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19 feared dead in Bandarban boat capsized

BANDARBAN, July 12: At least 19 people were feared drowned today in a boat capsized in the river Sangu at Ruma thana here, today, reports BSS.

District administration sources said, the accident occurred at around noon when the engine boat with 20 passengers aboard was going to Bandarban district headquarters from Thanchi thana Sadar.

Only one passenger managed to swim ashore and informed the district administration of the accident. A rescue team has been searching for the survivors and the bodies, the source added.

PM leaves for Germany

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka last night for Hamburg to attend a UNESCO-sponsored conference on adult education, reports UNB.

She will deliver the key-note address at the international conference in the German city, renewing the country's commitment to fight illiteracy.

A VIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the Prime Minister, left Zia International Airport shortly after midnight.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Mayor of Dhaka City Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohtashim Khan Alamgir, State

Samad Azad to look after PM's routine work

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will look after the regular routine work of the prime minister during her absence abroad, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka midnight last night for Hamburg to attend a UNESCO-sponsored conference on adult education. From Hamburg she will proceed to the United States.

Sources in the Prime Minister's Office said since there is no constitutional provision for leave of the prime minister and since all the power of the government is vested in the prime

Amu acting AL president

Awami League presidium member Amir Hossain Amu will discharge the duties of acting president of the party during Sheikh Hasina's visit to Germany and the USA, reports UNB.

The announcement came yesterday in a party press release, signed by office secretary Abdul Mannan Khan.

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka for Germany last night.

Nepali chopper now at Ctg airport

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, July 12: The Nepalese helicopter, which landed at Sitakunda yesterday evening due to inclement weather, arrived at Chittagong Airport this afternoon.

It is expected to take off from Chittagong Airport for Singapore tomorrow, airport sources said.

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An affected family in a low-lying city area inundated by rain waters. —Star photo

Road links with 16 N-dists remain snapped

Flood situation worsens, death toll rises to 57

The flood situation in some parts of the country has worsened, leaving at least 25 more dead, reports UNB.

Of the dead 11 people were in Cox's Bazar, nine in Bandarban, three in Fabna and one each in Sirajganj and Chittagong districts.

With this the death toll rose to 57 in the flash flood, caused by downpour and onrush of hill waters.

Tens of thousands of people in several worst-hit districts remained marooned and a vast tract of standing crops were damaged. Major rivers continued to rise flooding fresh areas particularly in the country's northern and southeastern regions.

Normal life and communication system have been paralysed in the flood-hit Chittagong Hill Tracts, greater Rangpur, Sylhet and Mymensingh regions.

Low-lying areas of the affected districts as well as capital Dhaka and port city Chittagong went under water. People have taken shelter in flood centres where they badly need food and other relief materials. Road communication between Dhaka and 16 northern districts were disrupted as a portion of Natakola-Nagarbari road was washed away on Friday.

Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road link remained cut off for the third consecutive day. Bandarban is still detached from rest of the country while movement of heavy vehicles was suspended on Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

Eleven people were killed and more than five lakh others affected in the 19 unions of Chokoria thana of Cox's Bazar

5 suspected muggers beaten to death

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, July 12: A mob beat five persons to death, suspecting them to be muggers, on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road at Bhuigarh in Fatullah thana early this morning, police and witnesses said.

Four of the victims died on the spot while another succumbed to his injuries at the Narayanganj General Hospital. All the five, four wearing lungis and another trouser and shirt, were in their thirties.

The man who died at the hospital had said his name was Alam and named another in his team as Babu. The others could not be identified. All the bodies, bearing marks of injuries caused due to beating with iron rods, were sent to the General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Contrary to the claim by the mob, police found no arms or weapons of any sort in the possession of the victims or in the vehicle they were travelling in.

A police team from Fatullah thana reached the spot two hours after the incident. They continued their search for the killers and were interrogating the local villagers until the filing of this report at 9:30 pm. However, the panicked local people did not give any statement regarding the killings until then.

Besides, the local people also declined to say anything to a group of journalists including this correspondent when they visited the area in the afternoon. A tense situation was witnessed there.

