



Waterlogging after days of torrential monsoon rains make a river of the road in East Dania on the eastern outskirts of Dhaka City. Local residents say they have been undergoing the same sufferings for years because of authorities' indifference.

Flash flood deluges northwest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy downpour has caused flash flood in many places of the country's north-eastern region.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) sources, flood situation in Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Comilla districts may deteriorate further while the situation is likely to remain unchanged in Sylhet.

"If water levels of the Brahmaputra and Ganges-Padma basins swell together, most parts of the country would be flooded," Selim Bhuiyan, director of the FFWC, told The Daily Star yesterday adding that normally it does not happen before August.

Out of the 85 monitoring FFWC stations, eight points registered river currents flowing over danger mark, 33 saw rise while 17 recorded fall, a FFWC bulletin said.

In the north-eastern region, eight points of the Meghna basin yesterday saw waters crossing the danger level.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna and SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

JUDGE'S WRIT PETITION ON INTIMIDATION

Ex-CJ wonders if lower courts can work freely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief justice (CJ) Mahmudul Amin Choudhury yesterday expressed his surprise at the writ petition filed by a judge who complained of pressure by two public prosecutors (PP) and wondered if lower courts are able to operate freely.

A judge is not supposed to be transferred within 16 months of his posting for administrative reasons, Choudhury said and asked why a judge would be transferred for administrative reasons since he works in the judiciary.

He was speaking at a seminar on "Rule of Law and Social Justice", at Sonargaon Hotel, organised by Legal Aid, a monthly legal affairs journal.

Choudhury observed such issues becoming public through filing of writ petition have tainted the judiciary's image.

"The PPs and GPs (government pleaders) are appointed on political considerations. They change with the change of government... A judge is expected to discharge their judicial duties but in such an environment can they freely do so?" he asked.

He said parliament is not the supreme authority, it functions in accordance with the constitution and rules of procedure. The Supreme Court is empowered to scrutinise the laws passed in parliament.

"Laws are supposed to be enacted in public interest, but nowadays they are framed to advance the interest of a handful of people."

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudasser Husain echoed Choudhury in saying that judicial independence means freedom from improper pressure by any quarter in the decision-making process.

"Independence of the judiciary cannot be guaranteed without separation of judiciary," he observed.

Husain said judiciary is the ultimate protector of the rule of law since each individual has the right to enjoy economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights in the country.

"None can deny the fact that an impartial, efficient, competent and effective judiciary is a must for satisfactory functioning of democracy in the country."

Justice Fazlul Karim was the keynote speaker while Justice M Ruhul Amin, Justice Joynul Abedin, Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, Attorney General AF Hassan Ariff, Barrister Mainul Hossain and Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman spoke. Khawaja Golam Morshed chaired the seminar.

Rivals slaughter five outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiya

Underground political operatives Wednesday night slaughtered five members of their rival faction at Naripota village under Damuhuda upazila of Chuadanga district, in the latest of a long line of bloodletting in the terror-ridden southwestern region.

In a statement to local newspapers yesterday, the Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) claimed the responsibility for the killing.

The five slain are Akbar, 32, Latif, 29, Abdul Jalil, 40, Bazlu, 45, and Lutfur, 35. Of them, Akbar and Latif were residents of Natipota village, while Jalil, Bazlu and Lutfur hailed from Kultadanga of the same upazila.

Police said a gang of PBCP-Janajuddho stormed into a house of the village, where about 10

members of PBCP (Marxist-Leninist) faction were holding a secret meeting. The Janajuddho men caught five of them, took to a nearby field and slaughtered one by one. The rest of the PBCP-ML members could manage to flee.

Police recovered the five bodies yesterday morning and sent to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Police believe the slaying to be a sequel to a factional conflict over occupation of Gangar Beel, a natural water body, and control of the adjacent areas.

On March 24, the PBCP-Janajuddho killed another five operatives of the PBCP-ML at Kutubpur village under Sadar upazila in the district.

Sources said at least 98 people have been killed in the district in the last five months, compared to 55 in the previous three months, posting an alarming rise in factional killing.

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Hasina blames PM for by-polls blueprint

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has virtually come to a standstill as the prime minister is fully occupied with the Dhaka-10 by-poll.

"Currently no file moves from one place to another as the prime minister is busy with laying plans to maneuver the election result to see her candidate winner," Hasina said while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion organised by AL to mark its 55th founding anniversary at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh.

