

## Rivers around Dhaka

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Nawabganj, Narsingdi, Madaripur and Sharifpur may go under water soon, the flood-forecasting centre said.

Our Manikganj correspondent reports: Authorities closed two ferry-anchorage points at Paturia as the river is swelling by the hour, disrupting ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia route.

A traffic line stretched three kilometres at Paturia terminal and only one ferry-anchorage point was in operation yesterday morning. Floodwaters inundated the low-lying areas in Shibalia, Daulatpur and Harinampur upazillas.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma rivers continued to swell, while most rivers in the Meghna and the South Eastern Hill basins recorded a fall.

Our Gaibandha correspondent said thousands of people stranded on different shoals along the Teesta and Brahmaputra basin are waiting for rescue, while many others shifted to safer places as the floods in Gaibandha worsened Tuesday.

This year, the floods surging by one and a half feet more than last year

closed over 200 educational institutions in the northern district.

About 1km railroad in Balashi went under waist-deep water suspending train service with the capital. Railway personnel built 60-foot sandbagged dam across the rail tracks to protect Balashi's upper station.

Our Sherpur correspondent reports: Three people drowned in floodwaters in the last four days; they were named as Anwar Ali, 10, Gafur Ali, 65, and Zainal Abedin (age unknown) in Nalitabari upazila.

Our Bogra correspondent said the flood situation in Bogra worsened because of heavy rains and rising waters in the Jamuna and Bangali rivers.

Reports of Sylhet correspondent say: The floods in badly-affected Sylhet remained unchanged with inundation of new areas in Jagannath, Beinabazar and Fenchuganj upazillas and rivers flowing above the danger mark.

Abdul Momin drowned in a remote rain-fed water-body in Dhamapasha upazila in Sunamganj on Monday and a young man died in Chhatak upazila and two others, including a minor boy, in Jaintapur the same day.

## Limited TU

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Janata League (KSJL) and Shahjahan Khan of Awami League (AL) were incorporated in the bill.

Before the trade union right is ensured, the workers in the first phase will be able to form 'labour representative and welfare committees', empowered to negotiate and sign agreements with the owners to protect the workers' interest.

According to the bill, which is now an Act, the committees would run till October 31, 2006 and may continue beyond the deadline if the owners intend so, but would cease to continue if the workers formed an association in the enterprises.

The Trade Association and Industrial Relations Act 2004 emerged after a package deal the government struck with investors in the EPZs, American Federation of Labour & Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO), US ambassador in Dhaka and World Bank country director.

Trade union will be allowed in an industrial unit in the EPZs if 30 percent workers want it. After that, union can be formed if more than 50 percent workers take part in a vote and over 50 percent of them favour it.

Trade union bodies will run in line with a constitution elaborated in the Act and the executive body will be elected by secret ballot. The body will be able to work as collective bargaining agent (CBA).

The workers' unions in an area can form a federation, but in no way can they be involved with a body or a political party or its labour front. The unions are not entitled to take part in any political activity.

Opposition lawmakers termed the proposed law incomplete and demanded elicitation of public opinion on the bill.

AL lawmakers Rahmat Ali, Shamsur Rahman, Sharif, Abdus Shahid, Panchanan Biswas, Shahjahan Khan, Atiqur Rahman, Md. Mahabubur Rahman and Mohammad Nasim, and Kader Siddiqui of KSJL took part in the discussion.

They said the government does not protect the interest of workers and has closed down 4,000 mills and factories, including Adamjee Jute Mills and Chhatka Paper Mills. But it enacted the latest law under pressure from the US government.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said the enactment of the new law would not upset production in the EPZs. In the US, there are certain laws to protect labour interests and the new law would help protect our garment market in the US, he said.

Trade union right remained curtailed in the EPZs where one-fifth of the country's total export earnings comes from the six EPZs employing 1.36 lakh workers.

## 3 convicts

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Assistant Sub-Inspector Moinul Haq, Constables Amrita Lal Barman and Abdus Sattar are being confined in Rangpur Central Jail since 1997.