According to police and witnesses, over 100 villagers rushed to the spot and mercilessly beat up the five persons, going by a scooter amid heavy rains at about 6 am. The trouble started as a group of five or six people shouted for help to catch 'dacoits'.

Before crying for help, those persons stopped the scooter riding its bid to speed away through the under-construction link road, now banned for vehicles, local people said.

But police quoted Alam as

Envoy to China to be made Foreign Secy

By Staff Correspondent
Mustafizur Rahman, Ambassador to China is going to be appointed as the country's Foreign Secretary in September, according to sources.

Incumbent Farooq Sobhan goes on LPR from September 17. Rahman, who joined the erstwhile Pakistan Foreign Service (PFS) in 1964, is presently the senior-most career diplomat according to the gradation list, taking into account his role in the Liberation War.

He has been serving as envoy to Beijing since December, 1993. Previously he was ambassador in Moscow and Yangon and high commissioner to Malaysia.

Rahman, known for his scholarly works, has a number of publications to his credit. He also translated a book on the Liberation War written by the late Jahanara Imam. He was in the janera before joining the foreign service.

A top army official maybe appointed ambassador to China following his retirement later

PM's directive to Armed Forces Take part in rescue, relief operation

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday discussed the flood situation with the Chiefs of Three Services and directed them to involve the Armed Forces in rescue and relief operation, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister asked the three chiefs to take all-out measures to face the flood onslaught. The meeting was held at Ganobhaban.

The flash flood hit sixteen districts of northern part and some districts of southeastern part of the country.

Army Chief Mahbubur Rahman, Air Chief Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Navy Chief Nurul Islam attended the meeting.

BSS adds: Armed Forces have been kept alert to face any eventuality in view of heavy downpour across the country and onrush of hilly waters in the southeastern districts, a release of Prime Minister's Office said yesterday.

All formations of army, navy and air force are ready to assist the civil administration in facing possible floods following the order of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The 24 Infantry Division stationed in Chittagong has already sent 800 kgs of biscuits to Bandarban as emergency relief from its own resources. Some 2000 kgs of chira and 500 kgs of molasses will also be sent to the affected areas.

Air Force helicopters have been operating relief activities

College teacher shot in city

By Staff Correspondent
 A young woman was seriously injured when an unidentified gang fired on her near the Abahani playground at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday afternoon.

Taposhi Banik, 27, who sustained bullet wounds in her chest, was first taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). She was later shifted to the Chest Diseases Hospital at Mahakhali.

Another man identified as Bhupati Shaha, 30, who was accompanying Taposhi, was also injured, hospital sources said.

Police said both Taposhi and Bhupati were teachers of a nearby college.

The incident occurred when the two went to a shop near their house at Road No 15A of Dhanmondi to make a phone call at about 2 pm.

July 15 hartal politically motivated: AL

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and general secretary of Awami League Zillur Rahman yesterday opposed the July 15 hartal, saying a vested quarter had given the hartal call to serve its political motive, reports BSS.

In a statement, the minister said the hartal in no way can be supported.

Zillur said the Jatitya Sangsad on Sunday had unilaterally adopted a resolution strongly condemning the heinous propaganda against our Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) and the holy Quran.

The Jatitya Sangsad also expressed anger over the role of Israeli authority in this regard and urged all people of the world, countries, governments, groups, organisations and OIC to create pressure on Israel to stop such despicable activities

Spl JS session may be called to pass local govt bill: Zillur

LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday said if necessary special session of parliament would be summoned to pass the bill on local government, reports UNB.

"We had intention to place the local govt bill in the just ended parliament session, however, special session will be called to pass the bill after the cabinet's detailed scrutiny of the technical committee report on it," he said.

Zillur who opened a dialogue on the framework of the local govt and its future at LGED auditorium in the city said the government is actively considering the four-tier local government — Gram Parishad, Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad.

The dialogue was participated among others by PM's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Suranjit Sengupta, Whip Rafiqul Islam, Barrister Amirul Islam, Sadeq Khan, Gazi Shamsur Rahman, Hasanul Huq Inu, Shahidul Islam, Kazi Azhar Ali, Nurul Huda, Dr Atiar Rahman, Aftab Uddin Khan, Shah Alam, Prof Mannan, Shaiful Alam and Dr Maksud Ali.

The LGRD minister said a powerful commission on the local government completed its report within eight months and submitted its specific recommendations to the government.

The Commission recommended direct elections to elect representatives for all the four tiers. He said recommendation was also made for direct election in 30 per cent reserved seats for women in all the four tiers.

With the holding of these elections, people's sovereign power will be established in the administration. "We want to make the bureaucracy accountable to the rural people and to the nation as well," he said.

He observed that without direct voting in the local govt units, democracy will not have constitutional shape and the bureaucracy will not want to be accountable to the people.

The LGRD minister said without empowering the politicians, it would not be possible to democratise bureaucracy.

Participants at the dialogue suggested that the Commission's report on the local govt should be reviewed at the parliamentary committee, instead of examining it by a bureaucratic committee.

They demanded that the Commission's report should be placed in parliament in the form of a Bill after its scrutiny by a parliamentary committee.

Gas well fire: Statements of 12 recorded

By Staff Correspondent
 The inquiry committee recorded statements of at least 12 persons who were present at the Magurchara drilling site when it exploded, according to official sources.

The committee completed its report and the convener of the committee is scheduled to submit the report today.

The committee also analysed the drilling plan of the day of the blow out, from the recorded statements, the sources said.

The sources said the committee found that the driller of the German drilling company, Deutech, was sacked on June 13. He was replaced by a tool pusher.

The US company, Occidental Ltd, which was given the contract for hydrocarbon exploration at the drilling site in 1995 sub-contracted the drilling work to Deutech.

The blow out at the drilling site in the early hours of June 15 led to a fire at the site. The flame rose upto 600 feet to 800 feet high.

The flame remained at that height for few days which gradually started to decline till it came to about three to five feet high.

Statements of some officials of the Bangladesh Railway, Roads and Highways Department, Power Development Board, and employees of adjacent tea estates were also recorded during the investigation.

The five-member inquiry committee was formed on June 16 with TIS Lodhi, a director of Petrobangla, as its convener. Mahfuzul Islam, an additional secretary of the ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, was later made the convener of the committee.

Labour unrest forces closure of DEPZ factory

By Staff Correspondent
 A leading South Korean sportswear factory in the Dhaka Export Processing Zone at Savar has been closed due to labour unrest.

The authorities of the Young-gies Hi-Tech Sportswear Industries Limited said, 5,000 workers of the factory did not join their work yesterday.

A senior official told The Daily Star over telephone that the company had asked the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) to help them settle the matter.

A press release of the National Garment Workers' Federation

CSE turnover exceeds DSE's for 6 days

CHITTAGONG, July 12: The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), country's second bourse, touched another milestone last week as its daily turnover exceeded that of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) for six consecutive days of trading, reports UNB.

Briefing a group of newsmen at the CSE Bhaban here today, the bourse's chief executive officer, AGM Shamsul Kamal, said the increasing daily trade volume indicates that "CSE have become the alternate investment centre for small and large-scale investors."

He said that in the backdrop of a massive jolt in share market following "gross manipulation" in the DSE, the daily turnover of CSE started to move up steadily towards an investment-favourable condition, gaining more trust of the investors.

According to the daily trade reports of the two bourses in the last week (July 6-10), the turnover of CSE was Tk 25.95 crore and DSE Tk 20.48 crore.

The daily figures were: July 6 — CSE Tk 5.07 crore and DSE Tk 3.94 crore, July 7 — CSE Tk 5.28 crore and DSE Tk 4.38 crore, July 8 — CSE Tk 6.41 crore and DSE Tk 4.86 crore, July 9 — CSE Tk 5.19 crore and DSE Tk 3.93 crore, July 10 — CSE Tk 4.07 crore and DSE Tk 3.38 crore.

The CSE was established in 1995, after 40 years of the launching of DSE (1954). According to analyses by the share market experts here, efficient management and transparency were the major reason behind the recent success of CSE.

A corporate body system — mandatory for all CSE members — and independent secretariate having necessary powers, was

IU VC for talks with teachers, students to resolve crisis

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, July 12: The Vice Chancellor of the Islamic University, Dr Enamul Huq, has called upon the teachers and students to solve the present crisis on the campus through discussion.

In a statement today, he urged the agitating teachers and students to shun the path of movement.

The VC also denied the allegations brought against him by some teachers and students.

According to him, a section of teachers went against him as he supported construction of War Memorials on the campus. He said administrative decisions taken so far were in conformity with the rules and regulations of the University Grants Commission.

The vice chancellor is now staying at the Circuit House

'AG office lawyers should not be replaced with change of govt'

By Staff Correspondent
 Staff lawyers and officers in the Attorney General's office should not be changed with the replacement of the Attorney General after change of government, for quick disposal of cases.

The World Bank, in its recommendations made to the law ministry recently, said that only the AG could be replaced after change of government, according to official sources.

Replacement of most of the lawyers including the AG after change of government causes delay in the judicial process, since the newly appointed lawyers lack the experience, institutional knowledge and history of the cases handled by the previous lawyers, the WB has said.

Attorney General KS Nabi



Activists place wooden logs on tracks to prevent train services during a general strike yesterday to protest the shooting of 10 slum dwellers by police in Bombay. —AFP/UNB photo

Ordeal of a family trying to help the poor

By Morshed Ali Khan
 For Umme Nahida Akhtar Nishi, 16, an O-level examinee from Gulshan Manarat School, and her ten-year old brother Mohammad Zahedul Islam, it was a winter holiday.

On November 8 last year, they accompanied their mother Saleha Islam on a visit to Rajbari and Natore in their private car.

Their father, Nazrul Islam, a medicine trader, stayed back at their one-storey house at Uttar Shajahanpur in the city with two other children.

The Islam family, having spent 12 years in Saudi Arabia, is well known in the neighbourhood for their generosity to the poor. Ever since their return from Saudi Arabia in the late eighties, they have raised over a hundred poor children, mainly girls, teaching them the Quran and religion. Most of these poor children were handed over to Saleha by their parents in the impoverished villages in Natore. Islam had arranged marriage for many of them at his expenses. Others were provided with employment in houses of friends and relatives.

As Saleha and her children arrived at Chak Ambhat in Natore, several parents approached her to take their children. On November 11, the three were on their way to Dhaka. Six poor minor girls and a boy from the village were with them.

At the Nagarbari-Aricha ferry, people grew suspicious of the group and started questioning Saleha. The more Saleha tried to explain the situation, the more the people got angry and accused her of child lifting. When the ferry reached Aricha, thousands of people, in the presence of a few on-duty policemen, made them go to Shibaboy thana.

The long ordeal for the Islam family had started. Police arrested Saleha, Nishi and the driver and accused them of child trafficking under the Woman and Child Repression Act. Ten year old Zahedul Islam was also held but later released.

The following day, parents of the seven children rushed to the thana from Natore and gave their statements in which they said they trusted Saleha's family and gave their children voluntarily to be educated and raised.

Police arrested one of the parents, Jainal Bepari who came there to give a statement on behalf of his nephew, and accused him of the same offense. Few days later Jainal Bepari mysteriously died in police custody. His body reportedly bore marks of injury. Jainal's death sparked off violent protests in Natore.

The case was immediately

BA flight attendants end strike

LONDON, July 12: Flight attendants ended their strike at British Airways early Saturday, but the carrier warned passengers to expect disruptions for several more days, reports AP.

The airlines could also face new turbulence as it tried to make peace with the striking union. The two sides did not talk during the three-day walk-out and no new discussions in the pay dispute were immediately scheduled.

As British Airways worked to rebuild its crippled schedule, it said business would be hit worst at its main hub, London's Heathrow Airport.

British Airways said it would cancel 25 per cent of its