Hasina, also the leader of the Opposition, alleged the government is massing criminals from every corner of the country and spreading black money to swing the election result in favour of the four-party alliance.

She blasted the government for not arresting the killers of

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Sangu gas reserve goes dry fast

SHARIEF KHAN

The Sangu gas field reserve is depleting so fast that Petrobangla fears it will be exhausted completely by 2010.

The gas field that heralded a new era of foreign investment in oil and gas sector and started operation back in 1998 is supposed to supply 200 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) of gas as per the contract between its operator British Cairn and Petrobangla.

But despite its best efforts, Cairn cannot supply more than 140 to 145 mmcf now. It was able to supply up to 160 mmcf at a point in time in the past. In December last, the oil company began re-perforating its four existing gas wells to increase the supply to 200 mmcf from early this year. But the venture failed, shattering Petrobangla's gas supply plans for the current year.

The gas crisis gripping the

country now could be eased had Sangu performed as per projection, the sources pointed out.

Gas supply situation is the worst in Savar and Dhaka Export Processing Zone where the crisis has affected industries. "We are resolving this problem within a week by tweaking gas supply pipelines. But there would have been no problem had Sangu performed well," said a top Petrobangla official.

Demand for gas now is over 1300 mmcf but Petrobangla supplies less than that despite having a supply capacity of 1362 mmcf.

"Gas demand has increased tremendously, so has the supply," the official said. "In the last 30 months, we have added 264 mmcf gas with 62 mmcf added in May and June alone. But at the same time, the reserves at different gas

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Illegal rickshaws pile up by the roadside as Dhaka City Corporation yesterday seized scores of them without licence in the New Market area.

Hasina asks AL men to canvass for Mannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has asked her party's Dhaka city unit leadership to engage its activists in campaigning for Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh nominee Abdul Mannan in Dhaka-10 by-polls.

On Wednesday night, she gave the instruction at a meeting with Dhaka city AL President Mohammad Hanif and General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

The main opposition did not

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BNP men swoop on Mannan's procession, hurt 6 AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP adherents yesterday again attacked a procession of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) candidate MA Mannan in Tejgaon, leaving six Awami League (AL) leaders including a lawmaker injured.

AL lawmaker Mohammed Ali from Noakhali-6 constituency and some other party leaders particularly from Noakhali were campaigning for

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Activists of Jubo League, the youth front of Awami League (AL), bring out a procession in Dhaka yesterday in support of Bikalpa Dhara candidate Abdul Mannan. The AL has left support to Mannan in Dhaka-10 by-polls.

Faruque's bail rejected again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petitions for Proshika President Qazi Faruque Ahmed in three criminal cases including one for sedition.

The Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Dhaka passed the order after three criminal revisions were filed on Wednesday for his bail.

The revisions were filed against the rejection order of the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka on June 21.

The High Court (HC) and a sessions judge's court on Sunday granted the Proshika top official bail in 10 out of the 15 cases, lodged against him by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) on May 15.

Faruque and six others were also implicated in a sedition case on June 21. The next day the CMM's court placed him on a five-day remand and later the HC stayed the order following a writ petition.

SSC results tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations across the country will be published tomorrow, an official announcement said yesterday.

Examinees are advised to collect results from their respective examination centres or educational institutions.

The results of the SSC, SSC (vocational) and Dakhil examinations will be published simultaneously from all examination centres across the country at 4:00pm.

The results will also be available on website www.educationboard.org.bd

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Legal work permit holders must leave US for renewing visas

AFF, Washington

Thousands of foreigners legally entitled to work in the United States, many of them Indian nationals, will soon have to leave the country if they want their expiring US visas to be reissued, the State Department said Wednesday.

After July 16, non-immigrant US visas held by most non-official foreign workers will no longer be

reissued in the United States due to enhanced border security regulations adopted after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the department said.

Instead, the affected workers will have to apply for new visas at US embassies and consulates abroad, preferably in their home countries, because domestic facilities do not process visas and

are not equipped to handle new immigration procedures, including interviews, it said.

"We recognise that the domestic reissuance of business-related visas to applicants in the United States has been a convenience to the international business community," the department said in a

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| Prayer Timing | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| June 25 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-05 | 4-40 |
| Juma | 12-30 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-54 | 6-57 |
| Esha | 8-17 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation