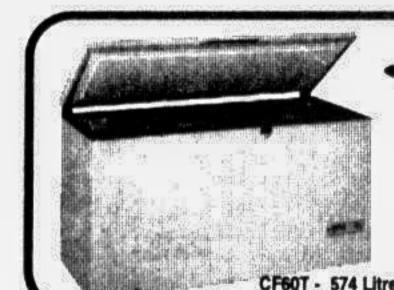
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Down to Earth Upswing in city's floating labourers

By A S M Nurunnabi

The present flood situation in the country has caused a tremendous increase in the volume of the city's floating labourers. Normally they form a prominent aspect of its socioeconomic life. The labourers are generally divided into two classes - those who hold regular jobs and those who work temporarily. The latter class of labourers are generally designated as floating labourers. The flood has brought about immense miseries to the latter class of labourers.

In every village or town of the country, we find existence of floating labourers. This picture has been drastically altered by the vast sweep of the flood. In normal times, we have observed in city areas a steadily growing number of them. This increase has been mainly attributable to a surge in migration of people from the villages to urban areas caused by the paucity of job opportunities in the villages since the majority of them have happened to be landless. There has been a persisting belief that in the ever expanding economies in city areas, there are greater opportunities for employment. In this context, to escape the suffering of growing unemployment in rural areas, people in large numbers without any means to fall back upon, make a bee line for the city. This process has been enormously aggravated by the extraordinary extent of the present flood which has affected all, landless or otherwise.

The enormous presence of the migrant floating labourers may be seen everywhere in the city. Some of the main areas

MOSCOW, Sept 4: The Duma

postponed a confirmation vote

on the acting prime minister

today avoiding a confrontation

with President Boris Yeltsin as

pressure mounted on hard-line

awmakers to back down, re-

postpone the vote after parlia-

ment leaders said Yeltsin had

called for more talks. The

Duma had been expected today

to reject acting Prime Minister

Viktor Chernomyrdin for a sec-

vote until Monday indicated the

hard-liners were no longer con-

fident of winning their con-

frontation with Yeltsin and

may be looking for a way out.

The postponement was likely to

boost Chernomyrdin's chances

postponement "calmly, with

full understanding that a longer

pause for contemplation is bet-

ter than haste," according to

presidential spokesman Sergei

From Page 1

ment to unanimously endorse

the appeal for aid made to the

international community by

against some members of Be-

gum Zia's cabinet. Sengupta

said, those are under legal pro-

cess and the government has

Regarding the fresh cases

the Prime Minister.

Yeltsin received news of the

The decision to postpone the

Lawmakers voted 294-54 to

ports AP.

ond time.

of approval.

where such labourers assemble everyday for a job are New Market, Elephant Road, Mir-pur, Kalyanpur, Mohakhali, Cantonment, Kamalapur, Shahjahanpur, Jatrabari, Sadarghat, etc.

Sometime back, a survey of floating labourers, conducted by the Institute of Social Welfare and Research revealed that a greater segment of them work as day-labourers with no clear specification of work. They are largely unskilled. Most of the people involved in the exodus from the flood-hit areas comprise labourers of this class. The disconcerting fact is that floating labourers usually find jobs difficult to come by. The flood has compounded to make the situation extremely critical in as much as work opportunities are now more scarce. Such people as may have worked as day-labourers or other unskilled occupations have been led to fend for themselves either through getting relief doles or hawking a miscellany of lowpriced items using whatever little money they have managed to save as capital. For shelter, they have usually set up shacks with pieces of plastic sheets and some bamboo frames along the vacant spaces bordering city thoroughfares. In some cases, they resort to occupying some under-construction buildings in some city areas.

Some of the flood victims may have nothing to fall back upon when flood waters recede and post-flood rehabilitation work is taken in hand by government or other agencies. In that situation, there may emerge some scope for some of

Russia had been plunged into

crisis by the collapse of the cur-

rency, the rouble, and a power

struggle between the Duma and

Yeltsin. Russians have been

deeply worried, but there has

Communist leader Gennady

been no sign of panic or unrest.

