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# The Daily Star



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## Flood-hit people gherao Rupsha TNO's office for relief

**KHULNA, Sept 16:** Several hundred flood affected people today gheraoed Rupsha TNO's office demanding relief, reports UNB.

The flood-hit people gheraoed the office at about 11 am. They, however, withdrew the programme after one and half hours when officials distributed four tons of rice among them. The flood victims were assured of more relief.

The TNO said residents of Ghatbhog union gheraoed his office and submitted a memorandum demanding 20 tons of rice. The memorandum was signed by Bazul Rahman, Chairman of Ghatbhog union.

See Page 12 Col 4

## Mastaans attack flood shelter in city: 5 hurt

**By DMCH Correspondent**

At least five people including a woman were injured when a gang of local mastaans attacked a flood shelter at Nur Chala under Gulshan thana in the city yesterday evening.

Two of the injured, Ayesa, 40, and Sahabuddin, 22, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The incident centred distribution of relief materials by an NGO, hospital sources said, quoting the two injured. The name of the NGO and other details could not be known immediately.

The two victims at the hospital.

See Page 12 Col 5

## AL workers clash over relief distribution in Pirojpur: 10 hurt

**PIROJPUR, Sept 16:** Ten people, including a police officer were injured in clashes between the supporters of two Awami League leaders over relief distribution here today, reports UNB.

Additional police were deployed to avert any further clash.

The clashes began following

See Page 12 Col 3

## Trucks carrying 80 tons of rice from India looted

**JESSORE, Sept 16:** A consignment of 80 tons of rice, purchased by Bangladeshi traders from India, have been looted on way before reaching the land port, reports UNB.

Report reaching from across the border said six trucks carrying the rice were looted on Tuesday from Jamtola and Bongaon in 24 Pargana district.

Jamuna Trading of Bogra and Papa Enterprise of Jessore are the importers of the rice.



**GIVE US SOMETHING... ANYTHING:** Till date, no organised help or relief goods reached the Rataldia village in Rugganj thana. When some people went to the flood-affected village yesterday in a boat, people there thronged the boat hoping that it was carrying relief goods. They said that no government or non-government organisation came to the area so far.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

## Clogged drains slow down recession of flood water in city

With all the major rivers receding fast, the country's overall flood situation continued to improve yesterday, reports UNB.

The situation is gradually improving in 38 districts while it has returned to normal in 12 districts, according to officials.

The flood situation, however, remained static in Chandpur in the Meghna confluence as down-rushing water coupled with high tide is surging the rivers Meghna and Dakatia.

In the city, the clogged drainage system is slowing down the recession of flood waters in the low-lying areas. Water Development Board officials said.

Widespread use of polythene bags for distribution of food in the city's 250 flood shelters have clogged the drainage system.

According to a recent survey, some 52 lakh poly-bags are estimated to be thrown away in the city every day, which rose to 60 lakh daily during the flood period.

As most of the city's dustbins went under water, the poly-bags were thrown in water, clogging the drains with the recession of water, the survey, carried out by an environmental organisation, found.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre in its bulletin yesterday said all the rivers in the Brahmaputra, the Ganges and the Meghna basins continued to mark substantial fall.

The Brahmaputra recorded further fall by 33 cm at Noonkhawa and 28 cm at Chilmari. The Jamuna fell by 18 cm, 23 cm and 25 cm at Bahadurabad,

Sirajganj and Aricha points respectively.

The Padma also registered further fall by 15 cm at Pankha, 23 cm at Rajshahi, 31 cm at Hardinge Bridge, 23 cm at Goalunda and 21 cm at Bhagyakul.

Both the rivers, however, are still flowing well above their danger levels at most of the points.

The Meghna fell at Bhairab Bazar by 7 cm, but is still above danger level by 70 cm. The Gumi at Comilla dropped by 26 cm.

The Centre forecast that the flood situation in and around Dhaka city will continue to improve as the water levels in the rivers around the city will fall further.

The FFWC said although the

See Page 12 Col 1

## 27 mm rainfall in city

**By Special Correspondent**

A late afternoon downpour worsened the conditions in the city, slightly raising the levels of flooding in some areas and leaving traffic in a mess on waterlogged streets in central Dhaka during rush hours.

The Meteorological Department recorded 27 mm rainfall in the city till 6 pm after dark clouds burst around 5 pm, driven by gusty winds. Barisal recorded 49 mm rainfall, Srimangal 39 mm, Sandwip 15 mm, Bogra 12 mm and Majdi Court 10 mm, the Met Office said.

