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Foreign trips by ministers, MPs put off
Maintain austerity at all levels: PM

RAJSHAHI, Sept 10: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called for maintaining austerity at all levels and save resources to combat the catastrophic flood and its aftermath, reports UNB.

"Cut your expenses, share savings with flood victims and support the post-flood rehabilitation plan," she urged the nation while addressing a big crowd of flood-hit people at Natchole Thana college ground in the afternoon.

Hasina, who conducted a day-long relief work in northern Rajshahi, said the government has decided to put off all foreign trips by ministers and MPs.

"At this hour of national crisis, we should not waste money on unnecessary expenditure, we must observe austerity at the government level as well," she said.

The Prime Minister, however, said the country's foreign reserve and food stock are satisfactory, and the international aid response is encouraging.

"Still we'll have to make adequate preparation to face any eventuality arising out of the flood. We need more money to buy more foodgrains."

She warned that stern action will be taken against any misuse of relief materials.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Awami League publicity secretary Abdul Mannan, Jaiul Abedin, BNP MP Syed Manzur Hossain, and Chapainawabganj Pourashava Chairman and Jamaat leader Ataur Rahman also spoke at the rally.

Both the BNP MP and the Jamaat leader praised the government's relief effort for the flood victims.

The Prime Minister visited the Rajshahi town protection embankment, which was damaged by the flood, and inspected the repair works being done by the army personnel.

She addressed a public rally at Rajshahi PTT School ground and held a flood relief meeting with public representatives and officials at Rajshahi Circuit House in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister addressed a separate rally at Rohan Yusuf Ali College ground in Gomostapur thana and distributed relief among the flood victims.

She offered feteiha at the mazar of Hazrat Shah Moazzem Shahdowla Daneshmand (R) at Bagha.

She also addressed the flood-stricken people at Bagha Degree College ground and distributed relief.

4 out of 31 arms stolen from KMP malkhana recovered

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 10: Police today recovered four out of the 31 firearms stolen from the malkhana (storeroom) of Khulna Metropolitan Police on Friday last.

The recovered arms included two pistols, a pipe gun and a revolver. These are among the firearms recorded in the malkhana register as 'alamats' (evidences) of different cases, police said.

The Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali thana, Moilab Beirab Ali, who is investigating the case, said that acting on a secret information he along with two sub-inspectors raided an abandoned house at Hospital Road Wednesday midnight and found the arms wrapped with polythene. But none could be arrested in this connection.

CSI Majejul Islam and Constable Jalaluddin arrested earlier in connection with the theft case are yet to confess their involvement during the interrogation by CID investigators. They were placed on seven days' remand from Sunday.

On Tuesday, police arrested a youngman identified as Iqbal, 28, as a suspect in the theft case.

He was recently released on bail from the district jail after being arrested two months ago for illegally possessing a pistol. The pistol seized from him is among the stolen firearms, but not among the four recovered on Wednesday.

Yeltsin picks Primakov as new premier

From Staff Correspondent

MOSCOW, Sept 10: Bowing to bitter opposition from parliament, Boris Yeltsin nominated his former spy chief Thursday as prime minister to head emergency efforts to stem the country's economic crisis, reports AP.

Yeltsin nominated acting Foreign Minister Yegor G. Primakov, a former KGB official, to be prime minister after his first choice, Viktor Chernomyrdin, asked not to be nominated for a third time. Leaders on all sides had warned of a political explosion if Yeltsin again nominated Chernomyrdin.

Asma

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led to many complications. She is suffering from haemoglobin deficiency which is at least 20 per cent below normal. She is also suffering from infections, 'over load' of body fluid and heart problem," Prof Haroonur-Rashid, head of Nephrology Department, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Describing Asma's condition as 'very critical', he said, "Asma was examined by cardiologist, urologist and by a general surgeon yesterday and the day before."

Asma would also be referred to the department of gynecology for ultrasonography and to urology department for 'fistula operation'.

"She needs special attention to overcome the crisis. It would take some time for her body to 'adapt' to the new system outside her body," Prof Haroon said.

Doctors limited her water intake to only one litre in 24 hours. Her legs still remain swollen while fresh tissues show signs of fluid accumulation. Doctors yesterday removed 2.5 litres of excess fluid and the process will continue as long as she needs it, the attending doctors said.

Prof Haroon ruled out the need for immediate kidney transplantation saying, "Asma's complications must be addressed first. Our main responsibility is to stabilise her condition by controlling her fluid, infection and other diseases."

Asma can only lead a normal life if she receives a kidney. Her other kidney, according to Dr Mahmuda Khatun of DMCH, was 'congenitally absent' since birth. Until a kidney is implanted, Asma has to rely on 'haemodialysis', the doctors said.

Her treatment expenses are being met by the nephrology department's fund for the poor.

Coaster service

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tagong for achieving the same objectives.

This information was given at a meeting of the senior officials of Shipping Ministry as well as its various organisations and representatives of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), an official hand-out said.

The Shipping Minister has already ordered for pressing into operation several barges between Kanchpur and Daudkandi as well as Dhaka and Chittagong.

Meanwhile, the handout said, ferry service between Kanchpur and Daudkandi will start in full swing after the approach roads are built.



AN IRONY INDEED! There is water everywhere around, but such poor city dwellers in the eastern neighbourhoods struggle everyday to find safe drinking water.—Star photo

Flood: millions face threat of acute food shortage in Assam

GUWAHATI, India, Sept 10:

Millions of people in the eastern Indian state of Assam are facing the double threat of acute food shortage and disease, after the worst floods for 50 years, officials said today, reports AFP.

More than 150 people have been killed in Assam, where flood waters from the mighty Brahmaputra river have submerged some 5,000 villages in the past nine weeks.

The agricultural and environmental effects of the flood have been devastating, officials said, pointing to the destruction of 900,000 hectares (2.2 million acres) of rice and other crops, and the inundation of the massive Kaziranga National Park, home to thousands of endangered animals.

More than five million people in Assam have been left homeless, and a health official warned of the growing incidence of diarrhoea, resulting from the consumption of polluted water and rotten food.

"Diseases such as hepatitis, jaundice and other skin ailments are also rampant," the official said.

In the worst-hit district of Dhemajai, villagers said food and medical supplies were almost exhausted.

"There is virtually nothing left to eat, not even clear drinking water," said a local school teacher recuperating at a hospital in the state capital Guwahati.

"Nobody has got any relief or food supplies from the government side," he said.

Chetia

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drawing the state defence lawyers appointed for him by the government. The order is scheduled to be passed on September 24, the next date of the hearing.

Chetia and his two associates were produced in the court yesterday for hearing of two cases filed under Section 11(b) of the Passport Act and Section 14 of Foreigners Act for illegal possession of Bangladesh passport and unauthorised stay in the country.

In the previous hearing of the two cases on August 24, Chetia and his two associates signed Vakalatnama seeking appointment of Sigma Huda and Alina Khan as their lawyers.

"Chetia is now being pressurised by the government to disassociate us from the case as his lawyers," Alina Khan told The Daily Star last night noting that the asylum petition of Chetia and his two associates was sent to the government through them.

Private power plant

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members of the PDB were present at the conference.

The agreement with Wartsila was signed in October 16, 1997. It was originally scheduled to be commissioned on August 16. Due to various reasons, the project was delayed. The PDB chairman said that the builders would later be fined, as per contract, 10,000 US dollars a day for the delay.

The Khulna power project is one of the four barge-mounted schemes taken up by PDB. The first agreement with Smith Cogeneration was signed on October 14, 1997, the second with Wartsila, the third with New England on March 10 last and the fourth with Westmont on June 10 last.

Of these, Smith Cogeneration is not implementing its project in Khulna. New England will be late by several months in implementing its project as it had failed to find a financier in time. And the current floods have hampered Westmont's work.

BGMEA hires 2 Russian cargo planes

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) has chartered two Russian cargo aircraft for transporting garment products for export from Dhaka to Chittagong port.

One of the aircraft is expected to arrive at ZIA this afternoon, BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Quddus told The Daily Star yesterday.

The government has agreed to waive port fees and other charges for these cargo planes, the BGMEA president said, adding that the government will also sell fuels to these aircraft at a cheaper price.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters' Association (BFEEA) has taken a move to ship frozen foods worth US dollar 100 million soon to the US and European Union markets.

The experience or skill to negotiate and make these happen, the PDB chairman said.

"Considering the fact that we did not know how such negotiations are done, we have not been slow. Furthermore, now that we have achieved a breakthrough, we are confident that the future projects will be implemented faster."

"The problem with barge-mounted plant builders is that they don't find financiers in time," the chairman explained why all barge mount builders were behind schedule.

PDB chairman also said that the PDB signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) Wednesday with US company AES for the 360-MW gas-based Haripur power plant.

"This is a breakthrough in a negotiation to build, so far, the country's biggest power plant in the private sector. We believe this experience will also pave way for faster completion of the final negotiation with AES for the 450-MW Meghnath power plant," he added.

The country's present demand for power is about 2300 MW while PDB supplies about 1900 MW.

Buriganga

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hundreds of sandbags. Water Development Board engineer AT Khandakar was present when the landslide took place at 12:30 pm. At 9:30 pm, work was still on to save the point of slide.

"First we levelled the earth and then sandbags were placed after geo-textile filtering," said Khandakar.

Rescue teams, comprised mainly of military personnel, have been kept ready to help evacuation, the DC said.

