

Flood spectre

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are among the worst affected areas in Barisal. Different villages in Ilisha, Dhania, and Shibpur in Bhola have also been submerged.

But in a reversal of the situation, the floodwaters slightly receded from Bera, Ishwardi, Sujanagar and Pabna Sadar in Pabna district, with the water level in the Padma and Jamuna lowering, said our Pabna correspondent.

The upazila nirbahi officer of Sujanagar told The Daily Star that the floods affected 1,775 families and submerged 3,476 hectares of croplands in the last four days.

GAIBANDHA

With a further five-centimetre rise in the Karotoa waters, the flood situation in western Gaibandha nosedived, our Gaibandha correspondent adds. Twelve-year-old Biddut of Nayanpur village in Palashbari upazila drowned in floodwaters.

The district administration said the floods affected over 73,000 families of 57 unions in seven upazilas and 4,816 hectares of land and 14,380 houses were damaged in Gaibandha.

Ten villages in Kishoregari union and five villages at Hossainpur union in Palashbari upazila were inundated yesterday after a breach opened in the Karotoa embankment at Nayanpur.

The food and drinking water crises hit the marooned people in Gaibandha. Khairuzzaman, chairman of Haldia union in Shaghata upazila said he received only one tonne of grains as relief, what he called too inadequate for so many people.

HARIRAMPUR

Official sources said the floods in Harirampur upazila in Manikganj, one of the worst-hit districts, turned severe, swamping Ajim Nagar, Satalori, Dhulshura, Lesraganj, Harukandi and Boyra, Kanchanpur and Balla and affecting over one lakh people.

The damage of about 9,000 houses, 160km road, 16km embankment, 21 bridges and culverts and crops on over 20,000

Audit finds

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lighted excess shore allowance, expenses for telephone, entertainment, medical treatment, and excess daily allowance and unauthorised purchase of pager and mobile phones as the heads that caused a loss of Tk 135.19 crore during 1997-1998 fiscals.

The special CAG report suggested for reducing expenditure, proper use of assets, increasing skills, bringing transparency in financial matters, restoring financial discipline and ensuring accountability in all spheres for optimum benefit of the government commercial institution.

According to the audit report, 15 officials of BSC were given Tk 4.92 lakh as shore compensatory allowance while Tk 36.80 lakh was spent in excess for telephones, trunk calls, entertainment and medical treatment.

Excess payment of daily allowance also caused a loss of Tk 1.16 lakh while unauthorised purchase of pager and mobile phones caused a loss of Tk 79.53 thousand to the government exchequer. Unrealised shipping fares also caused a loss of Tk 2.42 lakh.

Apart from these irregularities, the BSC has been counting a huge loss while running as a public sector enterprise.

During the 1995-96 fiscal, the BSC's income target was Tk 226.45 crore. But it earned Tk 218.38 crore, leaving a deficit of Tk 8.07 crore. In the next fiscal 1996-97, the deficit shot up to Tk 19.91 crore as the BSC again failed to attain the income target. In 1997-98 fiscal year, the deficit was Tk 9 crore.

The CAG report suggested for taking immediate steps to reverse the situation. "Or else, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation would become a burden for the government in the near future," the report observed.

BNP leader killed

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and fired at least ten times on him," said his brother Manjurul Haque Milon.

At least five bullets hit Anwarul in the head, back and chest, leaving him dead on the spot.

The killers also shot at Manjurul, who was on his motorbike close to his brother's rickshaw.

"I was moving in the same direction when I saw the attackers shoot my brother," said Manjurul. "They fired on me as soon as they recognised me."

A bullet hit Manjurul's leg, but he could run away for a few yards where petrol police was on duty.

Police took both the brothers to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Anwarul was declared dead. Manjurul is being treated there.

Kashem, who also sustained injury, was admitted to the National Medical College Hospital and was released later.

The reason behind the killing of Anwarul, who was the assistant secretary of the BNP's Sutrapur unit and Sramik Dal's convener of that thana, could not be immedi-

acres and 47 cattle deaths were reported. Part of Diabari Government Primary School and a high school in the same area went under water.

NAOGAON

The flood situation in Naogaon deteriorated. The Water Development Board explained that the fresh floods came as waters of the main rivers entered some tributaries in Naogaon in a downstream recession, said our roving correspondent.

The flood control embankment of Pachupur in Atrai upazila in Naogaon broke at Ujanpara point on Wednesday, inundating eight villages and affecting 300 families.

GENERAL RIVER CONDITION

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna registered further fall at all points except at Aricha where it remained steady. The Ganges-Padma registered further rise at upstream points while the river receded slightly or remained steady at downstream points. Other rivers in the two basins registered rise and fall. The rivers in the Meghna basin also registered rise and fall. Most of the river in the southeastern hill basin receded further. Of 85 monitoring stations, 34 points recorded rise, 30 points recorded fall, three points remained steady and 19 points are flowing above the danger level in the last 24 hours.

MEETING

An inter-ministerial Disaster Management and Coordination Committee meeting yesterday discussed the overall flood situation and preparedness for the worse.

The government alerted the district administration to the outbreak of water-borne diseases, said Disaster Management and Relief Secretary ABM Mozharul Haque.

Nasrin-1

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and BIWTA officials.

They said divers could not go any further below 60 feet into the water. Strong currents are also forcing the sunken ship to drift away from the salvage spot.

"We are waiting for an order to abandon the operation," said an official requesting anonymity.

The deputy commissioner on Tuesday night said Nasrin-1 would meet the fate of DINAR-2 that could not be rescued after the vessel capsized with about 400 passengers on board at the same place in August 1994.

Lalmohan-bound MV Nasrin-1 from Dhaka carrying 750 passengers capsized in whirlpools near Chandpur launch terminal on the night of July 8. Some 230 passengers could swim ashore or were rescued.

Darwin Test

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It is unfortunate that BTV remains lukewarm when it is an opportunity for them to cover the historic first Test. When an event like the recent Sharjah Cup, where Bangladesh did not take part was telecast live by the BTV, cricketers lovers in the country were expecting the special occasion to be shown at any expense.

While millions of TV screens will be blank, Mahmud's men will enjoy the experience of a lifetime as they attempt a battle of survival.

With a dismal record of 18 defeats and one rained-out draw in their previous 19 Test appearances, Bangladesh will be looking to build on the positives that have achieved so far on tour in Australia.

They have won two of their three warm-up matches including an exciting two-wicket victory against the Northern Territory Chief Minister's XI at the Darwin drop-in pitch.

The Marrara Oval will also be making its debut as one of Australia's two newest Test venues today, the other being Cairns which hosts the second Test over July 25-29.

(More stories on sports page)

Slain man at DU a 'criminal'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sajjad alias Nata Rubel, 26, an outsider and non-student of Dhaka University gunned down at Sir A F Rahman Hall gate Wednesday night, was charged with 24 criminal cases including murder.

Witnesses said a group of unidentified gunmen came in a black taxicab and gunned him down to run away from the university area.

Rubel's mother filed a case with Ramna police station accusing Ratan, Halim, Babu, Hanif and three other unnamed persons of killing her son as a sequel to rivalry.

A resident of Mohammadia Housing, Rubel was scheduled to go to Chittagong by night coach on July 16 with some of his friends, added his mother.

Police suspect that Rubel was involved in extortion and many other illegal businesses. A Speedy Trial Tribunal sentenced him to jail for five years in a case since he remained absconding for a long time.

Campus sources said the number of outsiders staying in halls under the direct shelter of the ruling BNP's student wing Jatiya Chattra Dal (JCD) and their roaming on the campus has increased alarmingly in the recent past. Sources also said that Rubel used to come and stayed several times with a JCD leader of the hall for more than six months.

Additional police were deployed on the campus in this connection.

Acid thrower sentenced to life in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

A young man was awarded life imprisonment and fined Tk one lakh for throwing acid on a girl and her mother at Paikgachha more than three years ago.

The judge handed down the punishment to Noor Islam and acquitted Rahim Gazi, another accused in the case.

The victim, Rashida Khatun, was asleep beside her mother at their house at Hatgopalpur village on the night of May 2, 2000 when Noor Islam threw acid on her, inflicting burn injuries on both daughter and mother.

BIWTA union protests staff transfer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The employees union of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has protested the government decision to transfer all employees of the Sadarghat launch terminal.

They said such wholesale transfer will not help solve problems in the water transport sector.

"The capsize of Nasrin-1 and consequent loss of 600 lives occurred due to overloading and wrong navigation by the vessel master," said leaders of the union at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

"Any accident must be thoroughly investigated and the culprits punished," said Mohammad Awalul Azam Khan, general secretary of the union.

