

Weather warning system to be improved

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and Mitsubishi Corporation of Japan yesterday signed an agreement on a project for "improvement of weather warning services related to natural disaster" in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Under the project, BMD will get opportunities to strengthen its capabilities for weather forecasts and warning to reduce the extent of devastation caused by the natural disasters.

Dhaka radar will be replaced and a satellite ground receiving station (SGRS) will be established for receiving cloud images. Besides, a new radar will also be installed in Rangpur under the agreement.

BMD director Ershad Hossain and Koji Abe of Mitsubishi signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations in the city.

Sciichi Shinoki, representative of Japan Weather Association, Brigadier TU Muhammad Iftikharul Bashar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence, and other BMD senior officials were also present on the occasion.

President concedes death of Dr Karim

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday conduced the death of Dr AQM Bazul Karim, a renowned scientist and educationist of the country, reports BSS.

In a message of condolence, President Shahabuddin recalled the contribution of Karim to the development of science education in the country as professor and chairman of the Department of Soil Science, University of Dhaka.

He was the first chairman of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission.

In his death, the country has lost a notable scientist and educationist, the President said.

In another message, Prof Dr A Mannan, Vice Chancellor of The People's University of Bangladesh, has also conduced the death of Dr AQM Bazul Karim.

2 drown in canal

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 9: Two passengers of a microbus drowned when the vehicle fell deep into canal near the circuit house in the town this afternoon, reports UNB.

The microbus was pulled up from the overflowing canal within half an hour. Zahurul Islam and Nanoo were found dead inside the vehicle while two others, still alive, were rushed to the local hospital. The driver who managed to escape remained absconding.

The driver on his way to Bogra is believed lost control of steering and plunged into the canal while crossing over the belly bridge.

In another incident, 50-year old Siraj was crushed under the wheels of a Dhaka-bound coach at Konabari.

Govt sanctions another 1,450 MT of rice, Tk 5 lakh

The government allotted Tk 5 lakh and 1,450 MT of rice for some flood-hit districts of the country yesterday, reports UNB.

Disaster Management and Relief Ministry sanctioned 200 MT of rice each for Dhaka, Comilla and Chandpur districts, 100 MT of rice each for Sherpur, Kishoreganj, Feni, Sirajganj, Noakhali, Tangail and Natore districts and 50 MT of rice each for Kushtia, Meherpur and Magura districts.

The ministry also allotted Tk one lakh each for Dhaka, Kishoreganj and Chandpur and Tk 50,000 each for Noakhali, Kushtia, Meherpur and Magura.

With this, the government has so far allotted Tk 4.83 crore, 73,318 MT of rice and 400 MT of wheat among other relief materials for the flood-affected people.

Armed forces continue relief work

Bangladesh Armed Forces continued relief activities throughout the country yesterday, reports UNB.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant Gen Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman yesterday visited the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment at Chashara, Narayanganj, where a contingent of army personnel have been trying to protect it against the surge of flood waters.

Army troops have been deployed to monitor and repair the breaches at the embankment, in co-operation with the local administration and other concerned agencies, since August 18.

More troops were reinforced yesterday to augment the work, said an ISPR press release.

RU classes, exams suspended

RAJSHAHI, Sept 9: All classes and scheduled examinations of Rajshahi University have been suspended from tomorrow to September 27 due to flood in the country, an official of the university said tonight, reports BSS.

It was decided at an emergency meeting of the Syndicate today with Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdul Khaleque in the chair.

Classes will resume on October 3 after Durga Puja vacation. Offices of the university will remain open as usual.

UNDP Human Development Report '98

Only 20pc world's people reap benefits of consumption boom

Despite a dramatic surge in consumption in many countries, over one billion people fail to meet even their most basic needs, according to a UN report released yesterday, reports UNB.

The Human Development Report 1998, released globally by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said 80 per cent of the world's present consumption is by just 20 per cent of the world's people.

People are living longer, healthier and more productive lives, but the gap between the rich and the poor is expanding, it said, calling upon individuals, communities and governments to plan how to share the benefits of the consumption boom more equitably.

The 1990 UNDP report, that ranks 174 countries according to their level of human development, said global consumption of goods and services this year will top 24 trillion US dollar, six times the figure for 1975.

