

Dry fortnight gives way to showers

RITH BASU

An unusually dry fortnight gave way to steady showers in parts of Calcutta on Sunday.

But the rain should not be construed as the harbinger of a wet spell, at least not for the next couple of days, the Met officials said.

The sky was cloudy since morning on Sunday as a trough of low pressure passing close to Calcutta pulled in moisture from the Bay of Bengal. There were intermittent spells of drizzle throughout the day but the intensity of rain increased in parts of the city, including the city centre, towards evening.

Many areas in North and South 24 Parganas received showers as well.

Satellite pictures showed that the trough of low pressure — an imaginary line joining various low-pressure points across the country — passed through Gaya, Bankura and Diamond Harbour (57km from Calcutta) on Sunday.

MET RULES OUT HEAVY RAIN



Heavy rainfall, however, is unlikely in the absence of low pressure areas or depressions, a Met official said.

"At the moment, there is no such system brewing around the city. So, there won't be heavy rainfall for the next two to three days," Devendra Pradhan, deputy director general of meteorology, India Meteorological department, Calcutta, said.

August 2-15
● How much it should have rained: **159.1**
● How much it rained: **90**
● Deficit: **43.5%**

Rainfall in millimetre
Source: IMD
Vehicles wait for pedestrians to cross a road at Esplanade amidst rain.
Picture by Sanat Kr Sinha

The absence of such systems around the city was also responsible for the relatively dry spell over the past two weeks.

In the fortnight gone by rainfall in that bracket happened only on four days. Met records showed that it rained only 90mm between August 2 and 15, when it should have rained 159.1mm — a deficit of 43.5 per cent.

"Calcutta received only light to moderate rainfall recently... The general direction of the wind has southerly, from the direction of the Bay, which is the norm in the monsoon. But that was hardly enough to cause heavy rain," Pradhan said.

Even that southerly flow had ceased between August 6 and 11 when the monsoon

trough had shifted away from the city. The clouds had disappeared and the mercury had shot up to 36.1 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal.

The weather had turned sweltering and uncomfortable because of water vapour in the lower atmosphere.

Since then, the clouding has returned and the maximum temperature has come down to 30 degrees Celsius.

Places along the trough of low pressure have atmospheric pressure lower than their surroundings and that is why they pull air towards themselves.

This moisture-laden air is flowing into Calcutta and its surroundings from the Bay of Bengal.

Experts, however, stressed there was still more than a month of monsoon left in the city and hence plenty of time for favourable wind formations to crop up over the Bay.

In 2013, August had recorded 884mm rain and September 346.6mm. The corresponding figures last year were 302.8mm and 324.8mm, respectively.

5 Lankans held in hotel

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Five Sri Lankans were arrested at a central Calcutta hotel on Saturday on the charge of travelling with fake passports and other identity papers.

Two men from Tamil Nadu, who police said were accompanying the Sri Lankans, were arrested on the charge of criminal conspiracy.

"The seven had put up in two rooms at the hotel," an officer said. They have been remanded in police custody till August 24.

"The Sri Lankans, all in their late 30s, came here two days ago from Tamil Nadu, where they had reached by sea. We suspect they were heading for Nepal," the officer said.

"The foreigners were carrying forged passports and fake voter's I-cards."

The police said they had launched a search for the Sri Lankans following the arrest of a man from that country in Panitanki in Barjeeling district, on the India-Nepal border. He was allegedly trying to enter Nepal. "While interrogating him, we came to know about the five others," the officer said.

Jewellery theft at temple

STAFF REPORTER

Gold ornaments adorning the Durga idol of the temple at Bhukailash Rajbari in Kidderpore were stolen on Saturday night or early on Sunday. Police said the stolen jewellery was worth Rs 50,000.

The temple has neither a guard nor a CCTV camera.

The theft came to light when the priest opened the rear door of the temple around 5am. The police said the platform on which the idol stood was ransacked and the ornaments were missing.

Soon after, the priest, Swapan Chakraborty, noticed that the lock on the front door had been opened.

Among the ornaments stolen were a necklace, a waist chain, a nose ring and two ankle bells. Some silver weapons of the deity and a snake made of silver were also stolen.

Members of the Ghoshal family, the custodian of the temple, blamed the staff at the shrine for the theft. The police questioned the



The Bhukailash Rajbari deity whose ornaments have been stolen. (Bishwarp Dutta)

priest and the three cleaners and sweepers for several hours. Night was arrested till late on Sunday.

"There had been two earlier attempts to steal ornaments from the temple. On both occasions the thieves were caught before they could steal anything," said Jaya Ghoshal, a member of the family.

The 287-year-old Rajbari is around 100m from Fancy Market. The plaque outside the temple says it was constructed 232 years ago by late Raja Jaynarayan Ghoshal.

selling. Das said. In decentralised or open counselling the institute concerned interviews candidates on its own, as opposed to centralised counselling that is conducted by the JEE board for all engineering and medical institutes.

A professor of computer science and engineering at CU, Sankhayan Choudhury, blamed the JEE board for seats remaining vacant. The board, he stressed, should have held another round of centralised counselling.

The start of BTEch classes at CU has been deferred by a week because of decentralised counselling.

"The classes were to start on August 10. In the revised schedule, they will start on August 17," an official said.

Jadavpur University is currently holding decentralised counselling in an attempt to fill up 219 vacant seats in engineering.

CU bid to fill up tech seats

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Calcutta University will soon hold decentralised counselling to fill up 56 of the 203 BTEch seats that have remained vacant after three rounds of centralised counselling conducted by the state joint entrance examination board.

"We will announce the counselling schedule in a day or two," said Nikhil Ranjan Das, the dean of engineering at CU.

The university has not fixed any cut-off rank for decentralised counselling.

"The students who have already been admitted will be allowed to take part in the coun-

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