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Govt waits on flood damage repair

REZAUL KARIM

The flood situation is improving, but the government will not immediately go for major repair and rehabilitation works as the threat of a second spell of floods looms large, sources said.

They said the first spell of floods triggered by heavy rain and outflow of water from upstream is subsiding, but the government is preparing for a worsening of the situation during a second spell in August and September.

They further said the government is closely monitoring the situation, but it will not be possible to repair the damaged infrastructure before the floods were finally over.

Sources at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief said the district administrations are sending reports on the flood situa-

tion every day and remedial steps are being taken on the basis of the reports.

They said the Prime Minister's Office and a number of line ministries are also monitoring the situation.

According to the official estimates, 18,391 square kilometre areas of 1,364 unions in 191 upazila under 31 districts have suffered huge losses in terms of lives and property due to the floods.

The flood-affected districts are Dhalai (6 upazila), Netrakona (6 upazila), Jamalpur (7 upazila), Munshiganj (6 upazila), Manikganj (7 upazila), Faridpur (4 upazila), Rajbari (4 upazila), Madaripur (4 upazila), Shariatpur (6 upazila), Sirajganj (9 upazila), Bogra (4 upazila), Naogaon (4 upazila), Lalmonirhat (5 upazila), Dinajpur

(13 upazila), Rangpur (1 upazila), Pabna (6 upazila), Natore (3 upazila), Gaibandha (7 upazila), Chittagong (6 upazila), Cox's Bazar (2 upazila), Noakhali (6 upazila), Comilla (7 upazila), Chandpur (8 upazila), Feni (4 upazila), Khagrachari (8 upazila), Rangamati (8 upazila), Sylhet (11 upazila), Sunamganj (10 upazila), Habiganj (8 upazila) and Jhenaidah (4 upazila).

Official estimates said around 74,31,787 people of 14,484,340 families have been affected by the floods and standing crops on 2,81,982 acres of land have been damaged completely and on 51,4,324 acres partially.

The floods completely damaged some 96,970 dwelling houses and 5,03,011 houses partially.

Official figures have confirmed the deaths of 93 people. Besides,

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Indo-Bangla joint tiger headcount on cards

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

India and Bangladesh will carry out a joint headcount of tigers in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest straddling the two

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Newsweek July 28 issue banned

UNB, Dhaka

The government has confiscated all copies of July 28 issue of the Newsweek magazine for publishing "confusing and objectionable" information about the holy Quran.

The government has banned sale, distribution and preservation of the July 28 issue of the Newsweek under section 99 (Ka) of the CrPC (Criminal Procedure Code) as it might hurt Muslim religious sentiments, said an official handout yesterday.

The weekly Newsweek is published simultaneously from New York, USA, Singapore and Malaysia.

Judgement on Humayun Kabir murder today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The judgement in the Engineer Humayun Kabir murder case will be given today.

Mohammed Sirajul Islam, judge of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, will pronounce the verdict at 12:30pm, court sources said.

Both the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments on July 21.

Earlier, the court had recorded statements of 28 out of 34 prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on November 27, 2000. The trial of the case began on January 29, 2001.

Humayun Kabir had been in America since 1981. He came to Bangladesh on November 13, 1999 and was shot dead by his partners in oil business in America at Central Road in Dharmundi on November 21, 1999.

The victim's brother Enamul

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

No headway in Bogra ammo haul probe

STAR REPORT

Political interference has put brakes on the inquiry into the massive ammunition and explosives hauls in Bogra, said sources.

Even one month after the recovery of about one lakh bullets and nearly 200 kilograms of explosives, police failed to press charges against any of the arrestees as kingship behind the incidents.

"Investigation is still on," is all the police sources will say of the case, Manshi Akbar Rahman, told The Daily Star. He declined to say if the probe made any progress.