Meanwhile, with the continuous rise of the Buriganga and the Shitalakya, flood water around DND dam was flowing 117 cm above the danger level till last night.

The level of water outside the protected area has been measured at over 21 feet high above the ground, which is some six inches higher than the 1988 level, said an engineer.

Apart from Dhaka, according to the Relief Ministry control room, the situation in 30 other districts deteriorated yesterday.

The districts where the situation worsened are — Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Narsingdi, Gazipur, Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Kishoreganj, Tangail, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogra, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Barisal and Kushtia.

The situation was improving in Netrakona while in Narail and Habiganj it was static.

Thirty-one more deaths were reported from across the country yesterday raising the flood death toll to 843.

Meanwhile, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna has recorded fall at all points. The Padma registered a fall at upstream and registered rise at downstream. All the rivers, except the Manu basin, recorded further fall.

Rivers in South-eastern Hill basin also recorded fall at most places.

Following fall in the upstream, the FWC forecast that the situation along Brahmaputra-Jamuna up to Aricha will improve.

In Meghna basin up to Bhairab Bazar, the situation will also improve, but from Bhairab Bazar to downstream up to Chandpur may continue steady due to abnormal rise of tide.

Bangladeshi killed in BSF firing

LALMONIRHAT, Sept 10:

One Bangladeshi national was killed and another injured when BSF opened fire on villagers along Jawari border in Kaliganj thana today, reports APB.

Officials and local sources said BSF entered some 200 meters into Bangladesh territory near Pillar No 913 and opened fire. They dumped the body of Anwara Begum, 35, and took away her six-year-old son.

Bullet-wounded Mahendra Nath, 30, was admitted to a local hospital.

The killing triggered border tension as both BDR and BSF strengthened security along the border.

Officials said Bangladeshi Rifles called for a flag meeting, but the Indian side was yet to respond.

EU: Flood

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Bangladesh could expect to find the European Community more responsive to its products after the EU and Bangladesh conclude the 'third generation agreement'.

The last round of negotiations on this new agreement is expected to be concluded in October. The first and only commercial agreement with the European Community was signed in 1976.

Negotiations for the new agreement will require Bangladesh to recognise the International Intellectual Property Rights accord and agree to greater maritime cooperation.

Starr's report

From Page 1

affair with Lewinsky travelled the dozen city blocks from Starr's office to the House.

After being transferred to Capitol police, the boxes were taken to a room at the Ford House office building under lock and key to wait until the House decides how to proceed in handling the information.

The US constitution says the House must initiate any impeachment proceedings to remove a sitting president from office. Not since 1974, when the House judiciary committee approved three articles of impeachment against Richard Nixon, has the process been used against a president. Nixon resigned before there could be a full impeachment vote.

House Judiciary chairman Henry Hyde, who would oversee any impeachment inquiry, said he would not allow a "political witch hunt" and pledged to work with Democrats. He said there would be a full impeachment investigation only if justified by the evidence.

Khaleda asks partymen Help army in repairing breaches in DND dam

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the people irrespective of political opinion to stand by the suffering humanity, reports UNB.

"Now the time is to get united with whatever you do face the calamity," she said while visiting the DND embankment which is under threat of collapse.

"Let us forget who is doing what at this time of devastation," she added encouraging all to take part in protecting the embankment along with the Army.

Begum Zia, accompanied by party leaders and workers, visited the vulnerable point of the embankment at Postagola yesterday afternoon. Later, she distributed relief goods in the flood-affected areas of Lalbagh thana.

Pointing to the critical condition of DND embankment, the BNP chairperson called upon the people and her party-men to extend cooperation with the army in repairing breaches in the embankment.

Begum Zia placed a sack of sand at a vulnerable point of DND embankment.

In Lalbagh, she distributed saree, lungi, shirt, rice, chira, pulse, potato, candle and matches at 10 points.

In a brief speech at the Hazaribag Park in the evening, the BNP chief urged all Muslims to join the special prayers after the Jumma prayers today seeking divine blessings to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

Boat capsizes: 2 drown in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Sept 10:

Two people drowned and a girl died of water borne disease in Palash thana Wednesday, reports UNB.

Hurmuz, 35, and his minor son drowned as their boat capsized in a river at Gayeswarpur. The victims were going to a shelter centre.

The body of Hurmuz was recovered but his son's is yet to be recovered.

In a separate incident, Yasmin, 10, daughter of Chan Mia of village Uitar Chandanpur died of water borne disease at Gayeswarpur High School shelter in the afternoon.

Rail links

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Shahatal on Laksam-Chandpur section.

The Chandpur-bound train services of the section is now playing up to Hajiganj only.

Besides, train services also remained suspended on Dhaka-Narayanganj, Jamalpur-Jagannathganj, Jamalpur-Sirajganj Ghat, Panchuria-Gaolundo, and Annura-Chapainawabganj routes.

