

Padma, Mahananda on rise 80000 marooned in Chapainawabganj

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Aug 17: Flood situation worsened further with some 80,000 people marooned in the district as the Padma and the Mahananda continued to rise in last 24 hours till 6 pm today (Wednesday), reports UNB.

Officials said the Padma was flowing 200 cm above its danger mark while the Mahananda was 23 cm over its danger level. In last 24 hours, water level in Padma rose by 18 cm at Shibganj point while the Mahananda 13 cm at Nawabganj point.

They said 223 square km in five wards of the municipal area of Chapainawabganj town and Sadar Shibganj thana went under water during the period.

Flood water also washed away some 3541 thatched houses and partially damaged

nearly 5,587 others.

Standing crops on about 1,000 hectares of land were submerged raising the total to 12,000 hectares since floodings swept through the district.

Three primary schools in the two thanas, where some affected people had taken shelter, also were submerged in water, compounding people's sufferings.

Meanwhile, to make the situation further worse, diarrhoea broke out in parts of the flood-hit area where some 22 people were reportedly infected in last 24 hours.

LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder today (Wednesday) visited the flood affected areas and talked to the people. He assured them of all possible help in facing the calamity.

Writ against JS boycotters

HC rejects Maudud's plea

A petition of Jatiya Party leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed seeking issuance of rule upon the Speaker and the Secretary of Parliament in the writ against the Opposition's boycott of Parliament was rejected yesterday by the High Court, reports UNB.

The division bench of the High Court comprising Justice Kazi Shafiqul Hossain and Justice Kazi A T Manwar Uddin also rejected the prayer for two weeks' extension for hearing of the original writ and set August 23 for the hearing.

While rejecting Maudud's petition, the court observed that the Speaker is immune from any court of law.

The learned court had issued rule upon the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, MP, Jatiya Party leader Barrister Maudud Ahmed, MP and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Matuor Rahman Nizami, MP, upon a writ filed by Advocate Anwar Hossain Khan on June 26.

The petitioner said the opposition leaders, by boycotting Parliament since March 1, had been violating their constitutional obligations. The Speaker

and the Secretary of Parliament were also made parties in the writ for giving financial and other benefits to the boycotting Opposition MPs.

The court rejected Maudud's plea that the presence of the Speaker and the Parliament Secretary was needed for proper adjudication of the case.

The JP leader had contended that there was no bar in issuing a rule on the Speaker. The issue raised in the writ is not a legal or constitutional one, rather it is a political issue and should be resolved politically, he argued.

Maudud expressed his suspicion that the writ petition might have been filed on instigation from the ruling party and said the Opposition, too, might be tempted to take a similar move against the Prime Minister for his absence from most of the sittings of parliament.

BSS adds: Later, in reply to a question from journalists, Maudud Ahmed said he would file an application for leave to appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the judgement of the High Court.

Trial of Ershad in JP Office Case

Cross-examination of PW-2 completed

The Special Judge's Court trying deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad in a corruption case was told yesterday that repair and renovation works of House No 104 in Road No 3 of Dhanmondi Residential Area, which was used as the Jatiya Party office, was done prior to completion of official formalities, reports BSS.

Shahiduddin Ahmed, Superintendent Engineer, Housing and Settlement Directorate and a prosecution witness, said during cross-examination yesterday that the works done with government money were taken up in March 1990 and completed by August that year. The tenders for the works were, however, passed only in January 1991, he told the court.

Zinat Ara, First Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka who was presiding over the court, adjourned the hearing till September 7 on completion of the cross-examination of Ahmed, an Executive Engineer of the PWD during the renovation work of the JP office.

Former Works Minister Mostafa Jamal Haider and former acting Works Secretary Abdur Rouf are co-accused in this case. Special Case No 50 of 1993, better known as the Jatiya Party Office Case.

Ershad has been charged with abusing his official position in ordering the renovation and refurbishing of the house in question (an abandoned property), causing a loss of nearly Taka 83 lakh to the state exchequer.

During cross-examination, conducted by ATM Akbar, defence counsel for accused Rouf, the PW-2 admitted to inviting a tender for the work as the then Executive Engineer. But he added that the same was approved by the duly constituted committee. He also admitted accepting one signature. There was no mention of Rouf's name in the documents submitted before the court.

Before the actual business of the court could start, defence lawyers raised some objections relating to change of premises of the Special Court and alleged harassment of the de-

fence attorney in the name of security checks.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Razzak Khan, who objected to both the issues, stated that the court was duly constituted. He said notification was issued for shifting the court to the current venue (opposite the Central Jail) from Gulshan.

