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# The Daily Star

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এখানে পাবেন  
 অত্যাধুনিক ডিজাইনের  
 সালোয়ার, কমিট ও শাট  
 নাহার মার্কেট (দোতলা)  
 নাহার ভবন  
 ১৫ সিকেন্দরী, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ

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## Inside Today

### International



The British press was shocked by the invitation extended by bosses of Indian Congress (I) party to Sonia Gandhi to succeed her assassinated husband as party leader  
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### Magazine

Noted educationist Zillur Rahman Siddiqui writes about Sri Lanka, the darling of nature  
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### Metropolitan

#### Dhaka Day by Day

A thought provoking photography exhibition on 'Struggle for Democracy '87-90' traces the movement from the day Nur Hussain, the first martyr, died  
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### Weekend sports



Two Bangladeshi chess players earned International Masters' norms in the recently held United Insurance Chess Masters Chess tourney. F M Rahman reviews the prestigious meet  
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### Article

After the bombing of the anti-nuclear ship Rainbow Warrior in 1985 and the premature repatriation of the bombers, French agents Alain Mafart and Dominique Prieur from their "exile" on Hao Atoll, relations between France and New Zealand reached an all-time low  
**Page 4**

## NEWS BRIEFS

### ECNEC okays three projects

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council on Thursday approved three projects to be implemented at a cost of Taka 206 crore 51 lakh, including a foreign exchange component of Tk. 156 crore 8 lakh, reports BSS.

### BNP council date extended

BNP has extended the dates of completion of councils of its units in union, thana and district of greater Sylhet, Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Khulna till July 31 and the rest of the districts till June 30 instead of May 31, reports BSS.

### Mosharrarf's bail rejected

The bail petition of A K M Mosharrarf Hossain, former Industries Secretary, was rejected by the District Judge Habibullah Wednesday.

## Sonia declines to become party president: Chances of national government bleak

# Congress plunges into deep leadership crisis

By Reazuddin Ahmed

Sonia Gandhi has declined to become the president of Congress(I) landing the party into a deep crisis. The Congress high command hurriedly chose Rajiv's widow as the party's president on Wednesday to avoid leadership vacuum in the party at this critical juncture and catch sympathy votes in next month's Lok Sabha elections.

Sonia on Thursday refused the Congress offer saying the tragedy that had befallen her and her children did not make it possible for her to accept the post.

Some of the political commentators in New Delhi, when contacted over telephone from Dhaka on Thursday, predicted a difficult time for Congress (I) in choosing a leader of all India stature and acceptable to the party cadres. They named PV Narashima Rao, Pranab Mukharjee, Sarod Pawar and ND Tewari as the possible successors of Rajiv. None is available at the moment from Nehru dynasty to lead the Congress. The commentators told the Daily Star that the decision of Sonia Gandhi not to accept the stewardship of the Congress has, at least, temporarily ended the Nehru dynasty's long control over the

oldest Indian political party which ruled the country for 40 years.

The sources in Delhi told the Daily Star over telephone that the Congress leaders were meeting in Indian capital to find an acceptable man to lead the party to victory in Lok Sabha elections on June 12 and 15. The Nehru dynasty's control over Congress for a long time has created a leadership vacuum in the party. There is no outstanding personality in the Congress now who is acceptable to Indian people and party's rank and file.

Former Indian foreign minister PV Narashima Rao stands a bright chance to succeed the slain leader. But he is not contesting the Lok Sabha elections. Besides, his old age may not permit him to campaign for party's victory. Pranab Mukharjee has very little chance to become Congress chief because, so far, the Congress leaders with the exception of Subhas Bose have been chosen from non-Bengali stock. ND Tewari, chief minister of Uttar Pradesh by this count has a bright possibility. In India, there is a saying that he who rules Uttar Pradesh rules

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## Killer bomb was hidden in woman's body