The rate of discharge of water from the city is slow because of the impediments in the normal course of Balu river which carries the water to the Shitalakhaya. A Water Development Board official said. Shitalakhaya meets the Meghna.

Balu drains out water from the northeastern, eastern and southern fringes of the metropolis.

But new settlements on its course, raised by a real estate company, interrupted the normal flow of the water to the south, leaving the conditions bad in Gulshan, Baridhara and Badda areas. As a result, the

See Page 12 Col 3

## Families return to pick up rubbles at their homes

From Morshed Ali Khan

**TANGAIL, Sept 16:** As the flood waters recede, thousands of families in the district have started picking the rubbles at their homes which had remained inundated for over two months.

During a visit to Charabari, Nandipara, Char Fatehpur, Torabganj, Dubail, Ishapasha and Char Ishapasha across the river Jamuna, this correspondent found a trail of devastation along the 15 km long route.

The landscape of the villages has changed. The lower half of trees and houses are rotten and grey coloured while the upper half of trees are green, giving a clear sign of the height of flood water.

All along the Dhaleswari river route to Char Ishapasha, all the kutcha roads were seen washed away. Only the rows of babla trees which had once been planted along the roads remained intact. Culverts were found tilted or washed away.

As the boat carrying this correspondent and a team of local NGO workers proceeded, villagers — men and women — waved and asked for relief.

"We only had 2.5 kg of rice in the last one month," said a weeping Falu Mandal, aged about 60, with a stick in hand to support him. At his Char Fatehpur thatched house under Dhanya Union of the district, nothing was right. The flood

waters rot the lower part of his dwelling.

Falu Mandal's neighbour Vanu said after her husband died, she along with her three children moved to the village from another village. "We lived on the platform for two months without any work or help. We have nothing left," Vanu said showing her house.

Hundreds of people were seen fishing in the receding water with nets fitted with bamboos. Many were seen on the rooftops, repairing their houses.

At Torabganj Bazar, people said activities at the market resumed after two months. A rice mill owner Gani Mourad said he had kept his mill open although it was partially inundated. "People came with five to 10 kg of paddy each to crush those during the last two months." When asked whether villagers crushed the seeds, Mourad replied "I do not know. They brought the paddy after boiling."

Many said that farmers were forced to crush their seeds to survive during the long flood.

In the bazar, several sellers of rice were seen with jute sacks full of coarse rice. It sold for Tk 14 to 16 per kg.

Farmers gathered there to say how they lost all their crops. "Right now, we need seeds

See Page 12 Col 4

## \$172.5m aid pledged so far

The country received commitment of 172.5 million US dollars in cash and kind from 32 donor countries till yesterday, reports UNB.

Talking to newsmen at his office yesterday afternoon, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said the foreign response to the government's appeal for flood aid is 'extremely positive.'

He said the food for works programme and test relief will be launched immediately after recession of flood waters to ensure both income and jobs for the affected people.

To a question, Chowdhury said, if necessary, helicopters would be engaged to drop relief goods in inaccessible areas.

See Page 12 Col 5

## Gunshots during Khaleda's visit to DU campus

**By DU Correspondent**

Several gunshots were fired on the Dhaka University campus yesterday during BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to the oral saline and pure drinking water project, run by Jatya-atabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at the conference room of the Business Studies building.

BNP's student front JCD and Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in separate press conferences later accused each other for the gunshots.

Panic stricken students ran for shelter when four shots were fired near the Business Studies building just before Begum Zia entered the campus at about noon, witnesses said. The incident took place in presence of a huge number of policemen deployed.

See Page 12 Col 7

## FBCCI Election Board member resigns alleging manipulation

By M Shamsur Rahman

Tension in the country's business community continued to mount after a member of the FBCCI Election Board resigned alleging that the voters' list was false and charging the current FBCCI leadership with "manipulation."

The resigning member said the list contained names of "non-eligible voters" and "some genuine ones were dropped without assigning any reason."

The FBCCI leaders denied the allegations, terming those "baseless and false."

The FBCCI election is scheduled to be held on October 15.

"It is almost impossible to remain faithful to the trade organisation rules, FBCCI articles of association and election rules, and at the same time, remain a member of election board," Manzur Ahmed said in his resignation letter.

Ahmed resigned as a member of the election board on September 1.

"As such, in spite of my best efforts I cannot continue as a member of the election board," he said.

In a letter to the Ministry of Commerce on September 7 Ahmed alleged that the Election Appeal Board in association with the FBCCI leadership and later many provisions of the trade organisation rules.

Ahmed alleged that the appeal board approved nomination of members who were not "eligible representatives" of those associations.

