

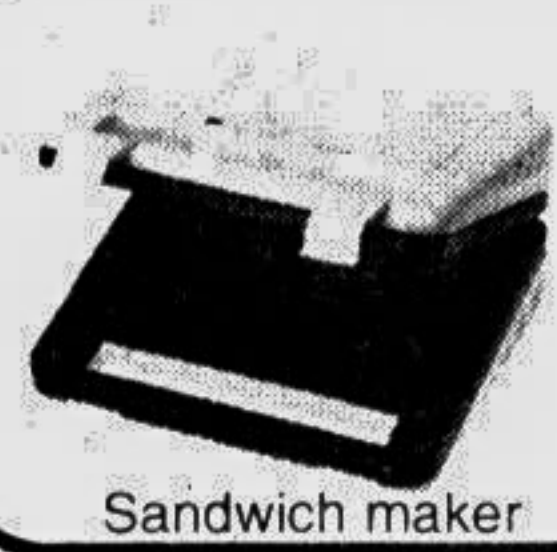


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PHILIPS

Flood comes as a boon to boatmaker Zakir

By Rafiq Hasan

Zakir Hossain, a carpenter at Tongi Bazar is earning Tk 800 to 1000 daily by making boats, the mode of transport in the flood-hit areas.

Starting early in the morning, Zakir works till midnight and makes six to eight kosha (small boats). He takes Tk 120 to 150 as making charge for a boat. He employed two boys as helpers, who get around 15 per cent of his earning.

Timber traders and saw mill owners are also doing brisk business, like Zakir, due to heavy demand for kosha because of the flood.

About 10 to 20 boats are sold daily at each of the about 60 timber shops at Tongi Bazar. Several temporary 'boat bazars' have also grown up in the city's Rampura, Jatrabari, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Khilkhet and Bishwara road areas.

The price of one kosha varies between Tk 1000 and 3000 depending on the size and quality of the timber. Most of the boats are made of mango, chamber and karol wood.

"We have run out of timber stock because we could not guess that the flood would last so long," said Bulbul, owner of a timber shop at Tongi. He said the price of timber has gone up as the transport cost has increased. "We have to pay around Tk 5000 for each consignment of wood as toll to mastans at different points and bribe to police," he alleged.

According to him, the boat making business has increased by three times this year than that in the previous years because of a long-lasting flood.

"We could not meet the demand for boats due to shortage of carpenters and timber," said Shahjahan, another timber

Asma still very sick, her heart has enlarged

By Staff Correspondent

Asma, whose only functioning kidney was mistakenly removed by doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital a month ago, is still very sick.

"Asma is suffering from acute renal failure. It will take at least six months before things become normal," said Prof Haroon-ur-Rashid, who is supervising her treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital.

The existing 'unstable' state of Asma's health has to improve before she can be ready for a kidney transplant, he told this correspondent yesterday.

Prof Rashid said, "Her heart condition at the moment is not stable. Her heart has enlarged. She is now being treated by cardiologists."

Asma still suffers from haemoglobin deficiency and excess fluid in her body. "We will remove at least two to three litres of fluid from her body until it's normal. She will also receive blood transfusion until her haemoglobin count reaches standard level," he said.

One killed in gas cylinder explosion

A technician was killed as a gas cylinder exploded while he was repairing a refrigerator in the city's Eskaton area yesterday, reports APB.

Hospital sources said Farhad, 25, received severe burn injuries while the gas cylinder exploded as he was repairing a refrigerator at a house at about 10.30 am.

Trawler capsizes

From Page 1

local people and labourers at the ghat immediately started a rescue operation. Some passengers of the capsized trawler managed to swim ashore.

The rescuers recovered the body of a teenage boy, whose identity could not be known immediately.

Keraniganj police said 26 passengers of the capsized boat were rescued and were identified by them. Some more people might have been rescued by the volunteers but they did not contact police.

Thirteen passengers injured in the incident were admitted to Mitford Hospital, police added.

Fire brigade divers reached the spot after about an hour and searched the area for about three hours but failed to recover any of the missing people or trace the capsized trawler.

Police interrogated two drivers of the trawler who were also its owners. The drivers - Bhebol and Premnath - who were brothers, were rescued by local people. They told police that at first they tried to anchor their trawler at Rajarghat. But they could not do so due to heavy congestion and moved towards Balurghat where also the condition was almost same.

