

DRY WEATHER LIKELY

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during midnight till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may fall by 2-3 degree Celsius and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:26pm and rises tomorrow at 6:43am.

Country's highest temperature 28.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 13.8 degrees at Ishwardi. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City, Temperature in Celsius (Max/Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning/Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

DS journo pummelled by law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Khaleda Zia, leader of the largest opposition party in the country, although not in parliament, was confined to her Gulshan office by law enforcers yesterday in the name of protection, a journalist on way to his office was dragged down from a rickshaw, thrown onto the asphalt of the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue and indiscriminately kicked and stomped on from the waist downward by lawmen, all in the name of defending the law.

Not willing to risk his car being vandalised or burned, Syed Mansur Hashim, assistant editor of The Daily Star, had little choice but to hire a rickshaw to go to his office.

His rickshaw was stopped by an Ansar member at the intersection near the Bangladesh Navy chief's residence, where Eskaton Garden Road meets Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

Although prohibited from plying VIP roads on other days, rickshaws are the most common vehicles which usually run everywhere during any political unrest.

Thus Hashim did not find the Ansar man's order to turn the rickshaw away from the VIP road logical.

However, instead of just settling the matter lawfully, the Ansar man with three policemen carried out the assault for several minutes. They stopped only when Hashim begged for mercy and asked to be handed over to a police station.

The men took him to a traffic inspector at Bangla Motor, who lent him an ear only when Hashim showed an identity card issued by the newspaper and mentioned the name of a police high-up he knew. The four were then reprimanded by the traffic inspector and Hashim was let go.

"Usually, when a vehicle breaks the traffic rules of plying a VIP road, a case is filed," said a policemen wishing anonymity.

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A policeman aims his gun ready to fire live ammunition at a procession (not in picture) of the BNP-led 20-party alliance in the capital's Bijaynagar yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

ETV off air after airing Tarique's speech

Broadcast not fully restored till 1:30am today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's cable operators, mostly loyal to the ruling Awami League, allegedly stopped the transmission of private television channel ETV yesterday afternoon for giving "excessive" coverage to BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman.

ETV went off the air around 2:00pm, and became unavailable all over the country within the next one hour said sources in the network.

They said the ruling party men, especially Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), got furious because ETV had live telecast Tarique's speech from London for 50 minutes from 1:30am and relayed it several times.

Senior Reporter of the TV Sajed Romel said there was no problem with uplinking; it lay with downlinking, which the cable operators controlled.

He claimed that the transmission was restored in some places in the evening, and the channel could be seen countrywide soon.

However, broadcasting was not fully restored till filing of this report at 1:30am today.

An official of the Prime Minister's Office said there was no instruction about blocking its transmission but said ETV was doing it to "excess".

Sources in the government said ETV might face legal

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Miladunnabi observed

UNB, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, marking the birth and death of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (pbuh), was observed in the country on Sunday with due reverence and religious fervour.

On this day in 570, the 12th of Rabiul Awal of the Hijri calendar, Mohammad (pbuh) was born in Makkah with divine blessings and messages of peace for mankind. He also passed away on the same day.

The day was a public holiday.

Different Islamic and socio-cultural organisations and political parties held various programmes, including milad mahfils and discussion meetings, to mark the day.

Thousands of devotees, carrying banners inscribed with "Kalema Taiyeba", joined the processions taken out in the capital by religious organisations.

Islamic Foundation also organised programmes, while a milad mahfil was held at Bangabhaban in which President Abdul Hamid participated.

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BJRI holds doa mahfil for scientist Maqsudul Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A dao mahfil for Bangladeshi-born scientist Dr Maqsudul Alam was held in Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council auditorium in the capital yesterday afternoon, organised by Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI).

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Secretary to the ministry Dr SM Nazmul Islam, brother of the eminent scientist Maj Gen (ret'd) Manjural Alam, other family members and a number of scientists participated in the prayers.

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Contempt rule dismissed against Prothom Alo editor, joint editor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday disposed of the contempt of court rule against Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and Joint Editor Mizanur Rahman Khan after they apologised before it for publishing an article over the appointment of the chief justice.

The Appellate Division on December 15 last year issued the rule against the two for running the article, "Prophan Bicharpati Bechhe Neowa" (selection of the chief justice) written by Mizanur Rahman Khan on the same day in the newspaper.

Yesterday, Matiur and Mizanur offered unconditional

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BDR CARNAGE CASE Death reference hearing starts Jan 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special High Court bench yesterday fixed January 18 for starting hearing on the death reference and appeals in the BDR carnage case, paving the way for complete adjudication of the biggest ever criminal case in the country's history in terms of the number of accused and convicts.

The bench, comprising Justice Md Shawkat Hossain, Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique and Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam,

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Raid on New Age threat to press freedom

Say 44 eminent personalities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seeing it as a threat to press freedom, 44 eminent citizens yesterday strongly condemned the December 28 unwarranted raid by police on the office of the English daily New Age.

The drive is a "threat to objective journalism and press freedom", and a "clear violation of law and the citizens' rights", read a statement, adding that the planned raid was aimed at intimidating the news media. The citizens demanded punishment for the officers who raided.

Signatories included professors Anu Muhammad, Nasim Akhtar Hossain, Seema Haq, Manosh Chowdhury, Geeti Ara Nasrin, CR Abrar, and Tanjim Uddin Khan, photographers Shahidul Islam, Taslima Akhtar, columnist Rahnuma Ahmed, and writer Khademul Islam.

NEWS IN brief

Indian held with gold at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs intelligence detained an Indian national and seized 9.6kg of smuggled gold worth Tk 4.5 crore at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

Zawed Akter, 32, arrived from Bangkok in a BG089 flight. Mostafizur Rahman, deputy director of customs intelligence, said tipped-off, they questioned Zawed and found 8.6kg of gold hidden in the water tank of a bathroom in the airport. The remaining gold was found in a pipe in the bathroom, he said, adding that Zawed said he flushed the gold in fear.

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