BUY NOW PAY LATER
Whirlpool HOME APPLIANCES USA
Gas Cooker
Transcom Electronics Limited
Authorized distributor in Bangladesh for Whirlpool Appliances, USA

Extra 4-page Special SPORTS and CULTURE every day

The Daily Star

Today's issue 20 pages

TOSHIBA TV
For best picture quality buy only TOSHIBA Colour TV with BLACK STRIPE PICTURE TUBE
RANGS GROUP

VOL. IX NO. 168 REGD. NO. DA 781 INTERNET: http://www.dailystarnews.com ASHAR 30 1406 BS DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 14, 1999 RABIUL AWAL 29, 1420 HIJRI 20 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

Lakhs helpless, marooned

Gushing water engulfs 10 villages in two hours

By Morshed Ali Khan, back from Comilla

As troops and the district administration battled to tackle an unprecedented flood situation, lakhs of helpless people remained marooned yesterday in ten villages in Burichang and Devidwar thanas in Comilla district.

The villages reeled under water in about two hours Monday morning as strong current breached an irrigation inlet in the Gumti embankment at Ebadpur, eight miles from Comilla town. There were vast sheets of turbulent water all around.

Thousands of men women and children were seen negotiating strong current of waist-deep water on the Moinamoti-Brahmanbaria highway to go to shelters, still not known to them. They were holding whatever belongings they could save from the carnage.

Army trucks deployed to carry the affected people from the highway to shelters in Moinamoti had to retreat several times yesterday as the level of swirling water on the highway kept on rising fast.

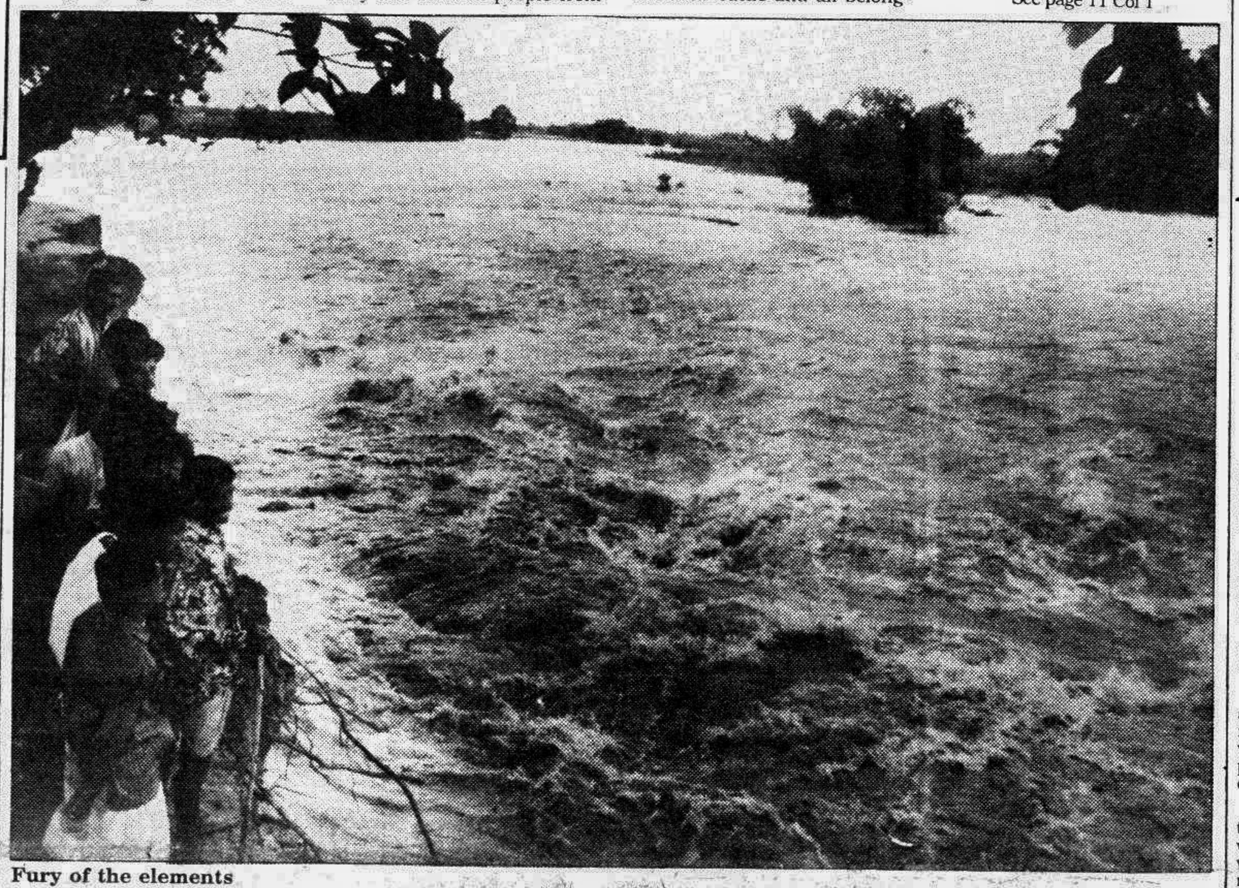
The level of the gushing water rose so sharply that in the afternoon, the road was unsafe for any vehicle.

