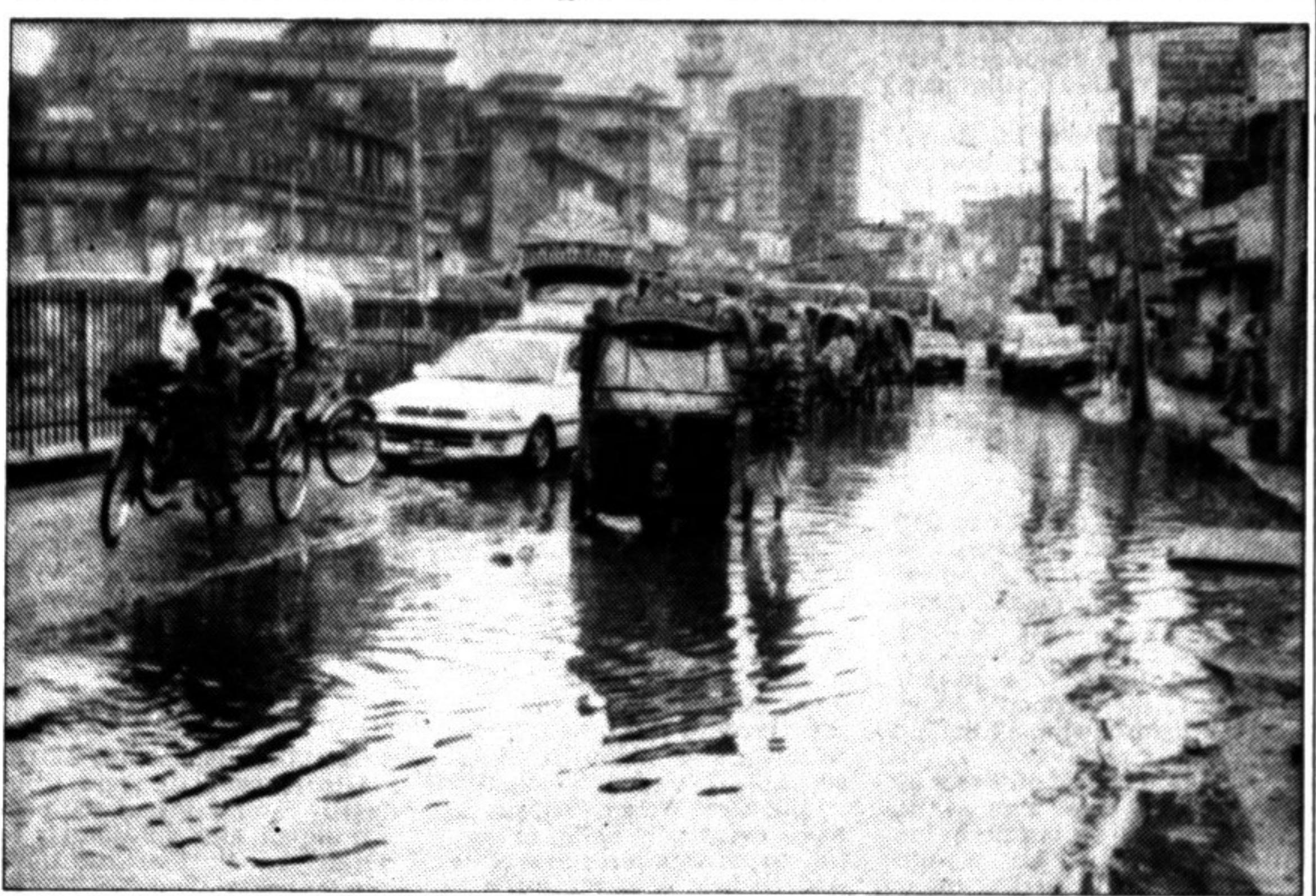


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Water-logging at Malibagh-Moghazar road in the city after yesterday's rain caused traffic jam. — Star photo

### GSP for garments export

## Netherlands to request EU for consideration

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed has sought Dutch support to Bangladesh's plea for getting GSP for garments export to European Union countries, reported UNB.

Tofael made the request through the visiting Development Cooperation Minister of the Netherlands, Jan P Pronk, who called on him at his office in Dhaka yesterday.

Pronk said they were sympathetic to the plea of Bangladesh about the continuation of unconditional GSP. "We will promote your case to the European Commission for sympathetic consideration," he added.

Tofael said it is difficult for Bangladesh to cancel the disputed GSP certificates issued from 1986 to 1996.

"It will create unemployment. Female workers, who constitute 90 per cent of the garment workers, would suffer badly. It will also hamper the poverty alleviation programme and create legal complications," he said.

### Depression

From page 1

According to DND sources yesterday, standing aus, aman seedlings covering several hundred acres of land have gone under water.

Rain waters have also swamped residential houses, educational institutions and factories.

The seriously affected localities are Dhania, Sanir Akhra, Shiddhiganj, Mizmiz, Fatali, Aliganj, Raghunathpur, Bhuglar, Kutubali, Delpara, Jalkuri, Simrafl, and Jatra-

The rivers in Brahmaputra basin continued to fall at all points while Ganges-basin rose at the upstream points during the last 24 hours till 6 am yesterday.

The rivers in Meghna and SE Hill basins recorded rise and fall during the period, according to a Flood Information Centre bulletin.

However, the Ganges at Bhagyaluk, the Surma at Kananghat, the Kushiyara at Amalsid and Sheola, and the Meghna at Bhairob Bazar were flowing above their respective danger levels.

## Cabinet resents failure

From page 1

affected areas of the country.

While discussing the Magurchhara fire incident some cabinet members also wanted to know from Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan, why representatives of the Petrobangla was not there during drilling by the Occidental. Some ministers observed that insincerity of the Occidental was responsible for the explosion and asserted that the ministry concerned should have demanded financial compensation from the Occidental much earlier for enormous economic and ecological damage.

However, the cabinet resolved that the Energy and Mineral Resources Minister would submit a "comprehensive report" in the next cabinet meeting.

During the meeting, most of the cabinet members observed that the Khatib of Baitul Mukarram mosque had a hand behind the recent incident at the premises of Islamic Foundation. The ministers agreed in principle that the Khatib "should go immediately" as he has clearly identified himself with a particular political camp. Cabinet sources said that a meeting of the governing body

### Reinvestigation

From page 1

struggle for justice in the Shima rape case.

The resolutions adopted at the conference, held recently in England, were sent to The Daily Star by Farida Akhter, a leader of the Sammiliti Nari Samaj, last night.

Over one hundred participants at the meeting, deplored the acquittal of the four men accused of raping Shima Chowdhury, according to a press release.

### Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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## 'Congestion surcharge at Ctg Port to affect trade'

Country's leading trade bodies have expressed deep concern at the imposition of congestion surcharge at Chittagong port, saying it would seriously affect the trade and industry, especially the garments sector, reported UNB.

The proposed port congestion surcharge at 150 US dollars per 20 feet container would put the garment industry in a most uncompetitive position, risking the loss of business to weaker competitors in other countries, said a joint statement.

The statement was signed by Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Samson H Chowdhury, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry president ASM Quasem, Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mahbub Jamil, Bangladeshi Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Mostafa Golam Quddus and Bangladesh Tea Association Chairman AQI Chowdhury.

The Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), a Singapore-based organisation of feeder vessel operators, has decided to impose congestion surcharge on container cargo at Chittagong port from August 15.

The surcharge is a result of congestion in the country's prime port caused by frequent labour unrest and other rea-

son. The statement said the readymade garment industry has to import raw materials and then export the finished products, which means their prices would cost 300 dollars more than the pre-surchage period.

The statement said the frequent work-stoppages and go-slows by the port workers, due to political instigations, outdated container handling equipments and their inadequate availability, lack of adequate space to store containers, inefficient port management, strike-calls by political parties and above all, using the dock labourers for local political purposes, have contributed to the present situation marked by frequent work stoppages and very poor productivity, it said.

The statement said it is regrettable that the whole situation is not being dealt with in the manner which is necessary in the larger interest of the national economy.

"Use of dock labourers for political gains is simply unpardonable," it said and also criticised the government for its failure to appoint any chairman for the port on a permanent basis during last three years.

It mentioned that the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) was being run by the head of another organisation, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, as an additional responsibility.

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