People have not had the slightest

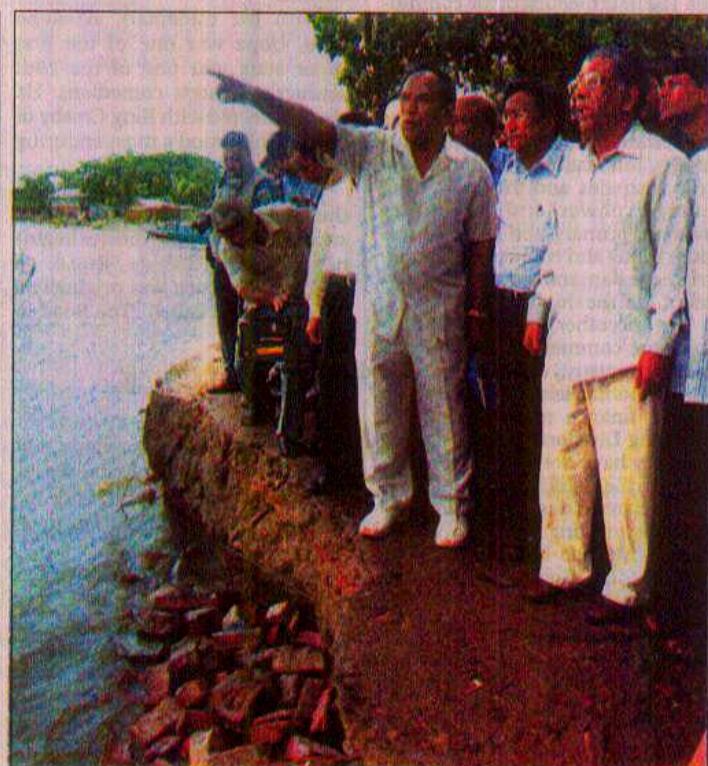
idea of what has been squeezed out of more than 30 people by the investigators. Only two of them are now in police custody.

Intelligence agencies also ran probes into the biggest ever ammo haul but mystery shrouds the eventual destination of the ammunition and the identity of the persons involved.

"In the interest of national security, we don't want to comment on the case," said a high official of an intelligence agency.

The probe got off to a chaotic start: the home minister told the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmad points to the midriver of monsoon-swollen Padma yesterday, while Land Minister M Shamsul Islam, right, and State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha, middle, look on at erosion hit-Munshiganj.

FRAUD CASE 4 ex-bank staff get 8yrs in prison

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four former officials of the Chawkhazar branch of the Pubali Bank in the city have been sentenced to eight years rigorous imprisonment in a fraud case.

A client of the bank was sent to three years in jail.

Mohammed Azeem Haq, Judge of the Special Court for Dhaka Division, delivered the verdict yesterday.

The convicts are former additional general manager Mohammad Shahidullah, second officer-in-

charge (foreign exchange department), Mohammad Shuhabuddin, senior officer Mohammad Humayun Kabir and godown inspector Mohammad Shahidullah.

The court sentenced Selim Chowdhury, the client, to three years rigorous imprisonment in the same case. He was condemned to imprisonment.

Selim Chowdhury will also have to pay a fine of Tk 30 lakh. His conviction will take effect from the date of his surrender or arrest, the judge said.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Test series Aussies'

AFP, Cairns

World champions Australia thrashed Bangladesh by an innings and 98 runs on the fourth day of the second cricket Test at Batabong Stadium here Monday to wrap up the series two-nil.

Starting the day with 106 for four wickets in their second innings, Bangladesh were all out for 163 shortly before lunch, with more than five sessions remaining.

It was Bangladesh's 20th defeat in their 21 matches in Test company.

It came only a week after Australia outplayed them in Darwin, winning the first game between the two countries by an innings and 132 runs.

Leg-spinner Stuart MacGill again wrecked the Bangladeshi batting, snapping up 5-56 after capturing 5-77 in the first innings a marvellous double which won him the match award, as well as the man of the series award.

MacGill, deputising for banned spin wizard Shane Warne on the sidelines because of a drug offence snared up 17 wickets in the series.

This match marked his second haul of 10 or more scalps in a Test he snared 12 against England in Sydney in 1999.

