

DND Dam overflowed

FROM PAGE 1
Water Development Board of the dam leakage from the beginning, but the authorities were also.

Reports from the flood-hit areas said sufferings of the affected people are mounting in the absence of adequate relief operation. The district administrations distributed relief materials, which were insufficient.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief yesterday allocated Tk 12.50 lakh in cash and 650 tonnes of rice worth Tk 9.5 lakh for four flood-hit districts -- Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Sirajganj. The money and rice will be distributed among families affected by flash floods, officials said.

Officials at the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said although the situation in Narsinghdi, Narayanganj and Kishoreganj districts is likely to remain almost unchanged, the situation would improve in Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Ranpur and Kurigram in the next two days.

Flood situation in Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Pabna, Tangail, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Rajbari and Madaripur districts are likely to deteriorate.

According to a bulletin of the FFWC, flood situation in the Meghna basin is likely to remain unchanged. Light to moderately heavy rainfall at most places and heavy fall at some places in the Brahmaputra basin and light to moderately heavy rainfall at most places in the Ganges basin were recorded during the 24 hours till 09:00 am yesterday.

Our Correspondent in Gaibandha reported that flood situation deteriorated as the Teesta and the Brahmaputra swelled further.

Thirty-five unions in the district are affected. A portion of the Brahmaputra flood control embankment at Kalikesh under Fulchhari upazila was washed away by surging waters.

A three-year-old child, Selim, of village Dhamaruha under Shaghata upazila drowned in floodwater.

The marine yard of Balashi Railway Ferry Ghat and several hundred feet of rail track has gone under water. Transhipment of goods wagons remained suspended

CIA takes blame

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African country of Niger. A month later, the administration retracted the allegation after learning that the British intelligence it was based upon had been forged.

Tenet acknowledged Friday that the CIA had tried unsuccessfully for months to substantiate the British allegation and that State Department intelligence analysts believed the claim was "highly dubious," yet neither stopped Bush from making the claim in a single sentence of his annual address to the nation.

"These 16 words should never have been included in the text written for the president," Tenet conceded in a statement.

"Let me be clear about several things right up front," he said. "First, CIA approved the president's State of the Union address before it was delivered. Second, I am responsible for the approval process in my agency. And third, the president had every reason to believe that the text presented to him was sound."

The director took his cue from Bush and Rice, who hours earlier blamed the error on the CIA.

"I gave a speech to the nation that was cleared by the intelligence services," Bush told reporters in Uganda. If the CIA director had concerns about the information, "these doubts were not communicated to the president," Rice added.

Key members of Congress called for someone to be held accountable.

"The director of central intelligence is the principal adviser to the president on intelligence matters. He should have told the president. He failed. He failed to do so," said Senate Intelligence Committee chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan.

for the last three days. Several hundred wagons have been stranded as a result.

Reports from Manikganj said the Padma and the Jamuna are still in spate. Water Development Board officials said the Jamuna at Aricha point is flowing 64 cm above danger level. More areas of Hariampur, Shivalaya and Daulatpur upazilas have been inundated, disrupting road communication.

Hariampur upazila complex is under water. Local officials estimated that about 25,000 people have been marooned in charlands in Hariampur and Daulatpur upazila. Many of them have moved to nearby schools.

Our Sherpur Correspondent said the worsened yesterday due to onrush water from across the border, rise of the Brahmaputra and incessant rains.

District Relief Officer Siddique Hossain said Jhenaigathi and Nalitabar upazilas are the worst affected.

District administration sources said Dhaka-Jamalpur road communication was snapped yesterday.

A report from Pabna said flood situation worsened yesterday with fresh areas in Bera and Sujaganar upazila inundated. Nearly 10,000 families in eight unions of Bera and five unions of Sujaganar have been affected.

Officials said floodwater damaged over 7,000 thatched houses. The affected unions are Haturia-Nakalia, Ruppur, Masumdia, Notun Barendra, Pura Barendra, Jatsakin, Dhalarchar and Koitola of Bera and Nazirganj, Manikhat, Satbaria and Sagarkandi of Sujaganar upazila.