PP Khan drew the attention of the defence lawyers to the fact that they could have raised this issue of the court's venue long ago because it has been functioning at its present premises since 1991.

Menon's call to resist politics of killing

By Staff Correspondent

Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, MP, yesterday called upon all to resist the politics of killing, terrorism and conspiracy.

He said the government enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act but failed to remove terrorism from the country. Instead of curbing terrorism, the government has been using the law to suppress its political opponents, he alleged and added that if the ruling party was serious about removing terrorism, the persons who had made an attempt on his life would have been brought to book by now.

Menon was speaking at a function held in Gazipur on the second anniversary of the attack on his life.

Sylhet flood improves further

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 17: The flash flood situation in four thanas of Sylhet has further improved with the recession of waters from the affected areas.

Water has also started receding from the crop lands in Gowainghat, Kanaighat, Jaintapur, Companyganj and Beani-bazar thanas.

However, the river Surma at Kanaighat was flowing 44 cm above the danger-level while the Kushiara river at Amolshid was flowing 56 cm above the danger-level. At Sheola Ghat, it was flowing 24 cm above the danger-level today.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam



A helpless mother with her critically injured child waits for doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, the first day of a two-day doctors' strike. — Star photo

Doctors' strike

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At the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, an unidentified male patient was seen screaming in pain with his badly cut ankle dangling loosely.

Run over by a train, the man was brought to the DMCH at about 4 pm but there was none to provide him urgent medical care.

Our Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital correspondent reports that only seven emergency patients were treated on the first day of the doctors' strike.

Besides, more than a hundred patients returned from the outdoor of the SSMCH, the report said.

Meanwhile, the striking doctors yesterday held a demonstration in front of the Health Directorate at Mohakhali to force the government to accept their demands.

23 injured in Sirajganj clash

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 17: At least 23 people were injured in a clash between students and bus workers over bus fair at Meghai bus stand on the Kazi Pur-Sirajganj Road today (Wednesday), reports UNB.

The clash occurred after some students allegedly refused to pay fair and the bus workers forcibly took the students to Meghai bus stand instead of allowing them to get down at Kazi Pur Munsur Ali College bus stand.

Bangladesh, Brunei to set up missions

Bangladesh and Brunei will set up resident missions in each other's capital to bolster bilateral relations and intensify the cooperation in trade, investment, manpower and other fields, reports UNB.

"We agreed that there is an urgent need for establishment of resident missions in each others' capital," Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman said in Brunei on Tuesday.

Mostafizur was addressing a press conference at Bandar Seri Begawan before his departure from Brunei on completion of his three-day visit there at the invitation of Prince

AG office denies news item

The Attorney General's office has refuted a report published in a section of the press Wednesday that the Attorney General has been refrained from conducting cases against deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, reports UNB.

Clarifying the position, a press release last night said the circular of the Law Ministry quoted in the report was issued in September last year. The circular was neither executed nor the question of its execution ever arose because it was considered illegal by the office of the Attorney General.



The extreme Left United People's Front (UPF) of Nepal demonstrates in Kathmandu yesterday denouncing interim Prime Minister G P Koirala's government alongwith the monarchy. Some 700 UPF supporters were arrested before and during the nation-wide strike. — AFP photo

Cracker blasts mark hartal in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Aug 17: The half-day hartal called separately by two rival groups of the local Awami League today was marked by explosion of several hundred crackers.

No one was, however, injured.

The hartal was called demanding trial of the killers of Shamsul Alam, claimed to have been an AL leader. Alam was killed by splinters during a clash between the feuding groups Monday at an AL function in Deobhog in connection with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's death anniversary.

Both the groups blamed each other for Alam's death and held separate rallies in the town.

All vehicles remained off the roads and business centres closed during the hartal hours. However, train and launch services operated to and from Narayanganj as usual. A series of chases took place between the police and picketers at Deobhog and Raigata No. 2 areas in the morning.

The pickets pelted the police with stones. Police lobbed teargas and also baton-charged the angry activists. Eight people were arrested.

UN praises FP efforts

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The State of the World Population Report '94 pointed out that despite the unfavourable economic situation, the use of family planning in Bangladesh has increased fourfold, from less than 10 per cent in 1975 to 40 per cent in 1991.

Highlighting the country's efforts to upgrade the status of women by enhancing their access to education, services and economic activities, the report also lauded the role of the Grameen Bank, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and the Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition.

"The experience of Bangladesh illustrates a pattern which is becoming increasingly clear: when obstacles to access — official disapproval, limited services, religious prejudices and social stigmas — are cleared away, individuals and families avail themselves of reproductive health and family planning services," the report pointed out.

