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Bomb scare brings Biman flight back to Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

A Hong Kong-bound Biman DC-10 returned to Dhaka after an anonymous caller claimed that a passenger was carrying a bomb and planned to blow the plane up.

Security officials conducted a thorough search as soon as the plane carrying 115 passengers including the crew landed at ZIA, but did not find anything.

The flight BG-078 flew again for Hong Kong at 5:10 pm after about three and a half hours.

A senior ZIA official said an anonymous caller from Mirpur told security officials at ZIA that a passenger, Lance Naik Ahmed, was carrying a bomb to blow the aircraft up that took off at 11:34 in the morning.

"Soon after the call, we informed Biman and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) of the call. The Captain of the aircraft Mahmud Hossain decided to return to ZIA. The aircraft landed safely at 1:46 pm and was parked at the north

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Deportation Police seek Speaker's clearance to nab 2 MPs

By Staff correspondent

Police have prayed for permission from the Jatiya Sangsad Speaker to arrest two MPs who, along with 10 others, were deported from Heathrow airport in London on Tuesday last, sources said.

A formal letter has already been sent to the Speaker's office. Additional Inspector General of Police A Rahim said.

Rahim told The Daily Star last night that investigation into the matter was also progressing.

Two BNP MPs — AKM Hafizur Rahman and Shamsuz-Zoha Khan — along with 10 other deportees were arrested by immigration officials at Zia International Airport on Wednesday after their return to Dhaka.

The MPs were released on bail after they had given personal bonds assuring the police that they would be available "as and when needed". They also faced questioning by Special

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Flood: Police told to punish extortionists

The government yesterday ordered the law enforcing agencies to take stern action against those involved in extortion of money across the country on the plea of flood-relief, reports BSS.

The Ministry of Home Affairs in an instruction to the police said the government has noticed with concern that a vested quarter is extorting money from the innocent people in the name of flood. The miscreants are harassing the

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Cry for food, water in crammed shelters

By Morshed Ali Khan

While thousands of flood victims in the city's 176 shelters pass their days in inhuman conditions, thousands more around the city cry for food and drinking water.

The extent of the flood damage is so colossal that the authorities find themselves at a loss to meet the needs. In this city alone, two million people have been affected by the unprecedented duration of flooding, according to Dhaka City Corporation's relief control room at Nagar Bhaban.

According to the DCC initial estimates, about 70 per cent of all katcha houses and two-third of the city roads have been damaged by the deluge.

Only 1.2 lakh people, mostly of lower income groups, have taken refuge in different schools of the city, which have been turned into flood shelters. The remaining are marooned in their respective localities without or little help.

The crammed city shelters are receiving occasional relief from different private organi-

sations and government agencies. But most people in the periphery are living either on makeshift platforms or on roofs of buildings which have long been abandoned by their occupants.

At Lalbagh's Rahmatullah Model Girls' School, English language teacher Shuktdhara Barua said the school had to be closed on August 26 as "families after families" started to arrive for shelter from the nearby Kamrangirchar area. The camp accommodated 147 families in eight class rooms.

The women used wood for fuel for cooking in the dirty rooms while naked children played on the courtyard. They said they were not short of food, medicine or water as almost "every day groups with cameras were visiting them with some relief materials."

"Our husbands are pulling rickshaws and doing whatever jobs are available in the city," said Momena Begum who came to the shelter from nearby Nurbagh of Kamrangirchar area.

On the courtyard, traces of bleaching powder could be seen spread on wet ground. Local youths said the DCC gave them one kilogram of powder to disinfect the camp and they bought another five kilograms from the "black market".

In a nearby shop, a kilogram of bleaching powder was being sold for Tk 10. When asked where they got those sacks from, the shopkeepers said they bought them from "DCC people".

DCC's Chief Health Officer said his office had distributed two tonnes of bleaching powder through the zonal offices and the local ward commissioners.

"It is very sad that it should be sold in the black market," said the official. The DCC, however, issued notes to all its zonal offices warning them of the situation.

