

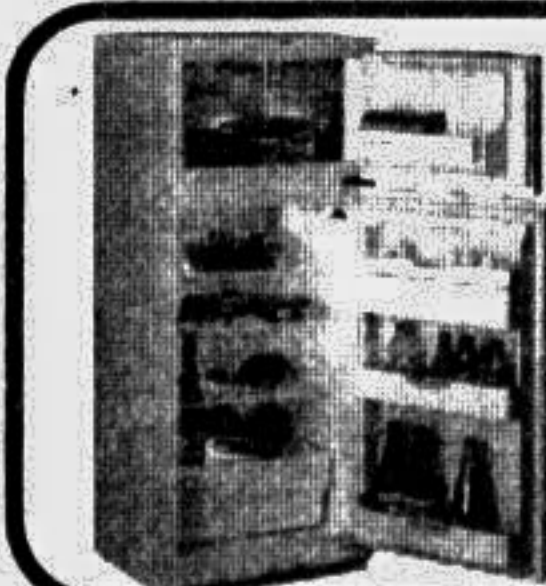
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Body formed to rehabilitate flood-hit industries

Star Report

The government yesterday formed a committee to seek ways to rehabilitate the flood-hit industries.

The committee headed by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria and consisting of representatives from different chambers and associations will sit with the finance minister today to chalk out future action programme.

The immediate concern of the committee will be to suggest ways for keeping the industries, still not affected by flood water, running, and to assess the damage of the industries for their rehabilitation.

The MCCI has already started assessing the losses caused to the industries. The newly formed committee will also prepare an assessment form and send these to industrial units to be filled in.

The committee members include representatives from FBCCI, MCCI, DCCI, BCI, BGMEA and BKMEA. The committee was formed at a meeting of business leaders with Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Bank has also called a meeting with the chief executive of Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) to assess the damage caused to the industries and to find out the fund position of the banks.

The problem now is that the NCBs are not in a comfortable position to provide huge funds for rehabilitation of the industries.

On the other hand, the banks also need assurance that their funds do not default which in turn would worsen the financial health of the institutions.

The government has already announced a Tk 3000 cr fund

Flood shelters

From Page 1

Officials were not aware that West End High School and Azampur Girls School were opened up to the affected people, as reported.

In addition, thousands of people have taken shelter at places not listed by any authorities, the sources said.

When county Commissioner of Area-9, Lalbagh, said hundreds of people, who somehow stayed at their houses on the periphery of the city so far, have started to arrive in the city. Many people from different areas of Keraniganj, Shahidnagar, Islambagh, Kamrangirchar and Maniknagar have arrived in her ward, she added.

"Those who are arriving now are well-to-do families who had tried their best not to move out of their submerged houses," she said.

DCC sources said yesterday some 1.54 lakh people were in the listed shelters. "But the number would be much more than that as we have no mechanism to monitor the rush of people," said one official.

Natural Disaster Emergency

From Page 1

extent that has now hit us, it is a crime to underplay it. The concern of the government is to prevent a panic situation by not declaring emergency is, in our view, totally misplaced. On the contrary people may become panicky when they will feel that the government is not doing enough to face the calamity, which includes declaring an emergency.

Either from a sense of complacency, over confidence or from serious lack of information the government did underplay the floods in the early stages. Our radio and TV were so preoccupied with the national mourning day that the floods hardly got adequate coverage till after it. The early position of not seeking aid and facing the floods with local resources, which looks so very naive now, caused us to lose extremely valuable time at the early stage. After all, the donors too have bureaucracies and, as bureaucracies everywhere, they have their own pace of doing things. The urgency of a situation makes only limited difference, especially if it is in a far away land.

All that is past. Now flood relief is in high gear. Government is working full speed to do whatever it can. It is in this context that we propose that a natural disaster emergency should immediately be declared to create the right tempo and mobilise adequate resources, both internal and external, necessary to face this calamity. Contrarily, we would like to argue, that if we do not declare this situation to be an "emergency" then we might give wrong signals, especially abroad, that the disaster we face is not of the magnitude to be termed as an emergency. In fact we can easily imagine points being made in foreign governments that if Bangladesh itself does not consider the situation grave enough to declare an emergency, the situation may not be all that bad. This would lead to a gross miscalculation on the part of the international community to mobilise adequate resources for us,

for rehabilitation of agriculture. This will take away a chunk of the money from the banking system.

According to an NCB high official, the loss assessment of the industrial sector should be done very meticulously by experts so that funds are not misused. Past records of the industrial units must be a criteria while rehabilitating them, he said.

PM tells DU students

Work unitedly to save flood victims

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to have patience at this critical moment and face the devastating flood with courage and fortitude, reports UNB.