UNB Chittagong Correspondent reports: The operation of Karnafuli Express train on Dhaka-Chittagong route was suspended this morning until further notice.

Karnafuli Express, whose commercial operation is run by a private company, has been suspended due to the longer period needed for re-routing of other trains between Dhaka and Chittagong.

FM: Emergency

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people. The President of the Assembly called for quick response to any request for help from Bangladesh, he added.

The foreign minister said the group of OIC Ambassadors at a meeting in Geneva decided that all the OIC members would revert their capitals with appropriate recommendations.

The OIC secretary general has made an appeal to the governments of OIC members to promptly extend all forms of aid asked by Bangladesh.

Besides, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia also made an appeal to Saudi citizens to donate generously to the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Azad said the Grand Mufti would also make another appeal to the Imams of Mosques throughout the Kingdom urging the common people to help Bangladesh.

A Royal Jordanian Air Force plane carrying medical and humanitarian aid, donated by the Hashemite Charity Organisation, will reach the capital on September 15.

Azad said the Foreign Ministry is consulting the Food Ministry to examine the need to draw food from SAARC Food Reserve.

Mukuli Begum remanded

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court correspondent.

The court also rejected two petitions moved by the lawyers of Mukuli Begum, a neighbour of Rubel's family and a local Awami League leader. One of these petitions was filed for her bail while the other for cancellation of the remand.

Prior to her departure from the court, Mukuli publicly claimed that she fell victim to the "conspiracy masterminded by police."

Mukuli was arrested by the CID on Wednesday when the handwriting experts confirmed that the 'chit' recovered from the possession of SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, also contained her handwriting, besides that of AC Akram, the principal accused.

Thakur, another accused in the case, is now in jail custody, but AC Akram is staying at the prison cell of the PG Hospital since August 10.

The 'chit' recovered from Thakur's possession described the location of Rubel's residence on one side and the address of a nearby coaching centre on the other side.

Meanwhile, sources close to the one-man judicial inquiry commission said Mukuli Begum is being named as one of the 10 involved in the murder of Rubel in police custody. According to the findings of the commission, she played a vital role in the arrest of Rubel, who died in DB custody on July 23, the sources said.

Of the 10 accused, eight have been arrested while the two others are missing. The arrested accused are AC Akram Hossain, Mukuli Begum, Inspector Aminul Islam, SI Hayatul Islam Thakur, ASI Abdul Karim, Havildar Nuruzzaman and constables Parvez and Faruk.

The two missing DB men are Sis Nurul Alam and Tarek, the sources said.

3-month moratorium

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The Finance Ministry will direct all the local and foreign banks to undertake such special loan programme for the damaged industries.

The meeting decided that an assessment of the damages incurred by industries will be done.

Under the leadership of the FBCCI, all the chambers across the country will undertake an assessment through a common questionnaire.

The banks will also undertake a physical verification of the damaged industrial units of their clients.

The meeting decided that a similar consultation would be held as soon as the flood water recedes throughout further steps to cope with post-flood situation.

However, the Task Force on Export and the Advisory Committee on Trade and Industry will meet in case of emergency. Private sector leaders have been members of both the committees.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Communication Minister Anwar Hossain Manju, Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rab, State Minister for Energy Prof Rafiqul Islam, State Minister for Jute Faezul Haq, State Minister for Textiles KM Jahangir, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Sath Chandra Roy, Bangladesh Bank Governor, Lutfor Rahman Sarker, FBCCI president Yusuf Abdullah Haroon, MCCI president Laila Rahman Kabir, DCCI president R Maksud Khan, BCCI president Shari Afzal Hossain, BGMEA president Mostafa Golam Quddus and leaders of

Hartal observed at Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Sept 10: A half-day hartal, called by all political parties, was observed here today protesting the killing of Runner Editor Mukul. During the hartal from 6 am to noon, all shops, markets, and educational institutions remained closed and vehicles were off the road.

Shaiful Alam Mukul was killed in a bomb attack on Aug 30 at 10:20 pm by a group of assailants.

Seven trafficked children brought back home

Seven children who were trafficked to India during last two years returned home yesterday, reports UNB.

They are: Babul (7), Abul Hossain (11), Abu Tyeb Jont (11), Mohammad Alam Iraqi (11), Miraz Kashem (9), Selim (12) and Mamun (12).

Advocate Salma Ali, Executive Director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) went to India and brought them from a children's home at Dumri of Umerkhandi in Mumbai.

All the children are now staying at a shelter of BNWLA, official sources said.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak, Awami League publicity secretary Abdul Mannan, Jaiul Abedin, BNP MP Syed Manzur Hossain, and Chapainawabganj Pourashava Chairman and Jamaat leader Ataur Rahman also spoke at the rally.

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