Less than a kilometre away at the Lalbagh Government Primary School shelter, 642 men, women and children

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CHILDREN OF LESSER GOD: While the healthy ones wait in a relief camp for flood water to recede, one of them, not so healthy, tries to get some rest.

— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

10 drown, 100 missing in Lalmonirhat boat capsizes

LALMONIRHAT, Sept 4: At least ten people drowned and over 100 others missing in a boat capsized in the river Sanjara here this morning, report agencies.

District administration sources said the boat capsized at around 9 am due to heavy current in the river. An engine boat carrying 125 passengers was crossing the river.

Local people recovered ten bodies.

Eight of them were identified as Dr Habib, Thana Health Administrator of Hatibhanda, Jasam Uddin of village Jamgram in Boura thana, Aleya Begum, 42, her son Biplob, 8, Galib Uddin Gatu, 40, Laib Uddin of Barokhata, Mansur Ali, 50, of Jamgram and Aatur Rahman Barania of Barokhata.

The identity of two others could not be known.

The Deputy Commissioner Lalmonirhat told BSS that divers from Rangpur and Kurigram district will join the rescue operation soon. The boat was overloaded and it capsized due to heavy current, the DC said.

The rescue operation was continuing till filling this report late at night.

Shazneen murder Rape case filed against 7

By Staff Correspondent

The CID yesterday filed a rape case against the seven persons who were allegedly involved in the killing of Shazneen Tasneem Rahman, police said.

Shazneen, the youngest daughter of Transcom Ltd's chairman Latifur Rahman Chairman, was found dead in the bed room of their Culsan residence on April 23 with more than 20 marks of stab injury. She was a student at Scholastica School in the city.

Mujibur Rahman Khan, CID investigating officer of the Shazneen murder case, lodged the rape case with Gulshan thana under Section 6 (1) (2)/14 of Nari O Shishu Nirjaton (Bishhe Bidhan) Act, 1995.

The accused are: domestic help Shihabul Islam, Contractor Hasan and his wife Badal, guard Humayun Kabir.

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Situation in city worsens further Flood hits Kushtia, Narail again : 31 die in a day

By Special Correspondent

At least 31 people died yesterday, five of them electrocuted in flood waters at a city suburb, as the third wave of flood unleashed its fury in the country.

Officials at the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said last night that the overall situation deteriorated in the country as the major rivers continued to rise.

Relief Ministry Control Room sources said, many areas of Kushtia and Narail were flooded again due to heavy rain and swelling of rivers. WDB embankment in Kushtia also collapsed, according to a source.

They said 22 out of 46 river monitoring stations showed the rivers including the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna above red mark.

The full moon affecting the astronomical tide tonight is likely to worsen the situation.

The Buriganga rose by three

cm yesterday, worsening the flood situation in the city. It swelled as the Brahmaputra and the Shitalakhya also rose by three cm due to rains.

Disaster Control Room said 23 people died yesterday due to drowning, snake bites and other reasons, raising the flood death toll to 493. Besides, diarrhoea claimed three more lives in the past 24 hours, raising the total to 115 since July 13.

Of the fresh deaths, seven were reported from Kishoreganj, six each from Shariatpur and Kushtia and four from Madaripur district.

The situation in 13 out of 47 flood-hit districts deteriorated as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna systems continued to swell.

Heavy rains triggered by an active monsoon contributed to worsening of the situation.

Reports from India said the

situation in the upper reaches of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra also remained critical.

The Ganges at Farakka point rose by 10 cm and the Brahmaputra at Goalpara in Assam swelled by 12 cm, fed by 70 mm rain yesterday, the FFWC said quoting reports received from India.

It further said the pressure from the upstream is likely to continue, causing further swelling of the major rivers. But their drainage channel to the Bay — the Meghna — will remain clogged as the high tide is likely to rise due to full moon tonight.

During high tide, the normal level of the Meghna rises by eight cm at Chandpur. It is likely to rise further by five cm due to lunar effect, which will continue for a couple of days.