But the report found gross inequalities in consumption opportunities that have excluded over one billion people who fail to meet even their most basic requirements.

Among the 4.4 billion people living in developing countries,

almost three-fifths live in communities without basic sanitation and almost one-third are without safe drinking water.

One-quarter of them lack adequate housing, one-fifth live beyond reach of modern health services and one-fifth of the children do not get as far as grade five in school, and an equal percentage are undernourished, the UNDP said.

The poor share the least in consumption and contribute a little in environmental pollution, but shoulder the highest risk of environmental damage, the report hinted.

It said with a one metre rise in the sea level, Bangladesh would lose 17 per cent of its land area. Egypt would lose 12 per cent, small islands like Maldives and Tuvalu would disappear beneath the waves.

The report said the runaway growth in consumption is placing unprecedented pressure on environment and putting those who consume the least in double jeopardy.

Per capita carbon dioxide emissions are 21 metric tons a year in the United States compared with 3 MT in China.

The poorest one-fifth of the world's people, who are responsible for just three per cent of

carbon dioxide emissions, live in low-lying regions that are most vulnerable to the rising sea levels associated with the global warming.

The UNDP report found that with the globalisation of markets, demand for luxury items and services is exploding, even in traditionally poor communities.

What was considered a luxury 20 years ago is now a necessity — a private car for every middle-class family in France, a wrist watch for every rural family in India, a refrigerator for every family in China.

Despite the high growth rates of consumption, developing countries are nowhere near catching up with the levels of consumption in the world's richest countries, said the report, giving some comparative consumption levels.

The wealthiest one-fifth of the world's people consume 45 per cent of all the meat and fish, 58 per cent of total energy and 74 per cent of telephone lines, and 87 per cent of vehicles.

But the poorest one-fifth consume less than five per cent of meat and fish, less than four per cent of energy, 1.5 per cent of telephone lines and less than one per cent of vehicles.

Different organisations distribute relief

Various political, socio-cultural and humanitarian organisations yesterday distributed relief materials among the flood victims, reports BSS.

Dhaka city unit of Bangladesh Awami League handed over 6000 rupees and molasses to Bangladesh Army for distribution among the flood victims in different parts of the country.

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman and city Awami League secretary Mofazz Hossain Chowdhury Maya handed over the rupees to an officer of the 42nd East Bengal Regiment.

Bangladesh Ansar and VDP distributed cooked food and drinking water among the flood victims at Khilgaon Government High School, Malibagh Staff Quarter Primary School and Khilgaon Staff Quarter School.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society jointly distributed relief materials including rice, lentils, potatoes, edible oil, salt, candles and match boxes among flood victims at Savar. Ibrahim Khalil, Mohammad Yusuf and Wafa Al-Atiq of Kuwait Red Crescent Society took part in the relief operation.

Sanskritik Forum

Sammilito Sanskritik Forum on Tuesday distributed relief materials among the flood-hit people of Khilkhet slums under Cantonment thana in the city, says a press release.

Prof. Maniruzzaman Mia former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University distributed the relief. Film actress Sabina, Tamanna, among others, were also present.

Sanskritik Oikya Jote

Sammilito Sanskritik Oikya Jote distributed relief materials at a flood shelter at Shamibagh in the city.

Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh distributed relief materials among 250 affected families at Rampura and other areas of the city. Director General of the foundation Abdul Awal and high officials were present, said a press release.

Proshika

Proshika yesterday sanctioned a fresh amount of Taka five crore to launch its second phase of relief operation under which two lakh families in the flood-hit areas would be provided with ten days' succour.

The amount was sanctioned at an emergency meeting at Proshika Bhaban with its president Dr Qazi Faruque Ahmed in the chair.

Meanwhile, the 200 medical teams and 60 livestock treatment centres, set up by Proshika under its first phase of relief operation, will continue their services for another one month and in case of emer-

Olympic Assoc

Bangladesh Olympic Association distributed rice, lentils, molasses and candles among the flood victims of Kalyandi under Bandar thana of Narayanganj Association president Lt Gen Mahbubur Rahman (ret) and other officials were present.

GMG Airlines

GMG Airlines Limited, country's third private airline, yesterday took a decision to carry emergency cargo on all its scheduled flights.

All concerned persons have been requested to contact GMG counters around the country, a press release of the airline said.