"Do not lose your patience at this crucial time, face the calamity unitedly depending on the grace of Almighty Allah," she said urging all sections of people to help the flood victims of the country.

Addressing a gathering of students in front of DUCSU Bhaban, the Prime Minister said the country is now facing the unprecedented flood, which is lasting for a long time increasing the sufferings of the people everyday.

"We all will have to face the situation with courage and patience, all have to work unitedly to save the people," she said thanking the students for their frantic effort to help the flood victims.

2 more non-stop trains in Dhaka-Ctg route

CHITTAGONG, Sept 9: Bangladesh Railway will introduce two more non-stop trains in Dhaka-Chittagong route on Friday, reports UNB.

Of the two trains, said the Railway officials here, one will start from Dhaka at 7 am and the other from Chittagong at 7:30 pm.

Ferry service

From Page 1

"We hope to start the ferry service soon. Things will take shape Thursday."

He said, "The ferry service will facilitate movement of the stranded trucks carrying export cargo only."

Asked about restoring the Dhaka-Aricha highway, he said, "It is not possible to resume traffic movement. It's too dangerous for traffic to ply there with many parts of highway still under water."

Meanwhile, traffic movement through the Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Mawa highways still suspended.

Natural Disaster Emergency

and part of the reason for it would lie at home.

We are aware that the opposition leaders are not too keen about the idea of an 'emergency'. That is so because they are afraid that it will lead to political oppression on them. To mitigate such fears we are suggesting a "natural disaster emergency" which will have nothing to do with suppression of fundamental rights or of freedom of press which sometimes follows declarations of "emergencies" called due to political unrest or civil disturbances.

In conclusion we underscore the point that while declaration of natural disaster emergency is a necessary condition, it is far from being sufficient to meet the present challenge. For that, more than anything else, even more than foreign assistance, we need national unity. Both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Opposition chief Khaleda Zia have called for unity. However, as President Shahabuddin pointed out that both these calls are essentially empty because the definition of 'unity' for each is that the other should join it. In this situation we welcome the statement of Khaleda Zia and commend her for it, for extending unconditional support to the government's flood related activities during the speech to the parliament last Tuesday. After a long time she said something that brought dignity to her person and her office. Now it is PM's turn to reciprocate. However belatedly, Sheikh Hasina must understand that we are facing a situation which is too critical, too all encompassing, too devastating, too far reaching, and touching too many people for any party or any government to face this challenge alone. It will NOT be a defeat for her to admit that she cannot face this situation alone. No government in the world could have faced it either.

On the contrary the PM will give, and the world, an example of her deep feeling for our people if she extends her genuine hand of co-operation to all at this stage of our national crisis.



Boat is the only means to move in and out of the flood shelter at Manda in the city. —Star photo

If DND dam collapses...

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi and Reaz Ahmad

In the event of a collapse of the protection wall, people living in the area will confront a water height of "seven-to-eight feet" if they do not move out of their homes along the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra dam, a Water Board engineer said.

If flood water enters the protected area, home to some six lakh people, their belongings would be buried under seven to eight feet water, the engineer said last night. "Believe me this is going to be situation. God forbid that doesn't happen."

However, the dam engineer said, "it will take eight to ten hours to inundate the area."

Interestingly, if water overflows the dam, people on the other side will probably find their life easier. "But we don't want to see the dam collapse which will affect many more people," said Mamtaz Ahmed, one of the thousands marooned on the other side.

Meanwhile, worried relatives of those living along the dam made frantic calls to The Daily Star to know about the latest situation. "Is the dam gone?" was the most common query from scores of people. "Will it survive?" most of them asked.

A top water expert said flood water would not cross downtown Dhaka in any case. Anun Nishat, a professor of water resources at BUET, said the likely affected areas would be the polder starting from the Jatrabari point, the road that leads to Buriganga bridge approach road, Pagla, Chashara, Narayanganj, Kanchpur and Demra Ghat to Jatrabari.

One of our staff correspondents who lives at the heart of the area protected by the dam built in the early 60s, said some panicky people were evacuating themselves while others shifted their valuables to neighbours living in multi-storied houses.

A Daily Star team that took an early morning trip to the area saw thousands of people waiting anxiously "to see what happens". At Postogola crossing, police stopped vehicles heading for Narayanganj saying it would be dangerous to go further. "Some 50 yards from here, you will find thousands watching efforts to protect this road. They might damage your car," a constable warned at 3:30 am Wednesday. Felled trees were put up as

barriers to block vehicles when Roads, WDB and military engineers continued their fight with flood water.

The dark, rain-soaked night wore a ghastly look as a Star car drove along the road from Jatrabari to Postogola. Hundreds of lorries lay stranded on both sides of the wet road.