Zyuganov insisted his faction

would never approve Cher-

nomyrdin and would not agree

to a compromise with Yeltsin.

But the Communists abstained

from the vote, indicating their

position might be crumbling

since they had earlier ruled out

Russia appeared to face a

weekend of hectic closed-door

talks as the two sides looked for

a compromise. Yeltsin said he

would allow the Duma to con-

sult on ministerial appoint-

mitted notices seeking discus-

sion on almost all the current

tices on the scandal at Chit-

tagong port and the killings at

Hilli border point," he said

charging several powerful per-

sons in power for the crisis at

party MPs' resignation letters.

he claimed that the process was

"near complete." He, however,

said the process has been

stalled as most of the legisla-

tors are now outside Dhaka.

"The process would be expedited

on their return to the city,"

the party who are opposing the

resignation move, indicated

that there may be a debate on

the issue at the BNPPP meeting.

Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed

told The Daily Star earlier that

he had sought an adjournment

motion to discuss the flood sit-

uation and the government's to-

tal 'failure' in this regard and

also submitted some other no-

tices and questions on other

However, some legislators of

Another Whip of the party,

Rahman said.

burning issues.

"I myself have submitted no-

ments, a minor concession.

any more talks.

job," Zyuganov said.

Duma postpones vote

on Chernomyrdin

them to return to their original habitats, but for the greater majority, their fate may lie in continuing their existence as floating labourers in the city.

Even under normal conditions, fortune does not favour most of the labourers who gather every day at the assembling points in the various areas of the city. The great misfortune from which the floating labourers suffer is that they are not offered wages at rates prevailing in the market. When they see the prospect of finding any work bleak at proper wages, they sometimes, under pressure of sheer necessity of earning some income, are obliged to accept any job at much reduced

By and large, they are haunted by the fear of financial insecurity all the time. It is not unusual that sometimes they pass their days in great privation when they get no work or when they are unable to go to work on account of illness. This proves particularly hard on those who happen to live with their families and children.

In the city's labour market. an important section is constituted by the city's rickshaw pullers. They form an important element of our transport system.

It is felt by observers that at present the big challenge before us is to create scope for expansion of the labour market with suitable openings for work. In this respect, various poverty alleviation projects that are undertaken by govt, NGOs and the Grameen Bank are expected to make significant contribu-

hartal at

rorist activities, reports UNB. This was decided at an emergency meeting of the NCCI here today with its president M

Meeting sources alleged that the ruling party-backed terrorists went on rampage and looted a number of hotels, restaurants, shops and other business establishments in last three days.

Extortion

"We are not going to vote for people and threatening them if Stepanovich they refused to give in to the ex-(Chernomyrdin). We believe he tortion. won't be able to handle this

ple are punishable offences, the

money from innocent people

The ministry urged the people to lodge their complaints against the extortionists to the nearest police station or out-

Bomb scare

From Page 1 taxi track of the landing strip," said Wing Commander Sheikh Aminur Rahman, Director of

The official said Air Force, CAAB and fire fighters were put on alert to handle any emer

evacuate the passengers with the bomb threat still there. All the passengers were later taken to the terminal, said another

third in a row in recent months and second for the same DC-10 aircraft.

Recently, the ZIA authorities have taken extensive security measures following the bomb attack on the US embassies in

Biman officials later told The Daily Star that there was no one named Lance Naik Ahmed on the passenger list.

5 electrocuted

From Page 1 dent last night a high police official suspected that water in the area might have been elec-Till filing of the report last

night, Lalbagh police were preparing to file an unnatural death case in connection with the incident.

On August 21, five persons including a mother and her child, were electrocuted in a slum submerged under flood water at West Razabazar. A couple and their child were electrocuted in flood affected Madartek area on August 26.



