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NEWS BRIEFS

Indian floods:
PM shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed deep shock at the loss of lives and destruction of property by the recent floods in India. In a message to Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao she said, "It is with a deep sense of shock that we have learnt about the loss of many valuable lives and serious destruction of property due to devastating floods in some states of India in recent days," reports UNB.

Medicines seized
at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
Customs Surveillance team seized contraband medicines worth about Tk 2 lakh from a passenger at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday. The medicines were seized from one Fazlur Rahman who came to Dhaka from Karachi by a PIA flight (PK 264) at 1:30 pm. He is a Bangladeshi national. Rahman was freed after a departmental case was lodged against him.

Strike observed
at SMC

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, July 21: A complete strike was observed by the students of the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College today in protest against the ransacking of a private chamber of a physician by some people. The people went on the rampage over the death of a college student allegedly due to wrong treatment in the hospital on Monday (July 18) last.

Postal stamp on
JMB July 24

The Bangladesh Postal Department will release a stamp of Taka four denomination on the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge on July 24. A first day cover of Taka five denomination will also be released on the occasion and a special canceller be used, reports BSS.

800 refugees die in one camp alone in 24 hrs

Cholera claims several thousand Rwandans



A Rwandan man throws the body of a baby — a cholera victim — wrapped up in sheets into a mass grave yesterday in Goma, Zaire where hundreds of Rwandan refugees have sought shelter from the civil war in their country.

GOMA (Zaire), July 21: Several thousand Rwandans have died in refugee camps around this Zairean town hit by cholera, doctors from the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said today.

MSF spokesman Georges Dalleagne said about 800 people were dead in the Munigi refugee camp alone, some eight kilometres from Goma, where some 100,000 people are crowded together.

Cholera victims and other ill refugees were streaming in constantly for treatment from other centers, she said.

Aid groups said earlier today that 800 people had died in the past 24 hours.

In MSF spokesman Georges Dalleagne said samples of stool sent to Paris for analysis confirmed the presence of the cholera bacteria.

Earlier, Reuter said: "Aid workers warned that thousands of Rwandan refugees could die in the next few days from a suspected cholera outbreak in eastern Zaire as a mass grave was filled to brimming with corpses."

"Hunger, thirst, the cold and the dust are killing us," said a tearful Rwandan woman peering into a trench where she said her mother was among up to 300 bodies dumped on the outskirts of the town of Goma.

Earlier on Wednesday the lifeless forms were laid out in neat rows at the bottom of the 50-metre trench dug into the volcanic soil, but as the hours went by they were thrown in haphazardly as the bodies piled up.

New groups of bodies,

Upendra Chakma
against armed
struggle

From Staff Correspondent

TABALCHHARI (Khagrachari). July 21: Tribal leader Upendral Chakma said here today that he was against the insurgency by the Shantibhini but supported their demands.

"I don't support the armed struggle but I support the demands of the Shantibhini," Upendral, who heads the Tripura-based Tribal Refugee Welfare Association, told a group of reporters.

He came to Bangladesh today with a group of Indian officials before the second phase of the repatriation of tribal refugees began on the day.

He said he had no contact with the Shantibhini or its leader Shantu Larma. "I only look after the refugee issue."

A former MP, Upendral left for India in 1988.

29 investigation centres to be set up to check crimes

The National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reforms (NICAR) yesterday in its 81st meeting decided to set up 39 investigation centres across the country to eradicate crimes, maintain law and order, take cases and help expedite investigation process, reports BSS.

The meeting held at the International Conference Centre, with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, decided to man each of these investigation centres with 21 police personnel including two sub-inspectors.

It also laid importance on further slashing the unproductive expenditures and siphoning those resources to the people's programmes like setting up hospitals, constructing houses, roads, bridges, cul-

cluding two sub-inspectors.

Two-day conference of the SAARC Council of Ministers will begin in Dhaka on July 30.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the current chairperson of the SAARC, will inaugurate the

meeting at the International Conference Centre.

The association grouping Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, was formally launched in 1985 to promote the socio-economic condition of more than one billion people in the region.

Foreign Office sources said yesterday that preparations to hold the 14th SAARC Council of Ministers meeting in Dhaka had almost been finalised.

The council would review the progress achieved in different sectors of the 10-year-old association, besides fixing the summit date and recommendations for new action programme.

The ministerial meeting will be preceded by meetings of the SAARC Standing Co-

Repatriation resumes

359 more Chakmas return home

From Asiuzzaman

TABALCHHARI (Khagrachari). July 21: A batch of 359 tribal refugees re-turned home today ending eight years of camp life in Tripura state of India.

"I longed to return home but could not come earlier because of various reasons," Bimal said, describing the camp life as "harrowing".