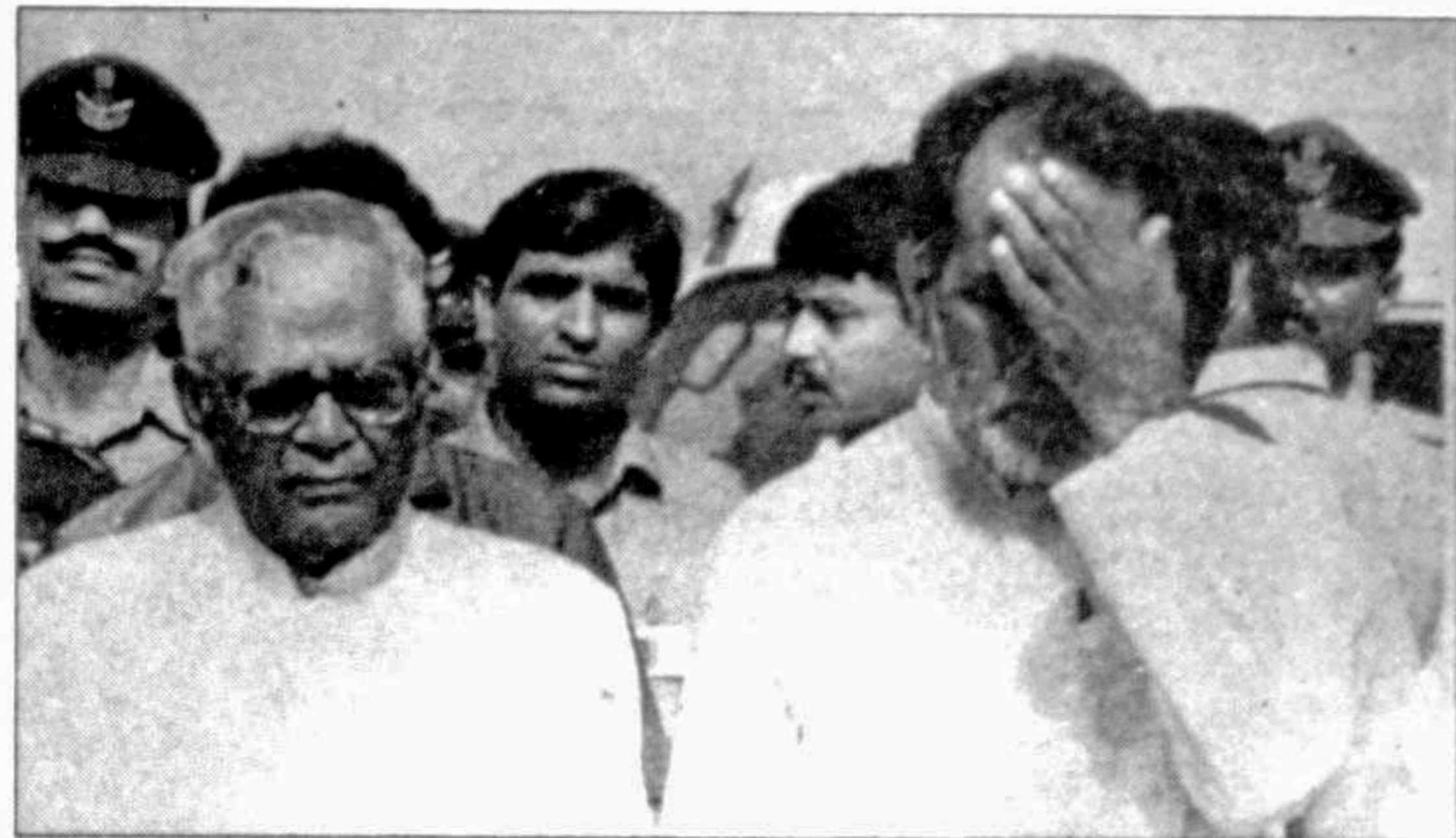
NEW DELHI, May 23: Indian leader Rajiv Gandhi was blown up by a woman who had explosive devices strapped to her body. Minister of State for Home Affairs Subodh Kant Sahay said today.

Sahay told Reuters forensic experts had confirmed that a woman, who has yet to be identified, had concealed a high-powered bomb on her body which exploded when she bowed to greet Gandhi.

A wire, a spring and a British-made battery had been found on the remains of the woman's torso, he said. The upper portion of the woman's body had been totally blown away, but her face was intact, he added.

India's Law and Justice Minister Subramaniam Swamy said today fresh evidence on the assassination pointed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

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TOP: Indian Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar (right) holds hand to head and stands with President Venkataraman (right) on Wednesday as the coffin bearing remains of Rajiv Gandhi arrive in New Delhi. BOTTOM: Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto offers condolences to Priyanka (centre) and Rahul Gandhi (right), daughter and son of Rajiv on Thursday at the late leader's residence. —AFP photo

## Islanders want permanent embankment

# Tarawa sails for home May 29

From Nazmul Ashraf

CHITTAGONG, May 23: Tarawa, the mother ship of the US Task Force, and its fleet "Eagle of the Sea" will set sail for home on May 29 the 15th birthday of the Tarawa.

About 6900 Marines and sailors will also depart with the fleet while 388 airmen, army and navy personnel will stay on at Chittagong Airport to

conduct relief operations. Lieutenant Ken Ross, press spokesman for the Task Force said on Thursday that the Tarawa would be returning to Long Beach and camp Pendleton of California after six months of its departure for the Gulf.