In its forecast for today, the

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5 electrocuted in flooded area

By Staff Correspondent

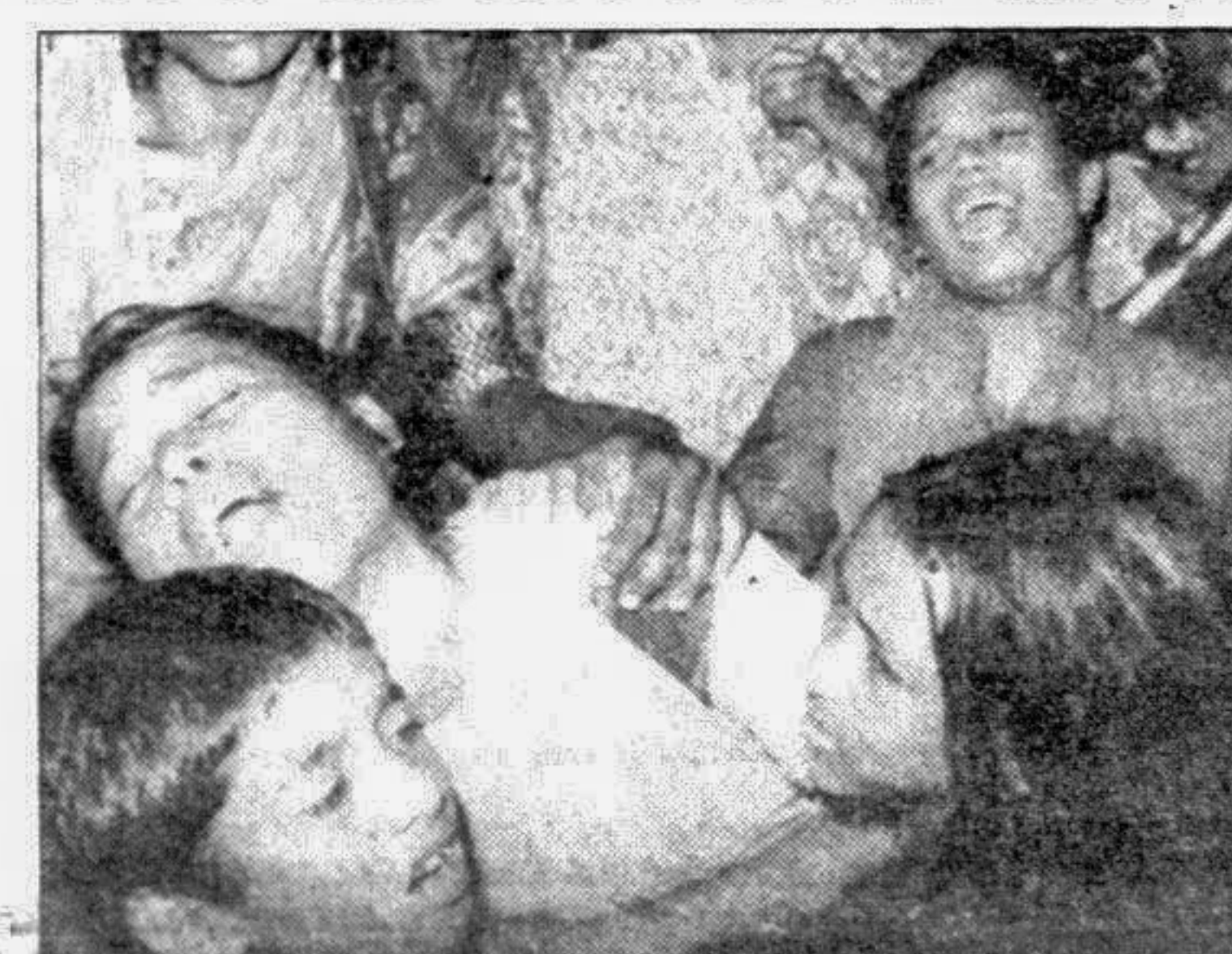
Five persons, including a minor girl, were electrocuted and another injured when they were travelling in a boat in flood affected Islambagh area under Lalbagh thana in the city yesterday noon.