Thousands of marooned people have taken shelter on flood protection embankment and roads and in educational institutions. About 13 tonnes of rice and Tk 30,000 were sanctioned for the affected people in the two upazila, officials said.

Shahbazpur

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development work at Shahbazpur gas field in June 2001 with the objective of feeding a 20 MW power plant as well as supplying gas to the energy starved south-western region gradually.

The field is expected to supply 20 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of gas initially. Though the country consumes above 1250mmcf of gas, the south-western region could not be brought under gas supply scheme.

But the fruit of the present gas development project would not be immediately reaped, as the government has not yet decided on the 20 MW power plant.

At the fag end of the Awami League rule, the bidding for the project was floated but the three-month caretaker administration halted the over-priced scheme. The project remains shelved since then.

In the mid-2000, the government assigned BAPEX to prepare a development plan for Shahbazpur gas field which happened to be the centre of focus of the controversial Western Region Integrated Project (WRIP) of the US oil company Unocal.

Drilling the same well back in 1994, the BAPEX ran into similar problem due to unexpected high pressure inside the well. The national explorers however succeeded eventually to push ahead the scheme and struck gas there in the following year.

But BAPEX stumbled again as soon as gas was discovered. As Shahbazpur is located in the offshore Bhola island, the government was hesitant about developing the field through BAPEX to cater for the gas need of the south-western region and opted for foreign investment instead.

But rather going for an open invitation for foreign investment, the government sealed an exclusive deal with Unocal that proposed the WRIP. But it demanded high price passing all the risk factors on the government. During a scrutiny by American experts, Unocal withdrew from the project.

Charge-framing against 9 in BTV officials murder case Aug 14

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, will frame charges against nine accused in four BTV officials murder case on August 14.

Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam yesterday rejected the discharge petitions of the accused and fixed the date.

Four BTV officials -- programme director, M Monirul Alam, administrative officer, A F M Siddiq, accounts officer, Akmal Khan and cameraman, Chowdhury Firoz Quayyum -- were shot dead on November 7, 1975 by some military personnel allegedly in collaboration with some BTV officials and employees.

The killers led by Lt (ret'd) Altaf Hossain dragged them behind the BTV Bhaban and shot them on the night of November 7. Later, their bodies were dumped in a jheel nearby.

Following the incident, family members of the victims filed separate murder cases with Gulshan Police Station on November 19, 1975 without naming any accused.

Bodies of the victims were recovered from the jheel in February, 1976.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police took up the cases for investigation and submitted final report in January, 1978.

As per directive from the higher authorities, the case filed by the wife of victim Akmal Khan was reviewed on March 25, 1997 and investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted a chargesheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on August 18, 1998 against nine people, including three former army personnel for their involvement in the killing, showing 106 people as prosecution witnesses.

The chargesheeted accused are Lt (Ret'd) Altaf Hossain, assistant director (suspended) of BTV Abul Kashem Bagoja, assistant director (suspended) of BTV Abdul Awal Sarker, producer (suspended) Lutfur Rahman Talukder, programme controller (ret'd) Syed Anul Kabir, duty officer (terminated) Aynuzzaman, first field engineer of Bangladesh Army Mohammad Shahjahan Straj, armyman K A M Zakaria Haider and Abul Kashem.

Of the accused Syed Anul Kabir, Aynuzzaman, KAM Zakaria Haider and Abul Kashem have been absconding since March 25, 1997 while five others are on bail.

Barrister Ishtiaq

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and intermediate from Dhaka College.

Ishtiaq secured first class in BA Honors in economics from Dhaka University and did his masters from the same university.

He had his bar at law from Lincoln's Inn, London in 1958 and also obtained MSc in economics from London School of Economics.

He started practising law at the East Pakistan High Court. He emerged as one of the leading lawyers on constitutional and civil issues and earned a high degree of reputation.

He was appointed additional attorney general in 1972 and attorney general in 1976.

He was the country's permanent representative to the United Nations in 1978.

He held the office of the adviser for law, justice and parliamentary affairs in the first caretaker government in 1991 and the latest in 2001.

