

Rains continue to flood northeastern Europe

AMSTERDAM, Jan 30: Torrential January rains forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people in northeastern Europe and German and French officials today proclaimed the situation the "flood of the century," reports Reuter.

At least 15 deaths in France have been attributed to the weather over the past week and five people are missing. The death toll in Belgium was put at six and in Germany officials said at least three had died. One man was reported drowned in Britain over the weekend but no flood-related deaths have been recorded so far in the Netherlands.

Flooding in the German Rhineland city of Cologne beat the previous record set at the end of 1993 and officials expected water levels to go on rising.

In the Netherlands, the biggest Dutch civilian evacuation for more than 40 years was under way today. Twenty-five thousand people in the eastern province of Gelderland were told to flee the rising Rhine and 9,000 have been evacuated in Limburg province

along the River Mas (Meuse). Local Dutch officials were contemplating whether to tell 47,000 more people in the two provinces to abandon their homes.

France said it would provide emergency financial aid to flood victims in the northeast of the country.

"In many areas, we are talking about the flood of the century," French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's office said in a statement. "Nearly half the country has been affected."

Belgian officials reported the situation in the southern part of their country was deteriorating but evacuations had so far been kept to a minimum. Emergency workers said this year's floods were fast reaching the levels of December 1993, the worst for more than 60 years in Belgium.

In Cologne, the water level reached 10.64 metres (32 feet), exceeding the 10.63-metre mark hit at Christmas 1993 and sending more murky water gushing over flood barriers into the Old Town, the city's entertainment centre.

30 injured in Sirajganj clash

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 30: Some 30 people were injured, six seriously, in separate clashes in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Police said 20 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of people at Ranigram area at about 10 am. The clash erupted following a family feud, they said.

Seriously injured Miran Das, 23, Gobinda Das, 25, Shani Das, 26, and Shrimati Surya Bala, 40, were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital.

In another incident, 10 people were injured as the rival people of Dhanbandi and Ekdala villages clashed with each other in the morning. A businessman, Sajadul Islam, 20, was kidnapped from Kalibari area in the town following the clash.

Of the injured Rahman, 26, and Badal, 14, were admitted to a local clinic with head injuries, police said.

Two separate cases were filed with the local police.

JU student beaten up

By JU Correspondent
A student of Jahangirnagar University was injured when a group of rival students assaulted him near the Mir Mosarrat Hossain Hall yesterday morning.

Mohammad Nazrul Islam, 25, a student of chemistry, was later admitted to the DMCH. The incident was a sequel to the factional conflict between the local and non-local factions of the JCD on the campus, it was learnt.

Sources said, a group of eight JCD activists severely beat up Nazrul with bricks and sticks when he was coming out from the hall at about 12.30 pm.

Japan's bid to ship N-waste protested

TOKYO, Jan 30: About 20 countries have protested Japan's planned shipments of highly radioactive nuclear waste from France by sea next month, a major Japanese daily reported today, says AFP.

The Asahi Shimbun said countries in the Pacific, including the Philippines, have told the Japanese government they would not permit the passage of the nuclear waste shipments in their territorial waters.

CMCH

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demanding punishment to those responsible for killing of its leader and medical student Ahsan Ullah Apel. He was killed by unknown miscreants on Saturday.

Doctors said out door treatment remained suspended, while emergency surgical operation was also suffering due to the strike.

The first professional examination of final year MBBS scheduled for today could not be held.

A meeting of Staff Council of the college was held today with its Principal Prof Sayeda Nurjahan Bhuiyan. It was decided to inform the overall campus situation to the authorities for immediate action.

The JCD leaders, who joined the meeting, vowed to continue their programme until the arrest of the killers.

They also brought out a procession in the college premises protesting the killing.

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Iraqis shopping Sunday in a Baghdad market for the holy month of Ramadan, which is due to start tomorrow. In the last 10 days, food prices have jumped by about 25 per cent in anticipation of increased demand. — AFP photo

Ramadan begins in S Arabia, Yemen today

DUBAI, Jan 30: Saudi Arabia will mark the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan today, the Saudi Press Agency said. Ramadan will also start in neighbouring Yemen today, reports BSS.

Office-timing
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earlier time-table after the Ramadan.

The new time-table, announced by the government, is applicable to all government offices, corporations and establishments. However, banks, post and telephone offices, railway, hospital, nationalised industrial units, factories and other organisations who are under essential services would follow their own time-table under the purview of their respective rules in the public interest.

Strike observed in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent
COX'S BAZAR, Jan 30: A full-day transport strike was observed on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway today leaving commuters including foreign tourists stranded here. The Arakan Road Transport Workers Union enforced the dawn-to-dusk strike to protest alleged recent police atrocities on transport workers at Chokoria.