Following suggestions from passengers, the boatmen decided to move towards Badamtoli ghat to anchor the trawler, police said quoting the boatmen.

The trawler was approaching the pontoon, its engine stopped functioning due to tremendous current of the river. The boatmen failed to restart the engine. Driven by the current, the 40 feet long steel body trawler hit the pontoon, broke into pieces and capsized, police said quoting the boatmen.

A case was filed with Keraniganj thana in connection with the incident yesterday.

Rubel murder

From Page 1

When asked whether the findings of the commission would be made public, he said, "The commission is not authorised to make it public."

Mentionably, about 40 judicial commissions were formed to probe different incidents earlier but their findings were not made public.

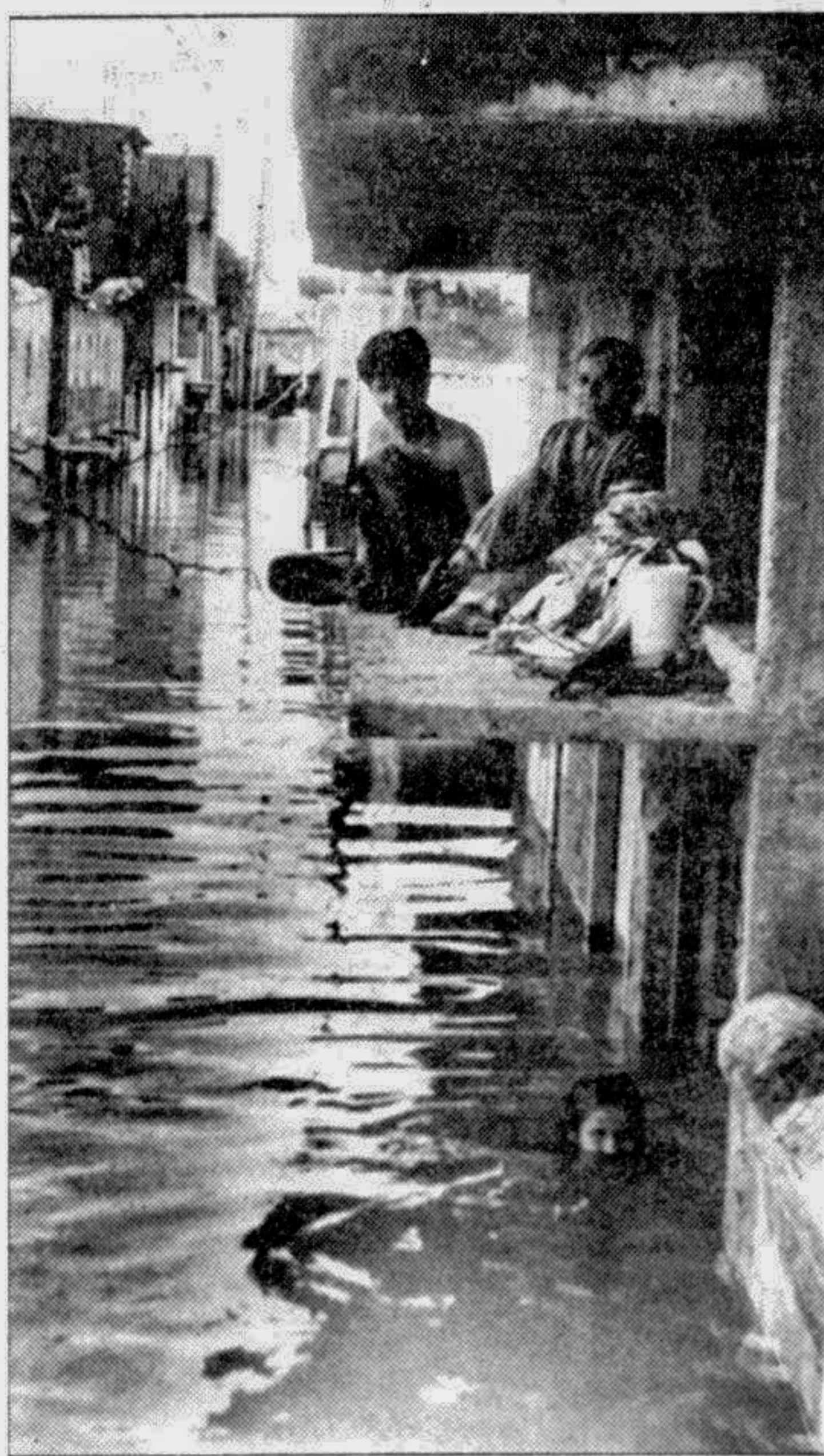
He replied the negative when asked whether he would recommend it in his report to make its findings public. "It totally depends on the government decision," he said.