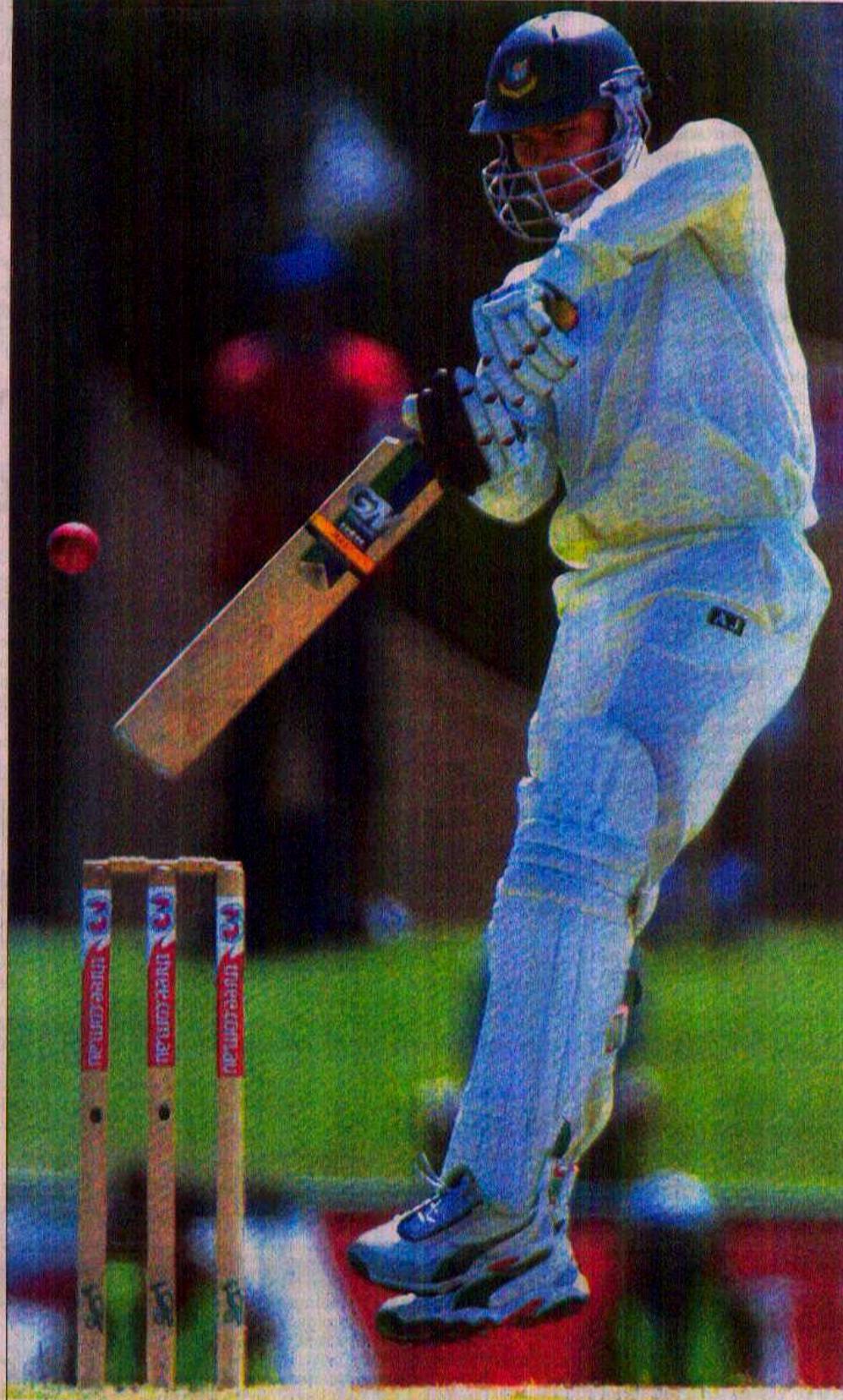
Bangladesh made 295 in their first knock before Australia slammed a mammoth 556 at almost a run a minute for four wickets in their only innings before declaring.

Daren Lehmann (177), skipper Steve Waugh (156 not out) and Martin Love (100 not out) all plundered centuries from the inexperienced bowling attack.

In Bangladesh's second innings, only Haman Sarkar (55) and Habibul Bashar (25) displayed any major resistance.

Pateman Jason Gillespie gave MacGill excellent support, bagging 4-38 as Bangladesh lost six wickets for 57 runs in the final day, with the last four wickets crashing for a mere seven runs as the innings ended 25 minutes before lunch.

Bangladesh will now attempt to regroup before taking on the world one-day champions in a series of three limited-overs clashes.



ON THE HOPI Bangladesh's tail-end batsman Mashrafee-bin-Mortaza is airborne as he tries to deal with the Australian pace at Cairns yesterday.