Ekushey fair

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is Taka 15 lakh while it was Taka 18 lakh last year, the academy authorities said.

The authorities and the leaders of various student bodies and cultural organisations have discussed different issues relating to the book fair and have also taken a number of decisions to make it a success.

Director General of the Academy Prof Mohammed Harun-ur-Rashid addressed the press conference. It was also attended by among others, Golam Moinuddin, Subrata Barua, Nurul Huda and Azhar Islam.

JS debate on discussing HC rule

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out his notice to initiate a general discussion on the High Court ruling which, he claimed, breached his privilege as a MP.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, in a ruling on Sunday, accepted a similar notice by Nurul Islam Moni and said the matter would be discussed in the House today (Monday). Accordingly, the notice was mentioned in the order of the day.

When Khalilur Rahman completed his discussion, Abdur Rob Chowdhury raised objection to the general discussion and said it would not be proper to discuss the rule nisi as the matter was sub-judice.

He, however, said there could be a discussion in camera only.

Taking the floor Khondker Delwar Hossain said, the matter was very complicated, the "Opposition is fighting to establish the rights of the people," he said.

Hasina maintained that the people's condition would not improve as long as "this autocratic, corrupt, vote-dacoit and inefficient government stays in power."

She called upon party leaders and workers to carry forward the agitation for forcing the government to step down and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government to conduct free and fair polls.

Awami League leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Mohammad Nasim, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Prof Abu Sayeed and Dr Mostafa Jalal Moinuddin were present on the occasion.

Delhi police fire on protesters: 3 killed

NEW DELHI, Jan 30: Three people died and more than 50 were injured here today when police opened fire on a violent crowd protesting over the death of a teenager allegedly beaten by police for defecating in a park, reports AFP.

Three people died in police gunfire, a police spokesman said adding that forty-five policemen and 13 residents were injured in clashes after the incensed crowd attacked the police in a northwestern suburb.

Nearly 3,000 people went on the rampage breaking car and shop windows, damaging property and stoning policemen after the death of an 18-year-old who was beaten by an officer for defecating in a public park, the spokesman said.

"It was a public complaint," he said. "Four policemen were guarding the park round-the-clock as local people had complained of the stench."

"A constable ran after the boy, who fell down. Locals say the officer then kicked him in the stomach and he (the boy) died."

The spokesman said some 3,000 shanty-town residents surrounded the park, blocked the police from carrying out the dawn-to-dusk strike to protest alleged recent police atrocities on transport workers at Chokoria.

Three beheaded in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Jan 30: Three foreigners were beheaded today for drug trafficking, raising to 15 the number of people executed so far this year in the Saudi Kingdom, the Interior Ministry said, reports AFP.

The ministry, quoted by the official news agency SPA, said a Pakistani was beheaded in the eastern town of Dammam, an Afghan in Riyadh, and a Nigerian in Jeddah, western Saudi Arabia.

They had been found guilty of smuggling heroin, hashish and other illegal drugs into the country.

Stranded Pakistanis march towards Pak embassy today

A group of stranded Pakistanis will stage a "short march" towards the Pakistan Embassy in the city today as part of their agitation on a four-point demand, reports UNB.

The Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC-Ejaz) announced yesterday that it would sponsor the march.

SPGRC Mirpur and Mohammadpur units will bring out a procession at 10 am, said a press release.

The demonstrators will also burn an effigy of the Home Minister of Pakistan, Nasrullah Khan Babar, in front of the National Press Club for his utterances against their repatriation, said the release.

It said the march to the Pakistan Embassy aims at realising their demands, including issuing of identity cards and Pakistani passports.

Strikes in Pakistan Feb 5 on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Jan 30: Pakistan called today for a nation-wide general strike on February 5 to back a revolt in Indian-ruled part of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, reports Reuter.

The government said the strike, a repeat of one observed last year on the same day, was part of its continuing efforts to arouse world opinion in support of the Kashmiri rebels.

B'baria-6 polls: Rigging alleged

By Staff Correspondent
An independent candidate in the recent Brahmanbaria-6 by-election yesterday brought allegations of widespread rigging and demanded polling in the constituency.

Addressing a press conference in the capital the candidate, Dr Rawshan Alam, said that massive "vote dacoity" during the by-election in Bancharampur January 25 had overshadowed the rigging in the Magura by-polls in March last year.

BNP supported Md Shahjahan Mia won the polls.

Dr Alam also criticised the Election Commission for not cancelling the votes despite his complaints of malpractices.

He alleged that the authorities had cancelled 12,000 votes cast in his favour and suspended polling in 23 centres in a bid to help the BNP-supported candidate to win.

