailies.

Obituary

Shariful Hasan Shaymol, son of Md Mujibar Rahman, passed away at Dhaka Shishu Hospital due to a cardiac arrest on February 16 at the age of 20.

He had long been suffering from thalassaemia, says a press release.

He is survived by his parents and two brothers. He was buried at his village home at Delgaon in Kapasia, Gazipur.



Dr Rashid-e-Mahabub speaks at a roundtable on 'The importance of public toilet in safeguarding the environment and public health' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Save the Environment Movement organised the event.

BANGLADESH ENVOY MEETS SAUDI SHURA SPEAKER

Workers' problems, adverse campaign discussed

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Major General (Retd) SM Ikramul Haque yesterday called on Speaker of the Saudi Shura Council Dr Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid to resolve the problem as there has been some adverse publicity against some Bangladeshi workers over there.

"The matter was also discussed in the Shura," said a foreign ministry release.

"Dr Saleh has visited Bangladesh twice and is seen as a

friend of Bangladeshis," it said.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry yesterday said it was reported in Saudi media that some Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia were allegedly engaged in claiming shops illegally, selling banned CDs, running illegal telephone business and printing fake currency.

Besides, by violating the Saudi laws, Bangladeshi workers started 'gherao', ransacking and strike to press home their various demands, according to

Saudi newspaper and media reports.

"A negative impact on Bangladesh's largest labour market cannot be allowed due to unlawful acts by a handful of Bangladeshis," he said.

The Ministry has already asked the Bangladeshi workers to abide by the Saudi laws.

The Bangladesh mission in Saudi Arabia has been instructed to report to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates' Welfare on the situation on a regular basis.

Properties worth Tk 2 lakh gutted at RU female hall

RU CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at Rahmatunnesa Hall of Rajshahi University (RU) in the early hours of yesterday creating panic among the resident students.

Fire fighters said the fire might have originated from a short circuit in the dining room of the hall.

The fire engulfed the entire dining room including a canteen and a laundry shop inside the room.

Furniture and electric fans were gutted in the fire that also damaged raw materials and confectionery items of the canteen.

The damage has been estimated at Tk 2 lakh.

There was however no casualties. A fire fighting unit rushed to the scene and put out the flames in half an hour, sources said.

Azimul Haque, a hall staff, told newsmen that at around 3:00am two dining boys, who slept inside the hall, began to shout saying fire, fire.

"We found that smoke was coming out from the dining room and we informed the hall authorities immediately of the matter," he added.

Soon after the incident, Pro-Vice-chancellor Prof Mamunul Keramat, Student Adviser Faridul Islam Pintu and Proctor Enamul Haque visited the spot.

In the morning, Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain visited the scene and talked to the students and hall authorities.

A five-member committee has been formed to investigate the cause of fire.

The committee, headed by Provost of Sher-e-Bangla Hall Shaheed Zaman, will submit its report within a week.

When contacted, Rahmatunnesa Hall Provost Dr Bilkis Begum confirmed the incident.

India inducts first batch of British Hawk trainers

AFP, Bidar

India yesterday inducted the first batch of British-made Hawk jets to groom rookie pilots and replace its ageing Russian-built MiG 21 fleet, nicknamed 'Flying Coffins' due to their high crash record. Indian Defence Minister AK Anthony gave five trainer aircraft to pilots training at Bidar air force base in southern Karnataka state, nearly three decades after the Indian Air Force first called for such aircraft.

The aircraft were among 66 trainer jets ordered by the Indian govern-

ment in March 2004 from Britain's BAE Systems in the face of stiff competition from France and Russia.

Under the terms of the agreement, 24 Hawk trainers were bought off the shelf, while the other 42 are to be built under licence at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), India's largest aircraft manufacturer in Bangalore.

Anthony said New Delhi would purchase 40 more Hawk trainers worth 50 billion rupees (1.25 billion dollars US) to ready air force and naval personnel, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light rain or thundershower may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh at the second period, Met Office said predicting slight rise of night temperature over the country.

Light fog may occur over the river basin of the country during early morning.

Highest temperature 30.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Patuakhali and lowest 11.0 degrees Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:59pm today and rises at 6:25am 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 | 28.5 | 14.4 | 47 | 38 |
| Chittagong | 28.7 | 16.5 | 79 | 58 |
| Rajshahi | 29.5 | 12.6 | 71 | 53 |
| Khulna | 28.5 | 15.3 | 72 | 58 |
| Barisal | 28.6 | 13.7 | 80 | 52 |
| Sylhet | 29.5 | 14.2 | 59 | 43 |
| Cox's Bazar | 30.0 | 17.2 | 55 | 66 |