The Tarawa was commissioned on May 29, 1976.

This correspondent also visited affected areas of Kutubdia island off Cox's Bazar to have an on the spot view of the devastation and the on going relief operations. Following is the despatch: "For the safety of our lives, we want a permanent embankment" — read the demand

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Mrs Marilyn Quayle saying goodbye to a kid who offered her a bouquet at Zia International Airport prior to her departure on Thursday. —PID photo

## Things improving, Mrs Quayle tells Khaleda

Mrs. Marilyn Tucker Quayle, wife of US Vice President Dan Quayle and Chairperson of the International Disaster Advisory Committee, said in Dhaka Thursday that she was happy to see that reconstruction work was in full swing in the cyclone-ravaged areas of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Mrs. Quayle said this while she called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her

## Plan for disaster management to be suggested

From Nurul Alam  
 CHITTAGONG, May 23: Mrs Marilyn Tucker Quayle, wife of United States Vice President Dan Quayle and Chairperson of International Disaster Advisory Committee (IDAC) said she would suggest a disaster management plan for Bangladesh in her report to US President George Bush.

Talking to newsmen at the VIP Lounge of Chittagong airport before her departure for

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## Relief should go on till next crop comes in: Phoebe Fraser

Ms Phoebe Fraser, daughter of former Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser has pressed for continuing relief to the cyclone-hit people of the coastal areas for three months till the next rice crop comes in, reports BSS.

Ms Fraser who is also the programme officer of CARE-Australia yesterday expressed her satisfaction over the emergency relief activities now being carried out in the cyclone-battered areas.

"From my perspective, everything is going in accordance with the plan in regard to emergency relief activities in the affected areas", Ms Fraser told a press conference at Hotel Sheraton at the end of her ten-day visit.

Ms Fraser arrived Bangladesh on May 14 aboard a jet liner filled with 90 tons of relief goods donated by CARE-Australia, CARE-Canada and the Australian people. She will return home today (Friday).

The relief goods included high protein biscuits, blankets and emergency medicines.

On her return home, Ms Fraser said, she would submit two reports on the devastating cyclone in Bangladesh, one for the CARE Australia and the other for Australian government.

The damage caused by the cyclone was so great that outside assistance is required, she said and pointed out that the response of the Australian public to the plight of Bangladesh was encouraging.

Robin Needham, Assistant Country Director of CARE-Bangladesh who was present at the press conference, gave a resume of the CARE relief activities in the affected areas.

Narrating her experience in

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## Joint meet on credit recovery sought

Star Economic Report

Trade and industry circles have suggested a joint meeting of the officials of Ministries of Finance and Industries and Bangladesh Bank with the representatives of the private sector to discuss the "knotty" credit recovery problem and find out a "realistic solution".

Proposals for the meeting have been mooted with Minister of Finance M Saifur Rahman in his recent meetings with the representatives of the chamber bodies. Available indications suggest that the meeting would be held on return of the Finance Minister to Dhaka after attending the annual meeting of the Aid Club in Paris. The minister leaves for Paris tomorrow.

In another inter-related development on credit recovery

problem, a number of commercial banks have sought clarification from Bangladesh Bank on the letter's latest circular, debarbing the 'defaulters' from obtaining any fresh credit support.

The circular, according to banking circles, is vague on some points and needs further elaboration. Bankers feel themselves quite uncomfortable in this situation, because violation of any of its directive, in the even of any misinterpretation, will involve penal actions under the recently-enacted Banking Companies Law.

Bangladesh Bank, in its circular issued on March 20 to the banks, directed that any defaulter included in the published list must not be given

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## Appeal for avoiding bloodbath in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA, May 23: With rebels closing in on the capital, Ethiopia's Acting President Tesfaye Gabre Kidan has urged the international community to help avert a bloodbath, reports Reuter.

In his first public address since taking over from military strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam who fled into exile on Tuesday-Tesfaye Gabre Kidan repeated calls for an immediate ceasefire and offered to share power with the rebels.

"I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to setting up a transitional government comprising all parties so that our people will determine their own destiny," he said in a television address late on Wednesday.

But he said peace could not

be achieved unless the "cooperation of the superpowers, the various communities of different societies and governments is included".

He appeared to be asking foreign countries such as the United States and the Soviet Union—once Mengistu's greatest supporter — to pressure the rebels into a truce.

A spokesman for the rebel Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), said the group's fighters were now only 30 km (19 miles) west of Addis Ababa and could enter the city when they wanted to.

