

Bad news for Bangladesh

Study predicts more frequent, major floods in later half of this century

Parts of Bangladesh, China and northern Europe face the risk of more frequent, major floods in the latter half of this century because of global warming, according to a study to be published today.

Catastrophically rainy monsoons or winters that previously occurred only once every half century or so may occur every decade or even more frequently, it suggests.

Tim Palmer of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting in Reading, southern England, and Jouni Raisanen of the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute in Norrköping publish their research in the British journal Nature.

In the second half of the 21st century, they believe, Bangladesh will each year run a three-times higher risk of suffering an exceptionally wet monsoon compared with the probability today.

Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands and northern Germany will run a five times higher risk of very wet winters.

And in China, the Tibetan plateau is five to seven times likelier to be hit by exceptional rains than today, Palmer's team estimates.

The plateau feeds many major Chinese rivers, which have gone into severe floods in recent years, exacerbated by severe deforestation that causes water on slopes to run off quickly.

Global warming is the term for man-made warming of the atmosphere, causing mainly by the burning of gas, oil and coal.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) released by this energy hangs in the atmosphere, causing the sun's heat to build up in the air, sea and land rather than radiate safely out into space.

The top UN scientific authority on global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last year said the earth had warmed between 0.4 to 0.8 C (0.7 to 1.4 F) since 1860, the highest increase in a millennium, with the last two decades being the warmest of the century.

It projects a further global average temperature rise of between 1.4 and 5.8 C (2.5 to 10.4 F) from 1990-2100, causing a rise in sea levels through melting polar ice and thermal expansion of between eight and 88 cms (five and 55 inches).

One of the big challenges, though, is predicting whether the warming will also cause extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, hurricanes and El Ninos, that could be costlier in lives and damage than some gradual average rise.

The latest study crunches data from 19 climate models that seek to predict the interplay between the ocean and the atmosphere and how this could affect rainfall.

Under a business-as-usual scenario, in which CO2 concentrations remained unchanged at 330 parts per million throughout the 21st century, an exceptionally rainy season would occur every 40-50 years on a s t a t i s t i c s

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Abducted minor girl rescued: One held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives rescued a two-and-a-half-year old abducted girl from Kotabari in the city's Mirpur area Tuesday night.

A team of detectives headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner Ruhul Amin arrested Nasiruddin alias Palash from Kazipara area and rescued the girl (name withheld by The Daily Star) from the residence of one Bishu at Kotabari.

Police said the girl was abducted from Gairala village under Patiya thana in Chittagong by her uncle on January 26, and was taken to Khalipur village, Suganagar, in Pabna.

The following day, Nasiruddin called his brother on the cell phone and demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom. The victim's father filed a general diary with Patiya Police Station the same day.

Later, her father came to the capital and reported it to the Office of the Detective Branch (DB) of Police and described the incident to ADC Ruhul Amin.

The ADC contacted the Suganagar Police Station and came to know that Nasiruddin left the area for Dhaka on January 29 along with the girl. The abductor told residents of Khalipur village that the girl was his daughter.

Back in Dhaka, Nasiruddin called his brother again on the cell phone and demanded a ransom of Tk 50,000 and a cheque for Tk 2,50,000.

Agreeing to the proposal, his brother asked him to come to Kazipara. As soon as Nasiruddin reached the mutually agreed place, the team of detectives deployed earlier in the area arrested him.

The DB team came to know about the girl through interrogation of the abductor and rescued her.

A case was filed with Mirpur Police Station in this regard.

The accused was produced before the CMM's Court, Dhaka with a prayer for a seven-day police remand. The court granted a two-day remand.

Alleged terrorist gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged terrorist was gunned down by unidentified hoodlums at Tatoi, Mollartek, in the city's Uttara area yesterday evening.

Kana Farid, 28, son of Mohammad Siraj and a resident of Dhakhinpara, Uttara, died on the spot when a gangster fired on him, sources said. The incident occurred when Farid was gossiping with his friend.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police said Farid was a listed criminal accused in five cases.

The duty officer of Uttara Police Station said last night that no case was filed in this regard.

Home ministry yet to confirm report on arrests of 10 top terrors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten of the 23 most wanted top terrors of the country are reportedly among the 75 Bangladeshis rounded up by Kolkata police in the wake of the terror attack on the American Center there, but the Home ministry is yet to confirm the matter.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury while briefing journalists in his office yesterday said that his office came to know through newspapers about the arrest of the men and is trying to get confirmation in this regard from authorities in Kolkata through the foreign office.

A news report on Wednesday said the arrested men included... SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 31		5-44 pm
Feb 1	6-40 am	

Prayer Timings

Jan 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-49	5-55
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Bush singles out Iran, Iraq & N Korea as 'an axis of evil'



President Bush delivers his State of the Union address on Capitol Hill in Washington yesterday.

US vows to act alone if they don't counter terrorism

AFP, Washington

President George W. Bush singled out Iran, Iraq and North Korea as "an axis of evil," bluntly warning the three nations that they could soon become targets in the US-led war on terrorism.

Delivering his first State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress, Bush put the three so-called rogue states on notice that the United States is prepared to act, alone if it has to, against them should they threaten their people, their neighbours or others.

In addition, the president said the United States could and would bear the immense cost of a military campaign against any one of the nations, maintaining that the price of doing nothing to counter such threats "would be catastrophic."

"States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world," Bush said in the speech which appeared to anticipate an extension of the anti-terror campaign beyond Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden.

"By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger," he said. "They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred."

"They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic."

"All nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security," he said. "We will be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events,"

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BAC detects alleged smuggling \$14 lakh in Narayanganj

FAISAL PARAG, Narayanganj

A Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) investigation has revealed the alleged smuggling of US\$14,28,000 by a gang.

The huge amount of foreign currency was smuggled out of the country into India by opening 29 fake L/Cs through IFIC bank Narayanganj over the period between January to June in 2000.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption has lodged three cases in Narayanganj thana in this regard.

Ashrafur Islam, the visitor of the bank department of the bureau, lodged three cases against three organisations of Narayanganj and Narsingdi.

In the first case, Ashrafur Islam complained that Ohibur Rahman, the owner of M/S Salam Fabrics of Panchdona bazar under Narsingdi Sadar thana, and his accomplice Haripad Saha, owner of Shilpi Color Co. of 14, SM Maleh road, Tanbazar, Narayanganj, smuggled USD 9,73,508 to India under a fraudulent scheme.

Ohibur Rahman opened 18 L/Cs through the IFIC bank between 23rd February and 14th May 2000 to import yarn from India with Haripad Saha as the guarantor of the L/Cs. But no yarn was ever imported against these L/Cs.

Ohibur and Haripad presented false statements to the bank by faking seals and signatures of the customs authority of the Hill and

Dinajpur borders. Narayanganj IFIC branch paid USD 9,73,508 to the bank account of these two people in India. Later however IFIC realised that the import papers were fake.

The Haripad Saha gang followed almost the same process in two other incidents.

In the second incident, Nur Mohammad Mia, owner of Rita Enterprise of Narsingdi, opened 8 L/Cs through the Narayanganj branch of IFIC bank between 11th April to 7th June 2000 with Haripad Saha as guarantor. Together they smuggled USD 4,61,858 against these 8 L/Cs. Once again, no yarn was also imported.

In the third incident, Haripad

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2 PBCP armed cadres jailed for 19 yrs each

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rafiqul Islam Bitu and Sayeedul Islam alias Khura Sayeed, two armed cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party, have been sentenced to 19 years rigorous imprisonment each in an arms case.

The judgement in the case was delivered Tuesday afternoon by Didar Ali Fakir, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Khulna.

Bitu and Khura Sayeed were arrested on August 19, 2000 from a house at Raipara under Khulna thana along with two revolvers and seven bullets.

The two armed cadres of PBCP are also among the accused in SMA Rob murder case.

First 20 days' flow of Ganges matches accord quantum

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The quantum of Ganges water flow in the first 20 days of the current dry season that began on January 1 has been found 'commensurate' with the quantum described in the 30-year Indo-Bangladesh water accord, sources said yesterday.

This was found by a team of experts of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Committee (JC) which went for a three-day spot technical and procedural study at the Hardinge

Bridge site on Monday.

The wrap-up technical meeting of the Joint Committee was held in the city yesterday.

At the meetings, the Bangladesh team was led by Towhidul Anwar Khan, Member of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC).

The Indian team was headed by M M Goyal, JRC Member from the Indian side.

According to the data recorded recently, Bangladesh received

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Saifur should resign if he has lost donors' trust: Kibria

UNB, Dhaka

Former finance minister SAMS Kibria yesterday asked his successor Saifur Rahman to step down if he has really lost the confidence of donors.

He made the plea when asked by UNB to comment on Saifur's statement that international donor agencies do not believe his mere words.

"Why should the donor agencies distrust the Finance Minister? What has he done within the last few months to lose their trust?" asked Kibria.

The finance minister of the past Awami League government said he was shocked to read in newspapers that while addressing the officers of Janata Bank at its annual conference Saifur said he lost the trust of the donor community.

Some papers quoted the finance minister as saying that international funding organisations do not believe his commitments about restoring macroeconomic stability. He was of course blaming the state-owned banks for this lack of credibility.

Kibria said, "The remarks made the people wonder whether the economy of the country is safe in the hands of an unbalanced person. Indeed, in the interest of the country he should resign if he has really lost the confidence of the donor community."

Bank reform, he said, is an ongoing process and despite many hurdles considerable progress has already been made. It is certainly possible to achieve further progress if the government and the banking

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Pvt investment in tourism to get maximum support: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government will extend all cooperation to private entrepreneurs, both local and foreign, in developing the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

"We have adopted a policy to give priority to the private sector in the interest of speedy growth of tourism. Like other industrial sectors, this sector will get all investment facilities," she said.

The prime minister was inaugurating a year-long programme at Sonargaon Hotel in observance of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 declared by the United Nations.

"We will welcome and extend cooperation to our private entrepreneurs to develop the tourism industry through proper utilisation of the vast scope in Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, St Martin's Islands and Inani," Khaleda said.

She said these areas could be made more attractive for tourists by constructing hotels, motels and golf clubs. "For this, we would welcome local and foreign entrepreneurs."

The PM said guided tours to Bangabhaban, Jatiya Sangsad, Prime Minister's Bhaban and Office, Supreme Court Bhaban and other important national and public establishments could be arranged for students initially for once a

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurates the International Ecotourism-2002 at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Kolkata attackers wanted to kill N-don, kidnap two cricket stars?

AFP, New Delhi

Aftab Ansari -- the mafia don who claimed responsibility for the attack on the American Centre in Kolkata -- had planned to assassinate the scientist behind India's nuclear programme and kidnap two cricket stars, a report said yesterday.

Investigations into the shooting in which gunmen opened fire on guards at the American Centre, killing five, revealed that Ansari -- backed by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence -- had planned to kill

scientist APJ Abdul Kalam four months ago, the Hindustan Times said.

"Hitmen had shadowed Kalam, but had to abort the plan because they couldn't acquire enough weapons in time," the Times said, citing internal police documents.

Kalam is the former scientific advisor to the prime minister and was the main brain behind India's 1998 nuclear tests. He is also credited with developing its short and long range missile programmes.

The Times said Ansari had also planned to kidnap star batsman, Sachin Tendulkar, and the captain of the national team, Saurav Ganguly.

"Ansari's plan for kidnapping Tendulkar was straight forward: kidnap the batting legend for ransom. But he wanted Ganguly abducted so that he could trade the Indian cricket captain for the release of Mohammad Amir Khan, a Lashker-e-Taiba militant who is in Tihar Jail (in Delhi)," the report said.

Ansari, alias Farhan Malik, had called from Dubai to claim responsi

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Hajj flights: Failure of pvt operators reviewed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

But the two are yet to operate any flights, as they are yet to obtain landing permission by Saudi Arabian authorities for their chartered aircraft, civil aviation sources said.

It was however not clear how they obtained permission from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh to operate chartered aircraft.

A number of people who booked their flights with one of the operators, Air Bangladesh, rushed to its office at a city hotel yesterday to

know the fate of their flights.

Air Bangladesh officials could not be contacted despite repeated attempts. The state minister for civil aviation was also not available for comments.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs allocated a total of 45,000 pilgrims to be handled by private travel agents and tour operators for this year but these agencies have so far been unable to make any consider-

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