

Govt destroying agri sector: Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the economy of the country is on the verge of ruin due to the 'subversive policy' of the government, reports UNB.

She alleged that the government in a planned way was destroying every sector to make the economy dependent on others. 'It was almost ruined garments, leather and jute sectors and is now destroying agriculture of the country.'

Addressing the leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Sechchhashebak Dal at her 29 Minto Road official residence, she said farmers of the country are now the most hapless community as they are being deprived of fair price of their produce for last one year.

The Leader of the Opposition said the government has increased prices of agri-inputs, including fertiliser to jeopardise the agriculture sector.

She said, the government's agriculture policy is to destroy the sector and encourage smuggling. Agricultural production might decline in future if the present policies continued, she apprehended.

The BNP Chairperson said it seems that the main task of this

government is to destroy the BNP. In fact, she said, the ruling party wants to introduce one party rule and this is why, repression came down on the BNP.

She said the BNP and its front organisations are being obstructed in every step in carrying out its political programmes across the country.

Begum Zia said the government has completed all arrangements to make Bangladesh a vassal state and its all activities, including the foreign policy, are being dictated by others.

The function was also addressed by Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, Sechchhashebak Dal president Rezvi Ahmed, general secretary Fazul Haq Milon, joint secretary Kamruzzaman Ratan, Mohammad Akhteruzzaman and Chhatra Dal president Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney.

3 arrested on charges of raping girl

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, July 11: Three people including a police constable were arrested on charges of raping a girl at a hotel in Cox's Bazar town early today.

Police said constable Musauddin along with two others identified as Shamsuddin and Abu Taher raped the 20-year-old girl at Hotel Jilani at midnight Thursday.

All the three were arrested from the spot. The constable was suspended and sent to Cox's Bazar jail while the two others were taken to sadar thana for interrogation.

It was alleged that the three accused picked up the girl from a suburban area and took her to the hotel Thursday afternoon. Later, she was gangraped in a hotel room.

When the hotel management informed the police about the incident, an emergency police team rushed to the spot and arrested the three. The victim filed a case with Cox's Bazar sadar thana.

JUBO LEAGUE LEADER KILLING: 3 BNP ACTIVISTS HELD

JHENIDAH, July 11: Three BNP activists were arrested last night in connection with the killing of Jubo League leader Kabiruzzaman, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided a house in the town and arrested Moslemuddin, Lito and Arup while two others managed to escape.

Karachi

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outside Malir district while a 22-year old shopkeeper was also killed in sniper shooting in the same area.

More than 250 people including dozens of activists of rival factions of the ethnic based Mohajir Qaumi Movement have been killed in the past four months of violence in this southern Pakistani port city.

Police have arrested more than 1,000 people in a crackdown launched after Karachi power company chief Malik Shahid Hamid was murdered last week.

Woman stabbed to death in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, July 11: A woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her close kin at a village in Kazipur thana of the district on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police and hospital sources said Asma Khanum, 30, of Salabara Kankhatu was admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital after being stabbed at her residence on Wednesday. She succumbed to injuries the following day.

Asma's husband, a butcher in profession, was also killed by unknown assailants at his home a year back and the case was still pending at the District and Sessions Judge Court.

A case was filed against some people of the village, including her husband's nephew Chand Miah, with Kazipur police. Chand went into hiding.

Flood situation in Assam, Tripura worsens

GUWAHATI, July 11: The flood situation in Assam took a serious turn today with the Brahmaputra rising above the danger level following incessant rains in eight districts inundating vast tracts of farmland and human habitation.

The army continued rescue and relief operations in Tinsukia district.

The four affected districts are Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Dhemajai, North Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Kamrup and Sonitpur.

The flood situation in Tripura worsened today with the alarming rise of water level in all major rivers following incessant rains during the last three days.

Official sources said around 400 people, living in the low-lying areas of the state capital and on its outskirts, had already been shifted to safer places.

Sources said water levels in Manu and Deo rivers of north district had crossed danger marks.

In south Tripura district, rivers Feni and Muhuri and the Howrah in west district were also swelling alarmingly, sources added.

Low lying areas of Ganagachara thana of Singpur were inundated by flash flood, caused by incessant rain, official sources said yesterday.

The Met office recorded 300 mm rain since Wednesday. The badly affected areas are: Nohali, Kochuya, Alambiditor, Mohipur and Salapak.

In Lalmonirhat, torrential rain coupled with onrush of hill water flooded low-lying areas and Chongadara high school of Sadar thana was devoured by the river Teesta yesterday.

The worst-hit areas are: Khuniagach in Sadar thana, Mahishkocha in Adittmiri thana, Votmiri in Kaliganj thana and Dawabari, Sindurna and Gandimari in Hatbandha thana.

In Sherpur, low-lying areas of Nalbitara thana were submerged by waters of the river Bhugai.