He said in one case Neyamatullah Sabu and Farokul Islam Shova submitted nomination papers, both claiming to be president of Bangladesh Dress Makers Association.

He said that the Ministry of Commerce and the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies did not recognise Sabu as president of the Dress Makers Association. FBCCI records also showed that

See Page 12 Col 3

## Rubel Murder Case CID may submit charge sheet by month-end

The CID investigators are preparing the charge sheet in the Rubel Murder Case that might include 12 people as accused, reports UNB.

The charge sheet is likely to be submitted by the end of this month or early next month, the CID sources said, adding they were doing their best to submit the charge sheet as early as possible.

Meanwhile, an absconding accused in the case, police constable Mohammad Kamrul Hasan, who was arrested Tuesday night from Netrakona, will be brought to Dhaka CID office for interrogation.

Kamrul was absconding soon after the killing of university student Shamim Reza Rubel in DB custody in the capital on July 23.

## Ctg JP leader murder: 3 arrested

**CHITTAGONG, Sept 16:** Pahartali police arrested three persons for their alleged involvement in the killing of Jatiya Party leader and President of Pahartali Traders' Association Ahaj Rafique Mia, reports BSS.

Soon after the killing of Rafique, police arrested Dil Mohammad and Nurun Nabi yesterday.

The confessed to the police of their involvement in the murder.

The third suspect Mohammad Jahed was arrested on the basis of the statement of Dil Mohammad and Nurun Nabi.

Ahaj Rafique Mia was stabbed to death by some miscreants at his Saraipara residence in the early hours of Tuesday.

## 3 held with foreign currencies near Benapole border

**From Staff Correspondent**

**KHULNA, Sept 16:** BDR personnel arrested three persons, including a film actor while they were going to India through Saidpur border village near Benapole on Sunday.

The arrested were identified as the Ahmed of 36, New Jhikatala, Dhaka. Mohini Sarkar of Tejgaon, Dhaka and Masum Khan of Panchgaon village under Araljhara thana of Narayanganj district.

According to BDR, Jessore, 700 US dollars, 208 Indian currency notes, 85,000 Bangladeshi currency notes, a mobile telephone set and two tickets of Bangladesh Biman were recovered from their possession.

Rajiv Ahmed identified himself as a film actor and a member of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry while Mohini Sarkar as model star and wife of Rajiv Ahmed. The other man, Masum Khan has been identified as their family friend.

BDR handed them over to the police of Sharsha thana.

## Extension of Occidental's PSC for blocks 13,14 being delayed Clarification on insurance payment to US co for Magurchhara explosion sought

By Sharier Khan

Extension of Occidental's Production Sharing Contract (PSC) for blocks 13 and 14 is being delayed due to lack of a clarification related to the Magurchhara blow-out, sources said.

Occidental's PSC for these blocks expired on January 11 last for failing to fulfil the contractual obligations which include drilling of at least one exploratory well in each of the blocks in the first three years. The PSC was signed in January 1994.

The Prime Minister's office recently sent back the Occidental's file on extension of PSC to the Energy Ministry, asking for a clarification.

The Prime Minister's Office

wanted to know how much Occidental was paid by its insurance company for the Magurchhara disaster," a source said.

Officials of the US company may meet Energy Ministry officials later this week to clarify the insurance affairs.

"The government may link Occidental's statement about its insurance money to the promised payment of compensation for the Magurchhara disaster," the source said.

Although the expired PSC has no legal provision for an extension, the government had initiated the extension process as Occidental promised payment of full compensation for

the Magurchhara blow-out. Occidental's drilling operation in Magurchhara area ended in a massive blow-out on June 14 last year.

In the process, which included some modification of the terms of the agreement, Occidental agreed to compensate for the "external damages" caused by the Magurchhara blow-out. However, Occidental had agreed on partial payment for the "internal" (gas structure) damage.

Petrobangla experts had said that the blow-out damaged the sub-soil gas structure at Magurchhara to a great extent. They had estimated that the damage would be worth at least Tk 250 crore.

The extension proposal also excludes an important clause under which the government can terminate a contract if it is found to be going against the interest of the people.

This clause was originally incorporated in the extension proposal in the light of the Model PSC approved by the Cabinet. Occidental believes that such a clause was heavily biased and it was against the whole concept of PSC as the government could terminate the contract any time.

The Law Ministry cleared the components of the PSC extension a few months back. The file was then sent to the Prime Minister's Office.

## Repair of damaged roads to cost Tk 1370 crore

By Staff Correspondent

Repair and reconstruction of the roads damaged by the flood will cost the government about Tk 1370 crore, officials of the communications ministry said yesterday.

