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Country continues to wilt under heat

2 die of heatstroke, scores land in hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people died of heatstroke in Benapole and hundreds sought treatment for dehydration and diarrhoea at hospitals and clinics in the capital as sweltering weather and extreme heat wave persist in the country.

According to the meteorological office, temperature in Dhaka reached its high 39.6 degrees Celsius yesterday, while the highest temperature was recorded in Jessore at 42.8 degrees Celsius.

The temperature hit a 14-year record high in Dhaka on Sunday while the city saw the highest temperature of 36.9 degrees Celsius in April last year. Lack of rain for over three weeks and frequent power outage makes life miserable for the city dwellers.

Hospitals in the capital are struggling to cope with the sharp rise in the number of patients suffering from diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases in last few days.

The authorities of different hospitals find it difficult to manage the excessive pressure with their existing workforce and infrastructure.

Moshir Rahman, 55, a brick-kiln owner in Bhabar village, and Ansar Ali, 60, a worker of another brick-kiln in Shymlgachhi village, died of heatstroke yesterday, reports A Correspondent in Benapole.

According to physicians, children are the

worst sufferers of the broiling weather. Children are seeking treatment mostly for fever, diarrhoea, pneumonia, jaundice, chicken pox, cough and skin diseases.

During a visit to Mitford Hospital, it was found that a huge number of patients were waiting in the queue even for more than three hours at the outdoor.

"Normally we receive some 200 to 250 patients every day. The number now stands at 600," said the resident physician of the department of Paediatrics at Mitford Hospital. He added most of the patients are suffering from viral fever, acute respiratory tract infection (ARI), diarrhoea and kidney infections.

During March-July period, they generally treat more patients than usual, but this year they have received record number of patients, said an on-duty doctor.

Excessive heat and sweating are the reasons behind fever, cough and pneumonia, said Dhaka Shishu Hospital authorities. They said they are treating patients three times higher than usual since last month.

The number of patients admitted to the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) has broken the record of 40 years during this pre-monsoon season.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



A homeless mother falls asleep while feeding and fanning her child on the pavement in front of Curzon Hall of Dhaka University as the heat takes its toll on people without proper shelter. PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

JS office for all MPs by this year

Says Hamid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the parliament will get office rooms on the parliament premises within this year.

"Initially, each of the lawmakers, who doesn't hold any governmental or parliamentary post, will get office rooms in the old MP hostels. Providing them with other logistical support will also be considered in the future," Speaker Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said around 230 lawmakers out of the total 345 will

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

World moves to contain spread of swine flu

103 die so far in Mexico

BBC ONLINE, London

Governments around the world are hurrying to contain the spread of a new swine flu virus after outbreaks were reported in Mexico, the US and Canada.

At least 100 people are now suspected to have died of the disease in Mexico.

The UN has warned the virus has the potential to become a pandemic, but said the world was better prepared than ever to deal with the threat.

Stocks of anti-viral medicines are being readied and travellers are being screened at some airports for symptoms.

Mexican Health Secretary Jose Angel Cordova said suspected swine flu cases in his

country had risen to 1,614. Of the 103 deaths in Mexico, only 20 are so far confirmed to have been caused by the new virus.

A public health emergency has been declared in the US, where 20 people are confirmed to have caught the virus. There are also confirmed cases in Canada, and investigations are being carried out on possible cases in six other countries.

In most cases outside Mexico, people have been only mildly ill and have made a full recovery.

In other developments, tests are also being carried out on individuals or groups in New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Brazil, Britain and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Passengers to be screened at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to start screening inbound airport passengers at Zia International Airport within two to three days to prevent outbreak of Swine Flu, a deadly respiratory disease that left at least 100 people killed in Mexico.

As WHO declared Swine flu as a "public health emergency of international concern" on Sunday, the National Human Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Technical Committee under the health and family welfare ministry at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Govt sets Tk 78,200cr revenue goal

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The revenue-earning target in the next fiscal year (FY) is likely to be around Tk 78,200 crore and a number of measures will be taken to achieve the target.

However, in the wake of the global recession, the government is going to fix a slim target for the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in revenue collection--only 13 per cent increase over the current fiscal year's target.

Sources said the government will take measures like reducing the number of items (goods) that now enjoy tax and duty exemption, increasing court and transport fees, setting up tax offices up to upazila level and giving opportunity to whiten black money in the next FY. The revenue-earning target was 21 per cent

higher in the current FY (2008-09) than the last FY's (2007-08) original target and 15 per cent higher than the target in the revised budget of last FY.

Of the total Tk 78,200 crore revenue-earning target in the next FY, NBR's collection target may be Tk 61,000 crore which is Tk 54,500 crore in the current FY. However, the total revenue-earning target for the current fiscal year is Tk 69,382 crore.

The target for NBR in the next budget is 12 per cent higher than its target in the current FY. However, in the current FY, the NBR was given a target of around 24 per cent higher than the previous fiscal year's original target.