Puja Udjapan Parishad

Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad distributed relief materials among 2500 flood-affected families of Demra, Sabujbagh and Keraniganj.

The parishad has opened a centre to receive relief goods at the Dhakeswarj Mandir and has requested all to cooperate with its operations.

Khaleda visits Lalbagh today

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will visit various flood-affected areas of Lalbagh thana of the city today, reports UNB.

Tk. 4.5 lakh donated to BNP's relief fund

Different units of BNP and its front organisations donated Tk 4.5 lakh to the party's relief fund yesterday, reports UNB.

BNP Qatar unit handed over a cheque of Tk 1.10 lakh, Jeddah-Saudi Arabia unit a cheque of Tk 2 lakh, Comilla Kotwali unit Tk one lakh and Jubo Dal Sirajganj Tk 25,000.

The donations were handed over to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her official residence at Minto Road yesterday.

Leaders of Saudi Arabia unit Abdul Qudus and Afzar Ahmed personally gave Tk 10,000 and Tk 5,000 respectively in cash to the party chief.

Other donors included Rafiqul Islam, Ahmed Ali Muki, Aminur Rashid Yasin, Kazal Alamin, Ershadur Rahman Niru and Munshi Kamaluddin.

UN donates 2 speedboats for relief work

United Nations warehouse in Italy has donated two inflatable speedboats to Bangladesh for relief operations in the flood-affected areas, reports UNB.

The speedboats were received by the UN Resident Co-ordinator in Bangladesh who informed the Disaster Management and Relief Ministry to make necessary arrangements for clearing the consignment from Zia International Airport.

Jubo Union urges relief workers to collect ORS from its project

Bangladesh Jubo Union (BJU) has urged all involved in relief activities to collect Oral Rehydration Saline (ORS) free of cost from its ORS production project for distribution among the flood affected people, says a BJU press release.

The organisation also sought assistance for its ORS project at the Dhaka University (DU) gymnasium.

The youth organisation opened the project on September 1 at the DU gymnasium in collaboration with the DU authorities and Bangladesh Chhatra Union.

It also called upon its members, youths and students to come forward to help the flood affected people.

During the 1988 floods, the organisation distributed more than 20 lakhs of ORS packets among the flood affected people.

Low-cost housing project in Hatia

HATIA, Sept 9: Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam today inaugurated a low-cost housing project build by the BN personnel under the Ashrayan scheme here, reports BSS.

The BN personnel in coordination with the local district administration this year completed construction of 13 barrack-type houses, each having accommodation for 10 families with provision of pure drinking water and modern sanitation facilities.

Besides, provision of bio-gas plant, pisciculture, farming, bee cultivation and other income generating activities will also be undertaken. In 1997, the BN personnel constructed 28 such barracks including 5 at St Martin's Island, 15 at Moheshkhali and eight at Kutubdia.

Speaking on the occasion, the Navy chief called upon the BN personnel to expedite the ongoing relief and medical assistance programme of Bangladesh Navy for the flood affected people in addition to the humanitarian services being provided to the landless and homeless people of the off-shore islands.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina taking part in preparing bread for the flood victims at DUCSU Bhaban when she visited the programme conducted by Bangladesh Chhatra League yesterday.

Gayoom's envoy hands over cheque for \$ 30,000 to PM as token relief

Abdul Sattar Musa Didi, special envoy to Maldives president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

The envoy on behalf of the President and the people of the Maldives expressed deep concern over the devastating flood in Bangladesh.

Didi handed over a cheque for 30,000 US dollar as token relief for the flood stricken people of Bangladesh. He also handed over a message of Maldives President to Prime Minister.

The government warning came following the deaths of several people after consumption of adulterated mustered oil in neighbouring India.

The government has taken measures to prevent entry of the adulterated mustered oil into the country and sought people's cooperation in this regard.

Govt warns people not to use Indian adulterated mustered oil

The government yesterday cautioned the people not to use adulterated mustered oil which could enter the Bangladesh market, said an official press release, reports BSS.

The government warning came following the deaths of several people after consumption of adulterated mustered oil in neighbouring India.

The government has taken measures to prevent entry of the adulterated mustered oil into the country and sought people's cooperation in this regard.