Child prodigy

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Son of a footpath hawk Khairul Alam, Sohag quit school two years ago as a class four student, and started the life of a child labourer at Akhi International, a phone-fax-computer shop at Panchagarh, at a monthly salary of Tk 200 and additional daily allowance of Tk 10.

Soon he learnt Microsoft Word, Power Point and Excel, and became a trainer there.

"I was very happy to be able to meet the prime minister. I couldn't believe I would be meeting her... it was a dream come true when she took the responsibility of my education," said Shohag, who was visibly over the moon with joy.

Shohag also had his photograph taken with the prime minister.

To help support Shohag's family, the prime minister also asked officials concerned to find a suitable job for Shohag's eldest brother Abdus Salam, who escorted the boy to the Prime Minister's Office.

3 of a family

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Nasir was spot dead, while Rashid died on way to the DMCH and Rubel shortly after admission to the hospital.

Shyamol and Asma were admitted to a clinic.

Bodies of Rashid and Rubel were kept at the DMCH morgue.

Rashid owned a grocery and Nasir had a cosmetics shop at Pabai Bazar. Rubel was a student of class ten at Pabai High School.

Delhi makes no request

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importing Bangladeshi gas to India, India's deputy high commissioner in Dhaka, Dilip Sinha, said, "We never made a formal request to Bangladesh government for gas".

He added, "It's the Bangladesh government to decide on gas export to India. Only when Bangladesh is willing to sell, and gas is available for sale, we will make an offer to buy."

Sources said the two neighbours will embrace a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) following the July 14-15 meet of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) to be held in the conference room of the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha arrives in Dhaka on July 14 as the head of his country's delegation while the Bangladesh side will be represented by Foreign Minister Morshed Khan.

"We expect the meeting to be a milestone event in our bilateral relations," Dilip Sinha said at a press briefing yesterday. A source in the foreign ministry confirmed that the talks on free trade would be one of the major issues on the JEC agenda.

The July 14-15 JEC meeting will be the first one after 1997, despite a tertiary protocol requiring the two nations to meet annually. Since its inception in 1982, the JEC had five such meetings in 11 years. The Dhaka meeting will be the sixth in a series.

The commission's area of cooperation includes trade and economics, science and technology, and transport and communication. Some cultural issues too have crept onto the JEC agenda of late, said Sinha.

The Dhaka meeting takes place amid widespread concern in Bangladesh over the yawning trade deficit between the two countries. Dhaka's average yearly import from India overshoots the mark of \$1.2 billion while its export to India staggers around \$450-500 million.

Between April 2002 and March 2003, Bangladesh imported \$940 million worth of goods and services

from its giant neighbour.

Despite such imbalances in bilateral trade, there are signs of enhanced Indian investment in various sectors of the Bangladesh economy. "Of the \$55 million worth of investment made by Indian entrepreneurs since the 1980s, \$20 million was invested over the last two years alone," said R R Das, Indian minister for economic affairs at the Dhaka High Commission.

The 10-member Indian delegation includes representatives from the ministries of railway, industry, customs, commerce and foreign affairs. The standing committee meeting will be held on July 14 -- to be headed by the two foreign secretaries -- while the JEC main body will meet on July 15.

The Indian foreign secretary will arrive in Dhaka today.

In response to the question of the stalled cement export to Tripura, Das maintained that the necessity to obtain certification has already been there. He, however, assured, "The two countries will meet soon to resolve the issue."

The free trade issue gained momentum following Dhaka's proposal to try the system for six months to see how it works. Dhaka and Delhi were also encouraged by the success of the Indo-Sri Lanka free trade. "The FTA will reduce trade deficit between Bangladesh and India," expects Sinha.

Following the China-India rapprochement, the free trade wind seems to be sweeping the region. Besides its existing FTA with Sri Lanka, India is busy putting in place FTA with Myanmar too.

This triangular move comes to focus as the Indian commerce minister, Arun Jaitley, moves to Yangon to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up a joint trade committee on the same day Yashwant Sinha arrives in Dhaka. Both Myanmar and India are members of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Dhaka expects to join the club soon.