Fresh areas in the city have been submerged by flood waters.

- Star photo

BCL activists at JU beat up agitating students

By JU Correspondent

A section of activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Jahangirnagar University led by their expelled leader attacked the activists of General Students' Unity (GSU) on the campus yesterday. The activists led by their ex-

pelled general secretary Jasimuddin Manik beat up at least five GSU activists at Kamaluddin Hall and Bhasani Hall and threatened students of dire consequences if they did not leave the campus immedi-Manik had earlier been ex-

pelled from the university and also from BCL for assaulting a teacher on the campus on Au-

mitted a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Prof Alauddin Ahmed demanding immediate action against the 'terrorists'. They also demonstrated on

The assaulted students sub-

the campus and threatened to go on a fast unto death if "the terrorists responsible for the attacks are not immediately ar-Armed BCL men led by

Manik are also pressuring the authorities to close the university in a bid to "contain" the ongoing agitation, sources said. They also warned JU correspondents of different national dailies not to report the incidents. Tension mounted as armed outsiders were seen roaming around the campus.

A meeting of the provosts. the proctor and assistant proctors of the university yesterday reviewed the situation and di-

rected the provosts and house tutors to stay in the halls to prevent any untoward incident The VC told students that he would "take responsibility if any further acts of terrorism on the campus." The Disciplinary Committee of the JU meets today to review the campus situa-

Earlier, the students who started a fast unto death from Thursday night suspended their programme at around 4 am yesterday when Proctor-In-Charge Mozammel Han assured them of taking action against the rapists withn 10 days.

Visiting the fasting students at around 1 am yesterday, the VC admitted the incidents of rape but said the authorities were "facing difficulties in taking action against the culprits due to legal problems."

Students laid a siege to VC's residence till filing of this report at around 11 last night when a meeting of the university administration was going

Rickshawpuller killed in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Sept 4: One rickshawpuller was killed when a speeding passenger bus hit his rickshaw at station road here this afternoon, reports

According to Kotwali police and eyewitnesses, Cox's Bazar bound Coach S Alam hit the rickshaw from behind killing its puller on the spot at station

protest from hundreds of Friday

nesses, took shelter inside the

guard room, leading the mob to

take to the Avenue where motor-

vehicles were damaged. The

chaos continued for about an

contingents, rushed to the spot

and used baton indiscrimi-

nately on the agitators. "In fact,

police beat up anybody who

came their way and many inno-

cent people became victims.

however, denied that police as-

saulted the skaters or the two

friends. Deputy Commissioner

(West) Serajul Islam claimed

that the policemen came under

prompting them to defend

nied having arrested any

The police official also de-

He said police would file two

attack from those skaters,

A senior police official,

one witness said.

themselves.

woman.

Police, reinforced by new

Police, according to wit-

visitors who turned into mob.

31 more die From Page 1

FFWC said the major rivers will continue their rising trend worsening the situation along the Brahmaputra-Jamuna, the Ganges-Padma and in the downstream of the Meghna from Bhairab Bazar to Chand-

Districts where the flood sit uation deteriorated yesterday are Dhaka, Narayangani Manikganj, Narsingdi, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Brahmanbaria, Comilla and Laxmipur.

Situation remained unchanged in Gazipur, Mushiganj Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Gopalganj, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Bogra, Pabna, Sirajganj, Chandpur and Noakhali

Relief Ministry control room sources said improving trend was observed in only five districts - Mymensingh, Sherpur. Netrakona, Habiganj and Barisal.

Modhu Purnima today

By Staff Correspondent The Buddhist community will observe the "Modhu Purnima" across the country today

The Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prochar Sangha (BBKPS) has arranged various programmes to observe the day, said a press release.

The BBKPS has arranged Buddha Puja, religious gathering and mass prayer seeking blessings for the flood affected people. BBKPS Chairman Shuddhananda Mahathero will lead the prayer, the release said.