It said, "Bangladesh's experience shows that when priority is given to investing in people and to meeting the reproductive health needs of women and men, fertility decline occurs, as long as individuals and families can make their own choices."

Body of youngman recovered from near JU

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered the body of a youngman from the Dhaka-Aricha highway near the Jahangirnagar University yesterday morning.

Savar police, when contacted, said that after primary investigation the victim was identified as Quamrul Islam aged about 25 and he was from Jafarpur village under Nabinagar thana of Brahmanbaria district.

"The cause of the death is yet to be known. We have sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy and have sent a message to the Nabinagar thana to check the identity of the victim and to know the detailed information about him. We are yet to receive any reply from Nabinagar police," Savar police said.

A UNB report, however, said an admission seeker, M Shamsul Alam, who was from Manikganj town, was beaten to death at Maulana Bhasani Hall of Jahangirnagar University Tuesday night reportedly for speaking in favour of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Prof. Golam Azam. Alam was at the university for his viva-voce examination.

Asked about this by The Daily Star, Savar police and several teachers of the university denied any such incident in the university.

A teacher said "There was a rumour on the campus in the morning that a young man was beaten to death in a residential hall of the university but later no one could confirm it."

Soccer fans

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rowdy supporters and members of the law enforcing agencies.

At one stage, police resorted to baton-charge and teargassing to bring things under control.

However, by then the violence had spread outside the stadium with the fans-turned vandals venting their frustration on everything they came across, including wayside shops and passing vehicles.

The nearby National Sports Council office came under attack — lights and windowpanes were broken and cars parked outside the building being damaged. For the next one and a half hours, the whole area from the National Press Club to Bangladesh Bank, and even from Tikatully to Nawabpur, turned into a virtual battlefield with the frenzied soccer hooligans pelting stones at anything and everything. The policemen on duty had no recourse but to baton-charge and lob teargas canisters.

At least 30 cars were damaged while two motorbikes were set ablaze. Several hundred ten-Taka National Sports Council lottery tickets were reportedly also looted from the temporary booths on the roads around the stadium.

Police lobbed approximately 40 teargas shells and also fired a few blank shots to bring the situation under control.

Seven persons were picked up and sent to the Motijheel thana, but no charges were filed against them.

Most of the injured received first aid at various clinics and hospitals. It could not be confirmed, even until late last night, if anyone had been admitted to any of the city hospitals with serious injuries.

BUET closed

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ferent halls, hurling bombs in class rooms while the classes were going on and attacking innocent students," it said.

"We have also noticed with concern that the number of outsiders on the campus has increased alarmingly," the VC told The Daily Star.

"Our decisions were taken through consensus among the teachers, provosts, deans and heads of different departments. We want to keep the university free of violence at any cost," he said adding that the elections were not essential when those threaten the lives of people.

Asked about the re-opening of the BUET, the VC said, "We will sit very soon over restoring peace on the campus. I believe, it will not take very long, perhaps a week or a little more."

On students union elections Prof Shahjahan said, "obviously we want the students should practise democracy from their student life. We had first announced the EUCSU and hall union elections of 1994 in January. But those were not held due to different reasons. This time we had to postpone due to violence."

During the last six days, the student bodies opposing the elections had been observing strikes on the campus.

Police was deployed on the campus.

The Midnight File

US Dy Treasury Secy resigns

WASHINGTON, Aug 17: Deputy Treasury Secretary Roger Altman resigned today, the White House said, confirming the fall of the highest-ranking administration official yet in the Whitewater case. White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said Altman had informed President Clinton of his decision to step down. "This was Roger Altman's decision," she said, reports AFP.

Grenade attack on Hindu pilgrims

JAMMU, India, Aug 17: Kashmiri Muslim militants hurled a grenade at Hindu pilgrims going to a holy cave today triggering an army manhunt, police said here. No casualties were reported from the attack which occurred near Rambra, 178 kilometres (106 miles) from Jammu, Kashmir's winter capital. Two of the militants were immediately 'captured', police officials said, reports AFP.

Defeated forces of '71

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members. "I want the trial of the killers of my father, mother and brothers. It's my fundamental right and I want to get back this right," Hasina said. "Why should I not enjoy my fundamental right as a citizen of the country," she asked.

The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said the people were deprived of their basic needs and the fruits of their struggle for independence after the killing of the 'father of the nation.' The spirit of the Liberation War was also destroyed with his killing, she added.

The AL leader called upon the people to translate into reality Bangabandhu's dream for building a society free from poverty and exploitation.

Khaleda

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begin on September 5. More than a dozen heads of state and government are expected to attend the Cairo Conference.