At roadside restaurants near Jatrabari bus terminal, still open at that hour of the night, crew of stranded trucks were sitting in despair, some in half slumber, waiting without any hope in sight.

"Who knows when it's going to end," said Mohammad Selim, a truck driver, visibly frustrated that it's going to be a long wait.

Life seemed a lot changed for tens of thousands in the affected areas as many of them were found moving around in city's main thoroughfares at 4:00 in the morning, an unusual sight.

There were women, with babies in their laps. There were men with vacant looks. No help came for them as they roamed about in the heart of the city at the dead of the night.

'US visa seekers must have personal passport'

All the applicants for US visa must have a personal passport from October 1, reports UNB.

Consular section of US embassy in Dhaka yesterday said both the immigrant and non-immigrant visa applicants must have personal passport, said a press release.

It said children may no longer be included in a parent's passport.

Meanwhile, the new hours for admission to consular section for individuals applying for non-immigrant visas will be from 8 am to 9 am, four days a week excepting Tuesday and official holidays.

Ctg port

From Page 1

container vessels are now waiting at the outer anchorage for berthing while three vessels are unloading containers at three CPA jetties.

A total of four foodgrain vessels are waiting at the outer anchorage while five foodgrain vessels are unloading at the CPA jetties.

The sources said the reason behind the possible congestion is for non-delivery of cargo by the importers who could not send their goods to the destination as road communication of the district disrupted badly due to the prevailing flood situation.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) management, however, urged the importers to release their goods from the port to ease the pressure on the terminals.

Meanwhile, withdrawal of the penal rent which the importers have to pay in case of delaying release of goods within a week has put an additional burden to the port authority.



Mukuli Begum after being arrested by CID police yesterday. —Star photo

Govt to reassess food deficit

From Page 1

Werner Kiene, Country Representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Bangladesh said, "September 10 is the cut-off period and if water starts receding from then, there can be still some plantation," he said while talking to The Daily Star at his Dhanmondi office recently.

Kiene, however, hastened to add that production loss was likely to be much higher than "we thought three weeks back." He, however, declined to assume anything. "It may be or may not be four million tons All depends on how sooner or later the water recedes."

Kiene had coordinated the UN system in Dhaka when international assistance was sought last week.

"After water recedes, they (farmers) may be left with the only option of cultivating wheat or local varieties of paddy as the time is running out for HYV paddy," he said.

Food and Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury had earlier told this correspondent that the government would facilitate farmers to cover up the loss of Aman crop by increased cultivation of wheat and Boro. She had also said that wheat acreage would be increased.

"Our first priority is to expedite unloading of foodgrains from the port and ensure proper distribution," Chowdhury said.

As regards food relief operation, Kiene said NGOs will join the government's effort in identifying the worst affected people

while distributing fresh VGF (vulnerable group feeding) cards. WFP will provide a monthly ration of 16 kg of foodgrains to 14,25,000 persons each, he said, adding, quantity may be increased.

It is learnt that government is seriously thinking of increasing the number of VGF cards to 900 or more from 300 in each affected union provided donors food assistance came early for replenishing the government's food reserve of seven lakh metric tons.

Meanwhile, analysing its latest field reports, Novartis, a multinational company dealing in agro-chemicals in the country said, "It is now clear that loss of Aman crop will be more than two million tonnes projected earlier. We dare not speculate further."

As the deadline for cultivation of high yielding variety (HYV) rice is over, Aman lands will most probably be cultivated with vegetables, mustard, wheat etc once the water recedes, its latest monthly bulletin said.

"After the havoc in the central districts, hopes were banked on HYV Aman in the northern region (Rajshahi division) It is now feared that if water remains stagnant for another three to four days, 10-15 per cent of Aman crop in the northern region may be lost," it said.

The water level is expected to recede completely by the end

Bangabandhu Murder Case Prosecution case an attempt to hide truth, defence counsel

The prosecution case is a cooked up one and an attempt to hide the truth behind the August 15, 1975, killings, defence lawyer for Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farook Rahman, one of the principal accused in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, told the trial court yesterday, report agencies.

The prosecution even had miserably failed to determine the specific time of the massacre through its witnesses, which was confusing, as well as full of contradictions, Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman submitted.

The confusing and contradictory evidences given by the prosecution witnesses have destroyed the prosecution case and the accused would get benefit out of it, Advocate Khan argued citing a case decision of the Supreme Court.

Submitting his argument for the second consecutive day at the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's court, the counsel said that the manner in which the incident occurred is also beyond reality.

Huge number of cartridges found here and there at Bangabandhu's residence proves that shots were also fired inside the house, he said.