With these, at least twenty people were electrocuted in the city in the last fifteen days and most of the incidents were due to flooding, according to newspaper reports.

Victims of yesterday's incident were identified as Poly, 12, daughter of Abul Kashem, Akhter Hossain, 16, son of Badsa Mia, Apu, 18, son of Ruhul Amin, Mintu, 22, son of Anwar Hossain and Amir, 16.

Another person, reportedly the boatman, was also injured in the incident. He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) but his identity could not be known immediately, police said.

Local people and relatives of the victims recovered the bodies of Poly, Mintu and Akhter and took those to the DMCH where doctors confirmed that they were dead. The relatives forcibly took the bodies from the hospital without autopsy, hospital sources said. Bodies of two other victims could not be



Relatives of four persons who were electrocuted at Islambagh in the city yesterday, are wailing.

— Star photo

recovered till filing of this report last night, police said.

The tragic incident took place when they were coming to Islambagh from Posta.

The boat hit an electric pole while crossing an alley beside the Islambagh mosque.

One of the passengers, reportedly a girl, touched the pole and was electrocuted. The four others were electrocuted when they tried to rescue her. In the process, the boat overturned and all the passengers fell into the flood water, police said.

Talking to this correspondent

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FLOATING MEDICAL CENTRE: A physician examining a patient brought on a boat at Kamrangirchar.

— Star photo

Occidental's move to confirm actual reserve Proposal to drill wells, conduct seismic survey at Bibiana

By Sharier Khan

US company Occidental has submitted a proposal to drill two appraisal wells and conduct a three-dimensional seismic survey at the Bibiana gasfield, sources said.

Occidental struck gas at Bibiana a few months ago. According to Occidental's analysis, the gasfield might have a reserve of between two and four trillion cubic feet of gas. This reserve, still unproven, is said to be the second biggest in the country. The biggest one is owned by Titas gas systems.

The actual reserve would be confirmed after the appraisal wells are drilled and the three-dimensional survey is conducted.

"Right now, it would be unwise to quantify the gas reserve

at Bibiana till the appraisal plan is implemented," said a source.

Occidental submitted its discovery report to Petrobangla last month. It said that gas was found in seven 'Pay Zone' in the exploratory well, which was drilled up to about 4,000 metre. The US company also submitted its appraisal plan which is now being reviewed by Petrobangla.

Sources said, besides the extraordinary prospect, the Bibiana gas field promises a high quality gas production. The gas is 'wet' in nature, meaning that it would produce larger quantity of condensate as a by-product. This condensate can be used for production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) locally and

marketed for domestic use.

"In other words, the Bibiana gas has the potential of more usage than the dry gas found in the southern part of the country," said a source. "This also means that the Bibiana gasfield would add more value for Bangladesh than the other dry gasfields."

Bibiana is going to be Occidental's first success story in Bangladesh. After it signed two production sharing contracts (PSCs) with Petrobangla for blocks 12, 13 and 14 four years ago, Occidental blew up the Magurchara gasfield last year and 'mishandled' the Jalalabad gasfield earlier this year.

The Bibiana operation was also troublesome as a drilling

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One dies at thana hajjat in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 4: One person died at Sonargon thana hajjat here at midnight last night, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Mostafa, 30, son of Giasuddin of Bhairobdi village of Arahazar thana.

Police said, a group of people of Sanmanadi union beat up Mostafa and Hajrat Ali on Wednesday, for their alleged involvement in a dacoity and later, handed them over to the police.

Both of them were released from jail recently.

After treatment in hospital they were sent back to the hajjat where Mostafa died.

Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rahman and SP A H M Nuruddin visited the thana hajjat today.

Police suspected that Mostafa died due to internal haemorrhage caused by mob beating.