Meanwhile, sources close to the CID told The Daily Star last night that they would submit the charge sheet sometime next week.

Mukul Begum, one of the accused in the Rubel murder case, will be produced in the CMM's court today, as her two-day remand expired yesterday, the CID sources said. She had been denying her involvement in the arrest of Rubel, although handwriting experts confirmed that her handwriting was found in the 'chit' recovered by the CID earlier.

Of the ten persons involved, eight have been arrested. They are - AC Akram Hossain, Mukul Begum, Inspector Aminul Islam, Si Hayatul Islam Thakur, ASI Abdul Karim, Havildar Nuruzzaman, and constables Parvez and Faruk.

The two others Si Nurul Alam and Tarek are 'missing' since the killing of Rubel in DB custody, sources added.



STILL UNFAZED: Zahir Miah and his wife are still surviving. Their house went under water weeks ago, forcing the couple to move to the roof, which also vanished days later. This window sunshade of an abandoned house in Kamrangirchar has now been their home for the last seven days. (Below) For their only daughter, swimming in the stealthy water has become a good fun. —Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Pressure on DND dam

From Page 1

remained under knee-deep water across the embankment.

"I do not know what I am going to do when the water rolls back finally. I have borrowed Tk 200 yesterday from my mahajan (the wholesaler of puffed rice) and bought food."

His wife had been preparing food on a kerosene stove beside the wooden box which is serving as the five-member family's temporary home on the station platform.

As the aroma of Hilsha fish being stewed in a simple curry, a tiny kitten hovered around the stove. Huq had salvaged the kitten along with his belongings when he abandoned his shanty on the verge of collapse.

His mother died when he abandoned the home. But I could not leave behind the kitten, it's so small and helpless," Huq said managing a rare smile on his weary face as he squatted beside the stove.

It is the future that she ponders hard like Rezia, an unemployed garments factory worker.

US relief

From Page 1

These would be given to the CARE-Bangladesh for distribution through its network of NGO partners and to the ICDDR,B, a USIS press release said.

Kibria termed the American response very generous. "The international response to help us through the floods have been satisfactory," he added.

He said the water was expected to come to normal level in about two weeks. "But we have a massive task of rehabilitation of agriculture and ensuring food until the next harvest."

Besides, the minister said the people were getting the help they needed despite the disruption in transport system. He referred to his visit to Naryanganj yesterday and reported that nobody was suffering from hunger.

US Ambassador John Holzman, present at the ceremony to receive the aid consignment, said the one area in which the US could help was food since the aman crop was devastated.

"There is friendship between us and the need is there. We have committed 400,000 tonnes of grains. There is a possibility that we might consider more. Others are also helping."

Ambassador Holzman also said that the two US airforce C-130 cargo planes which arrived yesterday for a prescheduled joint exercise would be available to Bangladesh if the government wanted them for relief purposes.

Pressure on DND dam

From Page 1

while holding her husband's hand.

She had been standing for six hours in a queue on water to get the bag of rice. She was lucky to get it as many others were not so lucky.

But she was not worried about her precious plastic slippers she lost during melee in the queue.

It is the future that she ponders hard like Rezia, an unemployed garments factory worker.

Trawler capsizes: One drown in Gumti

COMILLA, Sept 12: One person drowned today in a trawler capsized in the Gumti river near Daudkandi Tollplaza here, reports BSS.

Witnesses said Md Jahiruddin Sarker, 30, an employee of the Law Commission, drowned when a Tollplaza-bound trawler from Hasanpur with 35 passengers on board capsized in a storm.

Police rescued 29 passengers from the river while the rest of the passengers managed to swim ashore.

Khaleda postpones visit to Sirajganj

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia postponed her Monday's scheduled visit to the flood affected areas of Sirajganj district due to disruption of road communication, reports UNB.

She will visit the district as soon as road communication is restored, party sources said yesterday.

Clinton's conduct was wrong

From Page 1

Indeed, the report graphically described sexual encounters between Ms Lewinsky and the president - a cigar as a sexual prop, phone sex sessions and even oral sex performed while Clinton spoke on the phone with members of Congress.

Lawmakers who began reading it were aghast.