The situation aggravated due to onrush of hill waters from India's Meghalaya province following incessant rain in the district.

The embankment on the riverside was also washed away by the flood water at two points inundating the low lying areas. Thana office premises including the Dakbanglow and Ambagan roads went under knee-deep water.

According to a report from Comilla, a breach has developed at Gumi river embankment in Mirpur area in Brahmanpara thana following erosion due to onrush of hill water last night.

Our Cox's Bazar Correspondent quoting official sources said, Abul Kalam (25), Manik (27) and an unidentified man of Ramu thana, and Nurul Alam (18) and Syed Ali (7) of Sadar thana drowned in flood water yesterday.

The snapped road communi-

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Down to Earth

City's Parking Problems

By A S M Nurunnabi

It is a regrettable reality that in the Dhaka city, there are no definite rules and regulations governing parking of cars and other motorised vehicles. The present practice in this regard is that parking is done helter and skelter on the roads, and where there are shopping centres, in their immediate vicinity.

In modern cities of developed countries, there are provisions for parking lots for the busy areas like the commercial zones, shopping arcades and the like. In places where there are high-rise, multi-storied buildings, specific facilities for parking are provided. In many cases, they have underground parking lots and even multi-storied ones above ground level.

Such kind of indiscriminate parking as seen in Dhaka city not only impedes the movement of comparatively slow-moving traffic but also creates problems for pedestrians. From an on-the-spot survey, it has been found that previously when shopping complexes or markets were set up, no facility was provided for car parking. Similarly business establishments were set up in earlier times. As a result, no discipline evolved in the matter of car parking, leaving the main thoroughfares for use as parking zones.

Ownership of the Dhaka roads belongs either to the government or the Dhaka City Corporation. Under the City Corporation there are only four registered parking zones in the city. They are surrounding areas of New Market, Moham-madpur Town Hall, Kawran-bazar and Uttara Bank Bhaban. The City Corporation reportedly earns about Taka 24 lakh by leasing them out. Attempts were made previously to set up a couple of additional parking places, for example, in Gulshan and Luxmibazar areas. But such proposals did not materialise.

Besides these four registered parking zones, the City Corporation has no control over other areas of the city, which come under the domain of regulation by the traffic department of the police. It is understood that the traffic department, taking into

consideration the volume of vehicular traffic and commercial importance of any area, set up traffic post in that area with signboards indicating 'parking' or 'no parking' zone. For such traffic post locations, a number of traffic police are posted.

It is understood that for shortage of manpower in the traffic police department, it has not been possible to man the traffic posts with required personnel. Particularly in the busy commercial areas of the city, the parking arrangements break down partly on this account and partly on account of the heavy concentration of vehicles during business hours.

Sources say that in the Gulistan-Fulbaria area of old Dhaka, about two thousand buses operate on the 26 bus routes including the inter-district ones. Also 400 tempos operate from this area. But for the large number of vehicles operating from the vicinity of the nearby markets in this area, no arrangements for parking exist.

If we look at the principal commercial centre at Motijheel, we will find the magnitude of the tribulations caused by free-style parking in that area. Existence of kutcha bazars and indiscriminate parking of staff buses here and there are also causing deterioration of proper environment of this important commercial centre.

Except for the parking space in front of the Uttara Bank building, there is no parking space in the whole commercial area. As a result, motor vehicles belonging to banks, insurance companies and other commercial concerns and also to visitors who come to their offices are parked in several rows on both sides of the main roads. Similar scenes may be observed before Islah Chamber, Janata Bank, BCCI, Rahman Chamber, Dhaka Stock Exchange and MCCI buildings. In the Dilkusha area and on the roads adjacent to Bangabhaban, the offices located there have no parking space of their own.

Beside New Market, which provides some parking space, a good number of other shopping

complexes have come up which have no parking space. They are Chandini Chowk, Gowsia Market, Noor Mansion, Christia Market, Ismaili Mansion, Dhanmondi Hawkers Market. It is estimated that the total number of markets in this area will be about 15. The shopkeepers in this area express concern that for want of adequate parking space in this area, incurring business loss is a constant threat.

In the non-commercial areas also, it seems there is a general lack of awareness of the need for parking space for the multi-storied structures coming up or already completed. Examples in this respect are the new Central Hospital located on the western end of the Green Road and the Gonosastha Hospital on the Mirpur Road across Road No. 5, Dhanmondi Residential Area, both under process of construction.

It is felt that in the interest of easing traffic congestion in the city, there is an urgent need for a change of outlook in the matter of provision of parking space. For this purpose, the question of using ground floors of spacious buildings, where possible at the time of construction, may be considered. Such vacant spaces are still available in the Motijheel Commercial Area may be considered for construction of multi-storied parking facility. For such projects, both the Dhaka City Corporation and the private sector may be associated.

