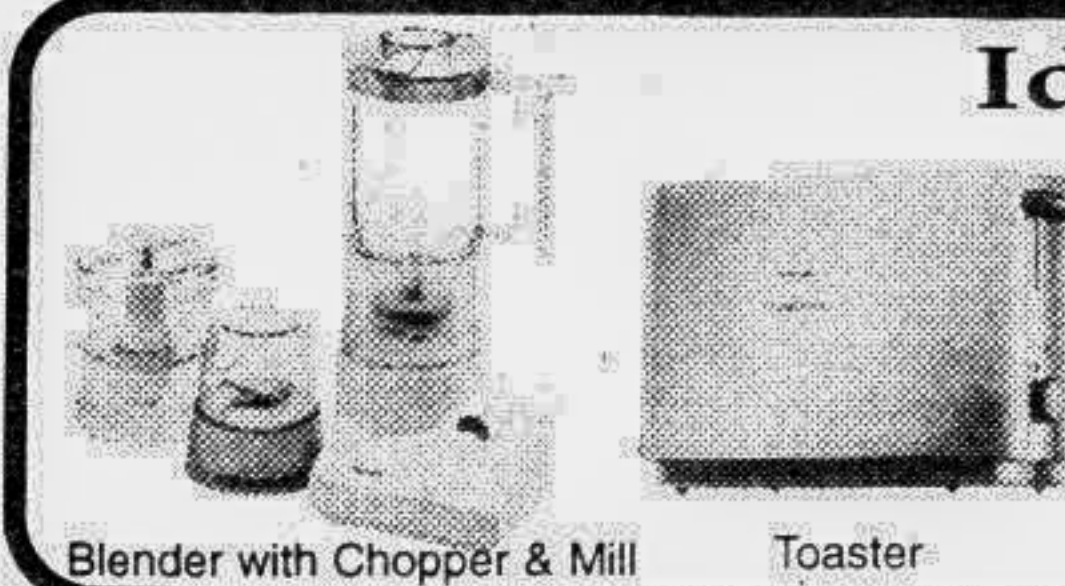


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Flood situation in 2 N-dists worsens

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation in Rangpur, and Kurigram deteriorated further, due to heavy rain in the last three days.

The situation in Munshiganj and Manikganj districts may also worsen, according to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

Our Rangpur Correspondent reported death of an unidentified old woman at Bairagipara. She was drowned in the flood water.

Flash flood gripped the entire district and Rangpur Pourashava areas have gone under water following torrential rain for the last three days. All rivers in the district swelled further and were flowing above their respective danger levels.

Our Kurigram Correspondent also reported worsening of flood situation in the district.

Most of the low-lying areas have been submerged after heavy rain. On rush of hill water flooded fresh areas adding to the miseries of the marooned people.

UNB adds: Rivers Brahmaputra and Jamuna continued to

swell due to downpour for the last two days, threatening flash flood in northern region.

It said a significant rainfall of 145.5 mm was recorded at Kaunia while 126.5 mm at Panchagarh, 115.0 mm at Chilmari, 105.0 mm at Dalia, 103.5 mm at Rangpur, 100.0 mm at Dewanganj and 85.5 mm at Gaibandha.

Rivers Brahmaputra and Jamuna were rising alarmingly and may rise further in next 24 hours till 6 am today while the Padma and Ganges recorded further fall in last 24 hours.

The Ganges registered further fall at all points, except Gualundo, while the Brahmaputra and Jamuna registered further rise at all points.

River Dharala was flowing 6 cm above its danger level at Kurigram while the Jamuna 4 cm at Aricha and the Padma 17 cm at Pankha, 1 cm at Gualundo and 16 cm at Bhagyakul.

Of the 46 water level measuring stations monitored by the centres, five were flowing above red marks while 23 points recorded rise and 18 fall.



