

# The Daily Star

**MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE**  
WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF  
ITALIAN CARRARA, PEBLATO SICILIA,  
BOTTICINO, INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,  
MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE  
OF DIFFERENT TYPES.  
**NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.**  
199, TEJGAON I/A, DHAKA.  
TEL: 605957, 607363 SHOW ROOM: 661965

**JUICE**  
JAM  
PICKLE  
KETCHUP  
SHERBET  
**PRAN** for Health **PRAN**  
SQUASH  
VINEGAR  
KEWRA-  
WATER  
ROSE-  
WATER

VOL. VIII NO. 203 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com> BHADRA 4, 1405 BS DHAKA TUESDAY AUGUST 18, 1998 RABIUS SAANI 24, 1419 HIJRI 16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

## Assess flood damages to brief donors, PM tells cabinet meet

**By Nurul Kabir**  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked her cabinet colleagues to separately assess the damages caused by the flood so that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can make a presentation before the donor community very soon.  
The PM gave the directive at a Cabinet meeting held yesterday evening.  
According to cabinet sources, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will brief the donor community sometime this week on the devastation caused by the flood.  
The Cabinet also approved a proposal for multipurpose use of Voters Identity Card. Once completed, the Voters ID cards would be used for as many as 14 purposes including distribution  
See Page 12 Col 4



The collapsed boundary wall of the PDB sub-station at Mirpur in the city under which three persons were killed. —Star photo

## 3 killed in Mirpur wall collapse

**By Staff Correspondent**  
Three persons were killed and at least five injured when a portion of the boundary wall of Mirpur power sub-station collapsed on some shanties in an adjacent slum yesterday afternoon.  
Fire brigade sources identified two of the dead as Nurul Amin, 36, and Armina Begum, 32, wife of one Lyakat Ali. A six-year-old girl was still to be identified, they said. The injured were taken to different clinics and hospitals.  
Police and hospital sources, however, confirmed the death of two persons in the incident. They did not have any information about the death of the girl till last night.  
When contacted, a DESA official said that the sub-station  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Delay in ban on TUs worries chief executives of NCBs

**Star Report**  
Chief executives of the Nationalised Commercial Banks are worried over the delay in taking a decision to ban trade unions in the face of lobbying by the TU leaders to frustrate the government move.  
The cabinet committee on finance recently decided to 'study further' the issue of banning TUs in banks.  
The committee felt that the issue is a politically sensitive one and therefore, hasty decision should be avoided.  
However, the committee said TU activities banned in the central bank should continue.  
In a meeting with the Bangladesh Bank (BB) on August 11, chief executives of the banks had expressed their concern that without checking TU activities, it may become difficult to run the banks.  
Some of the chief executives had expressed their helplessness to the BB in dealing with the TUs because of their links with political high-ups.  
"It is unfortunate that the government has failed to take a tough decision on such a vital issue," said the MD of an NCB without wanting to be named. "This is specially so, because the government had shown a lot of goodwill in the beginning by setting up a task force to curb trade unionism."  
Meanwhile, the TUs have embarked on a campaign to frustrate any move to ban trade union activities. The TU leaders have convinced a number of influential political leaders about the necessity of the TUs.  
As part of its campaign, the TUs have recently issued press statements saying that the unions play a positive role in realising default loans and in 'good management' of the banks.  
This statement of the TUs is, however, challenged by the task force report on TUs which alleged that the TUs have harmful influence on bank management and decisions on loan sanctioning.  
The task force had submitted its report to the finance ministry six months back and the report was referred to the cabinet committee.  
The task force recommended a complete ban on the formation and activities of TUs in all scheduled banks of the country.  
Banning TUs can revive discipline in the banking sector and help check corruption and quicken reforms in the banks, the task force report recommended.  
The report had noted that political patronage played a major role in protecting unlawful activities of TU leaders. It also said the main problem in curbing TU activities is a lack of environment and power of the banks, rather than any legal lacuna.  
The chief executives of the banks had expressed their helplessness to the task force in dealing with TUs because of their links with political high-ups.