Besides, offering of food to the Bhikkhusangha at 11 am, distribution of relief materials among the flood affected people at 1 pm and Prodeep Puja and mass prayer for global peace at 6 pm are on the schedule for the

The Buddhist community in Rangamati will celebrate the occasion on September 6.

Shazneen

From Page 1 carpenter Shani Ram and two maids - Parvin and Minu. All the accused have been employed at the Gulshan residence of Shazneen's father for some-

According to the FIR, domestic help Shahid raped and killed Shazneen. Contractor Hasan masterminded the killing and the rest collabo-

rated with him. The case was lodged with the thana on the basis of the postmortem report-of the victim, evidences collected by police and confessional statements given by some of the accused, the IO said in his FIR.

The father of Shazneen earlier lodged a murder case with Gulshan thana in which he mentioned that the victim was raped and killed. CID took up the investigation of the case on the basis of the murder case

Final document adopted

NAM's call for int'l summit on terrorism

DURBAN, South Africa, Sept 4: Heads of state and government of the 114-nation Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) early today adopted the final declaration of the movement's 12th summit, defining policy for the new millennium, reports AFP. The final document, a 127

page-declaration comprising 514 resolutions, called for an international summit on terrorism to be held under United Nations auspices, and reaffirmed its commitment to North-South dialogue, UN re-form and nuclear disarma-

The document was adopted shortly before President Nelson Mandela, the NAM's new chair declared the Durban summit closed at 12:32 am (1032 GMT). The NAM agreed the terror-

ism summit should be held 'to formulate a joint, organised response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.'

But it notably opposed 'selective and unilateral actions by states,' a veiled reference to US missile strikes on suspected terrorist targets in member states Sudan and Afghanistan.

The summit "welcomed the decision of the United Kingdom and the United States of America to finally accept Libya's position on the Lockerbie issue to try the two suspects in a neutral country but expressed their regret that it has taken so long for them to accept this position.

They expressed deep concern over the current deadlock in the Middle East peace process... as result of the policies and actions of the Israeli government in violation of existing agreements including settlement activities...

NAM leaders also expressed concern over 'the development

of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and a rampant traffic in ar-

maments. The leaders 'noted the complexities arising from nuclear tests in South Asia, which underlined the need to work even harder to achieve their disarmament objectives including elimination of nuclear

Économic globalisation, the summit pointed out, had created 'new challenges and oppor-tunities' but the process had translated itself into an increased marginalisation for the majority of the developing countries.

They underlined the need for a specific regulatory framework for the financial and exchange markets, and recognised the 'essential need to ensure the transparency of the capital flows of private sectors to bolster an early warning system.

Long considered politically irrelevant, the NAM leaders expressed determination to further strengthen its capacity for action to enhance the influence and impact of its decisions on world affairs.

In a chapter headed 'Agenda for Peace,' the document said sanctions should be clearly defined as soon as their objectives are achieved.

"They should be imposed for specified time frame and based on tenable legal grounds." NAM leaders conceded in

Resolution 66 that there were important differences 'between them on a number of issues of UN reform, but they agreed on an increase — 'by not less than 11'- in Security Council seats for NAM countries, based on 'equitable geographical distribu-

Ex-Rwandan PM gets life-term for genocide

ARUSHA (Tanzania), Sept 4: The International Criminal Tribunal here jailed Rwandan former premier Jean Kambanda for life today on conviction of taking part in genocide in his country in 1994, reports AFP.

said the court set up by the

Ctg port

From Page 1 stop terrorist activities at the

port. The meeting, however, excluded from the agenda the workers demand for resignation of the Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Choudhury.

Acting Chairman of Chittagong Port Capt. Zohiruddin Mahmood was also present in the meeting. Saber Hossain did not attend the meeting in the wake of protest from the work-

Meanwhile, the Shipping Minister visited the affected jetties and other areas where the clashes took place and went to see the injured people at the Port Hospital this morning.