The Indo-Sri Lanka free trade

has reduced Sri Lankan trade deficit with India by almost 60 per cent in two years. In 2001 alone, Sri Lankan export to India rose 139.6 per cent, according to a study.

The Daily Star has learnt that major Bangladeshi chambers of commerce have endorsed the free trade proposition.

"After the signing of the FTA, Sri Lanka overtook Bangladesh as the largest seller to India within SAARC," maintains Sinha.

Dhaka expects that while the free trading modalities are laid out in detail, India will accept Bangladesh's proposal to allow duty-free access of 24 Bangladeshi items to Indian market.

5yr jail term

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driver is five years imprisonment and Tk 10,000 fine.

There is no provision for punishment of launch owners and so the main change in the clause would be to make so, said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials.

A victim of the accident or his family members may collect a maximum of Tk 1 lakh from a launch owner in compensation, as per the existing rules.

In many cases filed previously with the marine courts it was observed that the owners were also responsible besides the driver or the captain, said a BIWTA source.

But they were never punished, the source added.

Woman raped

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suggest that she had been raped and killed, said Kader Baig, officer-in-charge of Sathkira Sadar thana.

Police arrested Palash at Parulgachha of Kaliganj upazila in Sathkira after the victim's father filed a case with Sathkira Sadar thana accusing him of murdering his daughter.

Palash however denied the charge, said Baig.

Slain Humayun's relatives asks for neutral trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Relatives of murdered engineer Humayun Kabir have asked for a neutral trial yesterday.

They fear that the accused, Foysof Ansari, being a US citizen, is trying to influence the government with the help of the embassy concerned as the trial is reaching its end.

Foysof was arrested on the night of the incident and is now in jail but his relatives are allegedly threatening to kill the relatives of late Humayun. During phone calls, they claim that Foysof will soon be free and will punish them.

Humayun's younger brother Enamul Kabir filed a general diary last Friday with the Demra Police Station after threats from the accused and his relatives.

Engineer Humayun Kabir was killed on November 21, 1999 at Central Road in the city when he came to visit his family from US.

Man killed, sunk in a pond with bricks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Keraniganj police recovered a body from Liakat Ali's pond in Atigram village at 4:30pm Friday.

The man, 25, was slaughtered and stabbed in the abdomen. The killers tied bricks to the body and dumped it in the pond.

Police sent the body to Mitford hospital for autopsy.

None came to take the body from hospital till writing of this report at 9:00pm last night.

Abdul Kaiyum, sub-inspector of the Keraniganj Police Station filed a murder case.

Six revolvers, pistol held from a bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recovered six revolvers, one pistol, two magazines and 20 rounds of bullet from a bus near Shibganj upazila on Rajshahi-Chopra (Babaganj) highway on Saturday.

Raiding a bus No Tangail-Ba-196, the BDR recovered the arms and ammunition from under the seat.

None was arrested.

Saddam cousins

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Kerrick did not name any of the arrested men or say where or under what circumstances they were detained.

In a separate statement Saturday, the US military said it had apprehended two "local opposition leaders," Anwar Al-Asaw and Bashir Ahmed Thanun Al-Dulaymi, in the northern city of Mosul.

On July 9 the US announced it had placed in custody two more former senior Iraqi officials from the 55 "most wanted," of which more than half have already been captured.

Acquire knowledge to face future challenges

Commerce minister tells IUB graduates

Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmood Chowdhury has called upon the graduates to equip with knowledge and skills to face future challenges.

The commerce minister made the call while he was addressing the felicitation ceremony for the first graduates of IUB Chittagong campus as chief guest at Chittagong Club auditorium on July 4, says a press release.

"We are Bangladeshi and we should be proud of it. This pride will lead us to march forward in our journey for development," he said.

Prof Bazul Mobin Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of IUB, was the guest of honour.

Habib Ullah Khan, member of the governing council of IUB, Amir Humayun Mahmood Chowdhury, president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Prof Borhanuddin, director of business school, and Prof M Anwar, acting director of communication school were present as special guests.

Prof Syed Sufderul Huq, coordinator and chief executive of Chittagong campus, conducted the function attended by elites, chief executives of different bodies, celebrities, foreign diplomats, graduates and their guardians, and faculty and staff members of the university.