"It is gross and I don't know how to react to it," said Rep. Tom Davis.

Starr himself apologized in the report for its lengthy and explicit details of 10 sexual encounters between the former intern and president but contended it was necessary to prove Clinton committed perjury - both in the Paula Jones lawsuit last January and again in his grand jury appearance last month.

Prosecutors said the detail showed Clinton lied before the grand jury when he insisted he gave 'legally accurate' testimony in January in claiming he did not have 'sexual relations' with Ms Lewinsky.

Clinton's argument was based on the fact that the two

President visits DND embankment

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed visited the Dhaka-Naryanganj-Demra (DND) embankment early yesterday morning, reports UNB.

The President started from Postogola point towards Patulla and stopped at Chashara at Naryanganj. He saw sand bags were being placed on damaged spots of the embankment to stop leakages.

The President was informed that the local Engineer Brigade Command of the Bangladesh Army in cooperation with the Water Development Board, Roads and Highways and the civil administration is working day and night to protect the embankment from erosion.

The President talked to the local MP Shamim Osman, officials of the Army, Water Development Board and civil administration. They said that the situation is now under control.

During the visit in and around the DND embankment, the President stopped at Shimroil-Kanchpur bridge point and Ranimahal and talked to the flood-affected people and enquired about their condition.

The President was informed that water levels of the Buriganga and Sitalakkhya were almost static.

Bangladeshi woman stabbed to death in Birmingham

LONDON, Sept 12: A Bangladeshi young woman was stabbed to death by an unknown assailant at Douglas road in Birmingham Handwarth area here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The 21-year-old woman was identified as Rokhsana Begum, a resident of Albart road of Birmingham Handwarth and a worker of local branch office of Lloyds Bank.

Police said Rokhsana was stabbed mercilessly while she was going to her work at 8 am. Hailing from Gaoipur village under Balaganj thana in Sylhet, Rokhsana was being harassed by an African neighbour and her family has been trying to protect her from him since long, police added.

Meanwhile, police have interrogated 30 people and arrested a West Indian man in this connection. The autopsy of the body was also performed.

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Apparels for export

From Page 1

"We used to pay about 850 dollars for a 20-foot container and 1700 to 1800 dollars for a 40-foot container," said an exporter. "But now, we have to pay 1300 to 1400 dollar for 20-foot and 2800 to 2900 dollars for 40-foot containers."

Quddus admitted the crisis of containers and said, "We are appealing to all concerned to act like patriots."

On the other hand, a severe congestion is now prevailing at Chittagong Port. Some 32 feeder vessels with raw materials for the garments sector are awaiting berthing at the outer-anchorage in the Bay.

"There is hardly any cargo movement there," said an exporter. "When more cargo starts coming from tomorrow, it will be a big mess."

"We have arranged fast clearance of raw materials with the help of customs authorities," said Quddus. "We are getting full cooperation from the authorities."

The Y-8 aircraft, brought in by International Project Service Systems Ltd (IPSSL), will cost 750 dollars per hour while the AN-12 will cost 1200 dollar per hour in addition to fuel and other costs.

The Y-8 has come from Iran, while the other aircraft will be flown today from Thailand.

Individual garments exporters will bear the cost. "It is going to be costly for us, but we are going to avail the chartered plane as we do not want to miss the deadline for supplying the orders," said one exporter.

Already 40 exporters have booked the planes to airlift their cargo. It may take 10-15 days to clear the heaps of apparels if the port functions smoothly.

2 young men held for going 'close' to PM's car

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 12: Security forces arrested two young men today for breaking the security ring and going near the Prime Minister's car when she was going to Khalishpur to inaugurate a power plant.

The incident took place near the local Anark headquaters when the Prime Minister's motorcade was passing by the Khan Jahan Ali Road after she inaugurated a private eye hospital at Tilok under Rupsha thana in the morning.

Police said the two young men, Abdulla Al Baki, 18, and Shushmoy, 20, riding a Honda motorcycle without valid papers, suddenly broke the security ring and went 'very close' to the Prime Minister's car. They were caught immediately, arrested under Section 54 and later handed over to Kotwali police.

Police seized the motorcycle and recovered five Indian Cyproketaline Hydrochloride tablets and broken parts of a sharp razor, generally used for surgical operation, from their possession.

They were being interrogated till filing of this report in the evening. The young men belonged to no political party, police said.