## President apprised of Baburabad incident

President Shahabuddin Ahmed was apprised of the incident at Baburabad in Satkhira district on July 27 in which a landless woman was killed and many others were injured, reports UNB.  
A 12-member delegation of public representatives of Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira districts narrated the incident to the President during meeting with him at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.  
Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman led the delegation.  
The delegation members said some local influential people, in connivance with government officials, are trying to grab the huge agricultural khas land where more than 1,250  
See Page 12 Col 5

## Flood situation worsens in 6 dists : 7 more die

The flood situation yesterday deteriorated in six districts, remained unchanged in 10 others and showed improving trend in seven districts, reports UNB.  
Officials at the Relief Ministry control room said seven more flood related deaths were reported from across the country, raising the death toll to 297.  
Of them one died in Rajbari and another six in Dhaka.  
The FFWC in its bulletin yesterday said due to very active monsoon over the country, the flood situation in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins and central districts is likely to aggravate further while in upper part of Meghna basin it may deteriorate slightly.  
The bulletin also forecast that the situation from Bhairab Bazar to downstream of Meghna basin and around Dhaka city may remain unchanged.  
The districts where the flood situation deteriorated yesterday are: Faridpur, Rajbari, Jamalpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Sirajganj.  
The flood situation in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Shariatpur, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Pabna, Brahmanbaria, Bogra, Manikganj and Sunamganj remained unchanged.  
Improving trend was evident in Narsingdi, Madaripur, Netrokona, Comilla, Chandpur, Moulvibazar and Habiganj.  
The monitoring report of the FFWC said major rivers in the country's four basins were flowing above the red mark at 20 points.  
The Brahmaputra-Jamuna recorded rise at all points. The Brahmaputra recorded rise at all points, except at Bhagyakul.  
Most rivers in the Meghna basin registered rise while the rivers in the Southeastern Hill basin receded at most places.  
The rivers flowing above the danger level are: Brahmaputra at Chilmari, Jamuna at Bahadurabad, Sirajganj and Aricha, Dhara at Kurigram, Buriganga at Dhaka, Shitalakhya at Narayanganj, Turag at Mirpur and Tongi, Kaliganga at Taraghat, Padma at Pankha, Goulunda and Bhagyakul, Mahanada at Chapainawabganj, Surma at Kanaighat and Sunamganj, Kushiya at Amalshid and Sheola, Meghna at Bhairab Bazar and Halda at Narayanhat.  
Meanwhile, light to moderately heavy rainfall at most places with heavy fall at one or two place across the country was recorded in last 24 hours till 9 am yesterday.  
Significant rainfall of 153 mm was recorded at Sunamganj, 99.5 mm at Mymensingh, 68 mm at Durgapur, 56 mm at Lama, 40 mm at Chilmari and 37 mm at Panchpukura.  
Another report says, cases of water-borne diseases are on the  
See Page 12 Col 3

## Floods may drag upto mid-Sept

**By Special Correspondent**  
Waves of gray clouds from the Bay of Bengal continued to wrap the country yesterday, breaking intermittently and blanketing the sun.  
The Met office recorded 121 mm rains until 6 pm yesterday in the metropolis that virtually paralysed normal life as streets were flooded and traffic jams stranded people on way to workplaces.  
Rain will continue on-and-off, leaving the floods rolling until mid-September, meteorologist, Sajedur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.  
He said the situation has been compounded by onrush of waters from the upstreams, following rains in the Himalayan foothills and on the Ganges basin.  
The water that flows down the Meghna river to the Bay of Bengal, is moving slowly because of the full moon that heightened the astronomical  
See Page 12 Col 1

## Clinton starts giving testimony

WASHINGTON, Aug 17: Determined to tell the whole truth, President Bill Clinton today began giving grand jury testimony in which he was expected to admit to an 'inappropriate' physical relationship with Monica Lewinsky, reports Reuters.  
After last-minute talks with his private attorneys, Clinton entered the White House map room and began his sworn testimony a minute earlier than scheduled, at 12:59 pm (EDT) (16:59 GMT), said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.  
He was answering questions from independent counsel Kenneth Starr and his team, who arrived at the diplomatic entrance of the White House half an hour earlier in a pair of cars.  
Aides described Clinton, who turns 52 on Wednesday, as confident and ready to get it over with and said his wife Hillary Rodham Clinton was an active participant in the strategy sessions.  
"I wouldn't say he is exactly looking forward to it, but he knows with certainty what he is going to testify to - and that is the truth and the whole truth," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry.  
With 23 grand juries watching on closed-circuit television at the Federal Courthouse a mile (1.5 km) away, Clinton was  
See Page 12 Col 7

## Statements of Rubel's brothers recorded

**By Staff Correspondent**  
CID investigators yesterday recorded the statements of the three elder brothers of Shamim Reza Rubel who was tortured to death in police custody on July 23.  
A CID team led by Investigating Officer ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman recorded the statements of Rubel's brothers for about two hours from 7:00 pm.  
The statements of Rubel's brothers - Iftakharuddin Ahmed, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Abu Reza Jewel - were recorded under Section 161 of the CrPC as witnesses in the murder case.  
CID investigators would record some more statements of Rubel's family members in next couple of days.  
Earlier on Sunday, the investigators recorded the statements of Rubel's father Abdur Rob and two sisters-in-law.  
Rubel's family members had  
See Page 12 Col 2

## Dhaka won't accept anyone unilaterally identified by India as Bangladeshi

Bangladesh will not accept anyone unilaterally identified as 'Bangladeshi' living illegally in India, a meeting was told yesterday, reports BSS.  
A regular inter-ministerial meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took up the issue of so-called Bangladeshis being held in India and threatened to be deported to Bangladesh, according to a meeting source.  
Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad presided over the meeting. Finance Minister Shahi AMS Kibria, Home Minister Major (retd) Rafiqul Islam, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Meghnaghat power plant Final negotiation with AES begins today

**By Sharier Khan**  
The Power Development Board will begin final negotiation with US company AES today for setting up the Meghnaghat Power Plant, sources said.  
The negotiation was earlier scheduled to start from July 8. But it was deferred as the PDB sought clarification of some technical issues from AES.  
The plant will produce 300 mw to 450 mw of electricity.  
Negotiation for the plant have been delayed by about a year now due to persisting difference of opinion between the PDB and AES, problems with the consultant of the project and lack of experience of the PDB in handling private sector investment, the sources said.  
"After long, it now seems that the PDB is moving ahead with the project," said an official.  
Although AES won the bid for Meghnaghat plant in mid-1997 by offering a very low levelised power tariff of 2.79 cents per unit for 22 years, PDB had slowed down the bidding process over some technical and non-technical issues.  
The original proposal of AES had said that it would provide free electricity (or electricity at zero tariff) during the initial operation period (IOP) which is usually 10 months. AES later said that it wanted to reduce the IOP by several months so that the power plant could start in full swing well ahead of time. It argued that during IOP, power plants consume more gas and generate lesser power.  
But PDB considered this argument as a violation of the original proposal. It also insisted that AES must promise, in writing, that it would provide free electricity during the 10-month IOP.  
The original proposal had  
See Page 12 Col 4

## Cracks in Rupganj dam

**From Our Correspondent**  
NARAYANGANJ, Aug 17: At least 100 cracks have developed in a nearly 11-kilometre-long embankment of the Narayanganj-Narsingdi Agrani Irrigation Project at Rupganj, officials of the Water Development Board and the district administration said.  
The cracks are threatening some 1300 hectares of area where 1.5 lakh people reside and some 500 industries of different sizes are located, according to the officials.  
The embankment of the Narayanganj-Narsingdi Agrani Irrigation Project was constructed in 1984 with Japanese assistance.  
"Water is still seeping through two or three points with the rise of water level in the Shitalakhya river," said Amanullah, sub-divisional engineer of the WDB, adding that other cracks were repaired with sand bags.  
The embankment was slow  
See Page 12 Col 3

## Stabbing of TU leader 100 injured, vehicles damaged in Rajshahi

**From Our Correspondent**  
RAJSHAHI, Aug 17: Over 100 people were injured, 12 of them seriously, in attacks by activists of Rajshahi Motor Sramik Union on buses at various points in the city and its outskirts today.  
The attacks followed stabbing the general secretary of the union this morning allegedly by activists of a rival union.  
Bus and truck services to and from Rajshahi were stopped for an 'indefinite period' following the incident.  
The transport workers also damaged at least 15 buses including one BRTC bus and seven trucks.  
Sources said Sadequul Islam, General Secretary of the union, was stabbed near Motpukur by a group of about 25 people, allegedly activists of a rival union. Sadequul was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.  
Hearing the news, agitated supporters of the union leader put up barricades at Katakhal square, Jahangir Sarani, Kasidanga square, Raigate, Premtoli, Bjoyanagar and Rajbari and started to damage buses and trucks indiscriminately. More than 100 passengers of various buses were injured when hit by brick bats and flying broken glasses. The 12 seriously injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and Premtoli Health Complex.  
A tense situation is prevailing in Rajshahi bus terminal, Kasidanga and Jahangir Sarani areas following the incident. Thousands of passengers remained stranded at various points in the city due to stoppage of bus service.  
The union activists were seen gathering at various places in the city till the evening.  
It may be mentioned that one motor sramik union activist  
See Page 12 Col 1

## CU tense over arrest of BCL activist

**From CU Correspondent**  
CHITTAGONG, Aug 17: A tense situation is prevailing on the Chittagong University campus after police arrested an activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) from Shaheed Abdur Rab Hall late last night.  
BCL activists gheraoed the residence of the Vice Chancellor last night and demanded the release of the BCL worker, Rusel Jahan Suman, a first-year Honours student of Marine Science.  
BSS adds: Some unruly youths today went on a rampage on the Chittagong University campus following the arrest of a student activist.  
According to the university and police sources, the agitating  
See Page 12 Col 2

## Inside Today Article

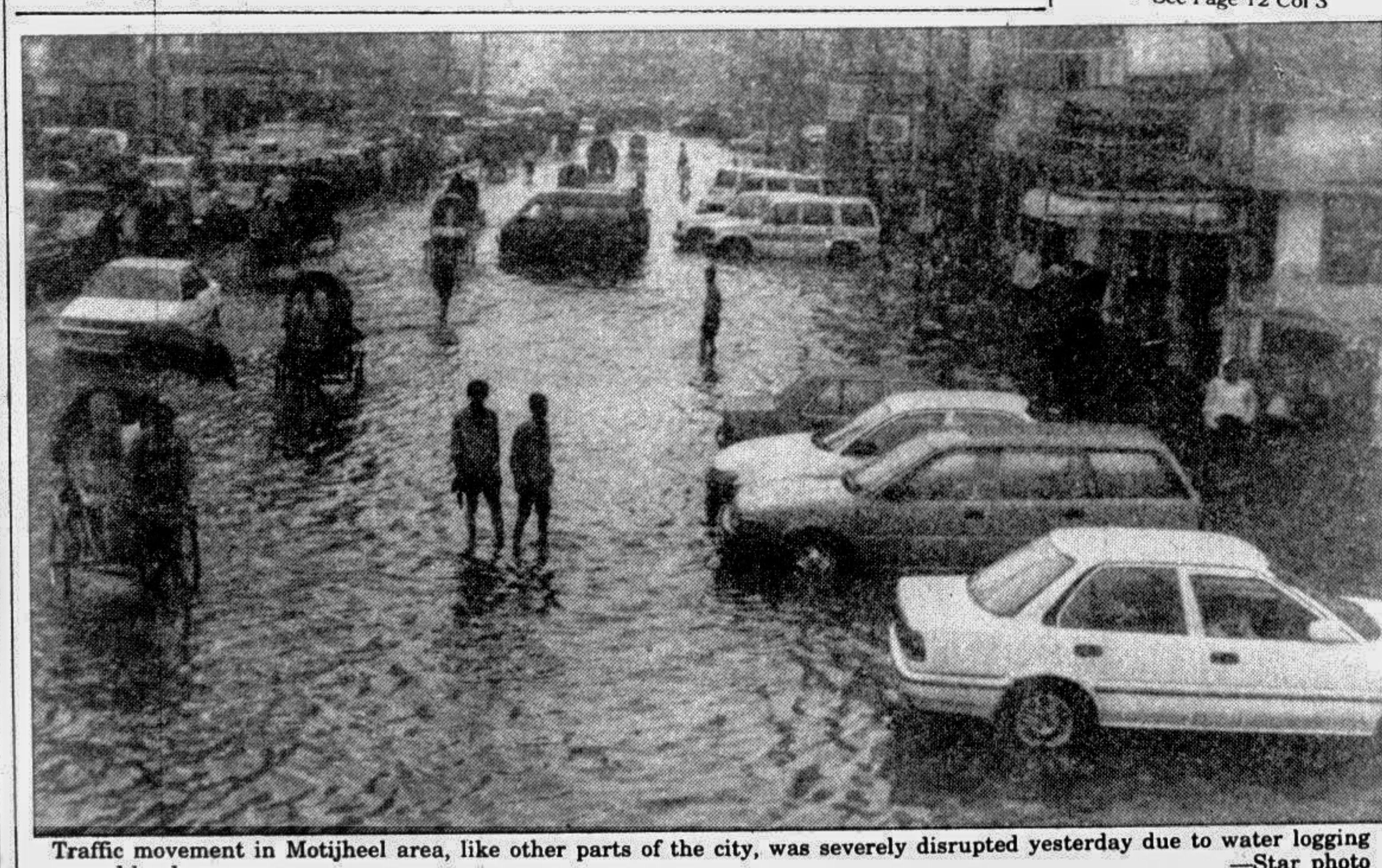
**Myanmar Opposition Leader's Stand-off**  
by Barrister Harun ur Rashid  
Page 4

