

# Little change in flood status in central part

## Sirajganj sees serious erosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite serious erosion caused by heavy rains and rushing upstream water in Sirajganj district, the flood situation in the central part of the country is by and large static and situations elsewhere are improving. But people are now faced with various flood-related problems. People are short of food, medicine and drinking water while many have to abandon their houses in the grip of erosion. In Nilphamari, flood-affected

people are menaced by water disease. According to reports, one died from diarrhea yesterday and more than two hundred were affected. A number of medical teams are working there. According to the Flood Forecasting Centre the inundation situation of low-lying areas in the districts of Manikganj, Munshiganj, Madaripur, Narayanganj and Narsingdi may likely to remain static. But the flood situation in the districts of Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Sirajganj and Tangail are likely to improve further.

Flash floods in the districts of Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvi Bazar, Habiganj & Comilla have also abated. The Flood Forecasting Centre said that the Brahmaputra-Jamuna registered fall at all points except at Aricha. The Ganges-Padma continued to rise at all points. Other rivers in these two basins registered rise & fall. Most of the rivers in the Meghna & the South Eastern Hill basins observed further fall. Out of 85 monitoring stations, 33 points

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PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

High officials inspect yesterday railroads through the Jamuna multipurpose bridge before the launch of a railway service to Rajshahi by the end of this month. The service linking the eastern and western regions of Bangladesh was to start on June 8.

# Tk 59 cr irregularities reported in projects during AL rule

BSS, Dhaka

Financial irregularities to the tune of over Tk 58.96 crore have been unearthed in 10 different foreign aided projects of six ministries implemented during the previous Awami League government.

The irregularities were unearthed in the audit reports of foreign aided projects of the Ministries of Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives, Communications, Primary And Mass Education, Post and Telecommunications, Planning and Education during the fiscal 1998-99, 1999-2000 and

2000-01.

State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah Abul Hossain tabled the audit reports of the Auditor and Comptroller General of Bangladesh in parliament yesterday.

The reports pointed out that an expenditure of Tk 49.107 crore incurred during 2000-2001 in the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) of the LGRD Ministry with the IDA loan was not recorded.

The amount was given to contractors for public works but no document, paper, tender notice, estimate, work order, tender com

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# PM's portrait removal AL refutes charge, 2 of its men held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday refuted the allegation that it had the portrait of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia removed from the Chapinawabganj Circuit House. "Through such propaganda the government is trying to shift people's attention from their misrule and misdeeds," said General Secretary of the AL Abdul Jalil in a statement

yesterday.

He also criticised the ruling coalition for 'firing invective' at AL chief and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

The AL statement also accused the government of undermining Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other national leaders since coming to office.

Meanwhile, UNB reports, police

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# MPs have to wait longer for NAM flats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers will have to wait longer than anticipated to get allotments of the under-construction apartment blocks in the city, resolved a meeting of the House Committee of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

With Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain in the chair, the meeting, held at the Sangsad Bhabhan, reviewed progress of the construction of 324 flats initially undertaken to accommodate visit

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# Criminal case against 3 cops, 2 ansars

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A criminal case was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday against three police personnel and two ansars.

The accused are Officer-in-Charge of Ramna Police Station Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, Sub-Inspector of Motijheel Police Station Raju Miah, Constable of Motijheel Police Station Nurul Islam and ansars Kawsar and Mrinal.

Sabina Akhter Tuhin, a central

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# Human dev index ticks positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Human Development Index (HDI) ranking shows that Bangladesh has improved slightly as it reached 139th position among 175 countries for the year 2001. In the year 2000, Bangladesh held the 145th position.

This improvement puts Bangladesh in the Medium Human Development category of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI ranking was done in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income.

The UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) released yesterday shows that Bangladesh along with China, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal and Thailand are moving up among the developing countries in terms of HDI.

In South Asia, Bangladesh outranked Nepal and Pakistan at positions of 143 and 144. But it scored below Maldives (86), Sri Lanka (99), India (127) and Bhutan (136).

None of the South Asian countries achieved High Human Development category, while Nepal and Pakistan fell in the Low Human Development category.

As in the previous year, Norway remains number one in HDI ranking and Sierra Leone remains at 175 as the world's least HDI rank holder.

However, the HDR on development crisis warns that the world is facing an acute development crisis,

with many poor nations suffering severe and continuing socio-economic reversals.

On 'Millennium Development Goals In Reach By 2015', the HDR said that the pledge by world leaders to lift hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty by 2015 can be achieved -- but only if poor countries pursue wide-ranging reforms and wealthy nations respond with improved trade terms and increased aid.

Despite promises by the wealthy nations to eradicate extreme poverty, developing nations still need more aid, fairer terms of trade and meaningful debt relief, the report added.

The concept of HDR is to look beyond per capita income, human resource development and basic needs as a measure of human progress. It also assesses such factors as human freedom, dignity and human agency, that is, the role of people in development.

The Index, developed in 1990, takes stock of fundamental aspects of human development in countries both rich and poor. Since the beginning, the UNDP has commissioned an independent team of experts to explore major issues of global concern.

Bangladesh was among the 189 countries that pledged to combat poverty, HIV/AIDS, hunger, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women by achieving targets set out under the Millennium Goals.

# Talks with Dhaka on free trade accord this year, hopes Sinha

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India hopes to begin talks with Bangladesh for a bilateral free trade accord by this year-end.

"We hope to start negotiations on a free trade agreement with Bangladesh before the year-end," External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said here yesterday.

Sinha made the remarks while addressing the third meeting of India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

His speech constituted an

outline of a new vision of trade diplomacy in South Asia and beyond envisaging free trade accords with major economies of the world.

He visited Egypt, South Africa, Brazil and Argentina recently as part of India's effort for a free trade agreement with an organisation of Latin American countries.

Carrying the same message, he is likely to travel to Dhaka in the third week of this month to attend the Joint Economic Commission meeting.

Commerce Ministry sources

said if efforts for free trade accords are taken to their logical conclusion, India will be able to access a huge market for its goods and services, the sources said.

A number of countries including China, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and South American nations like Brazil are among the world's leading importers of goods and services.

The success of North American

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 09		6-50 pm
July 10	5-17 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 09		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# 22nd PW gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Maksudur Rahman Patwari, the 22nd prosecution witness in the Shazneen case, gave his deposition before court yesterday.

Kazi Rahamat Ullah, judge of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, recorded the deposition.

The court adjourned the hearing till July 13 following a time petition by the defence lawyer of accused Minu. The witness will be

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# Headmaster gets life for raping student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Barisal, yesterday sentenced a school teacher to life for raping a girl student on April 25, 2002.

The court also fined the convict, Abdus Sobhan Shikder, headmaster of Poterhat Adarsha Primary School in Pirojpur, Tk 1 lakh and asked the authorities concerned to realise the money and pay it to the victim as compensation.

According to the prosecution, the victim, a student of class three of the

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