Half-day hartal at Jessore today

JESSORE, Sept 9: The All-party Political Alliance has called a half-day hartal here tomorrow in protest against the killing of Runner Editor Saiful Alam Mukul, reports UNB.

The alliance at a meeting on Monday demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to those responsible for the murder.

2 electrocuted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Sept 9: Two garments workers were electrocuted this afternoon at Chandanaish, police said.

The victims were identified as Babar Uddin 25, and Babul 27, police said, adding that they met with the tragic end of their lives while working inside the Raju Garments factory located at Chandanaish.

2 murdered

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Goala, out of his residence on Orphanage Road at about 6 am yesterday.

They took Ashique in front of the Ansar Camp near the Polashi Crossing and shot him three times in different parts of his body, including his head. Ashique died on the spot. None, however, was arrested in connection with the killing till filing of this report, police said.

The body was handed over to Ashique's family after its autopsy at Mitford Hospital morgue. Sonia Goala, mother of the victim, filed a murder case with Lalbagh thana in this regard yesterday.

In another incident, Sarwar, a clinical assistant of a lawyer, was attacked by an unidentified gang following an altercation in a playground of Rayerbazar at around 8:15 pm Tuesday.

The gang hacked Sarwar indiscriminately and escaped in an auto-rickshaw. In a fatally injured condition Sarwar was rushed to the nearby Bangladesh Medical College Hospital.

Later, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Sarwar succumbed to his injuries at about 12:15 am yesterday. The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

The victim's father filed a murder case with Mohammadpur thana accusing unidentified assailants in this regard yesterday.

Relief item

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areas that voluntary relief workers were distributing "Amoxicillin, Cotrim and Doxycyclin."

In no case these antibiotics should be given to a person without advice from a qualified doctor, Dr Ashraf said.

"Through Cotrim, the patient might suffer from sulphur reaction which might lead to death," he warned.

Britain to provide Tk 163 cr Flood: \$172m aid pledge received so far

With the pledge from the United Kingdom for 21 million pound sterling (about 34 million US dollars), the commitments received so far in response to the appeal for flood victims from donor countries, multilateral agencies, philanthropic organisations and individuals staying abroad would be about 172 million dollars in cash and kind, reports BSS.

British Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for International Development George Foulkes, MP, made the pledge when Bangladesh High Commissioner to UK AH Mahmood Ali called on him in London Tuesday, a British High Commission press release said in Dhaka yesterday. Britain earlier announced donation of over five million dollars for the distressed people.

David Walker, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday to brief her on UK assistance package. The relief assistance package amounting to Tk 163 crore has a number of components, including emergency relief, flood aid and rehabilitation of agriculture and infrastructure, the press release added.

Meanwhile, with donation by Maldives and commitment of assistance by Pakistan and the Kingdom of Jordan, the number of countries offering assistance rose to 26. Some of the relief materials and donations in cash have already reached the country, while others are on way. External Publicity Wing (EPW) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said.

The British High Commission said the new pledge is in addition to the normal British aid programme amounting to development assistance of 45 million pound sterling (taka 350 crore).

Abdul Sattar Moosa Didi, special envoy of the Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom who called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday to convey the message of

sympathy from President Gayoom and his people, donated 30,000 US dollars to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Wang Chungui handed over a cheque for 20,000 US dollars as pledged by Beijing earlier.

Jordan yesterday sought permission to allow one of Royal Jordanian air force aircraft to land at Dhaka. The aircraft is expected to arrive here September 15, will carry medical and humanitarian aid from the charitable organisations of the kingdom for the flood victims, MOFA sources said.

Japan which has donated 30 million yen (210,000 US dollars) as initial response to flood victims, is sending a fact-finding mission to assess immediate requirements as well as post-flood needs. Bangladesh mission is Tokyo informed.

Republic of Korea which earlier announced to contribute 10,000 dollars through Red Cross, has decided to provide relief foodstuffs on an emergency basis. South Korean embassy here informed MOFA of the government's decision to send wheat, flour, sugar, tinned fish and powder milk.

Officials sources earlier said donors including WFP (World Food Programme) have so far committed to provide Bangladesh with 7.28 lakh tons of foodgrains, valued at 117 million US dollars. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has redirected 12 million dollars for the relief of the flood victims. European Union and several organs of the United Nations announced donations of 1.25 million dollars and 1.16 million dollars respectively. Commitment of contributions of countries, organizations and individuals excluding ADB, UK, UN, EU and flood aid, would be about 6 million dollars.

