

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 3,478 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 Biddu of Nayapur 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 Kishoregarh union and five villages at Hossainpur union in Palashbari upazila were inundated yesterday after a breach opened in the Karotoa embankment at Nayapur.

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, Dulshura, Lesrang, 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 paper and mobile phones as the heads that caused a loss of Tk 135.19 crore during 1997-98 fiscal.

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 paper 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. "Else, Bangladesh Shipping Corporation would become a burden for the government in the near future," the report observed.

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

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 river 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.

Lalmoham-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 covered 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)

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 while 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 convenor of that thana, could not be immedi-

ately known.

But police hinted the accused in the Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal murder might have a strong case to kill Anwarul, who was one of the main prosecution witnesses in that case.

He was receiving death threat since the verdict of the murder case, his family members said.

Given his criminal record, the BNP leader also had a lot of enemies who could have killed him, police said.

A bachelor, Anwarul contested in the last Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) elections from Ward 82 as an independent candidate but was marginally defeated by Shahidullah Minu.

He was going to the market to buy a cell phone charger while Milon, a DCC contractor, was going to the Nagar Bhaban.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Koka and Sutrapur BNP leaders went to the DMCH hearing the news.

No case was filed with the Kotwali Police Station till the filing of this report at 10:30 pm. None was also arrested as yet.

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 Chakra 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 Paikgacha 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's decision to transfer all employees of the Sardarhat launch terminal.

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

"The capsizing 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 Arafat 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," asperately 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 Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury and Vietnamese Chargé d'Affaires Ngo Van Hoa were present during the meeting.



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.

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 to mislead the people through her remarks. "Ruling party lawmakers had hurtled abuses at me in her presence," she said.

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

"We are taking our relationship to a new height from today," said Nguyen Duy 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

Vietnam's new chancery opened in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

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

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 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 week-long commemoration of the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations between the two Asian nations.

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