## Focus

What devaluation does and does not do; Strengthening US ties with natural allies like India  
Page 5

## Business

Saga of state-owned textile mills: Corruption, mismanagement, wrong policies and dirty politics ate them up  
Rouble undergoes sharp devaluation  
Share prices plunge on bourses  
Pages 6, 7 & 8



Traffic movement in Motijheel area, like other parts of the city, was severely disrupted yesterday due to water logging caused by downpour. —Star photo

## Ban on crab export to continue

**By Special Correspondent**  
The ban on export of crabs would continue till a policy in this regard is finalised, officials said yesterday.  
"It is being worked out," one official said, adding that the policy is at its final stage.  
Permission to resume crab export would be given under certain conditions after the new guideline is vetted by appropriate authorities, he said.  
Export of mud crabs was banned last month after a permit expired in June triggering protests from crab farmers and exporters in Khulna.  
The ban came into effect in the wake of concern at the declining population of crabs in the wild, particularly in the mangrove forests in the coastal districts, including the Sundarbans.  
A high level meeting on Tuesday last reviewed the situation.  
Attended by officials from the forest and environment commerce and fisheries ministries the meeting also has representatives of the crab exporters association, experts from the Dhaka University and a representative from the International Union for Conservation of Nature.  
Chaired by Secretary of the ministry of Forests and Environment Syed Marghub Murshed, the meeting noted that permission to resume export of crabs could be given without endangering their status.  
But export could not be permitted during their breeding season, the meeting was told by experts. They also emphasised further studies and developing a scientific mode of farming, meeting sources said.  
Exporters said crab export fetches the country more than seven million dollars annually, catering to the far and near east Asian markets.  
"But the indecision in this regard would cost Bangladesh dearly as new competitors from India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are slowly filling up the gap created by the ban in Bangladesh", one exporter said.  
Officials said the new guideline would permit export of  
See Page 12 Col 6

## Terrorist snatched from police in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Aug 17: Nasir Uddin, an alleged top terrorist of Rangunia thana, was snatched away by his accomplices from the police on Saturday night, reports UNB.  
Police arrested Nasir, wanted in connection with five murder and 15 other criminal cases, from a market at Padua, 20 kilometres from Rangunia thana.  
While Nasir was being taken to the police station on the same night, his accomplices suddenly swooped on the police and snatched him away.

## Outsiders: DU takes steps

**By DU Correspondent**  
The Provost's Standing Committee of Dhaka University has decided to take necessary steps to ensure that outsiders could not enter the halls, says a press release.  
An emergency meeting of the committee with Vice Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury in the chair yesterday also decided to strictly enforce the system of checking identity cards of resident students at the hall entrances.  
The house tutors have been urged to present at the halls by turns to implement the decision.  
The students who cannot stay at their respective halls for different reasons have been advised to contact the provosts concerned.  
See Page 12 Col 3