JS session may be brief but stormy

By Nazmul Ashraf and Reaz Ahmad

The coming session of the Jatiya Sangsad, scheduled to begin on Monday, is likely to be a brief but stormy one as both the Treasury and the Opposition benches are getting prepared to castigate each other on a number of issues.

The session is expected to witness stormy debates on a number of issues like the current devastating flood, Rubel murder case, deportation of two Opposition MPs from Heathrow Airport in London, fresh corruption cases against some former ministers, reported incidents of rape and assault on a teacher at the Jahangirnagar University, killings by the BSF at the Hilli border, crisis at the Chittagong Port and BNP lawmakers' resignation move, sources in both the sides said.

The JS Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which is scheduled to meet on Monday, will decide the length and agenda of the session. Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star last night.

About the duration of the session, a source in the Parliament Secretariat said, "A persisting flood will only force a short-lived session."

The BAC may decide for a shorter session as almost all the legislators will prefer to do relief activities in their respective constituencies in case of a staggering floods, he said.

In the session, the ruling Awami League may raise issues like BNP's alleged attempt to gain political benefits out of people's miseries caused by the flood, two BNP lawmakers' deportation from the Heathrow Airport for their alleged involvement in illegal manpower export, the alleged threat on the PM's life by the Leader of the Opposition and her party lawmakers' resignation drama, party sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Advisor Suranjit Sengupta said the nation was expecting the parliament to be a stormy session.

Container terminal dispute TUs withdraw strike, to hold talks with PM

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 4: Activities at the Chittagong port resumed from this morning after the trade union bodies opposing setting up of private container terminals here, withdrew their strike following an agreement with the government, official sources said.

The agreement was reached at 5 am today after Labour Minister M A Mannan and Shipping Minister A S M Rab held lengthy talks with the striking leaders.

Port officials and trade union leaders said, the meeting decided to arrange a meeting shortly between labour leaders at the port and the Prime Minister regarding the demands of striking port workers that include cancellation of the permission given to a US company

for setting up of a container terminal at Patenga.

At the meeting the trade union leaders were also assured that the persons who were injured in yesterday's clash will be given compensation and that the incident would be probed.

Earlier, the two ministers were sent from Dhaka by the Prime Minister to resolve the issue, port officials said.

A coalition of 22 trade union bodies enforced a strike at the port from noon yesterday after clashes with their rival port workers that left about 50 persons injured.

UNB adds: The meeting also agreed to form a high-level committee comprising representatives from various organisations and the government to

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Garments worker beaten up, dies at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

A young garments employee, who was beaten up allegedly by his co-workers at Demra in the city Thursday morning, died at Mitford Hospital the same night, police said yesterday.

The dead was identified as Liton Gazi, 20, son of Abdur Razzak Gazi, a resident of Jatrabari.

Police so far arrested an FIR-named accused, Reaz, and said the murder was sequel to a previous enmity.

At about 8 am on Thursday, when Liton arrived on a road adjacent to the garments factory at Kajla, some of his co-workers caught and dragged him to an under-construction building at Dholaipar. They beat him and left him in a critical condition. Some local people took Liton to Mitford Hospital where he died later, police said.

The body was handed over to Liton's family after autopsy at the hospital morgue.

Sahabuddin, an uncle of the victim, filed a murder case with Demra thana yesterday accusing three persons.

Transport strike in Rajshahi Div from today

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Sept 4: North Bengal regional committee of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation has called an indefinite transport strike in 16 districts of Rajshahi Division from tomorrow demanding release of the Motor Sramik Union leaders.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of 20 organisations of the federation at the office of Bogra Motor Sramik Union Thursday.

Ten union leaders, including Abul Kalam Azad, president of Rangpur Motor Sramik Union, were arrested about two months ago with arms and ammunition at Lalmonirhat.

The meeting also supported the ongoing transport strike in greater Rangpur region.

The federation leaders have threatened a countrywide transport strike from September 22 if the arrested leaders are not released.