Bangladesh government has made an appeal for 879.5 million dollars in cash and kind to take up emergency relief and post-flood rehabilitation programme.

Many city roads

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houses, families were busy washing and cooking in makeshift shelters. Motaleb Mia had just completed construction of a platform for his chickens on the roof of his submerged tinched house.

"I had more than 50 chickens, many of those have died," Motaleb said sitting on an old koshha that drew water through some leaks. He used to work in a factory at Dholaiakhal, but the factory closed down as it went under water. Motaleb's wife and four children watched from a nearby rooftop where they had taken shelter about two months ago.

About one km to the south, Haidar Ali High School at Manda accommodated more than 3,000 flood victims — men, women and children — on the three top floors. The ground floor was totally submerged. A pungent smell of human waste filled the atmosphere.

"Our biggest problem here is sanitation," said Dr Nurul Huda of CARE, Bangladesh, at his small dispensary on the roof of the building. CARE had taken over the charge of the shelter on September 2. "We offer the victims rice or khichuri twice a day and provide biscuits to the under-fives," said the young doctor who attends the victims seven days a week, from 9 am to 5 pm.

The rooms and the few toilets at the shelter were clean, but CARE workers said the number of toilets was inadequate for the 600 families. "We built some toilets on the water and took measures to prevent the waste from spreading," said Zahid Hossain Khan of CARE.

CARE officials said every day more than 100 patients were being treated. "Most suffer from diarrhoea and fever and more than 80 per cent of the sufferers are women and children," Dr Huda said.

About one km to the east of the flood shelter, at the extreme end of Manda known as Indarpar, a woman was heard wailing in an under construction four-storied building. The current was strong and the high waves hit the walls of the building that stood high at the edge of the vast sheet of flood waters. The incomplete concrete structure, known as Khaleda Saheber Garments, accommodated more than 500 people and dozens of cattle.

On the first floor a mother wailed for her 15-year-old missing son. According to inmates of the shelter, the boy was electrocuted Monday evening while going by a boat. After being 'caught' by the electric wire, he fell into the water in front of the building and disappeared, his friends who tried to save him suffered burn injuries," said Abdur Razzak, an inmate.

The flood victims at Khaleda Saheber Garments was the "first outsider" to have visited them. "People do not even know we are here. It costs us Tk 20 to go to the main road and we are out of work," they said.

On the second floor of the shelter, a grocery shop keeper took shelter with his family. He kept the goods on a bed and sold items like lentil, coarse rice, cooking oil, green chilies and cigarettes. Asked about the price of the coarse rice, he said it was Tk 16 a kg.

"We are re-selling the rice we bought from some relief workers in Manda area," he said.

PDB signs

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came stagnant again over determining a gas regulation authority which would control the flow and pressure of gas to be supplied to the plant.

The government resolved this issue last month by making Petrobangla the gas regulatory authority. This will cost Petrobangla about Tk 15 crore as an infrastructure will have to be built for this purpose at the power plant site. Earlier, Titas Gas Ltd was asked to undertake this task, but Titas argued this to be a task of the power plant builder.

Initialling of the PPA will now be followed by initialling of a land lease agreement with the Ministry of Industries, a Fuel Supply agreement with Titas Gas Ltd and an Implementation Agreement with the Energy Ministry.

After all these agreements are initialled, these will be forwarded to the Law Ministry for vetting. Once the Law Ministry clears the agreements, the government will sign the final agreement with AES.

"It is expected that the final agreement will be signed within two months from now," said a source.

However, as the negotiation to finalise the Haripur power plant project took a long time, the deadline to finish the project will now have to be rescheduled. Sources said that the project was originally slated to be completed by the year 2000. "Now, this could not be finished before 2001 if all goes well," the source noted.

