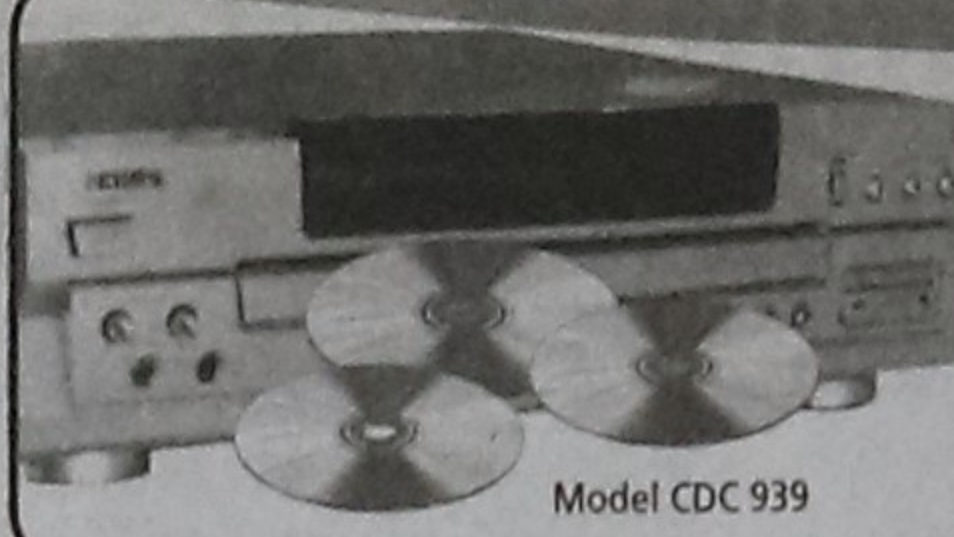


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Image of a creeping flood

Situation in Sylhet, B'baria already as extensive as in '98

By Reaz Ahmad

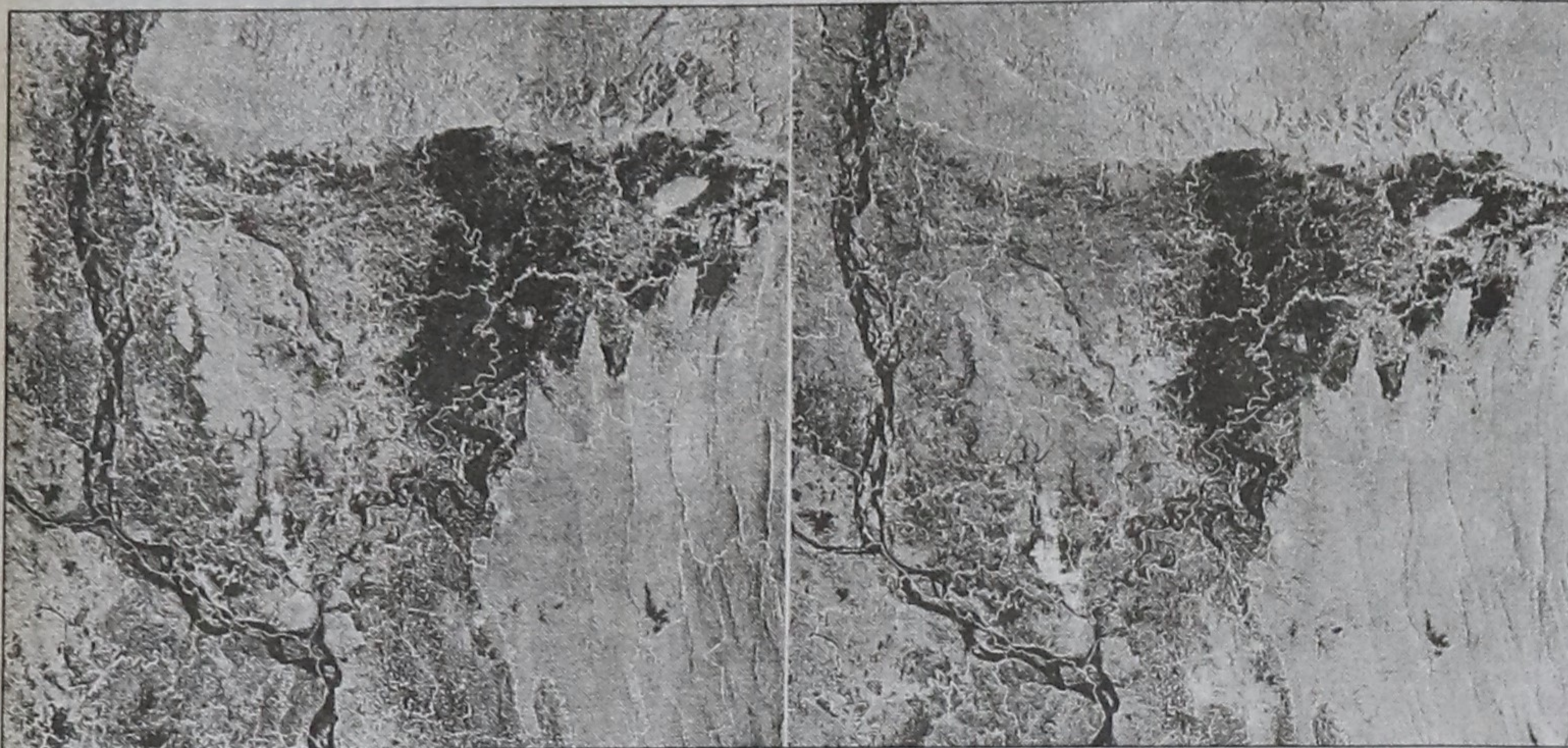
The floods in greater Sylhet and Brahmanbaria districts this year appear as 'extensive as the deluge' in 1998...

This satellite image collected on August 13 on request from the EGIS was received and pre-processed in Canada...

Data on the flood affected areas in Sylhet region showed that 1.7 lakh hectares of land have already been inundated...

In Sunamganj, 2.9 lakh hectares of land have gone under water so far this time and in 1998, 3.2 lakh hectares were...

See page 11 col 1



Radarsat-1 satellite images show the flooded areas in Sylhet and Brahmanbaria (indicated in black) on August 26, 1998 at 5:54 a.m. (left) and on August 13, 2000 at 6:01 p.m.

BNP preparing groundwork for polls

By Rezaul Karim

BNP has taken up extensive measures to finish the groundwork for the upcoming national elections by December.

A good number of senior party leaders, retired bureaucrats, academics, technical experts and cultural activists are doing 'research and homeworks' aimed at contesting the eighth parliamentary polls...

Sources said several groups have been formed on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's instruction to prepare strategies for the election...

The recommendations in-

clude changes in administration, Election Commission and media and to pave the way for a free and fair polls.

A panel of politicians and former bureaucrats is looking into the latest changes including political appointments at home and abroad.

It will be absurd to think that there will be a fair election under the present set-up in the administration at thana and

district levels," a panel member said, adding that BNP would place the list of partisan officials and employees, who have been "transgressing their limits" since Awami League assumed power...

Sources said changes in the Election Commission are being closely watched. They said the BNP will put forward a set of demands, including removal of Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed and Election Commissioner Shafiqur Rahman.

Besides, the BNP will press to recast the EC and bring amendments in the voters' list because election can't be fair

under the present EC and "exaggerated" voters' list, they added.

Another panel of politicians, academics and technical persons are working to chalk out a "unified policy" for the state-run and private sector Radio and Television and government controlled news agency.

Sources said the panel has already gathered the copies of agreement and policy of satellite TV channels being operated from Bangladesh. They said the BNP will suggest to the caretaker administration to set a non-partisan guideline for the private channels to follow during the latter's tenure.

A party leader said the care-

See page 11 col 4

Striking teachers to hold grand rally Aug 26

By Staff Correspondent

Non-government teachers will hold a grand rally at the Central Shaheed Minar on August 26 to press their demands including 100 per cent basic salaries from the government exchequer.

The decision came at a meeting of Bangladesh Teachers Action Coordination Committee (BTACC) with Principal Md. Kamruzzaman in the chair.

The other programmes of the striking teachers include holding of streetside rally in district towns from August 20 to 22 to mobilise public opinion in favour of their six-point demand and sit-in demonstration in district headquarters on August 23.

Teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions will assemble in the capital from August 25 to attend the grand rally.

Teachers leader Dr. M. Akhtaruzzaman, Principal Kazi Farook Ahmed and AKM Zahurul Huq also spoke on the occasion.

Police subedar shot: Ctg BCL activist held

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 17: A police subedar was shot when terrorists fired on a police team at Mughaltoli this afternoon.

The victim subedar Md Yunus received bullet injury in his throat. He was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

The terrorists fired on police team when it raided Mughaltoli at 4 pm today to arrest a BCL activist Saiful Islam Sumon wanted in criminal cases.

Police also returned fire, forcing the terrorists to retreat and arrested Sumon.

Meanwhile, the BCL activists staged a demonstration at Mughaltoli protesting the arrest and damaged some vehicles, police and witnesses said.

A large number of police were deployed to maintain law and order.

CAAB employee arrested for 'currency trade' at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport arrested a Lounge Room Attendant (LRA) of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh for provoking passengers to change their foreign currency at the customs hall yesterday.

Abdur Rahman, son of Jasim Uddin, was arrested near the conveyer belt along with Taka and Riyal worth about Tk. 95,000.

"Rahman was supposed to be posted at the red area on the first floor but he was found with the money near the conveyer belt at customs hall," said a customs official.

The cash was seized by the See page 11 col 3

Gunfight: Chhatak AL factions file separate cases

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Aug 17: A tense situation has been prevailing at Chhatak upazila headquarters in Sunamganj district following an armed clash between two rival groups of Awami League yesterday.

Both the groups filed separate cases blaming each other for the attack.

Chhatak Poursava Chairman Mohammad Majnu Miah lodged a case accusing over 100 people belonging to the rival group of the attack.

Tapash Chowdhury, leader of the other faction, filed another case accusing the ruling party MP Muhibur Rahman Manik, Poursava Chairman Majnu Miah and 15 others.

Over 100 people were injured in the clash at Khurma High School where both the factions arranged programmes at the See page 11 col 5



Happy reunion: South Korean Lee Sun-Hang (R), 81, shares a light moment with his North Korean wife, Hong Kyung-Ok(L), 76, whom he had not seen for 50 years, in Pyongyang yesterday. Lee later returned to South Korea. Story on page 5. —AFP photo

Confessional statement of Mahiuddin extracted under duress: Defence

Defence counsel in the Bangabandhu murder appeal case told the High Court yesterday that the confessional statement of Lt Col (ret'd) Mahiuddin Ahmed was extracted under duress, reports UNB.

"The confessional statement of Mahiuddin was taken forcibly keeping him in illegal confinement and through torture," counsel Khan Saifur Rahman submitted.

He further submitted that the magistrate granted the police seven days' remand of his client. But his confessional statement was extracted after the remand period was over.

The statement is not acceptable as it was not read out to him, and the authorities concern applied force in taking his signature on the statement. After taking all such measures Mahiuddin was thrown in the condemned cell, added the counsel.

Advocate Khan Saifur argued that it is clear that the statement was taken from his client through physical torture.

Taking the thread from his

Rab murder Rangu gives judicial statement, sent to jail

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Aug 17: Rangu Lal Biswas gave judicial statement to Metropolitan Magistrate Sabir Ahmed today.

Earlier, on Wednesday night he confessed to police his involvement and disclosed who were behind the conspiracy to kill AL mayoral candidate S M A Rab.

Rangu was arrested three hours after the murder of Rab on August 11. His brother-in-law James was also arrested the same day. Both were once security guards of Rab.

Two witnesses, homeopath Abdur Rashid and his son Kader, identified Rangu as one of the killers. The statements of the witnesses were recorded by the Metropolitan Magistrate Rabiur Reza Siddiqui.

The two suspects were taken on remand for six days for interrogation showing them arrested in the murder case.

In his judicial statement Rangu said there were seven professional killers in the area where Rab was killed. He himself and two others attacked and killed Rab while he was going to offer Juma prayers.

Four other armed men of a professional killing squad remained stand-by near yards See page 11 col 3

The counsel also pointed to deposition of another prosecution witness who said that Lt Col Mahiuddin was present near the Kalabagan lake. But when ADC Rabbani came to the trial court he did not identify Mahiuddin. If Mahiuddin was really there, Rabbani could identify him.

The counsel argued that a lone witness in his deposition quoted Mahiuddin as saying "the Army should resist the Rakkhi Bahini". Even if he had said so, he said it inside the cantonment. Mahiuddin was found nowhere in the place of occurrence nor he was involved in the killing or conspiracy.

The counsel claimed Mahiuddin as innocent saying that he was neither involved in the killing nor in conspiracy, and his name was not in the FIR.

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Prayer Timings August 18

Table with columns: August, Sun Rises, Sun Sets. Values: Aug 18, Aug 19, 4-30, 5-05, 12-15, 1-30, 5-00, 5-15, 6-40, 6-45, 8-15, 8-45

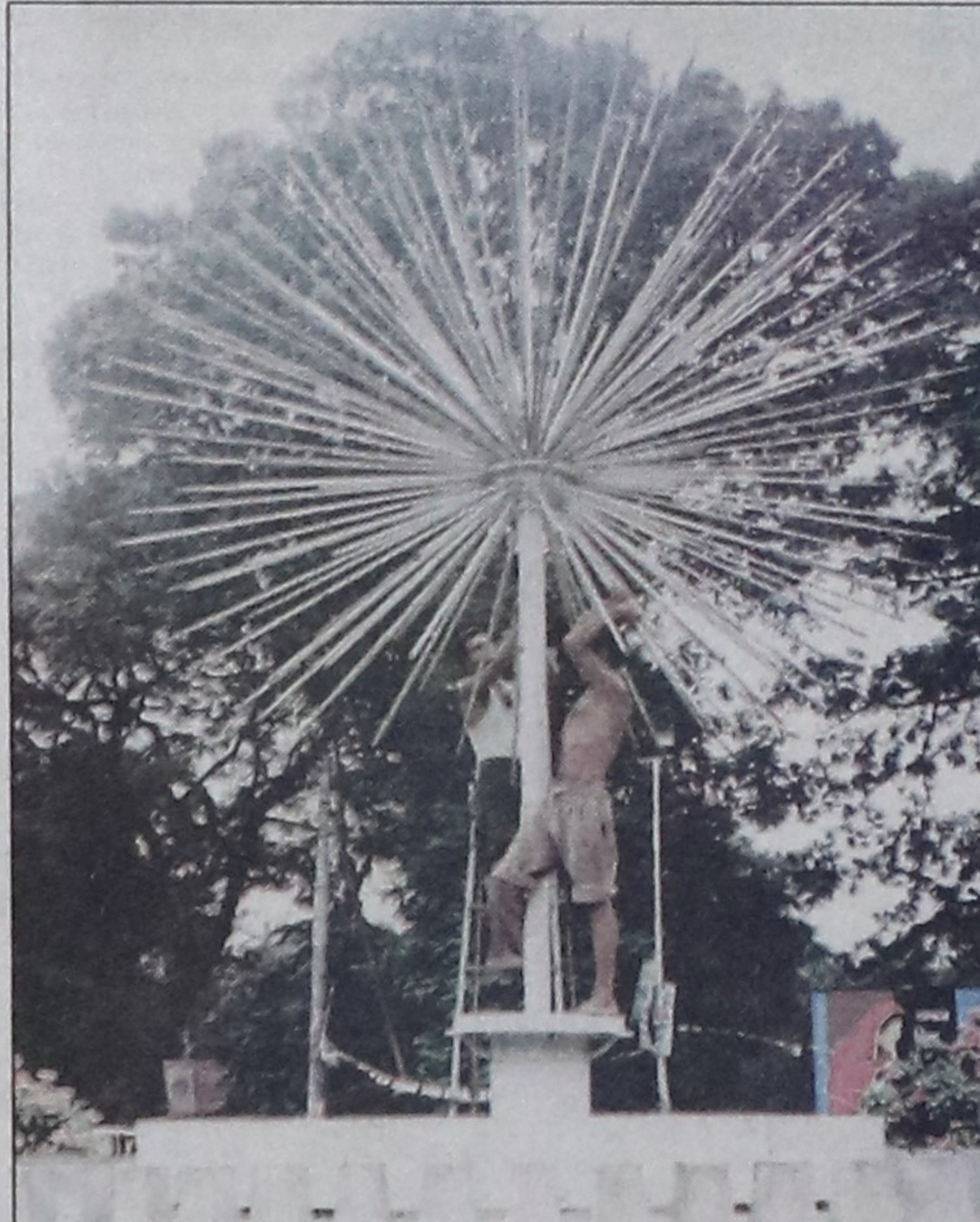
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সায়োদাবাদ পানি শোধনাগারের আওতায় নগরীর বিভিন্ন সড়কে পানির লাইন স্থাপন কাজ ১৭ই আগস্ট থেকে শুরু হয়েছে।

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানান যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা ওয়াসার সায়োদাবাদ পানি শোধনাগার প্রকল্পের আওতায় ঢাকা মহানগরীর বিভিন্ন এলাকায় ৩৮ কিলোমিটার পানির লাইন স্থাপনের লক্ষ্যে ইতোমধ্যে ঢাকা সিটি কর্পোরেশন ও ডিসি (ট্রাফিক) এর কাছ থেকে রাস্তা খননের প্রয়োজনীয় অনুমোদন পাওয়া গিয়েছে এবং নগরীর ইফাটন রোড, সোনারগাঁও রোড ও কাঁটাবন এলাকায় গত ১৭ই আগস্ট থেকে কাজ শুরু হয়েছে। পর্যায়ক্রমে নগরীর অন্যান্য এলাকায়ও উক্ত কাজ করা হবে। পানির লাইন স্থাপন কাজ চলাকালে সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকায় পথচারী ও যানবাহন চলাচলে সৃষ্ট সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য ঢাকা ওয়াসা আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখ প্রকাশ করছে এবং নগরবাসীর সুপেয় পানি সরবরাহ নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে উক্ত কাজ সুষ্ঠুভাবে সম্পাদনে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের আন্তরিক সহযোগিতা কামনা করছে।

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Workers take care of the artificial fountain in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in city yesterday ahead of the visit of Japan's Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori tomorrow. — Star photo

Accord with Chinese firm to build Paksey Bridge

Roads and Highways Department here yesterday signed an agreement with Chinese contractors, Major Bridge Engineering Bureau, to construct the Paksey Bridge over the river Padma, reports UNB.

The 1.8 kilometre long and 18.1 metre wide road bridge, being built under Japanese assistance at a cost of Tk 647.25 crore, will be the second longest bridge of the country.

The bridge, which will connect the country's northern region with the southwestern part, will have a 10-km approach road at the Pabna end

and 6-km at the Kushtia end. After its completion by the year 2003, the bridge will play an important role in transportation of goods under transit arrangements among Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

The Japanese Minister Anwar Hossain Manju, who was present during the signing ceremony at the Sarak Bhaban, thanked Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for its support to the project.

He mentioned the Japanese assistance for the proposed Rupsha Bridge and hoped that

Japan would extend similar support in constructing the proposed Padma Bridge at Mawa in Munshiganj.

The Chinese contractors, Major Engineering Bureau, will build the main bridge as well as carry out the river training works. Construction work of the approach roads will begin in the next dry season.

US firm Parsons Brinckerhoff and Associates has been appointed consultant to the project to construct the four-lane and 17-span concrete bridge about 300 metres downstream of the Hardinge Bridge.

Roads & Highways chief engineer M Abdul Wadud and representative of Major Bridge Engineering Bureau (MBEB) Jhao Jui Ping signed the agreement on behalf of their respective side.

Syed Abul Hossain, MP, joint secretary to the Ministry of Communications, Abul Quasem, JBIC representative Tonomori Sudo, Chinese Embassy official Bu Jianguo, MBEB chairman Yan Wen Xuan and project director Anwar Hossain were, among others, present.

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