

DRY WEATHER LIKELY

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today.

Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave is sweeping the regions of Rajshahi, Khustia, Srimongal and Sitakunda and it may continue.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:39pm and rises tomorrow at 6:42am.

Country's highest temperature 28.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday in Sitakunda and Bogra and lowest 8.5 in Chuadanga.

The highest and lowest temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage		
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening	
Dhaka	26.7	13.8	72	52	Khulna	27.5	12.5	86	62
Chittagong	26.0	13.2	84	79	Barisal	27.0	12.0	91	77
Rajshahi	27.00	9.2	95	70	Sylhet	27.9	13.4	83	53
Rangpur	26.2	11.5	87	53	Cox's Bazar	26.7	14.2	74	70

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR



The team at work at Char Kukri-Mukri. PHOTO: GOLAM MONOWAR KAMAL

Counting Birds on the Coast

Every year, members of the Bangladesh Bird Club count water birds in several areas of Bangladesh. The goal is to find the accurate population of dozens of bird species in our wetlands and coast. This data is invaluable. It gives us insight into the health of our environment. It also connects us to the global avian picture and tells us about thriving and dwindling species.

This year the water bird census of the coast took place in mid-January. In addition to BBC, this census team also included representatives from the Forest Department, Channel I, and NACOM, an NGO. I spoke with Dr. Niaz Abdur Rahman, president of BBC, who was in the team. "It was an unbelievable experience, going around for a week on a fishing trawler, counting up thousands of birds," he said.

Their exciting but demanding trip started out in Bhola. In two fishing trawlers, the team headed north, then east, before turning south-east, covering Nijhum Dweep, Domar Char, Andar Char, Char Kukri Mukri, Char Shahjalal and several other chars before looping around the south of Bhola island and returning to the starting point.

Living seven days on open fishing trawlers had its challenges. Team members slept in sleeping bags on deck. Days were spent under direct sun. For food, they stocked up on staples at Bhola. Fresh fish was purchased every day from fishermen on the Bay.

I asked Niaz about highlights of the trip. "We encountered large flocks of Indian skimmers that must be the largest anywhere," he said. These birds skim over the water looking for fish. "We also saw several spoon-billed sandpipers, a critically endangered species, and Nordmann's greenshanks, an endangered species."

Niaz was struck by the role of the daily tides which dramatically affect the coast twice daily. "Your boat could be left high and dry on land in just fifteen or twenty minutes if you are not careful," he said.

As the boats travelled, the teams searched for birds in the chars. When they spotted them, they went ashore on a smaller boat, set up their telescope and started counting. Some chars were muddy, others were solid sand.

Everest conqueror M. A. Mohit - who is also an avid birder - participated in the census and coordinated the trip's logistics. I asked him about his experience. "Newer chars have the most birds because of less human disturbance. But their mud can be difficult. One day, we arrived at a new char, and I decided to step into it, immediately sinking waist-deep in mud."

Which bird was most populous, I asked Mohit. "In Char Shahjalal, we saw a flock of 5000 Pallas's sea gulls. On the other hand, there were fewer ruddy shelducks and bar-headed geese this year." And rare ones? "In addition to spoon-billed sandpipers, we saw Caspian terns, pied avocets and asian dowitchers," he said.

Final results of the census were as follows. A total of 57025 birds from 76 species were counted. Of these, 52 species, including five raptors, were migratory. Ducks accounted for 14755 birds representing ten species. How did this compare with last year? For the same route, last year the team counted 50,080 birds from 66 species. Enam Ul Haq, founder of BBC, said year-over-year increases were also seen this year in the bird population of Tanguar Haor. We welcome this increase and hope it is a trend.

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Give compensation, not aid for emission
Greens urge greenhouse gas emitting countries, at 3-day int'l nature summit in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging the industrialised nations to be more discreet about greenhouse gas emissions, environmentalists at an international conference in the capital yesterday urged them to provide compensation instead of aid to the emission victims--the least developed countries (LDCs).

The contribution of LDCs like Bangladesh is very insignificant in the emissions but the livelihoods and lifestyles of their peoples are badly affected by the resulting environmental changes, they told the first International Nature Summit-2015 titled "Green Inspiration".

The developed countries should use fossil fuels discreetly and check deforestation to reduce emissions, said Mizan R Khan, professor of environmental science and management at North South University.

Criticising their role, he said the issue of climate change had been a "foster child" of global diplomacy, while international conferences on it had turned into talk shows producing no results.

Organised by Notre Dame College on its campus, the three-day summit will end tomorrow.

Green Inspiration is a conference that

Normalcy in a few days

Say AL, JP leaders about ending violence; do not specify how it would be achieved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the ruling Awami League (AL) and opposition Jatiya Party yesterday forecast an end to the ongoing violence and political crisis in the next couple of days, stating without elaborating that policing and talks would bring about the change.

Violence in the last 18 days of a blockade being enforced by the BNP-led 18-party alliance left 33 people dead and around 900 injured while about 700 vehicles were vandalised and torched. The alliance demands an inclusive, credible national election through a non-party administration.