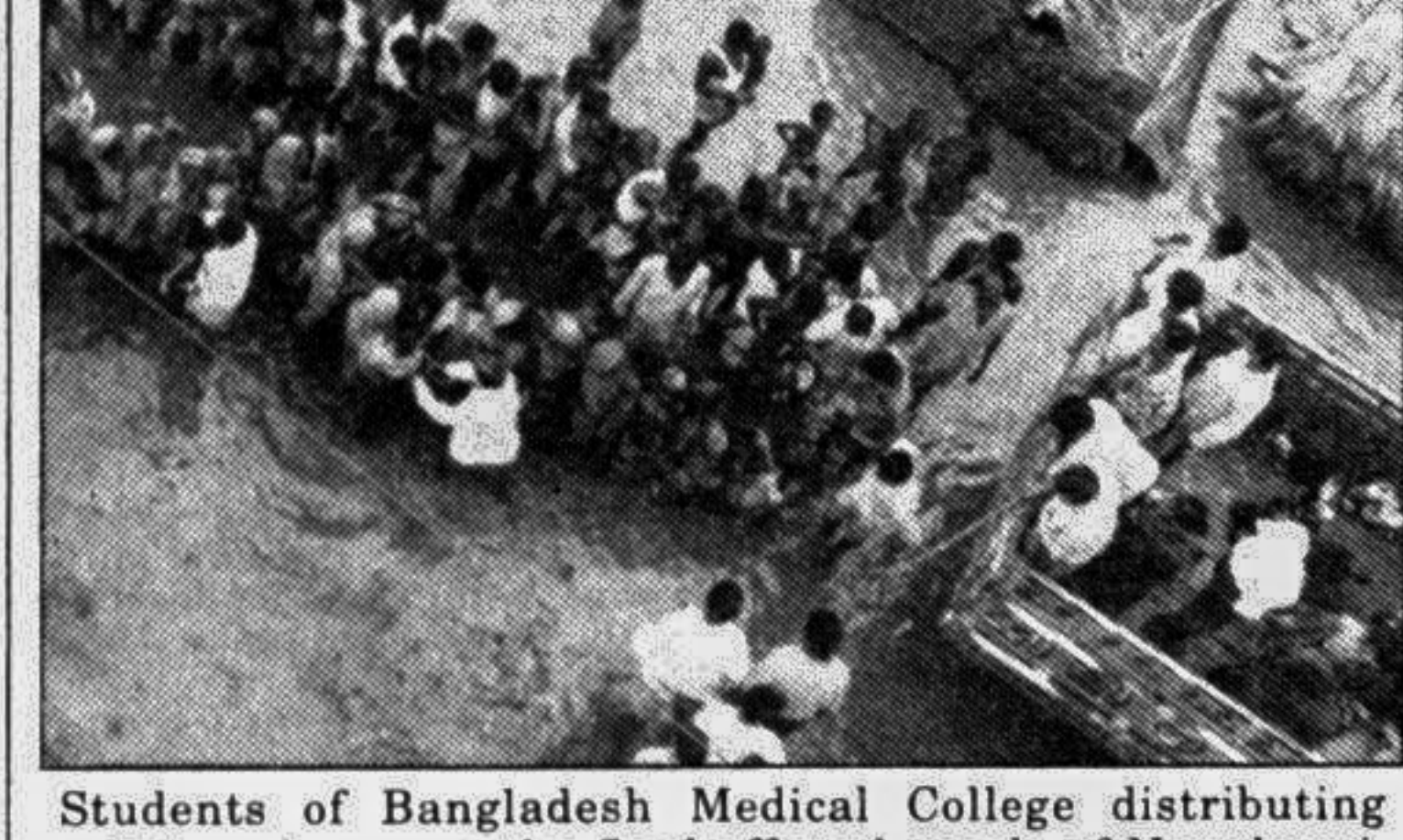
The Haripur power plant project will require an investment of about 350 million US dollars.

AES is also holding final negotiations with the PDB on the 300 MW to 450 MW Meghnaghat power plant project. Sources said that once the negotiators reach a break-through in the Haripur project, it would take only two months to finish all formalities for the final agreement on the Meghnaghat project.

"The government actually never had the experience of negotiating with a private power company on such large-scale project. Haripur's experience will pave the way for signing of other large-scale power projects," said an Energy Ministry official.



Students of Bangladesh Medical College distributing relief goods among the flood-affected people of Nawabganj.



Chairman of Unique Kalyan Trust distributing relief goods among flood victims at Nawabganj thana.



To keep the rail service operative, Railway engineers and workers have raised this rail track near Arikhola station as rail tracks between Arikhola and Pubail went under flood waters.