11 outlaws get life in murder case at Jessore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eleven activists of outlawed Purba Bangla Communist Party (PBPC) have been sentenced to life in the sensational Ali Akbar Khan murder case.

Judge Belayet Hossain of the Special Tribunal, Jessore, pronounced the verdict Sunday evening.

Of the convicts, four were present in the court while the rest have been absconding since the murder.

According to the prosecution, Ali Akbar Khan, a leader of the Purba Bangla Communist Party of Siddhinasila Union Parishad of Abhoynagar Upazila, Jessore, was shot dead by outlaws of PBPC at 8am on March 31, 1993 while he was returning home riding a motorcycle.

The victim's wife Fatema Begum filed a case with Abhoynagar Police Station on April 1, 1993 accusing six PBPC outlaws.

After investigation, police submitted a chargesheet against 15 persons. The court acquitted four of them as murder charge against them was not proved.

Three die after eating poisonous fish

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three people died and four others fell severely ill after eating poisonous "Tapa fish" on Sunday at Nogaria of Abhoynagar upazila in Sathkhira.

Selim Hossain, 18, his brother Shamim Hossain, 16, and Tarek Rishi, 40, died at the Sathkhira Sadar Hospital at 7:00pm.

Four others now undergoing treatment at Sathkhira Sadar Hospital are Selim and Shamim's mother Masuda Khatton, 50, Rishi's wife Ranibala, 38, Khonok, 12, and Subhash, 14.

Police said the fish had been caught from Betma river on Saturday.

Legendary entertainer Bob Hope dies at 100

REUTERS, Los Angeles

Legendary entertainer Bob Hope has died at age 100, a family spokesman said yesterday.

Hope died of pneumonia at 9:28pm Sunday with his family at his side, spokesman Ward Grant said.

Hope, who was born in England, was the ultimate comedian, a master of timing who turned the one-line into an art form and became a national institution.

His career, which included stints as an amateur boxer, minister in black face and dancer, spanned seven decades in which he starred in five mediums: vaudeville, radio,

Greens slam 'illegal' road plan by felling trees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main faction of the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) yesterday met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and demanded "abolition of the High Court verdict" banning farwa and recognition of "kawmi madrasah".

A seven-member delegation, led by its Chairman Azeem Haq, also expressed grave concern at the free fall of law and order and ominous rise of corruption.

Placing a seven-point demand, leaders of the IOJ, a partner of the ruling BNP-led alliance, urged the prime minister to take more intelligent steps to check deterioration of law and order as well as strict measures to curb corruption.

A rally by the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (BAPA) said construction of any new road in the area is mindless, as the space has two wide roads on both sides -- block Nos. D and E of the section 12 in Pallabi.

But Khan Majilish, one of those behind the felling of the trees, claimed, "The DCC allocated Tk 37 lakh for construction of a new road. The area will be free from hoodlums and addicts if the new road is built."

The homeowners in the area applied to the National Housing

Authority in 1996-1997 for allocation of the space in front of their houses. "The space was used as a playground for children. I have not received any paper allowing any road through the space," said Sohrab Hossain, sub-assistant engineer at the DCC regional office in Mirpur.

AKM Fajluzzoha, DCC chief estate officer, expressed ignorance about the matter and said, "I didn't permit the felling of the trees."

However, he said, "The DCC has the right to cut trees on any land for development work if it belongs to the DCC."

DCC Chief Engineer Dr Golam Quader M Chowdhury could not be reached for comments.

National Housing Authority

Office of the Executive Engineer

Dhaka Division-1, Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka

Final Notice for Taking Physical Possession of Plot

Allottees of Section-12, Bloc-B' & Bloc-E' of Mirpur Rupnagar Extension Project under National Housing Authority (abolished Directorate of Housing) were requested, by post from this office according to the address given in allotment letter, to take physical possession of allotted plots. Later on repeated requests were made through publication of notice in widely circulated Bengali & English national dailies for taking the physical possession. In spite of this, those allottees who have not taken physical possession of plots allotted in their names, are again requested to take physical possession of plot from the office of the undersigned within 7 (seven) days of publication of this notice. Otherwise the allotment letter of plot(s) allotted in his/her name(s) will be cancelled as per decision of the authority.</p