The cost has been estimated on the basis of damage caused by the floods upto September 15, the officials added.

"The donor agencies have already been approached for necessary funds for the repair work," said a top official of the ministry, adding that the funding organisations had already responded positively.

"The ERD Secretary will hold a meeting with representatives of the World Bank, ADB and some other donor agencies on Friday to finalise the issue of disbursement of necessary

funds for immediate repair of the roads," said an official.

About 3800-km road has been badly damaged while 4000-km road has been partially damaged during the prolonged floods this year, the ministry officials said.

Officials estimated that 35 per cent of the roads in the country including national highways, regional highways and feeder roads have been affected by the floods. The length of national highways, regional highways and feeder roads across the country is 2862-km, 1564-km and 15858-km respectively.

The flood waters also washed away 546 culverts and 562 portable and steel bridges, the officials said.

## Absence of standard arsenic detection kit affecting quality data collection

By Naimul Haq

The government is yet to select a 'standard' arsenic detection field kit, which is seriously affecting quality data collection, experts said.

Experts feel that the existing techniques for detecting presence of poisonous arsenic in tubewell water are not reliable and these have different degrees of capacity for detecting arsenic. As a result, most of the data are dissimilar, giving misleading information.

Field kits are used for detecting presence of arsenic (0.05 mg/L national standard) in water, a first hand method to identify arsenic polluted tubewells.

All public and private tube-

wells in the affected areas of the country are now being screened by using field kits. These are subsequently marked with either 'red' or 'green' paints to enable users to know which are 'safe' and which are not. The process has been initiated by the government.

Dr Mahmudur Rahman of Dhaka Community Hospital, explaining the problem told The Daily Star "There are different water testing field kits capable of showing presence of arsenic at various concentrations. Some can detect arsenic more than 0.05 mg per litre (mg/L) while others have the capacity to detect presence of arsenic at concentrations below

that level."

He said, "To avoid dissimilar test results, the government should opt for a standard kit so that identical data is collected."

Former chairman of the Planning Commission M A Quyum said, "Field kits used for analysis of water samples are not standardised by any competent body or authority. So the quality of these data are not assured and they are not statistically sound."

Currently, different organisations are using different types of kits for water sample tests.

The Daily Star recently obtained an evaluation report of all commercially available arsenic detection field kits in use.

The South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) of WHO contracted the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to evaluate the kits.

NEERI studies on five commercially available kits were carried out mainly to find 'limitations and accuracy' of the field kits and to develop guidelines for their use.

The five kits are of E Merck of Germany, Asia Arsenic Network (AAN) of Japan, Aqua Consortium of India, NIPSOM of Bangladesh and All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (AIIPH).

The lowest arsenic detection

See Page 12 Col 5

## Army, Navy to be deployed at Ctg, Mongla ports today

Army and Navy will be deployed at Chittagong and Mongla ports today.

The government decided to deploy army and navy to ensure speedy delivery of foodgrains from the ships and transport those to the flood-hit areas.

Talking to UNB, Deputy Minister for Shipping Saber Hossain Chowdhury said that the decision was taken to ease congestion and ensure smooth handling of cargoes.

"However, the port authority will conduct day-to-day operation as before and the armed forces will be responsible for overall supervision of the operational work and also identifying the bottlenecks in facilitating smooth discharge of goods from ships."

He said deployment of army and navy became inevitable for

smooth unloading of foodgrains and loading of exports at the quickest possible time.

According to the earlier decision, army will take over the supervision of the Chittagong port where the Navy will assist them. The Mongla port will be under the control of Navy where army will assist them.

"The Shipping Ministry has fixed the productivity of unloading at the ports at 1500 tons per ship a day, increasing the present productivity of 400 tons per ship a day."

Food Ministry sources said that the donors who committed to provide food aid were also inquiring about the port situation.

During 1988 severe flood, army was also deployed at the ports to ensure proper and

See Page 12 Col 3

**Star MAG TOMORROW**

Adolescence is perhaps the most difficult stage of one's life for it is a stepping stone for the child to reach adulthood. This week's cover story deals with this delicate and volatile stage when an individual goes through tremendous emotional fluctuations and sudden changes in the body.

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**White House in crisis**  
**The Most Powerful Man on Earth in Trouble**

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents  
by M M Rezaul Karim  
Page 4

**Focus**

An all-engulfing deluge; and Living with floods  
Page 5

**Business**

India calls for global norms to prevent financial crises

Progress on APEC trade liberalisation stalled

Both DSE and CSE indices rise  
Pages 6, 7 & 8