It is further suggested that a system of realising parking charge may be introduced through a suitable agency for stay at fixed places in every commercially important area of the city. It may be noted that in many cities in western countries, parking charge is realised for use of parking lots owned by private parties.

The bottom line is that in the absence of proper rules, free-style car parking in the city has assumed such ominous proportions that it has moved the authorities concerned take remedial measures on an urgent basis.

Holzman on Bangladesh

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and boosted the food production. He said like other South Asian countries Bangladesh is relying more on private initiatives and free markets as the foundation of a growing economy and less on state enterprise and controls. He said the country is a strong candidate member in the community of market democracies.

Holzman said the United States and Bangladesh enjoy cordial productive and expanding relations even though the two countries are on opposite sides of the globe.

He said the present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to power just a year ago through a free, fair and fully contested elections. He said the government's

BCL expels 2

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The press release said that the two persons were involved in killing, terrorism, extortion and were collaborating with BNP.

Meanwhile, the Shariatpur-Madaripur faction of the BCL expelled the activists of Gopalganj faction of the organisation from Fazul Haq Hall of Dhaka University Wednesday night.

Dhaka University authorities in a press release said that the university authorities had no responsibility in connection with the killing of Tonai as he was never a student of the university.

Moreover, the murder did not take place in the university area, the press release said. There is no scope for outsiders to enter the residential halls of the DU as policemen are there to check identity cards of students while entering halls.

But as the TV room of the Fazul Haq Hall is situated outside the main building, the children of employees of the hall and some outsiders come to watch television, the press release said. There is no police guard in the TV room of the hall.

However, the university authorities have formed a probe committee headed by Prof. Abdul Kader provost of Fazul Haq Hall to find out whether Tonai was in the TV room of the hall on the night the incident took place.

The committee will submit its report within seven days.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Kaiser Rashid Chy dead

Kaiser Rashid Chowdhury died in the city yesterday afternoon. He was 69, reports BSS.

He left behind his wife, three sons, four daughters and a host of relatives, friends and admirers.

The first namaj-e-janaza of Kaiser Rashid Chowdhury will be held tomorrow (Sunday) at House No 31, Road No 2, Dhanmondi Residential Area.

The second janaza will be held at Kurmitola Golf Club.

His body will be taken to Sylhet the same day and will be buried at Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) Dargah after Asr prayers.

Hailing from Sylhet, he was son of late Abdur Rashid Chowdhury, who was a member of the Indian central assembly prior to partition. His mother, late Begum Serajunnesa Chowdhury, was a member of the Pakistan National Assembly in the 1960s and a renowned social worker.

His elder brother Humayun Rashid Chowdhury is the current Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad while younger brother Farook Rashid Chowdhury was a state minister.

Born on September 22, 1928, he held the St Edmund's College in Shillong and the Aligarh Muslim University. He joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1951 and served with distinction in France, Myanmar and Australia.

Kaiser was director to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He resigned his post in 1966 and served in several business capacities thereafter. He was a golfer and very instrumental in promoting golf throughout Bangladesh. He was very active and popular in the social circles.

Lieutenant General Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, President of Kurmitola Golf Club, and all its members condoled the death of Kaiser Rashid Chowdhury, one of the oldest members of the golf club, said a press release.

Mahbub

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Mahbub, who hailed from Suriakathi village under Swarupkathi thana in Pirojpur district, was found dead in the wheel carriage when the Biman Airbus landed at Riyadh airport in the early hours of May 24. The Airbus took off from ZIA at about 9 pm on June 23.

State Minister for Jute and Textile, Faizul Huq, senior officials of Bangladesh Biman and Civil Aviation authorities were present during the handing over of the body.

The body was sent to Mahbub's village home by a Biman vehicle.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the Tongi-Ashulia highway at Tongi yesterday. —PID photo

Sierra Leone suspended from Commonwealth

LONDON, July 11: Punishing a military regime, Commonwealth foreign ministers today suspended Sierra Leone from the association of Britain and its former colonies, reports AP.

However, an eight-nation Commonwealth group that monitors democratic lapses in member-states took no new action against Nigeria's military regime, which is suspended and faces possible expulsion.

9 fall sick after taking Mirinda

Nine members of a family fell seriously ill after drinking Mirinda at a marriage ceremony at Shaahat under Keraniganj thana in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The victims were identified as Nasim, 35, Shamima, 32, Arafat, 10, July, 18, Eeti, 15, Imran, 6, Rabbi, 4, Nitika, 4, and Rakib, 5.

The children fell unconscious while the adults became seriously ill. They were admitted to a private clinic.

Hotel fire

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Police declined to speculate on the cause of the inferno, but hotel officials suggested a leaking gas canister in the kitchens was possibly at fault.