According to union leaders, the BIWTA does not have the mandate to stop a launch from departing. It can only file a case against an offender with the marine court.

"Often officials are prevented from performing their duties properly as most launch owners are 'extremely influential' with links stretching to government high ups," a speaker alleged.

Moreover, there is a perpetual shortage of manpower and equipment. Two-thirds of the posts of marksmen and pilot are still vacant, alleged another speaker.

The BIWTA is responsible for maintaining about 6,000 kilometres of waterway during the monsoon and 4,000 kilometres during the lean period.

The leaders of the union submitted a nine-point recommendation for improving the sector that includes 'sincere acceptance of the rules and regulations' by all vessel owners and officials. The recommendation also includes setting up of an alternative terminal at Chandpur during the flood season.

Dhaka, Hanoi

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During the meeting, the prime minister mentioned the scope of enhancing trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and indicated the possibility of Vietnam importing more jute, jute goods, leather, textiles and garments from Bangladesh.

The Vietnamese foreign minister said that he has had a meeting with business leaders in Dhaka and identified various ways for boosting bilateral trade. He said single-country trade fair could be held in Hanoi and Dhaka to enhance bilateral trade.

Other matters of bilateral, regional and international cooperation also came up during the discussion.

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury and Vietnamese Charge d'Affaires Ngo Van Hoa were present during the meeting.

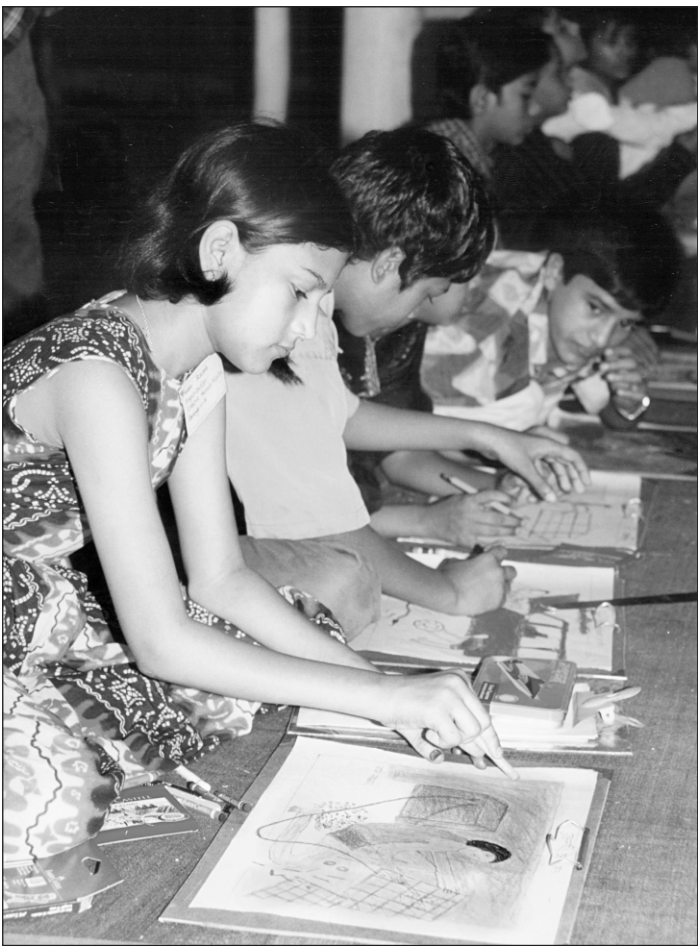


PHOTO: STAR

Children take part in a painting competition on the 'Worst Form of Child Labour' at the National Press Club yesterday, organised by Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, an ILO project.

Gas exploration

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national gas grid easily.

Irish company Tullow and US companies Chevron and Texaco will spend about \$6 million for drilling each well. The three companies equally share 90 per cent share among them while BAPEX holds the rest without investing in the venture.

Drilling the wells apart, the Block 9 partners were to conduct two-dimensional seismic survey on an area of 1,000km in the first three years.

"They have already completed seismic survey on 1,000km area and conducted an additional three-dimensional survey covering 455sqkm area," said a Petrobangla official. "BAPEX also conducted a survey covering 572km area and an international company named PGS conducted a survey, including the three-dimensional one, on 430km area."