Families coming from Garochur, Chikutia, Ziapur and Kacharitala villages under Burichang thana said they had left their cattle and all belongings and ran for safety as the embankment suddenly burst and their houses reeled under water.

They said there was no flood in the area in living memory. Unlike in most rural areas of the country, these villagers do not have any boat. They are accustomed to surface communication only.

"Hundreds of families want to escape the rising water but

See page 11 Col 1



Fury of the elements

The vicious face of the River Gumti's rolling water, yesterday, after its embankment was breached, in Comilla.—Star photo

Who is this contractor?

By Morshed Ali Khan

The irrigation inlet in the Gumti embankment at Ebdarpur in Comilla that gave in to the pressure of water on Monday, was built in May this year at a cost of Tk 3.5 lakh by an "influential" contractor, sources said.

But Water Development Board (WDB) officials refused to give his name. The sources claimed that the inlet was badly constructed and several nuts and bolts in it were "loose".

Moreover, the WDB had even failed to include this inlet in its list of 23 points in the embankment identified as "vulnerable".

Local people alleged that none of the officials bothered to look into the matter despite complaints to the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

Experts from the Army at Moinamoti Cantonment had

See Page 12 Col 1

'PM in London, not in Dallas'

The government yesterday categorically denied a news report that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now on a visit to UK, had quietly gone to Dallas in the USA from London, reports UNB.

The report, published in a local Bangla daily yesterday saying that Prime Minister has quietly gone to Dallas, is "totally baseless and false," said a release of the Press Wing of the PM's Office.

Faruq Kazi, the deputy press secretary to the PM, in the release dismissed the report and categorically said the Prime Minister is now staying in London.

"However, some of her programmes in London have been rescheduled and she (Prime Minister) is taking part in the functions as per new schedule," the release said.

It said the Prime Minister spent busy day in London yesterday. She gave an interview to Zee TV and had long discussion with a British company for investment in Bangladesh's energy sector.

Besides, Hasina also exchanged views with a delegation of Bangladesh-British business community on investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

"So, there is no scope of creating confusion in public mind by circulating speculative news over the Prime Minister's programmes in London," the release added.

Arrest warrant against Kader Siddiqui

Warrant of arrest was issued yesterday against ruling party leader and lawmaker, Kader Siddiqui, in a money defalcation case, reports UNB.

Police said the case was filed with Motijheel thana in 1976 for allegedly embezzling Tk 15.53 lakh by submitting forged documents with the Joint Stock Company.

The Anti-corruption Bureau submitted charge sheet on January 25, 1998 in the case against the dissident Awami League leader.

The case was revived and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Sunday sent it to the Additional Metropolitan Magistrate's Court for disposal.

'A shameless example of looting by ruling party'

By Staff Correspondent

The liaison committee of the BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday strongly condemned allotment of most of the Rajuk plots among ministers, Awami League leaders and their relatives and said this is a "naked and shameless example of looting of people's wealth by the ruling party."

The committee at its meeting at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in parliament alleged that all existing rules, procedures and policy were ignored in the recent allotment of 301 Rajuk plots in Gulshan, Baridhara, Uttara and Nikunja.