Bimal Chakma, Kanti Rani, Kanchan, Sudipta, Mohini, Maya Larma, Shefali, Nishi Kumar and a number of other refugees expressed similar feelings.

Several hundred people of the area thronged the riverbank to witness the second phase of repatriation which resumed today after a gap of several months. The process was interrupted due to some hitches on either side.

Some 50,000 tribal people. See Page 12 Col 1



Tony Blair made
British Labour
Party leader

LONDON, July 21: Tony Blair, a 41-year-old moderate lawyer, was overwhelmingly elected leader of the British Labour Party today and served notice he was bent on becoming the next prime minister, reports AFP.

Blair got 57 per cent of the vote by nearly one million Labour MPs and party and union members at a leadership conference here, replacing John Smith, who died of a heart attack in May.

"I am ready to serve," he said in his acceptance speech to cheering party members.

"Together, we will make this a turning point ... change the course of history and build a new land of opportunity."

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Attack on Indian HC cars in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, July 21: Two cars belonging to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad and the Consul General in Karachi were attacked this evening by groups suspected to be from Pakistan intelligence agencies and their windows were smashed this evening, an Indian High Commission spokesman said, reports PTI.

The driver of the car in Islamabad, Pillai received injuries when the vehicle's windscreen was stoned at 1830 hours. Pillai was returning to the high commission after dropping three Indian officials home, the spokesman said.

Immediately after receiving the reports regarding the two incidents, the Indian High Commissioner, S K Lambah spoke to the Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh on telephone and conveyed New Delhi's strong protest.

Bodos kill 11 Muslims in Assam

GUWAHATI, India, July 21: In an escalation of ethnic trouble, Bodo tribesmen shot, hacked and burned to death 11 Muslim settlers in northeastern India in retaliation for the death of a Bodo woman, news reports said Thursday, says AP.

The riot on Wednesday was the fourth deadly clash in nine months between the Bodos and Muslim migrants who have been flooding into the tribal area of the Indian state of Assam. In the worst incident last October, as many as 40 Muslim settlers were killed.

Worried by the sudden spurt of violence, the state government asked the army to take control of the Barpeta district, said Assam's Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia. Barpeta is about 150 kilometers (93 miles) north of the state capital, Guwahati.

The latest bloodletting began when migrants attacked a Bodo village and killed a 55-year-old woman to avenge the death of two settlers in a previous clash. Gangs of Bodos responded by raiding 16 Muslim settlements, killing at least 11 people.

S Africa 244 for six at Lord's

Sports Reporter
South Africa were 244 for six wickets at close on the opening day of their first cricket Test against England at Lord's yesterday, according to BBC monitored in Dhaka late last night.

Winning the toss the South Africans, playing in England after more than a quarter-century, owed their total mainly to a captain's knock of 105 by Kepler Wessels. Opener Gary Kirsten made 72.

Darren Gough claimed three of the six South African wickets at a cost of 43 runs.

Points of hits on Jupiter still glowing

Final impact comes today

GREENBELT, July 21: The second and third blow from the comet train's triple whammy smash into the cloud tops of Jupiter on Thursday, delivering what one astronomer called "the greatest one-two-three punch" ever, reports AP.

Fragment Q2 hit the planet on Wednesday, and expert comet watchers said fragments R and S were due Thursday. All were expected to hit so close together that marks left their passage would overlap.

That will leave only one more fragment, called W, in the string of speeding rocks that started hitting Jupiter last Saturday. The final impact comes about 0800 GMT Friday.

The triple whammy — three comet fragments hitting close together just 20 hours apart — could create chemical reactions not seen during the single impacts earlier.

If the triple whammy occurs as expected, it will put three explosive fireballs within a small area. The effects are uncertain, but experts said it could create chemical reactions that would not result from a single impact.

Each of the three pieces is only slightly smaller than fragment G, the largest of the comet shards. G exploded with a force estimated at about 6 million megatons of TNT, an explosive power far larger than all of the world's nuclear bombs put together.

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The photo of the impact of Fragment G released Wednesday by NASA. The fireball is seen 12 minutes after it hit the Jupiter. — AFP photo

City traffic jam — II

Vendors occupy pavements

By Masud Hasan Khan

He argues that proliferation of street vendors in the city cannot be checked until more serious issues like economic situation and migration of people from the rural areas are addressed.

Besides the lighter under-tone of the joke, the vendors spreading over the 162.94 kilometer long pavement network in Dhaka have gained a bargaining capability in the election of a mayor or fall of another.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif, however, disagrees with the notion but believes that the street hawkers are a section of desperate fellows trying to make out some kind of a living for them, according to an interview with The Daily Star, immediately after his election.

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Such sights are very common — vendors occupying the pavements and sizeable portions of busy city roads

— Star photo