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40 feared dead as bus falls into river in Pirojpur

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, May 27: At least 40 passengers were feared dead when a bus fell into the Kacha river from a ferry at Charkhali ferryghat under Bhandaria thana of Pirojpur district today.

The Pirojpur-bound passenger bus of Jhumur Paribahan from Bhandaria fell into the river when the driver lost control of the vehicle due to the brake failure.

Witnesses said, there were 50 to 55 passengers on board when it fell into the river. About 10 to 15 passengers including driver Bishu, 28, could swim ashore.

Fire brigade from Pirojpur, Bhandaria and Jhalakati rushed to the spot and started rescue operations immediately.

Ten people rescued were identified as Taslima Begum, 33, a teacher of Bhandaria College, Sabuj, 26, Helal, 28, Aulad, 40, Hakim, 55, Suman, 10, Haris, 29, Yusuf, 30, Jalil, 40, and Humayun, 26.

Rescue operation was going on till filing of the report at 7-15 pm.

Shipu murder Victim's family alleges threat over telephone

By Staff Correspondent

Police could not arrest Jewel, son of ruling party MP Kamal Ahmed Majumder, accused of killing businessman Iftekhar Ahmed Shipu at Banani on Wednesday night.

Brother of the victim alleged his family is being intimidated by unknown callers over telephone, asking them to drop the name of MP's son from the FIR.

The Dhaka City Shopowners' Association, will observe a three-day programme beginning today to protest Shipu's killing, said leaders of the association yesterday. The shopowners will hoist black flag and wear black badges to protest the killing.

The shopowners of Mahakhali, Gulshan and Banani will observe a half-day hartal on Wednesday to protest the killing, said their leaders yesterday.

The Gulshan police investigating the case told The Daily Star that they raided MP's Banani residence yesterday afternoon.

The MP's wife and son Tomal were present at their house during the raid, police said, adding they did not find Jewel there.

When contacted over phone, one person identifying himself

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Our new numbers

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Inside Today

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Putin's Forward March

by A M M Shahabuddin
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Business

Listed cos want dividend income free from tax

DSE, CSE price quotations
Pages 6 & 7

Supplements

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 2-page supplement on 'South East Bank' on Pages 8 & 9 and one page supplement on 'Safe Motherhood Day' on Page 10

May	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
28		6-40 pm
29	5-11 am	

Prayer Timings

	May 28	May 29
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-30	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-43	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Flash flood in Sylhet

Nor'wester claims 11 lives in city



The living and the dead

A father gets back his lost child (top) while a hapless girl (above) returns home after night duty at a garments factory only to find all her family members dead.-Star photo

By Special Correspondent

At least 11 people were killed and 50 injured as a severe nor'wester accompanied with heavy rains battered the city yesterday, while the inclement weather persisting for the third day caused flooding in Chittagong and threatened to worsen the situation in Sylhet region.

They were killed as two huge bamboo-made two-storied structures built on water at Poolpar at Rayer Bazar collapsed.

Fire brigade sources said 11 bodies were recovered from water. The injured were taken to different hospitals.

Rains and strong winds were reported from many places in the country. Cascading waters from the hills in the north-eastern region, the Manu crossing its danger mark at Manu Railway Bridge in Maulvibazar.

The flood situation in the south-eastern hill basin started to improve yesterday and is likely to improve further.

But flood situation in the Meghna basin may deteriorate with more rains. Rivers in greater Sylhet may rise sharply, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre in the city said.

While the nor'wester on the waning season of storm battered the city and many other areas, the Bay of Bengal continued to remain rough with the advancing monsoon reaching the North Bay near Teknaf coast.

The Meteorological Department advised hoisting of local cautionary signal number three at Chittagong, Mongla and Cox's Bazar for the third consecutive day yesterday.

The monsoon is likely to arrive

See page 11 col 6

Rain threatens Asia Cup opener



By Al-Amin

After days of incessant rain, the weather could well upset the start of the much-expected four-nation Pepsi Asia Cup cricket tournament, scheduled to begin at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

"We are keeping our fingers crossed. We will try to have the first match on Sunday but we are at the mercy of the weather," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, told reporters yesterday.

Weather willing, the mega event, tipped as the most exciting cricket extravaganza next to the World Cup, gets underway with Bangladesh taking on defending champions Sri Lanka in the opener. The day-night match is expected to start at 2.30 pm with the satellite channel Star Sports and the Bangladesh Television airing the proceedings live.

However, as the inclement weather continues to wreak havoc for the last few days, the premium event, also involving India and Pakistan, is, in all probability, heading nowhere but to a false start.

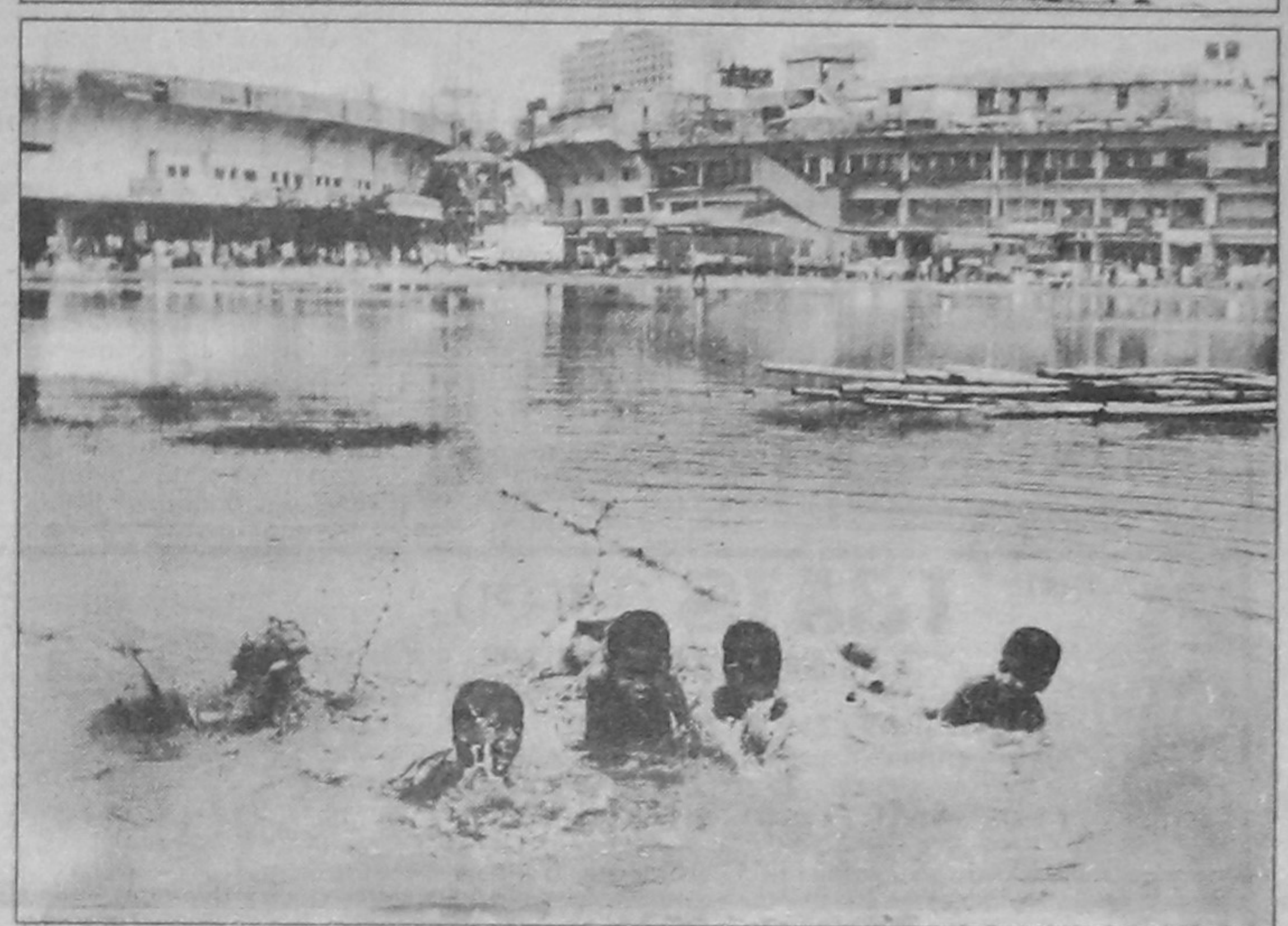
Saber said they were delighted to host the biennial event for the second time after 1988. But there was no sign of smile in his face, as tons of clouds was ominously hovering over the capital after a massive spell of rain early in the morning.

The rare sun however made a brief appearance in the afternoon, attracting hundreds of butterflies at the Stadium, but the fickle fortune shifted its side before another bout of rain splashing all over the capital, much to the agony of the groundsmen.

While the ground, if not the pitches, looked totally out of order, the BCB boss came up with an alternative choice of encountering the uncertain weather.

"This match is still on. In

See page 11 col 7



Two worlds

Inside, some struggle to keep the cricket pitch alright, while some others outside make merry in the rainwater.

— Star photo

A day dawned with devastation

By Morshed Ali Khan

For inmates of the two-storied bamboo-made structures at Poolpar slum in the city's Rayerbazar, the day dawned with a light rain.

Many of them attended a folk function till late Friday night and intended to get up from sleep a little late yesterday, unlike on other days. But the light shower soon turned into a torrential downpour. And within minutes, a devastating wind shook the bamboo structures, about 10 feet from the water below, on top of numerous bamboo poles.

Hawa, a garments worker in her early 20s, shared a room on

the 'upper floor' with a friend, paying Tk 250 per month each. As the velocity of wind rose suddenly, the entire structure started to crumble into the filthy water below. Hawa held her breath and jumped into water. Behind her, screams of men women and children could be heard. Many sleeping on the 'lower floor' had little chance of coming out as the structure went down.

"I heard a roaring sound all around and rushed to the exit, the stairs were gone and then we jumped into water," Hawa said while weeping.

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Trees bear the brunt

By Special Correspondent

Hundreds of trees were flattened, maimed or uprooted in the storm that battered the city yesterday morning.

Even bill boards, hoardings and neon signs along with steel structures were blown away at places by the high winds.

At some places, the twisted materials hung dangerously. A huge steel structure hung over the busy Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, threatening traffic below.

Trees at Suhrawardy Uddayan, Ramna Green, Minto Road, Hare Road and Shere-e-Bangla Nagar bore the brunt of the storm.

At least 50 trees were uprooted on the Dhaka University campus. Branches of trees littered the streets, blocking traffic on many roads for hours till the

City Corporation and the city's poor went out to claim those.

At many streets and parks, vandals had a hey day, selling the trees as fire wood as quickly as possible.

The small green corner opposite Sonargaon Hotel presented an ugly site. Taking the advantage, vandals chopped off many of the unaffected trees there, leaving only the trunks.

It could not be known how many trees were damaged as DCC officials were not available on the weekend.

Many buildings were also damaged by flying debris. The roof of a show room of Karika, a handicraft cooperative for women, was damaged when a steel frame of a bill board atop the Shahbagh Market collapsed.



The wrath

Scores of trees were uprooted by the nor'wester that lashed the city early yesterday. The picture shows one blocking traffic at Minto Road.

— Star photo

500 garment units get into free quota list after expiry of date

By Rafiq Hasan

As many as 500 garments factories were included in the list for free quota allocation for garments export after expiry of the last date for application this year, according to sources concerned.

A section of officials of different garments related organisations got this done with the help of some Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) officials.

The applications were accepted in two phases after the

last date, February 29, the sources said.

The garments organisations which are involved in free quota distribution include Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Bangladesh Terry Towel and Linen Manufacturers Association (BTTLA) and Bangladesh Specialised Textile

Mills and Power Loom Industries Association (BSTMPIA).

When contacted, a high official of EPB said 'some applications' were accepted after the last date because those were lying with the offices of associations. He however added that they did not accept any application 'directly' after expiry of the last date.

Officials of the associations admitted submission of applications after the last date but

said those were rejected by the quota allocation committee comprising association leaders and EPB officials.

Around 25 applications were submitted with the recommendations of BGMEA but those were rejected by the quota allocation committee, said an official of BGMEA.

He also denied that applications were accepted in two phases after the last date. But other sources alleged

that when the application box was opened, around 2000 applications were found but free quota was allocated to around 2,500 factories this year.

The allocation was given in the middle of this month.

Many of the applications submitted after the last date had with those EPB registration certificate and fire licence issued after the date of submission, the sources further alleged.

The applications for free quota were received at EPB's Dhaka and Chittagong offices. Of the 2,500 factories, around 2000 are in Dhaka and Narayanganj and the rest are in Chittagong.

Five per cent of the total export quota is distributed as free quota. Of this, five per cent is kept as reserve quota for Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Flood in Bandarban, 500 families evacuated

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 27: Heavy rainfall triggered flash flood in the low-lying areas of Chittagong region that forced evacuation of over 500 families from Bandarban town administration sources said.

The evacuated people took shelter in the local schools where they were provided with food.

Army personnel took part in the evacuation of those Marooned families from places near Shangu river in Bandarban town yesterday.

The downpour in the last three days caused breach in embankment of Durung Canal in Fatikchhari thana today, rendering about 20 families homeless. The affected families took shelter at safer places administration, sources said.

The heavy rain caused hill collapse in Rangamati and Khagrachhari, sources added.

The rainwater also inundated croplands in the low-lying areas of Chittagong. Roads and culverts were damaged in Raozan, Fatikchhari and Satkania thanas.

Today's visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the port city was cancelled due to inclement weather.

The prime minister was scheduled to inaugurate the six newly set up thanas in the port city in addition to attending a navy function.

Flight operation at Chittagong airport was suspended till 4 pm today due to heavy downpour, airport source said.

Movement of ships at Chittagong port channel was also suspended till this afternoon due to heavy rain. Cargo handling at the port was also hampered. Met office recorded 109 mm rainfall in the past 24 hours ending at 3 pm today.

Assault on newsmen

DU authorities order 'suspended expulsion' of a student

By DU Correspondent

Dhaka University authorities yesterday ordered six months' suspended expulsion of a student for assaulting two journalists on the campus on May 20.

The order will be treated as 'expulsion' if the accused, Majharul Islam Kajol, is found involved in such activities in next six months, the authorities said.

Kajol, general secretary of BCL Zahurul Haq Hall unit and

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BKSJL calls hartal in Tangail today

From Our Correspondent

TANGAIL, May 27: Bangladesh Krishok Samik Janata League has called a half-day hartal in Tangail today demanding immediate release of its district unit leader Murad Siddiqui, younger brother of Abdul Kader Siddiqui.

Murad was arrested from his residence on Wednesday under Public Safety Act (PSA).

Meanwhile, Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League has demanded trial of Murad Siddiqui for killing BCL leaders Ayub Reza Dipri and Saiful Islam. The BCL leaders vowed to resist today's hartal and urged the people not to respond to the call.

A huge contingent of riot police has been deployed in Tangail town.