A BAPEX geo-physicist said that this was the first time the state-owned explorer came up with a seismic survey of international standard. "This job earned us about Tk 6 crore in cash and Tk 3 crore more in terms of equipment," he said. "We were able to maintain the standard because the trade union did not interfere in these tasks."

Sources said the companies have acquired 19 acres of land for each of the two prospective drilling spots. The prospective well in the Gumti area is situated at a densely populated area.

New Saddam tape

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war on March 20 to 147 -- equaling the Gulf conflict in combat during the 1991 Kuwait War.

Streets normally filled with American Humvees and tanks were strangely quiet Thursday, perhaps part of an effort to avoid confrontation.

About the only thing on Baghdad's streets yesterday were rumors: one that Saddam would make some sort of personal appearance after weeks in hiding, and the other that he had finally been captured by US forces. There was no evidence either rumor was true.

Road mishaps kill 9 in Khagrachhari, Mymensingh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine people were killed and 73 others injured in separate road accidents in Khagrachhari and Mymensingh districts yesterday.

Of them, four were killed in Khagrachhari and the rest in Mymensingh.

In Khagrachhari, four people were killed and 68 others injured when a Panchhari bound passenger bus from Khagrachhari skidded off the road and fell into a ditch at about 8 am.

The dead were identified as Kuma Roy Tripura, 50, Tarindri Kumar Chakma, 35, Tambu Boiddya Chakma, 74, and Chikankrita Chakma, 70. Of them, Kuma Roy, Chikankrita and Tambu died on the spot while Tarindri succumbed to his injuries at Khagrachhari Sadar hospital.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reports: Five people, including three of a family, were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in Bhalka and Nandail on Wednesday night.

In Bhalka, a traffic mishap at Hajir Bazaar on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway left the four including three of a family killed and five others injured at about 10 pm.

In Nandail, a woman was killed as she fell from the motorbike being driven by her son on Nandail-Mymensingh road the same night.

Hasina blasts BNP, flies off to Italy

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the alliance government of hatching a conspiracy to destroy the caretaker government system in a planned way.

"They (BNP-Jamaat) are now fearing the public rage following their misrule. That's why they are conspiring to destroy the caretaker government system," she said.

The Awami League chief was talking to journalists at Zia International Airport in the morning prior to her departure for Italy to attend an international seminar.

The Ministry of External Affairs of Italy is organising the seminar titled "The Role of International Community in the Promotion of Democracy and the Rule of Law".

Hasina said the ruling alliance had used all government machinery to manipulate the last general election held in October 2001, but did not get the mandate from the people.

"Now they are trying to destroy the caretaker government system to cling to power," she said.

Referring to the formation of parliamentary standing committees, Hasina said the government violated the constitution and the Rules of Procedure by forming the committees without any representation from the opposition.

Replying to some remarks by the prime minister on the concluding day of parliament session on July 15, Hasina said the prime minister wanted mislead the people through her remarks. "Ruling party lawmakers had hurled abuses at me in her presence," she said.

Acting AL President Abdus Samad Azad, General Secretary Abdul Jall and senior leaders Abdur Razzak and Advocate Abdul Hamid were present at the airport to see her off.

Boy kills friend over TV watch row

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trivial argument over watching television resulted in a teenage boy being killed in Mirpur on Wednesday.

Both Babu, the victim, and Imran, the accused, are students of Textile Aparajay Bangladesh, a national non-government organisation. They are both 14-years-old.

According to Pallabi police, the arguments began when the two were watching television in the Aparajay Bangladesh students' hall at around 9:45 pm.

Imran, who was sitting behind Babu, asked him to budge a bit to clear his line of vision.

When Babu declined to do so Imran beat him up with a cricket bat.

Hearing Babu's screams, hostel officials rushed to the spot and rescued him in a critical condition. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared him dead at around 11:00 pm.

Pallabi police arrested Imran from the hall and produced him before a court yesterday. The court sent Imran to the Dhaka Central Jail.

A murder case was filed with the Pallabi Police Station.

Babu is the son of one Kalam Sheikh of Chadly village in Doulatpur.

Changes in exams

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marks in public examination as they secured in school grading, Milon said.

The system is aimed at erasing the apprehension that teachers can give higher marks to their own students out of bias.

"I am hopeful that it will reduce the tendency of cheating in public examinations," said the state minister, who has been carrying out an anti-copying drives since taking office.

He admitted that the standard of education was on the wane due to the absence of proper grading.