Occidental

From Page 1

string got stuck in the well at a depth of 4,000 metres earlier this year. As per Petrobangla's directive. Occidental had to give up its plan to drill up to 4500 metres after three weeks of efforts to recover the string. The early reports on the Bib-

iana gasfield were also interpreted negatively by Petrobangla While discovery of such a

big' gasfield changes Occidental's negative reputation in Bangladesh, the company is now concerned with the future of this gasfield. Occidental was well aware of the potential problems the government many face in paying for the Bibiana gas in US dollars as per an international rate, the sources

Worst of all, due to lack of planning for gas consumption and lack of infrastructure, it was not unlikely that the gov-ernment would not be able to optimally use the gas to be supplied from the Bibiana gasfield.

The government is already facing difficulty in buying and utilising the gas from Sangu. developed by British company Cairn. The company is now supplying slightly over onethird of the agreed quantum of gas from the Sangu field.

"Right now, the government should focus on optimising and improving the gas consumption and build new gas-based power, fertiliser, LPG and other byproduct plants in order to make all these discoveries economically meaningful," said an energy expert.

"Otherwise, if we can not consume this gas, these new fields would become economic burden for the government and Bangladesh would resort to gas export to escape that liability. At the same time, we would continue to face an energy crisis," he said.

United Nations late in 1994 ordered that Kambanda should serve a life term for his role in the massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda, which still faces the consequences of the bloodbath.

Kambanda had himself on May 1 pleaded guilty to genocide and crimes against humanity before the court sitting in this north Tanzanian town, a step which meant that there was no lengthy substantive hearing in

The bench failed to specify in which country Kambanda should be imprisoned.

sentenced genocide convicts to death and carried out executions, but the ruling here was part of landmark proceedings by an international tribunal founded by a UN Security Council resolution.

African nation.

Japan sending fact-finding * mission to assess

Japan is expected to send a fact-finding mission to Bangladesh soon to assess its needs arising out of current devastating floods as the missions abroad continued efforts to mobilise resources to help flood victims, diplomatic sources said, reports BSS.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Tokyo Rashed Ahmed who met Kenzo Oshima, Director General of the Japanese Foreign Ministry was yesterday apprised that "a Japanese factfinding mission would be leaving for Bangladesh immediately to assess the damage,' sources at the External Publicity Wing (EPW) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Deportation

Branch officials at the airport. The other 10 landed in the Dhaka Central Jail. Police plan to interrogate them again, the sources said.

may be part of a manpower mafia, which, however, the MPs

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday confirmed that a letter regarding the two MPs had been received by the Speaker's office two days back. The Deputy Speaker could not give the content of the letter from police as it was yet to be

from the country and is scheduled to return on September 6.

ferred to my office," Hamid told The Daily Star last night. "The issue will be taken up after the return of the Speaker."

BNP MPs who are now in the nothing to do. Brushing aside BNP's criticapital have also submitted a cism of the government for not good number of notices. Others forming all-party relief comwill do the same on their return

JS session from Monday

mittee. Sengupta said, "the govfrom the flood-hit areas, he ernment has not formed a oneparty relief committee. Relief is Replying to another quesbeing distributed through peotion the Whip said no date has ples elected representatives." yet been fixed for a meeting of Another ruling party lawthe BNP Parliamentary Party. On BNP's move to collect the

maker, Akhtaruzzaman, when asked said that a befitting reply would be given on the floor of the House if questions were raised over the process of relief distribution. "Government is doing relief operation in a dis-

ciplined manner." The ruling party will determine its strategy at a meeting of its Parliamentary Party. expected to be held at 2 pm on

Monday. Although there is a move in the BNP to collect resignation letters of its lawmakers, the party will join the coming session to project government's 'failures' in facing the flood situation and maintaining law and order.

last night, Abu Yusuf Moham-

mad Khalilur Rahman, a BNP

Talking to The Daily Star

Whip, said, his party has sub-**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**

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Dawn-to-dusk Natore today

NATORE, Sept 4: Natore Chamber of Commerce and Industries (NCCI) has called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the town tomorrow protesting ter

Aminul Haque in the chair.