Abdullah Al Baki is the son of Nazrul Islam, SI of Police at Avoynagar thana. Shushmoy is the son of Ishaque Ali Shikdar of Khalishpur Housing Estate.

Bin Laden placed under house arrest by Taliban

CAIRO, Sept 12: Osama bin Laden, the Saudi dissident accused of masterminding the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, has been placed under house arrest in Afghanistan by his Taliban hosts, a London-based Arabic newspaper said, reports AP.

Bin Laden is being held in a house in the Kandahar region of southern Afghanistan, Al-Quds Al-Arabi reported Friday.

The Taliban religious army has "prevented any contacts between him and his followers, and have prohibited" access to the media, the newspaper said, citing sources close to bin Laden.

There was no immediate way to confirm the report. But it comes less than a week after a ranking Taliban official said that bin Laden could stay in Afghanistan as long as he wants, even if his presence invites another barrage of US missiles.

Labour ministry

From Page 1

The change has been proposed to meet the name of the ministry similar to such ministries in other countries, the sources said.

When asked about the reason, Secretary of the Ministry Ahsan Ali Sarkar told, the words 'labour' and 'manpower' have similar connotation. "Besides, the existing name of the ministry does not cover all activities carried out by the ministry - specially training activities meant for human resources development," he said.

Rivers fall

From Page 1

(bari, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Netrokona, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Pabna, Sirajganj, Kurigram, Comilla, Chandpur, Barisal, Kushtia, Habiganj, Magura and Nalail).

The nine-week flood earlier had affected 12 more districts of Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati, Bandarban, Feni, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Joypurhat. The situation in these places returned to almost normal.

Despite fall at all points, Padma at Harding Bridge and Golaunda, Mohananda at Chapainawabganj and Shitalakha at Naryanganj are still flowing at the peak.

However, Buriganga and Shitalakha started falling while Turag fell slightly at Mirpur but rose at Tongi points.

People on rooftops

From Page 1

tering of boats." Suja Mia said pointing out that most villagers had left for the capital.

Villagers keeping their cattle on the building said, after the flood, the things they will need first are house-building materials like bamboo, barbed fences, rope wire and nails. Prices of those materials are already showing an upward trend, they said.

As the boat carrying this correspondent took to the river, strong current swept it towards Sadarghat. As it passed by the villages, people called out loudly for a lift. An acute shortage of transport could be seen everywhere.

At Nawabcher, most villagers abandoned their houses. A few people took shelter on top of buildings and kept vigil on the passing boats, they said they were constantly under threat of robbers who come by engine boats. "The dacoits come here and move from house to house, robbing the helpless marooned people and disappear quickly," said an elderly man.

Workers at the dockyards along the Buriganga river near Zinzira were busy doing emergency repairs to the anchored ships and launches. Welder Nurul Haq said shipbuilding work had come to a halt but lot of ships, launches and trawlers need emergency repair work for which they were very busy.

Thousands of onlookers stood on the Buriganga bridge watching the launches and boats plying in the strong current underneath. Nearby, army personnel with shovels and sandbags were preparing to board a mechanised boat. "The water remains at the same level nothing will happen to the DND embankment," a soldier said when asked about the condition of the embankment.

As the boat carrying this correspondent turned round to return to its starting point at Rayerbazar, it was immediately swept by the current. Near the under-construction second Buriganga bridge, the current was so fierce that the boat was swept almost under an anchored launch and it was about to sink.

At around 10.30 pm as the boatman struggled to row up stream in the darkness, hundreds of people were heard shouting "dacoits, dacoits" in a nearby village. Within few minutes, a mechanised trawler rushed downstream focusing a powerful torch.

"This place is called Kamrangirchar," said the boatman Abdul Baten. "Every night, you hear the same shouts," he said.

BNP offers spl munajat

BNP offered a special munajat after Asr prayers at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of Leader of the Opposition, yesterday seeking divine blessings for saving the country from the devastating flood, reports UNB.

Quran khwani and milad mahfil were also held on the occasion.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia also offered munajat accompanied by hundreds of leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations.

3 business houses looted at Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 12: Three business houses were looted allegedly by an unidentified gang last night at Agrabad commercial area in the city.

Police said the crime was committed after the gang made the four on-duty night guards unconscious by feeding them some seductive food.

The miscreants looted cash and other valuables after breaking open the doors of the three business houses, including a shipping agency, police said.

A case has been filed with Doublemooring thana but none was arrested so far.

The unconscious night guards were admitted to a hospital.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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