Addressing a discussion in the capital, AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said normalcy would return "by next week as you have seen criminal activities have already come down considerably."

Termining the ongoing violence acts of terrorism, he said the government would go all-out in the fight against



One bullet hit, three hurt in robbers' attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A man was hit by bullets while three others were also hurt early yesterday when robbers exploded two cocktails and opened fire on the villagers of Kharija Ghughat who tried to resist them.

Shafikul Islam, 25, is undergoing treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra.

Some 10 robbers attacked the villagers when they rushed in hearing that Abdur Rashid Mondol's house in Solonga of Sirajganj district was being looted by the criminals, said police.

Dhaka, New Delhi hope for strengthening ties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The relations of Bangladesh and India will see further advancement in the coming period, building on the previous successes, officials of the two countries told a seminar yesterday.

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pankaj Saran said, "We've done a lot to build relationship in the last few years. We've taken some further steps in the last six months. Our ambition level is higher. I have little doubt that in the coming period, we'll see further acceleration in our relationship."

Speaking at the seminar on "66th Indian Republic Day and Contemporary South Asia", he also thanked Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina for her role in taking forward the bilateral relations.

Bangladesh-India Friendship Society organised the programme at the capital's Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

"We've broken new grounds in terms of various activities such as energy cooperation, infrastructure development, trade, train services and so on," Pankaj said.

He added that there would be a meeting among Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan in Kolkata next month to discuss the prospect of signing a motor vehicle agreement, which will allow Bangladeshi trucks to travel through India and go to Nepal and Bhutan.

INDIA'S ACCESS TO CTG PORT: Tripura chief minister pushes for deal

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar has called for finalising a deal providing India access to the Chittagong sea port, expanding business between Bangladesh and the neighbouring country's northeastern region.

"Chittagong port could play a catalyst role for the extension of business and economic growth between northeast India and Bangladesh," he said.

Sarkar was addressing the inauguration of a three-day photography exhibition,

Milk selling at Tk 10 per litre

Dairy farmers incur huge losses in Pabna, Sirajganj for blockade

UNB, Dhaka

The dairy industry in Pabna and Sirajganj districts, where the largest amount of cow milk is produced, has been brought to its knees by the ongoing BNP-led 20-party alliance's blockade.

The dairy farmers in the districts are incurring heavy losses daily as the companies which process and then sell the milk under their own labels have reduced the amount of milk they collect from them largely for a lack of transport.

The farmers are being forced to sell milk at only Tk 10 per litre in the local markets failing to supply it to the companies.

Besides, a large quantity of milk remains unsold every day for the unavailability of customers.

Officials of the companies cited a lack of transport as the reason as the vehicle operators refuse to carry milk on the highways fearing vandalism by blockaders.

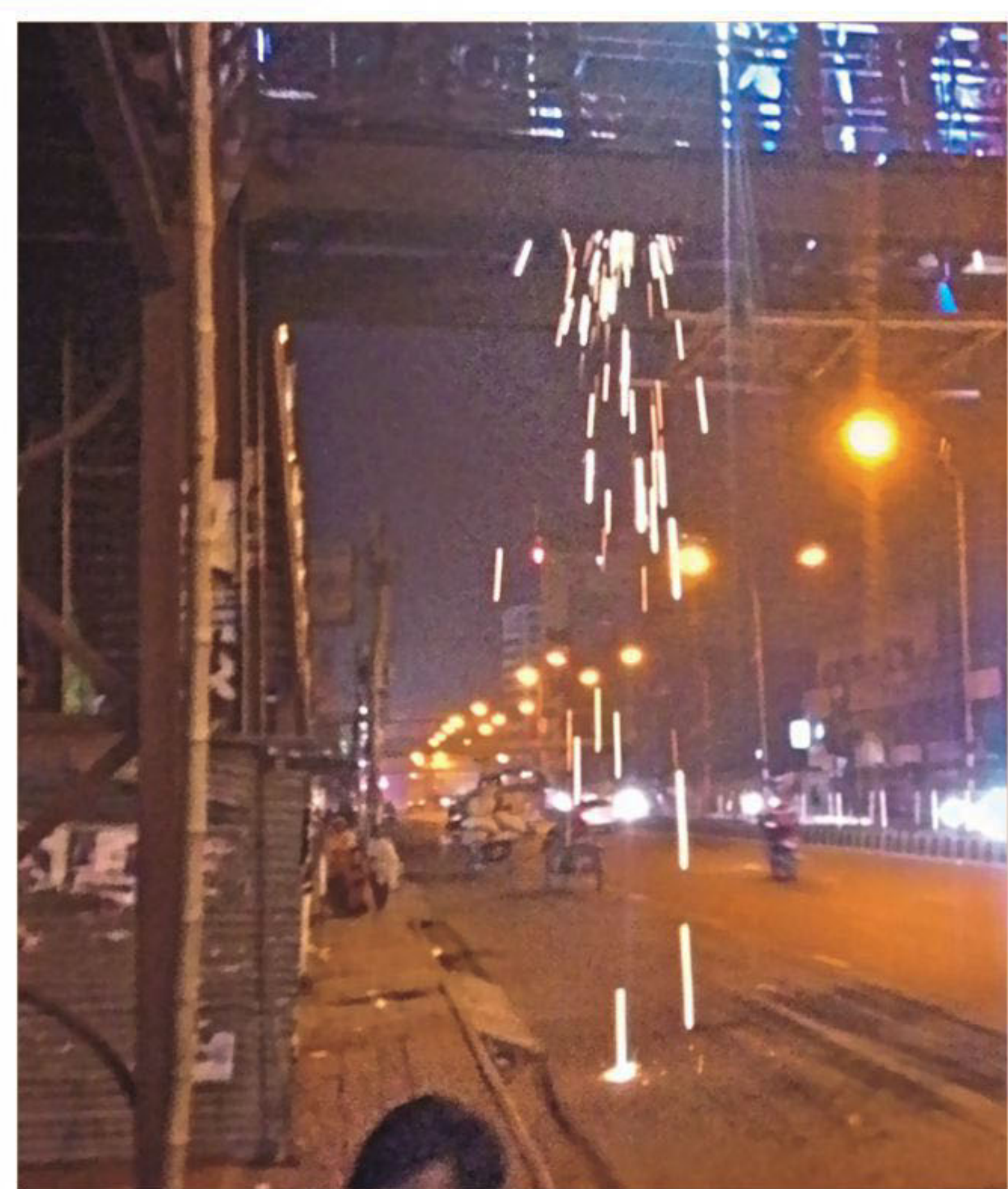
Milk producers also blamed the nonstop blockade for the deadlock in the milk market as the processing companies cannot send milk to the open market due to a lack of transport and security.