During her visit, Begum Zia will meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and hold bilateral discussions. She is also expected to have talks with other heads of state and government who would be attending the conference.

Her programme in Egypt also includes visits to places of historical interest.

The Prime Minister will go on an official trip to Malaysia on October 11. During her three-day stay, she will hold talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad and other leaders.

The itinerary for the PM's Malaysian visit is expected to be finalised during Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman's current trip to Kuala Lumpur in connection with the Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Commission meeting.

Prokrichi strike

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A Hena and transfer of Engineer Ruhul Matin, a central leader of the Action Council.

During the strike, the Prokrichi members will hold a rally at the Battala of the PG Hospital at 10am today.

However, Prokrichi officials doing emergency medical duties at the hospitals, HSC and university examination halls, emergency power, gas and water supply, police and ansar service, international Customs checkpoints, radio and television and relief operations have been exempted from the strike programme.

Lankan polls

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change present economic policies significantly despite the socialist background of the alliance's main component, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party that ruled the island from 1970 to 1977.

The opposition manifesto does not state any shift from existing economic policies, said Anura Wickremasinghe, head of brokerage HDF securities.

The UNP pledged in its campaign to continue liberal economic policies that have boosted growth and foreign investment.

The PA urged an end to what it termed widespread government bribery and corruption.

It also asked for a mandate to end the bloody civil war. Tamil Tiger rebels have been fighting since 1983 for a homeland for their minority community in the north and east.

The source said that the bill may be placed before the House during the 16th session of the Jatiya Sangsad, beginning August 30.

By DMCH Correspondent

Armed hooligans beat up a factory worker and severed his left hand near the Tongi Railway Station early yesterday.

The victim, Delwar Hossain, 30, a worker of the Meghna Textile Mills was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a critical condition.

A case has been lodged with the Dhaka Railway Police but no arrest was made.

The meeting was also addressed by AL presidium members Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Sajeda Choudhury, Abdur Razzak, and Tofael Ahmed, General Secretary, Zillur Rahman, Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim, Joint Secretary Abdul Jalil, Publicity Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Paltu, Matia Choudhury, Mamataz Hossain, Fazlur Rahman and Mofazzal Hossain Choudhury Maya.

Abdus Samad Azad said the people had given their verdict in favour of repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance by spontaneously observing a half-day nationwide hartal on Monday.

He said the government leaders had now become unnerved after the AL's announcement of a Dhaka siege programme on September 10 to press home its one-point demand — resignation of the BNP government.

Abdul Mannan accused the post-75 governments of suppressing the AL during the last 19 years. "But they had failed to destroy the party and the ideals of Bangabandhu," he said adding repression on the AL activists had rather strengthened the party.

Sajeda Choudhury maintained that the rule of law could not be established in the country unless all black laws including the Indemnity Ordinance were repealed.

Tofael Ahmed criticised the government for "blackening out the father of the nation from the state-controlled media."

Tofael called for materialising the dreams of Bangabandhu after dislodging the "neo-autocrats".

Abdur Razzak said that only a few people in the country did not recognise Bangabandhu as the Father of the nation and the architect of Bangladesh.

Referring to the formation of the BKSAL, he said the nation could have become self-reliant if Bangabandhu's second revolution programme was implemented.

Mohammad Nasim criticised the government for not passing the AL-sponsored Indemnity Ordinance (repeal) Bill despite "its commitment to do so."

"Nowhere in the world a constitution contains a law that blocks trial of the killers of founding father of a nation."

False cheques

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due to shortage of funds in the account of the drawer have been on the increase.

"Some people often, dishonestly, issue cheques for amounts much higher than the deposit in their accounts, which is tantamount to fraud," said the official.

"Due to such unfair practice, the very credibility of transactions through cheques has been declining, affecting the banks' smooth functioning, as well as disturbing normal business activities," he added.

The authorities feel the necessity for formulating appropriate legislation against such practices because the existing laws lack adequate deterrent measures.

"The country's banking activities are regulated under the more than a century-old The Negotiable Instruments Acts of 1881."

The Finance Ministry last year initiated drafting of an amendment to this law. After detailed scrutiny, this draft, titled "The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 1994" was placed before a recent meeting of the Cabinet where it was approved for placing before Parliament as a bill.

The source said that the bill may be placed before the House during the 16th session of the Jatiya Sangsad, beginning August 30.

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mands has been met," said Jaswant Singh, a senior leader of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party.

The financial scandal involved banks and brokers illegally diverting funds from government securities to the booming Bombay Stock Exchange. Singh offered to resign twice over it but Rao declined to accept his offers.