From Page 1

The ministry said a person or an institution is not bound to donate money or relief materials to the flood-affected people, instead it is a voluntary matter. The matter of extortion, threatening or harassment to the peo-

ministry added. It instructed all to refrain from indulging in extortion of

for flood relief.

It took about 46 minutes to

CAAB official. Such a false bomb alert was

Africa.

trifled at that moment.

Police-mob clash in city leaves 50 hurt: 15 held By Staff Correspondent

Miah Avenue in the city as police and a mob clashed over an alleged assault of a young woman. Fifteen were arrested, police said. Witnesses said among the

At least 50 people were in-

jured and more than 30 vehicles

damaged vesterday on Manik

arrested was the woman who was later released after the mob attack. Police came under fire after some on-duty uniformed men at the South Plaza of the parliament building allegedly assaulted a girl and her friend at 6:30 in the evening. The two had

protested when police reprimanded some young skaters. Police said skating and cycling were not allowed in the

compound. Witnesses said Ishrat Zahan and her friend Niaz Gazzali Nipu had an altercation with the policemen when the men in uniform allegedly used abusive languages and assaulted them

Then the policemen al-

legedly dragged them towards

the guard room of the parlia-

From Page 1

crammed in nine class rooms.

The toilets on the ground floor

were overflowing with ankle-

deep liquid waste. Amid the

stench and dirt women cooked

rice in the smoke filled rooms.

from a local Islamic organisa-

tion drank Coca Cola and ate

biscuits while others dis-

tributed uncooked rice and

Salimullah Khan, a local

businessman, claimed that he

was in charge of the shelter. He

said he welcomed relief from

any group, regardless of its po-

litical affiliations. When asked

about the appalling condition

of the toilets, he replied, "We

keep on telling these people to

keep the toilets clean but they

area, across the steel bridge, is

submerged with flood water up

The whole of Kamrangirchar

do not listen.

lentil in polythene bags.

Upstairs, some volunteers

at one stage.

separate cases, one on charges of trespassing and damaging state property and another on ment building, fueling an angry charge of attacking policemen. | lodged with the Gulshan thana. Floods: Cry for food, water

to 10 feet high. Local people said

well-to-do families have moved

to the city with their relatives

and some poor people have

taken refuge in the city shelters.

But thousands of helpless fami-

lies were passing their days in

uncertainty on rooftops or on platforms. Alamgir Mia, owner of a one-story house, said more than twenty families took shelter on the roof of his house. His house was under waist-deep water where he lived on platforms. On the roof women were busy cooking in tent-like accommodations. They said they had been living on the roof for

area over two months ago. "Our husbands are out of work for the last 15 days and we have run out of whatever savings we had," said Rina, a young

more than a month. They said

the flood waters engulfed the

water," she said. Further inside of Kamran-

girchar where country boats month ago.

housewife. She said all families owed the landlord at least two months' rent. "At the end of each day we have rice and lentil but what we do not is drinking

navigated in the dozens, 20 families took shelter on the first floor of the Kamrangirchar Primary School. The occupants said that they had taken shelter in the school more than a "Within this time we have only received three kilogram of

rice and two pieces of bread.' said Shahana, a mother of three children. Shahana said drinking water was a big problem as only one tubewell was operating for thousands of marooned people. "We have to hire a boat to get that water," she

The Hirondelle News Agency

his case.

In Rwanda itself, courts have

Kambanda was interim prime minister in Rwanda between April 8 and mid-July, 1994, during the genocide of between half a million and 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus in his Central

flood damage

From Page 1

Police suspect the two MPs

sent to him, he said. The Speaker is now away

"If it had been an urgent matter, it would have been re-