Bera, Santhia, Faridpur and Bhangura upazilas of Pabna and Shahjadpur and Ullapara upazilas of Sirajganj are the areas known for the milk production.

Several companies, including "Milk Vita", "Aarong", "Pran Milk", "Farm Fresh", "Ammo Milk", "Aftab" and "Rangpur Dairy" collect milk from the dairy farmers and sell it in the open market after processing.

Due to the huge demand of milk in the open market, the milk processing companies have to buy milk from the dairy farmers amid stiff competition.

But there has been a big slump in the companies' milk collection from the areas since the start of the political



Sparks produced by welding works on a steel footbridge at the capital's Farmgate rain down directly on the road as there was no safety measure in place to avoid doing harm to pedestrians or commuters, which is just another show of the Dhaka North City Corporation authorities' negligence towards public safety. The photo was taken at 11:50pm on Thursday. PHOTO: MIR FAZLA RABBY

BARIND TRACT Climate change poses threat to livelihood

BSS, Rajshahi

Adverse impact of climate change has started posing a serious threat to the farming sector alongside overall living and livelihood condition in vast Barind Tract comprising the districts of Rajshahi, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj for the last couple of years.

The adverse situation has directly been making negative impact on the water, sanitation, overall public health and sustainable livelihood in the region, said AKM Zilani, a development activist of Nachole in Chapainawabganj.

Substantial and sustainable promotion of water and sanitation related modern technologies have become an urgent need to face the natural catastrophe, he mentioned.

Although the region has achieved sustainable progress in increasing food grain production, groundwater use for irrigation is a growing matter of concern in the Barind Tract, according to a recent study.

Prof Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan, principal investigator of the study, says food security of the area is highly dependent on irrigational inputs with groundwater being the main component for food production.

More than 40,000 deep and shallow tube-wells and low lift pumps are extracting groundwater every day for maintaining the farming system especially the irrigation-dependent paddy for boosting its outputs to feed the huge population. "But, if the present trend of groundwater extraction continues, the water level will decline and water pumps will be non-functional due to a lack of water. Water level of surface sources, including rivers and wetlands, will also decline," he said.

Prof Dr Bidhan Chandra Das of Rajshahi University said if river water shrinks day by day, an ecological imbalance will take place, contributing to the environmental degradation. The whole water and sanitation is facing serious threat due to multifarious reasons including arsenic intrusion, rising of shoals as a result of erosion and accretion leading to water scarcity and quality problems.

UP member, nine aides shot 'by chairman'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A former chairman yesterday shot a Jashlong Union Parishad member and her nine supporters in Munshiganj when they went to attack him in his house in connection with a land dispute, said police.

According to police, some people caught fish from a water body on the disputed land on Tuesday night and the former chairman, Moklesh Dewan, filed a case with a Munshiganj court in this regard accusing the member, Rina Begum, and her followers on Wednesday.

Yesterday, about 100 people led by Rina Begum vandalised a microbus of Moklesh. The former chairman in "self defense" opened fire on them when they tried to break open his door yesterday afternoon, said police, adding that the firearm was licenced.

Kalam Khalasi, Ismile Khalasi, Farid Dewan, Julhas Dewan, Lipi Begum, Sheuli Begum, Bachhu, Kharshed Dewan and Sajan are undergoing treatment at Munshiganj General