One man jumped to his death trying to escape the flames in the hotel tower, local radio reported. There was no immediate independent confirmation of the report. The radio said he was thought to be from a Middle Eastern country.

Officials could not immediately confirm the identities or nationalities of the casualties. Most of the hotel's guests were believed to be Asian tourists.

A hospital spokesman said a Finnish woman had been treated for burns and released. Her identity was not immediately available.

Media reports said the hotel's sprinkler system was inadequate. In some areas, there were no sprinklers at all while in others the system was defective, the reports said.

Road communication snapped

From page 1

have also developed at different points of the flood protection embankment.

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The snapped road communi-

cation between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar could not be restored till yesterday evening as two bailey bridges on the highway were still under water.

Our Correspondent from Sylhet says, road communication between the district and rest of the country was snapped as flash flood threatened the Shahistaganj bridge in Habiganj district.

Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on Sylhet-Shahistaganj-Habiganj road.

The flood water has inundated 50 villages under five thanas of the district.

The road communication between the district headquarters and Beanbarid thana was also snapped yesterday afternoon as ferry service through Shalaghat stopped. The road link between Sylhet and Gowainghat thana headquarters remained cut off for the second day yesterday.

In Moulvibazar, at least 20 villages of five thanas were inundated due to torrential rain coupled with onrush of hill water in the last two days.

Standing crops and seedbeds on 10,000 acres of land were damaged and road communication in the district was disrupted due to the flood, official sources said.

Breaches developed in different points of the Monu river embankment.

Low-lying areas of three thanas of Sunamganj were inundated yesterday due to rain, official sources said.

Some 2,000 thatched houses, besides launch ghats, police outpost and standing crops were damaged by the onrush of hill water.

Sources said four unions in Tahir thana, one union in Chhatak and two unions of sadar thana were submerged.

In Feni, 40 villages of sadar and Porshuram thanas of the district were inundated due to

PM opens Tongi-Ashulia road

Massive plan to develop rural road network

TONGI (Gazipur), July 11: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said her government wants to build a planned communication network in the country for achieving overall economic development, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the Tongi-Ashulia section of the 18.6 km Tongi-Ashulia-Zirabo-Savar EPZ road project this afternoon.

Under the first phase of the Tk 58 crore project, the 5.5 km Tongi-Ashulia metalled road costing Tk 32 crore was completed in fiscal 1996-97 under the special directive of the Prime Minister and supervision of the Communications Minister.

Construction of the remaining 13.1 kilometres of the road is going on.

Three bridges, two box culverts and 20 pipe culverts will be built on the road.

On completion, it will help ease road communication between Chittagong and the northern parts of the country, opening a new route from Savar EPZ to Chittagong port and Dhaka International airport.

Besides, the road will be an alternative to the busy Dhaka-Aricha highway. It will also facilitate transportation of the pilgrims of Biswa Jitema at Tongi.

Addressing the inaugural function near Tongi bridge, the Prime Minister said the government attached top priority to the infrastructure development, especially the construction of roads, bridges and culverts to build a smooth road network throughout the country.

She said a good communication network would help

Major rivers

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The Surma at Kanaighat and Sunamganj, the Kushiya at Amalshid, the Manu at Manu Railway Bridge, the Khowai at Habiganj, the Someswari at Durgapur, the Muhuri at Parshuram, the Halda at Narayanhat, the Sangu at Bandarban, and the Matamuhuri at Lama and Chiringa crossed danger marks.

The bulletin also forecast that flood situation in Manu, Habiganj, Durgapur, Parshuram, Bandarban, Lama and Chiringa is likely to aggravate further.

The Surma at Sylhet, the Kushiya at Sheola, the Manu at Moulvibazar and the Gumi at Comilla may cross their respective danger marks today.

According to the experts at the Flood Information Centre, the Jamuna at Aricha may cross its danger mark as it is likely to rise further in the next 48 hours.

The river Ganges marked rise at all the points, but flowing below the danger levels. All the rivers in the Ganges basin are also flowing below their respective danger levels.

But the experts forecast that the Ganges is likely to rise by 41 cm at Goaland and by 29 cm at Bhagyakul today. The Brahmaputra is also expected to rise at all points.

Landslides

From page 1

The labourers, Belayet Hossain, 34, and Rafique Ahmed, 31, died on the spot while six others of the colony were injured.

Three of the injured persons were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital and the rest were released after first aid.

According to another report, one person was killed in a landslide in Kalarmarchara union of Mohezkhal thana under Cox's Bazar district yesterday.

In Kaptai, four children were killed when a big chunk of earth fell on their house near KMP Video Club at Chandraghona in the early hours yesterday.

The dead were identified as Shahara Begum, 9, Mariam Begum, 12, Mohammad Yusuf, 6, and Sheuli Akhter, 12.

strengthen the rural economy and set up export-oriented industries and export processing zones for attracting foreign investment.