Prof Syed Sufderul Huq asked the graduates to work hard with honesty and dedication for socio-economic uplift of the country to bring smiles on the faces of the teeming millions.

Habib Ullah Khan advised the graduates to take right decision and move forward to build their career.

Amir Humayun Mahmood Chowdhury asked the graduates to remove all vices from the society.

Prof Bazul Mobin Chowdhury thanked the students, guardians, sponsors, faculties and staff for their valuable contribution to the achievement of the university.

Later, Amir Khasru distributed crests among the graduates and sponsor members of IUB Chittagong campus.

The ceremony was followed by a musical soiree.

2 killed, 30 hurt in Jessore road mishap

UNB, Jessore

A road accident on the Jessore-Bheridah Highway in Kotwali Police Station yesterday left two persons killed and 30 others injured.

Witnesses said the accident occurred near Barinagore Bazar when a Khulna-bound bus plunged into a roadside ditch.

One of the dead was identified as Mukta, 12.

The injured were admitted to Jessore Combined Military Hospital and Jessore General Hospital.

Mahila AL council

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Hasina, also leader of the opposition in parliament, said the proposed commission will not be able to curb massive corruption that has pervaded all spheres of national life under the BNP-led alliance government.

She mentioned that the BNP government in its previous term had initiated legal actions the incumbent law minister.

"So, how can such a person root out corruption?" the opposition leader asked.

Hasina reiterated her party's demand that Bogra ammunition and explosives hauls be probed by an international body. "International inquiry is a must to find out origin of the ammunition and explosives and their destination," she said.

Censuring the government for making parliament 'ineffective', the AL chief said, "It has turned into a place to deliver abusive speeches against me and my party."

Turning to perks rise, Hasina said, "The prime minister, ministers and lawmakers raised their perks, leaving the people in general in a crisis due to price hike of essentials."

In the present budget, the government has widened the tax net on poor people, imposing additional taxes of about Tk 5,100 crore, she said.

Accusing the ruling party men of repression on women, Hasina called upon the people to dislodge the 'failed government' through a mass movement.

The AL chief also said the pres-

ent rulers came to power after signing a bond to sell natural resources. She however did not give details.

The former prime minister recounted various initiatives her government had taken to improve social status of women.

The council approved some amendments to the party constitution, proposed by Mahila AL leader Khaleeda Khanom. The amendments provide for a 91-member central committee of Mahila AL instead of a 66-member one, and divided the city unit into north and south units.

Akbar

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deadliest launch disaster in the country on July 8.

The minister however did not go into details of how he planned to develop the sector.

Akbar Hossain said budget should be allocated ministry wise instead of project wise so that every ministry can spend money according to necessity.

The minister also criticised the role of the Planning Commission in approving development projects.

"It takes one and a half years to get a project approved by the commission," he alleged.

According to sources, although the sector generates a revenue of about 150 crore annually, government allocation for it has been reduced to 29 crore this year from last year's 80 crore.

The ministry had to abandon various projects because of fund shortage, the sources added.

140 Sadarghat staff

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submit its report within two days. Administrative and legal actions will be taken against those found guilty, the meetings sources said.

The shipping minister also issued directives to file criminal cases against those who certified launches built on faulty designs and the panel members who recommended their approval.

The government last year conducted a survey and found that at least 40 big passenger launches were totally unfit for carrying passengers.

"This is the first time in the country that instructions have been given to file criminal cases against government officials for neglect of duties," said the minister after the meeting.

The meeting decided to deploy a supervisor of the BIWTA at Kathpatri in Munshiganj to make sure that no launch take extra load of passengers or cargo from there after leaving Dhaka or Narayanganj.

The meeting also decided that the river route near Chandpur would be developed through dredging to enable the launches to take an alternative route avoiding the hazardous confluence.

A state-owned steamer service will also be introduced during day time between Dhaka and Pirojpur to ease the pressure of the passengers.

The steamer will start at 11:00 am from Dhaka and reach Hularhat via Chandpur and Barisal from July

20.

The shipping minister directed all deputy commissioners to immediately seize the vessels operating unregistered.