The iron piling to reinforce the concrete in the under-construction box culvert behind Bangladesh Bank is rusting. It is part of Dhaka WASA's storm sewerage project to flush out excess water and save the city from water-logging during the monsoon.

— Star photo by Sheikh Enamul Huq

Clash at Ctg Commerce College: 20 hurt

From Our Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Aug 25: At least 20 people were injured when two factions of Chhatra League (BCL) clashed at Commerce College at Agrabad in the city this afternoon.

Police arrested over 100 activists of the both factions.

AZM Nasir group and Kader group of BCL locked in a clash when classes resumed after one month's vacation.

The feuding groups used firearms and exploded huge number of cocktails during the hour-long clash. They exchanged over 50 rounds of gunshots.

Police in a raid arrested around 60 activists of Kader group. Police also arrested 42 activists of AZM Nasir group when they went to submit a memorandum to the DC in a procession protesting the clash.

Belonia calm: Flag meeting on Sept 9

From Our Correspondent
FENI, Aug 25: Director General of BDR Maj Gen Azizur Rahman, BU, who visited the trouble spot at Belonia today had an informal meeting with Tripura state chief of BSF V.G. Goyal.

Later, a formal meeting between BDR and BSF officers was held. But details of the meeting could not be known immediately. However, BDR sources said that a flag meeting on the disputed Muhuri Char will take place on September 9.

Earlier, firing at the Belonia border stopped after a 'ceasefire' between BDR and BSF yesterday.

Meanwhile, the people of the area who desisted their homesteads following exchange of fire between the BDR and BSF forces started returning homes after yesterday's ceasefire.

Agargaon slum dwellers

From page 1
said every other person of the slum has availed micro-credit from different NGOs to run different sorts of businesses. This unplanned eviction would destroy livelihood of thousands of people, they added.

If they come to evict us from here we will take shelter at the ministers', said Shomiron, a mother of four children 'owning' a hut at Ambarer Bustee in the BNP slum area. She also said she has taken credit from an NGO to set up a shop in the slum. 'I lost everything due to river erosion in Bhola and came here to make a living.'

The entire area is devoid of any surface drains. Liquid wastes from kitchen and other sources flow openly along the huts emitting stench. The residents showed some tubewells and latrines and said those were built by the NGOs operating in the area.

The entire BNP slum is divided into at least 26 clusters and each one has been named after the man who owns and controls his respective cluster. There are local leaders who also control some clusters. Residents said they are Haji Noor Mohammad, Siraj, Nanna, Professor Sattar, Mohabbat, Kashem Chairman, Rashid and Alam.

Residents said there are more than 17,000 registered voters in the entire area. Tulatala cluster or Haterem Bustee has about 700 registered voters, Motaharer Bustee 300, Ali Mir Bustee 200 and Ambarer Bustee 400.

Naming more rich slum owners in the area, a rickshaw-

Italian envoy meets Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent
Outgoing Italian ambassador in Dhaka Raffaello Miniero yesterday observed that political problems in Bangladesh remain unresolved due to lack of communication between the government and opposition.

He said problems related to politics could easily be solved if the ruling and opposition parties sit together frequently and are sincere to solve important national issues.

He said this when the envoy paid a farewell call on BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia at her 29 Mint Road official residence here in the afternoon, yesterday.

Former ambassador and BNP Advisory Council member MM Rezaul Karim briefed newsmen after the call.

BNP leaders M Morshed Khan MP, MM Rezaul Karim and Reaz Rahman were present on the occasion.

Begum Zia discussed with the envoy the country's latest situation and other issues.

The Italian envoy praised the current road march and mass procession programmes of BNP and other opposition parties and termed that these are part of the democratic process.

Replying to a question from the ambassador, Begum Zia said the government has made parliament, ineffective, by not allowing the opposition to speak out major issues of national concern.

She said the opposition parties in parliament would not obstruct the incumbent government to complete its full term to the government if the ruling party allows the opposition to participate in parliament adequately.