How the people can expect that the of country's indepen-

See page 11 Col 3

Sharp public reaction

Massive nepotism in Rajuk's plot allotment

Star Report

Nepotism and political bias have embroiled Rajuk and the public works' and housing ministry in a public controversy over the allotment of 301 residential plots in the city's posh areas.

A section of the ruling Awami League now feels embarrassed as over 90 per cent of the lucrative plots have been distributed among cabinet members, party MPs, leaders and activists and their relations, allegedly in violation of rules.

Even the bureaucracy is now divided and bitterly critical of the entire plot affair as many senior officials were refused plots while many juniors and their spouses got the same by dint of their sheer connection with the power caucus.

On Friday last, Rajuk announced in a public notice published in only one daily — Banglar Bani — that it had selected 301 individuals for plots in Gulshan, Banani and Uttara areas of the city. Close scrutiny revealed that most of the plots were allocated to ruling party members who included 11 cabi-

See page 11 Col 6

Death of constable

Movable property of three DCC Commissioners seized

By Staff Correspondent

Police seized movable property from the residences of three ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday afternoon.

The commissioners are Chowdhury Alam of Ramna area, Kazi Abul Bashar of Shutrapur area and Ariful Islam of Khilgaon area.

Police conducted the operation following a CMM's court order yesterday afternoon.

CMM's court order was served after police failed to arrest the three commissioners who were allegedly involved in police constable Farhad murder.

Farhad, a police constable of the Riot Control Division (RCD) was killed and eight others were wounded when unidentified miscreants hurled bombs at policemen near the Zero Point on the night of July 7.

'AL terrorists killed constable Farhad'

It's a conspiracy, says BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Senior BNP leaders at a public rally yesterday blamed ruling Awami League for killing police constable Farhad and demanded immediate formation of a judicial inquiry committee to probe the July 7 incident that also left eight other policemen injured.

They alleged that terrorists belonging to the ruling party exploded the bomb at Zero Point on the night of July 7 with the motive to kill policemen and pass the blame onto BNP.

Addressing the gathering at Paltan Maidan in the afternoon, the BNP leaders said the Awami League, which has become isolated from the people, is hatching a deep rooted conspiracy to confront the opposition with police.

Dhaka city unit of BNP organised the rally to protest the killing of the police constable and demand immediate withdrawal of "false" cases against nearly 200 leaders and activists of BNP, including Sadek Hossain Khoka MP and Nazimuddin Alam MP.

Presided by Salahuddin Ahmed, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Prof AQM Badrudozza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Abdullah Al Noman, Mirza Abbas, Prof MA Mannan, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP, Joynal Abedin Faruque, Abdus Salam, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Fazlul Haq Milon, Mujibur Rahman and JCD leader Nuruzzaman.

Accusing the government party for the pre-planned murder of the police personnel, Prof B Chowdhury said the ruling Awami League wants to create a conflicting situation between the law enforcing agencies and BNP and killing of Constable Farhad is part of that conspir-

See page 11 Col 7

Sewing of sandbags starts as Shitalakhya swells

By Shehab Ahmed

CHANMARI (Narayanganj) July 13: Maju Mia is busy sewing the gunny sacks that his fellow workers are stacking in front of him in neat rows on a rail track near the Chashara railway station.

The man is hurrying, perhaps competing with the swelling waters of Shitalakhya and Buriganga rivers, which have already inundated some flood plains around Narayanganj town.

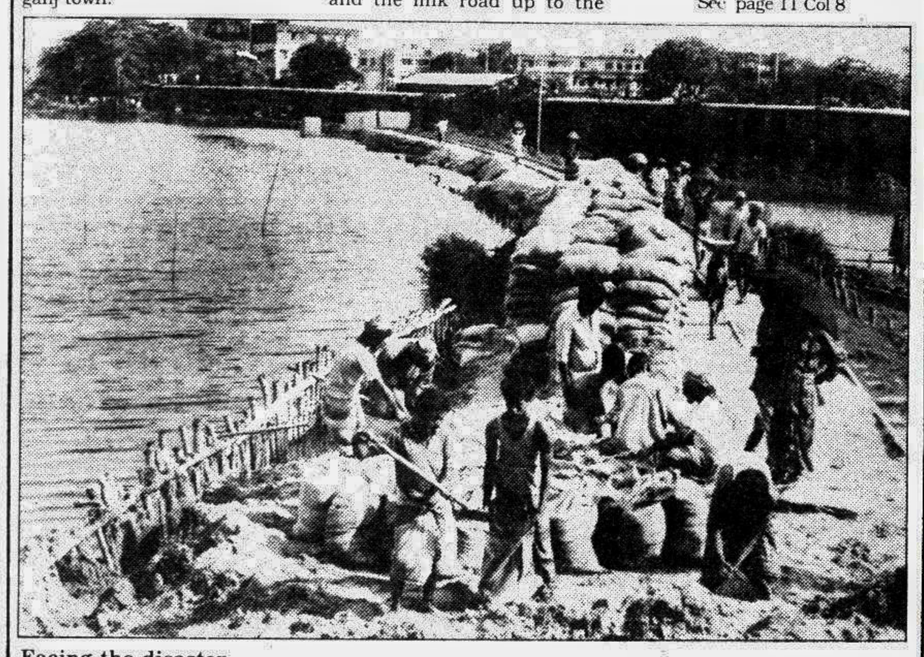
Maju, 45, and a dozen others have been engaged by a contractor of the Water Development Board (WDB), assigned last week to prepare 50,000 or more sand bags.

"We started working three days ago. The sand bags will be put around the rail track, the station as well as on the vulnerable points of the 2.5 km DND embankment from Chanmari to IET High School and the link road up to the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, if needed," Mujibur Rahman, a supervisor of the contractor said. Each bag will cost Tk 15.

The DND embankment is most vulnerable near the Chashara railway station.

Last year's flood damaged the embankment at several points. The sand bags came as a handy weapon in protecting the DND project's command area which include parts of the west-

See page 11 Col 8



Facing the disaster

Work is on for protecting the DND embankment at Narayanganj. —Star photo

Rehabilitation of sex workers

From Ehsanul Haque

NARAYANGANJ, July 13: The sex workers of Tanbazar, the 150-year-old redlight area, are going to be rehabilitated from tomorrow.

A high-level meeting held at the Prime Minister's Secretariat on Monday decided to rehabilitate those who are willing to give up their profession.

"And those who are not ready to give up voluntarily, they will be barred from continuing their business in Tanbazaar and Nimtali," according to Mir Shahabuddin, DG of Department of Social Welfare

The meeting chaired by Additional Secretary Idris Ali was attended by representatives of government and non-government organisations including the home ministry, youth and sports' ministry, ministry of women affairs', social welfare ministry, department of social service, socio-economic development agency of Bangladesh, the local SP of police and the deputy commissioner of the district.

In pursuance of the meeting's decision the department of social service has printed 3000 'forms'. The 'form' contains eighteen questions which will be distributed among the sex workers of the two brothels in cooperation with UNDP. The questions including bio-data of the sex workers, particulars of their children, the truth about their past, the way they were brought into the profession, their income, their savings, etc.

Under the rehabilitation programme a sex worker will be trained to be self-reliant through imparting different trades like knitting fishing nets, manufacturing candle and *Agarbatti*, doll making, handicrafts, pottery, gardening, cook-

See Page 12 Col 8

Inside Today

Article

Between inheritance and the new millennium

Imagining a 'negotiated polity' for Bangladesh

by M Rashiduzzaman
Page 4

Supplement

Today's 20 page issue of The Daily Star contains a 6-page supplement on the 'National Day of France' on Pages 15—20.

To accommodate the supplement, the Focus page and one page of sports have been dropped. We regret the inconvenience caused to our readers

Prayer Timings

July 14

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-15
Johr	12-50	1-25
Asr	4-55	5-05
Maghrib	7.00	7-05
Esha	7-55	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Winning Hands make all the Difference.

ONE Bank LIMITED

. . . We make things happen

July 14, 1999

commencing our operations today

at

45 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Tel : 9564249, 9551799, 9558295

andas/one bank/jul/99

Confidence