Diplomats said demoralised government troops were beginning to fall back in Addis Ababa, raising fears of looting and violence and the road to the capital seemed to be open.

## JS session from June 11

The Acting President, Mr Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, has summoned a session of the Jattya Sangsad at 10 am on June 11 in the Sangsad Bhawan at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, reports BSS.

## 10 feared drowned in launch capsized

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, May 23: At least ten people were feared drowned when a launch capsized in river Sugandha in Jhalakati on Thursday.

The mishap occurred when the ill-fated launch M L Arunima was rammed from the rear by another launch Sher-e-Bangla.

M R Arunima on being dashed capsized and sank with its over 50 passengers.

Forty passengers managed to reach the river bank but the fate of at least 10 others including a four-year old boy Juman was unknown.

Juman was going to his maternal uncle's house with his mother.

His mother and uncle were rescued by the local people but Juman remained missing.

The rescuers failed to salvage the launch after a day-long effort.

The NDC of Jhalakathi told this correspondent that the rescue operation will be started again from tomorrow (Friday). The launch was under 40 feet of water in the river.

## Bangladesh ranks 136th in human development

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh ranks 136th among 160 countries of the world in respect of human development, the Human Development Report - 1991 released on Thursday says.

The 202-page document prepared by the United Nations Development Programme puts Japan in number-one position in terms of human development ratings and Sierra Leon at the 160th position.

Charles H Lasrimont, UNDP's Resident Representative in Dhaka, released the report at a news conference at the United Nations Information Centre on Thursday.

The UNDP resident representative, noted that human development ratings of Bangladesh would be better if one takes into consideration the atmosphere of human freedom that has been prevailing since the parliament elections of February 27.

Defining human development as 'the process of enlarging people's choices' the re-

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## Ershad's arms case hearing May 30

The hearing of former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad's application seeking transfer of the arms case against him will be held before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on May 30, reports BSS.

Justice ATM Afzal granted Thursday the application preferred by the former President against the impugned judgement of the Division Bench of the High Court Division that discharged the rule on May 22 for transfer of his trial from the special tribunal.

Mv. Muhammad Wahidullah, Advocate-on-record for the appellant, filed the appeal. Strajul Haque appeared for Ershad, while Aminul Haque, Attorney General, appeared for the state.

## Hasina off to Delhi

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in the Jattya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka on Thursday for New Delhi to attend the funeral of former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, reports BSS.

Party leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury and Abdul Jalil were accompanying Hasina.

Prior to her departure, Sheikh Hasina recorded her message in the condolence book opened by the Indian High Commission at the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi.

# Flood situation in Sylhet deteriorates again

By Staff Correspondent

The over all flood situation in greater Sylhet region deteriorated once again on Thursday, according to reports reaching Dhaka.

The river Manu which was steady at the danger level on Wednesday was flowing 12 cm above the red mark on the day.

Over 700,000 people of six upazilas in the district have been affected. Relief operations have been geared up, the District Flood Control Room said.

Habiganj Flood water engulfed Habiganj town on Thursday follow-

ing the damage of a sluice gate of an embankment near the town.

"Flood water started gushing in from this afternoon and some city roads are now under water," an official of Habiganj Flood Control Room told The Daily Star over telephone.

The Hospital Road, Thana Road and Circuit House Road went under water, the official said adding if measures were not taken immediately the whole town might go under five to six feet of water.

He said the gate was par-

tially damaged some days ago which was being repaired but gushing water suddenly damaged it completely on Thursday.

However, the situation in other eight upazilas remained unchanged with River Khowai flowing below the danger mark on Thursday.

Some 1135 sq. km areas of the district are affected out of which 25 per cent were cultivated land.

Relief operation in the affected areas was continuing though there was no flood

shelter in the district.

Sylhet

The flood affected people of Sylhet district were returning to their homes following improvement of flood situation during the last two days.

About 42 flood shelters in the district have been closed as their inmates abandoned those," an official of the District Flood Control Room told The Daily Star. Now there were 111 shelters in the 11 upazilas of the district.

A total of 1200,000 people

were affected in the district and crops of over 160,000 acres of land were damaged.

The river Surma at Sylhet and Kanaighat as flowing below the danger mark but he Kushiara at Sheela point was 7 cm above the danger level, Control Room source said.

The Kushiara and Surma at its confluence in Jaktiganj upazila were flowing 17 cm above the red mark.

Jaktiganj, Balaganj, Compa-

nyganj, Bianbazar, Kanaighat, Fenchuganj and Ooanghat were the worst affected upazilas