On the question of land transshipment of Indian goods through Bangladesh, the BNP Chairperson said BNP always wanted to maintain good relations with India, which is our neighbour.

But India has been working against our national interest since the birth of Bangladesh.

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Mig-29 deal No papers shown at JS body meet: BNP MP

BNP lawmaker Maj (Rtd) Akhtaruzzaman has protested the government handout published in a section of the press yesterday regarding the purchase of Mig-29 fighter planes, reports UNB.

No such decision has been taken, nor the Parliamentary Committee on Defence Ministry examined any documents, as no papers were produced at the meeting, Akhtaruzzaman said yesterday.

The Air Chief failed to meet the queries made on July 28, added the opposition MP from Kishoreganj, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

He said that according to the decision of the meeting on July 28 the Chairman of the Standing Committee was supposed to produce the purchase contract and other relevant documents before the meeting on August 24. But it was not done.

Instead, the acting Defence Secretary informed the meeting that the purchase deal has been made as per 'order' and he being the defence secretary is fully satisfied.

On his explanation, Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah who was present at the meeting proposed to close the chapter since the defence secretary is satisfied and said that no further discussion is required. The chairman agreed with the proposal and concluded the discussion.

But, the opposition members in the meeting protested it. Akhtaruzzaman added, they demanded justification of the purchase, technical specification of the aircraft, year of manufacture and the terms and conditions of the deal, and continuation of deliberations on the issue, he said.

That ensued exchange of hot words. And finally the chairman gave the decision that he will first see the contract and inform the committee in the next meeting. Akhtaruzzaman said.

Manzoor Murder Case

The First Additional District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka yesterday fixed the date for passing order of a prayer for cancellation of bail of all the accused including former President H M Ershad in the trial of Manzoor Murder Case on September 9, reports BSS.

The judge, Sheikh Rownoql Islam, yesterday also fixed the date for hearing of the petition on September 7 and 8.

Prosecution witness Sadar Uddin was cross-examined by the lawyer of accused Major (Rtd) Kazi Emdadul Haque.

All the accused including Ershad were present in the court.

ECNEC okays 5 projects worth Tk 1871cr

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved five projects involving Tk 1870.85 crore, including Tk 1049.41 crore in project aid, reports UNB.

The ECNEC at meeting at the NEC Bhaban with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair gave the approval to the projects, including power-sector ones.

The Prime Minister stressed using of local-made quality electrical equipment in the power projects.

This would save foreign exchange that goes for imports as well as encourage the local entrepreneurs to produce more

Defence cross examines Rubel's father

By Court Correspondent

Father of Shamim Reza Rubel, who was allegedly tortured to death by DB police was cross examined by five defence lawyers for about two hours in the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday.

The ten of the 14 charges-heated accused, including AC Akram and Mukuli Begum, were produced before the court yesterday at about 2 pm. The rest four — SI Nurul Alam, constables — Mong She Oen, Abul Kalam Azad and Zakir Hossain — have been absconding since the killing of Rubel.

During yesterday's proceedings Khan Saifur Rahman, the lawyer for another accused SI Amir Ahmed Tarik, completed cross examining Rubel's father Abdur Rob.

Sirajul Huq — the lawyer for AC Akram Hossain yesterday cross examined the informant Abdur Rob for about 20 minutes. Lawyers for Inspector Aminul Islam ASI Abdul Karim, havildar Nuruzzaman also completed their cross examination yesterday.

The judge Molla Mustafa Kamal fixed September 8 and 9 for further cross examination

Accidents on Dhaka-Aricha road kill over 1200 in 5 yrs

MANIKGANJ, Aug 25: Accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway claimed at least 1207 lives and left 20,000 people injured during the last five years, reports UNB.

Besides, 479 people maimed in the accidents have been living a miserable life, said a report of Bangladesh Village Development Organisation, an NGO.

The loss in damage to vehicles and goods in the accidents was estimated at more than Tk 1,000 crore.

According to reports compiled from the fire brigade offices, police and other relevant organisations, 1424 road accidents occurred in five years since 1994, on the 88 km long highway.

A total of 242 accidents were recorded in 1994 with 247 deaths and 3,512 injuries, 302 accidents in 1995 with 219 deaths and 2,820 injuries, 231 accidents in 1996 with 236 deaths and 2,778 injuries, 387 accidents in 1997 with 308 deaths and 8,435 injuries and 215 accidents in 1998 with 197 deaths and 2,526 injuries.

The sources said pressure on the highway has reduced largely and the number of accidents declined after opening of the Bangabandhu Bridge to the vehicular traffic.

quality electrical appliances," she said.

The projects are: Area-based rural electrification project (4th phase), grid system rehabilitation, repair and expansion of capacity levels of grid system, rehabilitation, repair and expansion of capacity (2nd phase), Chancery building construction of the Bangladesh mission in diplomatic zone in Washington and further development of BUET under the fifth five-year plan.

The meeting discussed the matter of relieving the Forest Ministry of the afforestation project in the coastal belts. This project is being run by the Water Resources Ministry with finan-

cial assistance from IDA.

Five more projects were placed by the State Minister for Planning before the meeting for appraisal.

Those are Jaldhaka-Hatibandha thana integrated rural development project, secondary towns integrated flood-protection project, tribal museum cum library project, renovation of forestry department infrastructure of the hill districts and increase in facilities and construction of modern shopping centre at Talaimari.

The costs estimated for these five projects are Tk 160.33 crore, including project-aid component of Tk 103.20 crore.

Khulna Hunger strike on Sept 5 demanding punishment of Ershad Shikder

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 25: Manzurul Imam group of Jubo League and Chhatra League will observe day-long mass hunger strike at Maharaj Square on September 5 demanding 'hanging' of top terror and ward commissioner Ershad Shikder and immediate arrest of his armed cadres and recovery of all illegal firearms.

At a rally held this afternoon, leader of Jubo League and Chhatra League appealed KMP administration to revive all the murder and other criminal cases pending against Ershad Shikder.

Speakers at the rally also demanded eviction of slum-dwellers in Skid Ghat area which is said to be safe haven for drug dealers. The faction announced that they will gherao offices of the DC, Khulna and the Police Commissioner on August 29 and lead a protest procession towards Skid Ghat on September 1.

Meanwhile, Ershad Shikder has been taken on seven days' police remand. He will be handed over to Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka tomorrow, said a KMP source.

In another development, the CMM court has ordered police to return all personnel belongings seized from the residence of Ershad Shikder on August 4.

Contempt of court AL MP tenders unqualified apology

Shah Azizur Rahman, an Awami League MP, in the High Court yesterday tendered unqualified apology for his reported contemptuous comments which he, however, denied to have made at a recent public meeting in Sylhet, reports UNB.

Appearing before the Court Aziz tendered apology in an affidavit during the hearing of the contempt rule issued upon him by the division bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Haq and Justice Mohammad Mozammel Hossain.

Hearing on the rule was concluded. The Court will pronounce its verdict in the contempt case today.

Advocate Gazilul Haq, the counsel for Aziz, replying to the rule submitted that he (Aziz) did not make any adverse comments on the High Court as reported by daily Jalaalabad and Dainik Dinkal, the mouthpiece of Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP.

The report was intended to malign and politically victimise him.

Whatever exception taken by the Court considering the newspaper reports, he (Aziz) unconditionally seeks apology for the same before the court, submitted the counsel.

Shahjadpur JCD leader murdered

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 25: Unidentified assailants armed with guns and machetes killed Saiful Islam Shiko, 25, a leader of Shahjadpur thana Jatiyatadab, Chhatra Dal, and wounded some others at thana BNP office at Shahjadpur bazar this evening.

Thana BNP Secretary Anwar Hossain blamed supporters of Deputy Minister for Industries Hasibul Rahman Swapna, who was elected on ENP ticket, for attacking the party office and murdering Shiko. The victim was a former VP of Shahjadpur Government College Students Union.

But SI Kamaruddin of Shahjadpur thana told this correspondent that Shiko was shot by his rivals within the party during an altercation.

Rehabilitation of slum dwellers CHT leaders criticise Khaleda's proposal

KHAGRACHHARI, Aug 25: Tribal and Bengali leaders today blasted BNP chief and leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia's proposal to rehabilitate slum dwellers in CHT alleging that she was trying to "instigate fresh troubles in the region," reports BSS.

"Any fresh settlement of people from the plain land will only fuel conflict in the overpopulated hill region," Chandra Shekhar Chakma, the general secretary of the Parbatya Chhatragam Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), said.

Despite being huge in area, the habitable and agricultural land in CHT is insufficient particularly after the construction of the Kaptai Dam which inundated some 54,000 acres of its plain land, he said.

"The per capita land here is much smaller than any other region of the country and there is no scope for any new settlement," he said adding that the influx from the plains during Ziaur Rahman's government had made the problem complicated.

Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Jyotirindra Tripura said when those who were taken to CHT during former Zia's period could not be settled yet, Khaleda Zia's demand for rehabilitating slum dwellers indicated "a new conspiracy with the hills."

Shekhhar Chakma urged the government to resettle the slum dwellers at any other suitable place other than the three hill districts.

Zafar Ahmed, a Bengali member of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council

(CHTRC) alleged that Begum Zia's comments indicated that her party did not want peace in the CHT.

"When the Bengalis living in the hill tracts could not be rehabilitated fully, her remarks are unholy signal for creating a communal conflict in the region," he said.

Senior leader of the PCJSS and member of CHTRC Raktaptal Tripura said Begum Zia's suggestions for rehabilitating slum dwellers in the hills were like "rubbing salts to wounds (or add flame to fuel)."

UNB adds: United People's Democratic Front leader Prasit Bikash Khisa in a statement yesterday also protested Khaleda's suggestion for rehabilitating slum dwellers in the CHT.

He said, "By making the suggestion Khaleda, who did nothing for slum people while in power, is now encouraging and morally supporting government's bid to evict the slum dwellers."

The UPDF, opponent of the CHT accord, said Khaleda had unveiled her party's 'anti-people' policy in the name of showing sympathies to the poor slum dwellers.

"Her call for rehabilitating the slum people in CHT is unwanted and painful as she should know that more than one lakh hill people had to migrate to India and Myanmar due to scarcity of places after building the Kaptai dam."

He urged the opposition leader not to "mislead people by stating that there is a vast land in CHT where slum people could be resettled."

Two die while cleaning sewerage tank

By Staff Correspondent

Two day labourers died and two others fell sick while cleaning an underground sewerage tank at a house in the city's Islambagh area yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Abul Bashar, 26, and Abu Taher alias Jahir, 30, both from Jinjira area.

The two others who fell sick -- Ripon and Nurul -- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Hospital sources suspected that Bashar and Jahir were killed due to poisonous gas in the sewerage tank.

According to police and hospital sources, Bashar and Jahir were hired for cleaning the tank at the house of one Baser Mia. They got down in the tank first. Ripon and Nurul followed them a few minutes later but soon came out due to poisonous gas in the tank.

Later, local people somehow recovered the bodies of Bashar and Jahir. Those were sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Kotwali thana in this connection.

SL beat India by 7 wkts

COLOMBO, Aug 25: Sri Lanka beat India by seven wickets in their one-day match today, reports Reuters.

Scores: India 205-8 in 50 overs, Sri Lanka 206-3 in 46.4 overs.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 866772-4, Commercial: 866771, Fax No: 88-02-8663035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net