"We will gradually shift to multiple choice and objective questions from the subjective approach now in use," he said, adding a lot of research and practice was needed to put the system in place.

There will be also changes in the examination paper evaluation system.

He underscored the need for upgrading the curricula to suit the present day needs.

The ministry is considering introducing semester system to evaluate students' performance not annually, but throughout the year, he added.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a civil society think tank, in a recent remark said the circus that went in the name of public examinations made Bangladesh look silly to the world.

The infiltration of the worst forms of self-seeking and corrupt politics into education is the main cause of failure to stop the rot in the education system, it said.

Earlier, Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk said the percentage of pass in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations were lower because of strict measures taken to check cheating.

More than 60 per cent students failed in this year's SSC examinations.

Vietnam's new chancery opened in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign minister of Vietnam Nguyen Dy Nien and his Bangladesh counterpart M Morshed Khan pledged better economic and political cooperation between the two countries.

The two foreign ministers inaugurated a new Chancery of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Dhaka yesterday following bilateral talks to strengthen collaborations in trade, investment, cultural and scientific fields.

The Chancery was opened commemorating the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Hanoi and Dhaka.

The Vietnamese foreign minister flew in Dhaka on Wednesday and had had talks with the prime minister, foreign minister and business representatives. Nguyen leaves Dhaka today.

Vietnamese art and cultural festivities dominated many events in the city during the weeklong commemoration of the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations between the two Asian nations.

Vietnam was one of the first countries to recognise Bangladesh and had supported Bangladesh's liberation struggle wholeheartedly as a Cold War era ally of the Soviet Union.

"We are taking our relationship to a new height from today," said Nguyen Dy Nien during his Chancery inauguration speech. He added, "Bilateral trade will increase from now on."

Morshed said Vietnam was one of the first countries to open its diplomatic mission in Dhaka in the early 1970s.

The two peoples also have had the common experience of painful liberation struggles against foreign occupiers. Insinuating at Vietnam's struggle

for national independence, Morshed Khan said, "The two

IOJ names choice

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The BNP, however, did not announce its runner for the race necessitated by the death of its deputy Nurul Amin Talukder.

The IOJ action raised hackles in the BNP and one of its policymakers said: "It's a clear breach of commitment and we cannot allow Amini to create troubles from within the alliance."

"It's time to decide on Amini who was elected to parliament as a BNP nominee and used its polls symbol."

The secretaries general and senior leaders of the alliance at a meeting on Wednesday night decided to field a common candidate for the polls and left the issue with Khaleda Zia for the final decision, sources said.

The Prime Minister's Office also asked Amini not to hold any press conference to announce its candidate, they added.

Amini on July 2 staged a drama by offering to resign from the Jatiya Sangsad in protest against the non-inclusion of his party representative in the cabinet, but backed down after a meeting with Khaleda on July 8.

The IOJ chief also rejected the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Jute in a huff on Wednesday.

"I did not take any ministerial position. Now I do not want to lower myself to the position of a chawkidar (watchman)," he had told The Daily Star spelling out his stand.

Announcing the party nominee yesterday, Amini said: "We are very

nations are proud of their history, struggle and successes.

Khan also praised Vietnam's seven per cent GDP growth in 2002, which was second only to China in South East Asia.

A central player in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Vietnam earlier endorsed his support for Bangladesh's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Observers believe Bangladesh's 'Look East' policy has received a positive boost in recent days due to the encouraging responses it has received from the US, Myanmar, India and Vietnam.

The quartet is considered key players in the ASEAN and all of their foreign ministers have had a round of visit to Dhaka during the last weeks.

The Chancery inaugural ceremony was attended among others by the state minister for foreign affairs Riaz Rahman and Dhaka city Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Body of 40-plus man recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A decomposed body was recovered from a pond at Citypalli in Demra yesterday.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body huddled into a gunnybag.

Police could not ascertain how the forty plus man was killed as no mark of injury was found in his body.

The body was sent to Mitford hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with the Demra Police Station.

IOJ names choice

much with the alliance and will be with it, but we want our nominee to fight the polls as we are confident of his victory."

"I can confidently say no candidate other than Ehtesham Sarwar will win the polls."

Attack on Tofail protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political organisations have condemned and protested the incident of attack on Awami League leader and former minister Tofail Ahmed at Lalmohan, Bhola, allegedly by BNP