NBR sources said the target for the current FY is big and it would not be achieved. Till

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Stay on case proceedings extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High (HC) yesterday extended for a year its earlier stay on the proceedings of Barapukuria graft case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Marzi-ul-Haq passed the order in response to an extension prayer moved by Khaleda's lawyer Mahub Uddin Khokon.

On October 16 last year, the court stayed for three months the case proceedings against the former prime minister. In February this year it stretched the time for three more months.

Earlier on February 26 the Anti-corruption Commission filed the case against the BNP chief and 15 others for graft in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Auto-rickshaw drivers go on rampage at Tigerpass in Chittagong city protesting police action against vehicles without fare meters and tempered meters. Inset, a scared schoolgirl looks for protection on her father's shoulders as he tries to take her home through Tigerpass.

3-wheel drivers run amok in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaw went on rampage and vandalised over 50 vehicles, including a police van, during a wildcat strike in the city yesterday demanding an end to, what they said 'police harassment'.

The drivers locked into a clash with automobile traders on Sheikh Mujib Road that left at least 30 people injured, including police.

The wildcat strike and procession blocking the roads caused untold sufferings to the city commuters.

Fifteen drivers were arrested in connection with the vandalism while Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) at a meeting in the afternoon termed the demands 'unjustified ones'.

Sources said, the drivers enforced the strike keeping their three-wheeler off the road since morning to protest the ongoing drive by CMP Traffic Department against the three-wheeler plying with faulty tariff metre or without metre.

At about 12:00 noon, the drivers put up barricade on the city's busy Tigerpass intersection and staged a demonstration there. Later, they went to the Sheikh Mujib Road and vandalised about 50 vehicles.

They also ransacked the office of Crystal Agency, a meter installation company, at Dewanhat and assaulted Nazrul Sarker, a former leader of auto-rickshaw workers' association, sources said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

BDR man hit by BSF bullet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A company commander of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was injured yesterday as Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on a BDR patrol team near Taluigachha border under Sadar upazila in Satkhira.

BDR and BSF traded gunfire following the incident at Laxmidari border under Sadar upazila.

Injured BDR company commander Nayek Subedar

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE Mumbai batter Kolkata

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Senior pros Sachin Tendulkar and Sanath Jayasuriya produced vintage strokeplays to give Mumbai Indians a key victory in the Indian Premier League here on Monday.

The ageing duo hammered 127 for the first wicket from just 12.2 overs as Mumbai scored 187-6 in 20 overs after electing to take first strike and then bowled out Kolkata Knight Riders for 95 in 15.2 overs.

The massive 92-run victory took Mumbai's tally to five

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

RU professor made new HC in UK

UNB, Dhaka

Dr M Sayedur Rahman Khan, professor of the Department of Applied Physics and Electronic Engineering of Rajshahi University (RU), has been appointed Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK and Northern Ireland.

Dr Khan joined the Applied Physics and Electronic Dept of RU as lecturer in 1970.

He was conferred on PhD degree from London in 1977 and did post-doctoral researches from Sweden,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Talks with Taliban suspended

Thousands fleeing Lower Dir in Pakistan

BBC ONLINE, Islamabad

The Taliban's talks with the government in north-west Pakistan have been suspended amid army operations against militants, a Taliban negotiator says.

Pakistani troops and Taliban militants have clashed in Lower Dir in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), forcing hundreds of civilians to flee.

NWFP officials had agreed a deal that would introduce Sharia law in return for an end to the Taliban insurgency.

Critics argued the deal was a capitulation to

the militants. Ameer Izzat Khan, a spokesman for Sufi Muhammad, the cleric who negotiated the deal between the government and the Taliban, said: "Our council of leaders met on Sunday night and decided to suspend peace negotiations with the government in North West Frontier Province."

However, he said the Taliban still wanted to adhere to the peace deal, agreed in February. Khan said Sufi Muhammad was cut off in his village in Lower Dir and no talks could take place until communication was restored.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Economic crisis turning into 'human catastrophe'

Warns World Bank

AP, BBC ONLINE, Washington

The head of the World Bank has warned of a "human catastrophe" in the world's poorest countries unless more is done to tackle the global economic crisis.

Speaking at the end of the World Bank's spring meeting, Bank President Robert Zoellick also called on rich nations to do more to help tackle global poverty.

The global financial crisis could become "a human and development calamity" for many poor countries, he said, urging donor nations to speed delivery of money they have pledged and consider giving more.

Developing countries, its main constituency, face "especially serious consequences with the crisis driving more than 50 million people into extreme poverty, particularly women and children," the bank said Sunday.

Zoellick said some of the poorest economies are being hit by "second and third waves of the crisis." He said no one knows how long it will last or when recovery will begin.

"There is a widespread recognition that the world faces an unprecedented economic crisis, poor people could suffer the most and that we must continue to act in real time to prevent a human catastrophe," Zoellick said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Prayer Timing		
April 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation