

Tidal surge in coastal belts

FROM PAGE 1 Pirojpur, Jhalakati, Barguna, Barisal and Patuakhali were inundated.

Maximum sustained wind speed within 54 kms of the storm centre was about 65 kilometre per hour (KPH), rising up to 85 kph in gusts in the coastal belt. Panic-stricken people in different coastal areas moved to cyclone shelters yesterday.

The storm is reminiscent of the disastrous cyclone in November 12 in 1970, which killed about 10 lakh people and left several lakh homeless in the coastal areas of Bhola and Monpara.

Tidal waves hit Kuakata, a tourist town in Barisal.

The Mongla port in Khulna hoisted cautionary signal number seven while Chittagong port and Cox's Bazar showed cautionary signal number 6.

Most of the river ports in the coastal area have been asked to show cautionary signal number two. All fishing boats and trawlers over the North Bay have been advised remain in shelters till further notice.

The Met office sources said, the highest rainfall of 162 millimeter from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday was recorded in Jessore. The rainfall recorded in other areas were 123 mm in Dhaka, 77 mm in Khulna, 68

in Satkhira, 44mm in Barisal, 44 mm in Tangail, and 30 mm in Mymensingh.

Moderate to heavy rainfall was recorded all over the country during the last 24 hours.

In the city, Disaster and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf held an emergency meeting yesterday to take preparations to face any possible disaster situation.

In Chittagong, the district administration, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), Bangladesh Navy and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) took precautionary measures to face any possible situation. The district administration and the CCC have set up control rooms to monitor the situation.

The CCC also kept volunteers and vehicles ready to evacuate people from coastal areas, if necessary.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) declared all operational activities at the port suspended since yesterday afternoon. It also kept over one hundred workers and employees ready with equipment for rescue operation, if needed.

Two cargo vessels were sent to outer anchorage in the evening for safety.

CPA took the precautionary measures as per the decisions

taken at an emergency meeting with its Chairman Commodore (ret) Zulfiker Ali in the chair. Shipping secretary Golam Rahman was also present at the meeting.

Bangladesh Navy moved all its warships of Flotilla Naval Base from near the port city. Four of its frigates including Frigate DW 2000 (former BNS Bangabandhu) were sent to the Bay near Saint Martin's island.

Tk 5 lakh, gold ornaments looted in Fatullah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Robbers identifying themselves as army personnel looted Tk five lakh and 400 grams of gold ornaments from a house at Dharmaganj under Fatullah thana on Monday night.

Fatullah police said a gang of about 25 people knocked the gate of the residence of businessman Sanowar Hossain at about midnight, saying they were army personnel.

As the house owner opened the gate, they entered the house, tied up all the inmates at gunpoint and looted Tk five lakh, 400 gms of gold ornament and other valuables. The robbers decamped in a tawler.

9 get life term for killing three in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Netrakona, yesterday sentenced nine people to life term imprisonment for killing three persons.

The convicts are Abul Mia, Ali, Hadis Mollick, Nurul Islam, Kalam, Nazu, Khaleque and Momin. All the nine hail from village Mozaffarpur under Kendua upazila of the district.

The court also fined the convicts Tk 5000 each, in default, they will have to suffer five more months in the jail.

According to the prosecution, the accused killed Ataul, Mokshud Ali and Shahid of the same village on December 5, 1996 as a sequel to previous enmity.

Judge Mohammad Aminul Islam, after examining the records and witnesses, pronounced the verdict.



A female passenger struggles free out of a rickshaw that tipped over on a rain-filled pockmarked road in front of the Mouchak Market in the city yesterday -- the day marked by depression-induced rains.

Debate on army

FROM PAGE 1 added.

"Notices and questions are being scrutinised and most of the them are likely to be dropped as the session could be brief," said a parliament official.

As promised earlier, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar is expected to accept privilege motions about arrests and alleged harassment of some opposition lawmakers but is unlikely to entertain opposition notices seeking general discussions on the issues, sources close to him said.

The opposition lawmakers, meanwhile, hinted that they might stage walkouts should the Speaker refuse to allow them to speak on crucial issues such as promulgation of a new law to set up special tribunals for trial of six major criminal offences.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Committee of the parliament sits at 2:00pm today to decide length and width of the fifth session.

In the meeting, the AL members would demand that the session continue for at least 20 working days, party sources said.

Besides the anti-crime crackdown, the AL would also ask for discussions on reports of two national committees on gas and price-hike of essential commodities.

Some ruling BNP lawmakers may also come up with guarded remarks about the countryside army crackdown in which houses and cars of some of the party's MPs were searched besides arrest and torture of many of its activists, insiders said.

However, ruling party sources said, its role in the House would largely depend on how the party MPs are guided by the party hierarchy.

While the AL has made public statements accusing the government of using the army to persecute the opposition, the BNP is facing pressure from within, as most of the arrested are its leaders and activists.

The AL is likely to discuss the issues it plans to raise in the House at a meeting of its parliamentary party in a day or two. The BNP Parliamentary Party (BNP) may also sit before the parliament goes into session at 11am tomorrow.

In the session, the government plans to introduce a number of bills including the one on setting up special tribunals for the speedy trial in selected crimes. Other bills include Money Laundering Prevention Act, the National Agriculture Award Act and the Court-Fees (Amendment) Act and three more seeking amendments to regulations of arms, explosive and narcotics.

Security men

FROM PAGE 1 remain under the custody of the government until further orders in this regard.

Officer-in-charge of the police station concerned or an assigned official of DC office will issue receipts to the depositors. They have to produce the receipts at the time of taking back the arms, and ammunition.

The statement also said that the earlier order to cancel licenses of the arms that were not deposited in time and were also seized would remain effective.

Legal measures will be taken against violators of the order under the Arms Act of 1978.

Hasina: Arms

FROM PAGE 1 In applying for a waiver of the order in case of Hasina, her PS had told the home ministry, "If the arms are deposited according to the official notification, personal security of Sheikh Hasina would be threatened."

He cited recent incidents of armed attack on her in Naogaon on March 4 and in Kolaroa on August 30 this year.

In the application he also said, "Besides, many of the killers who were convicted in the Bangabandhu murder case are still absconding (and are) posing a threat on the life of Sheikh Hasina, the eldest daughter of the Father of the Nation. Such adverse circumstances construe a clear threat on Sheikh Hasina's life".

DCC tender

FROM PAGE 12 mayor was under immense pressure from the commissioners not to form any committee.

Contacted last night, DCC Chief Engineer Quamruzzaman Mahmud told The Daily Star that he had no information about the committee.

Earlier, The Daily Star reported that the commissioners got 10 per cent commission for each work from the contractors for collecting and dropping the tender schedules. The executive engineers of the ten zones of the DCC had taken two per cent commission.

Bright prospect

FROM PAGE 10 to the intended women entrepreneurs of this region for export of their products, particularly the agro-based ones.

A top CCCI official told The Daily Star that the process was already underway for opening the one-stop cell under Research Development Cell of CCCI.

Khosru said the government was taking different steps to this end. A fund of around Tk. 300 crore was also created for helping the intended small-scale business entrepreneurs and assisting export of their products.

He directed the EPB to complete all the procedures to train up the intended women entrepreneurs on exporting products within the next three months and make arrangement of export of agro-processed products by next six months.

The seminar was told that there were scopes for setting up of industrial parks in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) specially at Rangunia and Kaptai. These areas with huge forest and natural resources could be excellent source of raw materials for agro-based industries.

The commerce minister said for the agro-processed products of CHT there was a brighter prospect and in this regard he called for making Rangamati Chamber of Commerce and Industry more active for helping the intended women entrepreneurs there.

Over one hundred intended women entrepreneurs from different parts of the region, business leaders and officials related with business promotion participated in the seminar.

Iraqi parliament says no

FROM PAGE 12 the outset of their mission, a proposal backed by the League.

But he warned that Iraq must take the initiative and launch "armed action" if diplomacy fails to resolve the disarmament impasse.

In Paris, Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin departed from France's previously less threatening line, warning there will "obviously be a use of force" if Iraq fails to cooperate.

"It is up to Saddam Hussein, and Saddam Hussein alone, to meet his international obligations," de Villepin told France Inter radio.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia had Monday called on Baghdad to comply with the UN measure to lift the spectre of war from the region.

Meanwhile US President George W Bush continued with war preparations.

Bush used Veterans' Day celebrations to remind Saddam the United States was prepared to disarm him by force with or without UN permission.

The UN resolution passed Friday

gave Iraq one last chance to rid itself of any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

But US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld questioned whether UN arms inspections could succeed in disarming Iraq, while insisting the US military was "fully capable" of toppling Saddam.

Iraq has been given one week, until November 15, to agree to comply with the resolution and until December 8 to give full accounting of its weapons programs or to face retaliation. Baghdad has denied having weapons of mass destruction.

At a White House reception for veterans, Bush gave prominence to war talk.

"Should military action become necessary for our own security, I will commit the full force and might of the United States military and we will prevail," he said.

US media reported late Monday that Iraq has ordered its diplomats to use the cover of Iraqi embassies to conduct an aggressive surveillance effort against US facilities overseas.

In the Philippine capital of Manila, a Veterans' Day ceremony had to be cancelled after an Iraqi diplomat was observed videotaping the area where it was to be held, according to ABC News.

But an Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman angrily denied the report, saying it was based on "false information picked up from US intelligence sources whose intent is to harm the image of Iraqi diplomatic missions."

In Brussels, NATO chief George Robertson said alliance leaders would use a summit next week to discuss possible action if Iraq fails to abide by the resolution, although a likely absentee is Germany, which has made clear it will have no part in military action.

The November 20-21 Prague summit will deliver a "strong political message" on the resolution demanding Baghdad's full cooperation with weapons inspectors, he said.



Iraqi deputies vote during an emergency parliament meeting in Baghdad yesterday. Iraq's parliament proposed rejection of UN Resolution 1441, but agreed to leave the final word to President Saddam Hussein. (Story on Page-12).

Navy men beat OC

FROM PAGE 12 cian at Gorokghata of Moheshkhali upazila.

At one stage of the altercation, the ex-army person allegedly ransacked the chamber of the physician, who lodged a complaint with the local police station. The ex-army person was later arrested and sent to custody.

Sources said local naval forces were informed of the matter, who summoned the Moheshkhali Police Station OC to the local Naval Commander Camp at around 9:00am yesterday.

Earlier, the navy also brought the physician and a local tribal youth, Mong Ree Prue, to the camp and

allegedly beat them up.

The OC was accused of taking bribe from Dr Pranab to file the case against the ex-army man. But the OC vehemently refuted the allegation and later, he was allegedly beaten up by the navy men.

Sources said the physician and the OC are now undergoing treatment at the Cox's Bazar Hospital. The tribal youth was also admitted to the Moheshkhali Thana Health Complex.

The district commissioner and police super of Cox's Bazar reportedly visited the injured OC and the physician. A general diary was lodged with the concerned police station, sources said.

Prepaid phone

FROM PAGE 12 of Formula One, said, "If the government wants further deposit, it has to proportionately raise my current 15 per cent commission."

He said the bank guarantee of Tk 50 lakh in favour of the MOPT should cover the "imaginary" revenue pilferage of the BTB.

Referring to the "toll free" number issue, Masood said his company will pay for every customer service call - therefore, BTB's interest is fully ensured. The toll-free feature must be offered by the main telephone service provider BTB - as in other countries.

But the BTB chairman denied that the "toll free" feature was the BTB's responsibility.

On October 20, the BTRC told the BTB that licence of Formula One remains valid and the law will take its own course if the BAC finds any anomaly.

Referring to the government's continuous revenue loss and people's inaccessibility to telecom service, the regulator asked the BTB to launch the PCCS in seven workdays.

The telecom regulator also advised the BTB to temporarily suspend the "toll free" provision and allow Formula One to launch its prepaid service.

In reply, on October 28, the BTB refused to comply with BTRC and requested the regulator to cancel its "inappropriate" decision.

It will be incurring a loss of Tk 1.90 lakh in interests a month from this month.

"While the illegal international calling card business is mushrooming and eroding the government's revenues, it's not clear why the government is opposing my legitimate business," said the chairman of Formula One.

Hasina urges

FROM PAGE 12 unspecified press reports to say that there are as many as 10 lakh illegal arms in the country.

The opposition leader resented the release of a Bogra BNP leader who had fired at army personnel and demanded of the government to allow the army to operate neutrally.

Hasina expressed concern that the government is yet to explain the legal cover for involvement of the army in the anti-crime drive.

She said that at the initial stage of the ongoing drive, people had a sigh of relief, but with the arrest of leaders like Sabar Hossain Chowdhury, Sheikh Selim and Talukder Khaleque, the operation started losing neutrality.

Hasina suspected that notorious criminal Kala Faruq was killed because he would have "revealed secret information about the prime minister and her family."

The AL president said the ruling alliance had to call out the army because it had created a law and order situation. She claimed that 24,000 people were killed in last one year as the government released 45,000 criminals from jails.

Transport owners

FROM PAGE 12 Authority (BRTA) has not issued them any fitness certificate.

Policemen often stop trucks on the highways and want to see fitness certificates. The drivers manage to get away by bribing them, they informed the high army officials.

They also said that they would extend all out co-operation to army if they take any initiative to stop extortion and terrorism in the transport sector, according to sources.

The army officials assured that they would swing into action very soon to address the problems.

On Monday, the transport owners and army officials also discussed the issue. More than a dozen leaders of various transport owners and workers were present at the meeting held at Dhaka cantonment, according to sources.

The associations which were represented at the meeting include Bangladesh Truck Malik Samity, Bangladesh Covered Van Malik Association, Bangladesh Truck Drivers Union, Inter-District Truck Drivers Sramik Union, Bangladesh Transport Agency Owners Association and Bangladesh Long Vehicle Owners Association.

The meetings followed the visit of a group of army officials to Tejaon Central Truck Terminal earlier. The army officials talked to the transport owners and drivers and inquired about extortion in transport sector. They also queried about extortion at truck terminals and truck stands in the city and different parts of the country.

Motorcade attack Madaripur court to hear Selim's bail petition on Nov 16

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

The District and Sessions Judge's Court, Madaripur, yesterday fixed November 16 for hearing the bail petition of former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, MP, an accused in a case filed with Madaripur sadar thana in connection with an attack on the motorcade of the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia on June 17 last year.

The defence lawyers filed a criminal revision with the Sessions Judge's Court on November 2, seeking bail against the rejection order of a First Class Magistrate's Court, Madaripur.

The magistrate's court on October 30 rejected the bail petition of the accused.

Selim, chairman of Awami Jubo League, was arrested on October 21 from his Banani residence in the city under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

Later, he was shown arrested in two separate cases - one was filed with Madaripur sadar police station while the other with Keranigonj police station in Dhaka district in connection with the attack on the motorcade.

Robbers loot

FROM PAGE 12 The gang confined the employees in a room at gunpoint, took the key of almihara and looted Tk 8 lakh.

High officials of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) visited the spot and formed three police teams to nab the dacoits, police said.

Nurunnabi Kabir, cashier of the enterprise, lodged a case with Panchlajsh police in this connection.

Ershad dropped

FROM PAGE 12 But Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Quamaruzzaman phoned Ershad, requesting him not to attend the party, when Ershad and Howladar were heading for the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Quamaruzzaman reasoned out to Ershad that some leaders of the four-party alliance expressed reservation about his invitation.

"It's disheartening that someone has invited a person to a religious function and cancelled the invitation later," Ershad told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

On the other hand, Quamaruzzaman told The Daily Star that Ershad himself did not attend the party. Asked to specify if the invitation was cancelled at the last moment, he sidestepped the question, saying, "It's not supposed to happen."

The party was attended by, among others, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her cabinet members and political secretaries, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, and Mps.

NGO activities

FROM PAGE 1 Dhuiyan also informed them that the cabinet committee would confer with NGO leaders soon to finalise the policy. It is expected that the policy would be placed at the cabinet meeting sometime next month, official sources said.

The delegation also requested information regarding government investigation on the activities of the five NGOs - Proshika, PRIP-Trust, International Volunteer Services, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha and Centre for Development Services.

About the investigation, the minister informed them that the inquiry committee has completed it and has submitted the report to the Prime Minister's Office.

Sources at the meeting said the minister appreciated the efforts of a lot of NGOs. But, he regretted that a section of NGO leaders openly worked for a particular political party before the election, contrary to the ideals and activities of the NGOs.

"We want to see the NGOs working towards poverty alleviation and involved in social not political activities," he told the delegation.

About the imposition of tax on

NGOs, the LGRD minister said although the main activities of the NGOs fall within social activities, some NGOs tend to be doing business.

As a result, he informed, such local NGOs may be imposed with tax. However, taxation on foreign NGOs is yet to be decided.

Meeting sources said the minister said the government would welcome any good suggestion from anybody regarding the formulation of policy for the NGOs.

Talking to reporters, the LGRD minister said the government is strengthening the NGO Bureau to facilitate the non-government organisations.

Other members of the delegation were Ambassador of the European Commission Esko Kentrshynskyj, Mission Director of USAID Gene V. George, First Secretary of Institutional Development of the Dutch embassy in Dhaka Renate Ph. Pors and Second Secretary of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh Josephine Kalinaucks. Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau AHM Abul Kashem was also present on the occasion.

Ward commissioner

FROM PAGE 1 operations of the joint forces.

Our Khulna correspondent reports that joint forces yesterday carried out an intensive search on every floor of the ten-storey Chamber Mansion, which houses the office of the Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

The raid took place while a meeting of the KCCI executive committee was on. The troops asked for KCCI president Nazrul Islam and two of his aides - Humayun Kabir and Mohammad Jamal.

The three were not present at the meeting. Kabir, also editor of the Khulna-based Danik Tathya, has gone into hiding since Operation Clean Heart began on October 17, sources said.

The raid on the Chamber Mansion, meanwhile, ended without any arrest or seizure of firearms.

Our Magura correspondent reports that the army arrested four people including an activist of the outlawed Sarbahara Party yesterday.

Also yesterday, Nazim Uddin Ahmed, general secretary of the Magura BNP who was arrested by the army and handed to the police on

November 5, was released on bail.

Police had shown him arrested in a case related to a local clash, filed with the Sadar station in September.

Ahmed was produced before the court for the second time yesterday before it granted him bail.

Our Bogra correspondent reports that the army arrested 16 people including a student activist of the Duchanchia upazila unit of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD).

Our Netrakona correspondent reports that the army recovered two walkie-talkies along with fifty-five rounds of ammunition from Lipshia vilage of Khaliarjuri yesterday.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports that two notorious criminals from were arrested yesterday.

Our correspondent in Barisal reports that the army has so far arrested 32 people including eight listed criminals since Operation Clean Heart began on October 17. Of them, 19 were detained under the Special Powers Act. Detention proposal for five is still pending.

District secretary of the Jatiya Party and ward commissioner Kabir Uddin Hannu and Jubo Dal leaders Behari Aktar and Majibur Mallik are among the arrested.

In Chapainawabganj, troops arrested BNP general secretary and president of the Sonamasjid Customs Check-post C&F Agent's Association Ashraf Alam Rashid and Shibganj Poura BNP general secretary Masud Rana Tutul.

Fuel price

FROM PAGE 1 our major concern is that fuel is being smuggled to India where prices are much higher," Mosharrif Hossain said.

He claimed that fuel sale has increased dramatically due to smuggling, but did not give any statistics to back up his claim.

According to the new proposal, price of each litre of octane would be around Tk 35, a straight 17 per cent increase on the current Tk 30 a litre. Petrol would cost Tk 33 per litre, an 18 per cent jump from the current Tk 28. Diesel and kerosene would cost Tk 21 a litre, which are now selling at Tk 17. Furnace oil price would be fixed at Tk 12 a litre, a 33 per cent jump from the existing Tk 9.

According to ministry sources, the government is well aware of the negative impact the price hike would have on the cost of living and industry. Specially, the hike in diesel, kerosene and furnace oil prices would affect industry and agriculture.

Moreover, transport fare, which has already gone up in the last six months, would once again increase.

Meantime, Mosharrif said the proposed rates have been set keeping in mind Indian fuel prices. He said each litre of octane sells at around Tk 39 in India. Petrol sells at Tk 37.50 per litre, diesel at around Tk 24, furnace oil at Tk 15 and kerosene at around Tk 19, the state minister said.

Moudud

FROM PAGE 1 legal measures. Asked what would happen in case of death in army custody, Moudud only said "law will take its own course".

Asked whether appropriate legal process is being followed in the ongoing army drive, Moudud avoided a direct reply. "Since there is law, it is surely being applied," was all he said.

He said the speedy trial tribunal is not completely related to the current clampdown, rather they are complementary to each other. He also noted that murder, rape, arson and other types of cases for which police have