Sheikh Kamal was a valiant freedom fighter and acted as ADC to General Osmani during the Liberation War. "So, he

knew the operation of weapons, same goes with Sheikh Jamal because he was an army officer," said the lawyer.

Huge arms were found at Bangabandhu's residence as per the inventory, Khan Saifur said. Quoting different witnesses, he said the army and police house guards had arms packed with ammunition. The prosecution had denied the presence of ammunition.

He said the army coming from cantonment had deposited their ammunition on return. So the army group did not use their firearms, the counsel argued and questioned that "we will have to find out which one is the other group that used weapons."

Khan Saifur said as per evidence when Maj Mohiuddin and his group were trying to bring Bangabandhu downstairs, Major Noor and Major Huda asked Mohiuddin to step aside and fired shots at Bangabandhu.

So, it can be said that many a group were there, he said, adding "now we will have to find out which group belongs to whom and which group was doing that."

There were more than one group, he said and questioned whether they had gone there is a group to resist the attackers or not.

"There was no doubt about the killing incident, but we will

have to know who carried out the killings," the lawyer said.

About the actual timing of the incident, Saifur said some witnesses said it occurred after hoisting of the National Flag at Bangabandhu's house, if that is so, then the killings took place after 6 am.

But, according to the chargesheet, the occurrence took place between 4:30 am and 5:30 am, the defence counsel said.

Again, many other witnesses said that the killing took place at 5 am, he said. But, Gen Shafiqullah during cross-examination said that he received a phone call from Bangabandhu three to four minutes before 6 am and he phoned Col Shafiq Jamil at 6 am.

"I also want justice of the killings, but we will have to find out the culprits," the counsel submitted.

Quoting from a book authored by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the lawyer said, if Begum Mujib could flee to a neighbouring house on March 25, 1971 after Bangabandhu's residence came under attack, why then she or her other family members could not do the same on August 15, 1975.

Khan Saifur will resume his argument at 9:30 am on Monday.

CU teachers

From Page 1

Among others, Prof Anupam Sen, Prof Sekendar Hossain, Prof Fazle Hossain, Prof Munir Ahmed and Prof Golam Sarwar addressed the rally.

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) tried to bring out a procession on the campus defying a ban. Police thwarted their move.

Earlier, CU authorities banned political rally and procession on the campus till September 15.

Unicef

From Page 1

Unicef is primarily focusing on four major areas: primary health care, supplementary food, water and environmental sanitation and education supplies.

The focus of the Unicef efforts will continue to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable children and women, particularly the landless, over the next two to three months," she said.

Unicef would procure or import essential drugs including ORS and Intra Venus fluids to treat major diseases.

Mukuli arrested

From Page 1

The Rajarbagh Police Hospital for medical check up and following clearance from doctors, she was taken to CID custody, police said.

Iftikhar, brother of Rubel, told The Daily Star last night that the arrest of Mukuli was a positive sign in the investigation.

"It will now help find out the others who were involved in the arrest of Rubel and his subsequent killing in DB custody," he said.

Iftikhar, however, wondered why principal accused AC Akram was still being kept in the Prison Cell of the PG Hospital and why CID was reluctant to interrogate him.

Meghna estuary

From Page 1

5000 sandbags at Aliganj, a few kilometers away from Chasara. "We can manage jute bags, but there is crisis of sand or earth to fill those," said an official of Water Development Board.

WDB Executive Engineer Lutfar Rahman Mia informed an emergency meeting of district disaster management committee yesterday that the Chasara point was vulnerable. He said, continuous erosion of the embankment's slope is aggravating the situation.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Communication Minister Anwar Hussain Manju and Minister without portfolio Nuruddin Khan visited the DND embankment yesterday.

There were possibilities of more rainfall over the next couple of days, the expert added.

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) helicopters, carrying dry foods and other essentials, made four sorties in Chandpur, Manikganj, Luxmipur and Shariatpur yesterday.

"But the Chandpur-bound helicopter failed to land there and returned to Dhaka without unloading its cargo," an ISPR release said.

Official sources said the total flood-related death toll rose to 792 yesterday including 143 casualties from diarrhoeal diseases. The fresh deaths reported were 27 including nine diarrhoeal deaths.

Water level increased by two to four inches today at four points between Tongi and Jinarai, railway sources said.

Train service between Ishwardi and Sirajganj remained stopped since last night following inundation of vast tracks of rail lines. The Sirajganj-bound trains from Ishwardi are now running upto Bhanganra.

However, train service between Bhairab Bazar and Mymensingh resumed at noon yesterday after repair of a bridge which was affected by onrush of flood waters on Tuesday.

সময়ের সঙ্গে চলুন ■ সাপ্তাহিক ২০০০ পড়ুন

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