The whole Bancharampur area was terrorised by the hoodlums belonging to the BNP who forced my agents out of the polling centres, cast false votes and opened fire," he alleged.

The defeated candidate said that the EC had shifted a polling centre from one place to another without informing the voters.

"It will be proved during investigation why the voters could not exercise their right to franchise, why 'vote dacoity' took place at 23 centres or why the results were suspended at four polling stations," he said.

The Midnight File

Building collapses in Brazil: 27 killed

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 30: A six-storey apartment block collapsed, killing 27 people, a Brazilian rescue worker said today. Nine people were pulled from the rubble alive after the building collapsed on Saturday in the resort town of Guaratuba along Brazil's coast, reports Reuter.

Blast claims 20 in Algiers

TUNIS, Jan 30: A powerful explosion today killed at least 20 people and wounded 60 outside Algiers central police station, state-controlled Algiers Radio said. The radio said the blast at about 3:20 pm in Amirouche Street, caused major damage. It broadcast an order from the Interior Ministry for all doctors, surgeons and other medical staff to report urgently to nearby Moustapha Hospital, reports Reuter.

Hartal observed in Pabna 3 electrocuted in Patuakhali

PABNA, Jan 30: Traffic in six routes of the district was disrupted today as the Pabna District Truck Drivers' Union enforced a day-long hartal to protest the killing of its line secretary, reports UNB.

Habibur Rahman Habi, 30, the line secretary of the union, was critically injured as he was beaten by some extortionists at Nagarbari ferryghat on January 22. Habi succumbed to injuries at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on January 23.

The union supporters also held a rally in front of DC office in the afternoon and demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Presided over by Md Mansur, president of the union, the rally was addressed, among others, by Shimul Biswas and Rafiqul Islam Rafiq.

JCD protests hurling of bombs at PM's motorcade

Leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling BNP's student wing, said yesterday none could succeed in capturing power through politics of killing, conspiracy and evil design, reports UNB.

The JCD leaders were addressing a protest rally yesterday morning in front of the DUCSU Bhaban as part of their country-wide action programme for the arrest and punishment of those responsible for hurling bombs towards the motorcade of the Prime Minister on January 25.

They had earlier announced a two-day action programme in all educational institutions of the country, which ends today.

The protesters accused the Awami League and its student front, the Chhatra League, of conspiring against the hard-earned democracy and development drive introduced by the BNP government.

The rally was addressed, among others, by JCD President Fazlul Haq Milon, Organising Secretary Abul Khayer Bhuiyan, JCD UN Unit General Secretary Moinur Hossain and DU Unit Organising Secretary Jakir Ahmed Bablu.

"A vested quarter is opposing everything just for the sake of opposition, hindering ongoing development of the country," Milon said.

Moinur Hossain urged all JCD men and student community to safeguard the peace-loving people as well as democracy. He urged all to make the protest rally, to be held in front of the Jatiya Press Club, tomorrow a success.

Earlier, the protesters paraded through the Arts Faculty premises of the Dhaka University shouting slogans against terrorism.

PM: Defence

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graduates from home and abroad. Begum Zia said they earned an essential and prestigious degree of the armed forces through tireless training and exercise.

Your success heartens me. I am confident that this education will help you in discharging greater responsibilities in future.

Begum Zia congratulated the graduate officers of the army, navy and airforce for successful completion of the staff college course.

The Commandant of the DSCSC, Major General Mustafa Kamaluddin, also addressed the function.

Ministers, diplomats, Chiefs of Staff of the three services, Defence Secretary and other senior civil and military officials were present on the occasion.

Earlier, on arrival at the DSCSC, the Prime Minister was received by the Commandant of the college.

Overbridges

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The capital city now has four overbridges at Farmgate, Newmarket, near the Judge's Court in old city and near the airport. All these were built by the Roads and Highways Directorate.

The DCC, which is implementing such work for the first time also has plans to construct seven more overbridges with its own funds by the end of this financial year, said an official in its engineering section.

Those footovers will be set up at the Purana Paltan near Baitul Mukarram Mosque, at the Ittefaq intersection, GPO intersection, Dainik Bangla intersection, Mouchak intersection, Malibagh intersection and Sadarghat in old city, he said.

Tax holiday

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said the industries prefer tax holidays and showed little or no interest to the alternative.

Tax holidays are allowed to industries for 5.7.9 and 12 years depending on economic values of the areas where they are set up.

The cities of Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna and the adjoining areas are considered developed areas, and industries, if set up in these areas, are provided five years tax holiday. Chittagong Hill Tracts, considered as a special economic zone, has the most attractive offer with a relief for 12 years.

The period of tax holiday is calculated from the month of commencement of commercial production.