The Court of District Session Judge, Rangpur awarded death penalty to the policemen in August 1997.

The convicts challenged the verdict in the Supreme Court (SC). However, the SC rejected their appeal and upheld the lower court's judgement.

In April 2004, they lodged mercy petition with the president, which was rejected.

According to the prosecution, the policemen violated and then killed Asmeen in the small hours of August 24, 1995 at Dosh Mile in Dinajpur when she was returning to her native village from Dhaka.

## PM asks

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Development SM Walir Rahman also spoke.

"We've engaged our intelligence to trace the whereabouts of 'Galakata' Mujibbar and his operatives," said Mazarul Hoque, deputy commissioner of the DMP (west zone), adding, "we are expecting to arrest Mujibbar soon."

Meanwhile, police filed two cases with Mohammadpur Police Station - one for murdering the policeman and another under the arms act, sources said.

Sergeant Manzurul lodged the murder case accusing Mujibbar, his son Liton, Mohammad Ali, Mehedi Hasan Liton and 'Nakkata' Mostafa and unnamed others, they added.

Of them, Mehedi, whom police shot and wounded after searching him out of dead writer Ali's house, is arrested.

Filing the other case, Sub-Inspector Tariquezzaman accused only Mehedi and Ali of possessing illegal firearms.

On Monday, police gunned down Ali for his alleged ties to a criminal outfit after they searched out Mehedi from the dead writer's Rayerbazar house.

However, Ali's family members claimed that police killed the 65-year-old dead writer ignoring his repeated assertions of innocence. They also added that they did not know when the 'criminal' Mehedi entered Ali's house.

According to police, Mujibbar, who earned his nickname 'Galakata' (cut-throat) after kidnapping a businessman from Gazipur and hacking him to death in 1997, is an accused in eight criminal cases including four for murders.

Locals said Mujibbar's followers shot and wounded trader Shawkar Akbar on July 6 and murdered one Alwad last year after failing to extract Tk 10 lakh from him.

The gang killed an aged local businessman on Sunday after he refused to pay Tk 3 lakh in extortion money, they added.

## Civil servants

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official business.

Dr Kamal Hossain, lawyer for the petitioner, said it would amount to contempt of court if this four, however important public offices they may hold, do not appear.

The chamber judge, Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, however, referred the stay petition to the full bench after hearing both sides.

The full bench of the Supreme Court will hear the petition on Saturday.

The High Court (HC) on Monday also asked the four why they should not be charged with contempt of court after Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) candidate Abdul Mannan filed a contempt petition for violation of the HC directives to deploy army in each polling centre on the election day.

The four -- Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Home Secretary Omar Farooque, Defence Secretary KM Ehsanul Haq and Acting Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division at the Prime Minister's Office Brigadier General Illias Iftekhar Rasul -- yesterday filed an appeal petition to the chamber judge of the Supreme Court (SC) seeking a stay order on the HC directives.

The four are to appear before court to clarify their role during next hearing on July 24. Senior lawyer and ruling coalition lawmaker Advocate Mahabubur Rahman filed the appeal petition on behalf of the four saying the four officials need to be in their offices as they deal with important public matters. He told court public interest would suffer if the officials appeared before it leaving behind their official task.

He argued that it needs to be looked into whether the four officials violated the HC directives and if so, then whether they did it deliberately or whether it was done to degrade the judges. Advocate Rahman also submitted that court had better summon them after scrutinising the report of the Election Commission and replies of the four to its show-cause notice. He observed that the HC order to summon the four appears premature.

The lawyers for the BDB opposed the appeal petition when it was filed. Dr Kamal Hossain, one of the BDB lawyers, said if the four do not show up before court just because they are high officials, it will only go to show their disregard for court.

In the sub-continent countries prime ministers and ministers, not to speak of their secretaries, appear in court in person setting aside their important business. "There's no VIP in the eyes of the

## No separate pay

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leaving the NCBs opting for the private banks. To stop this their salaries may be increased as incentives."

The minister did not say anything about making an extra-increment of the policemen's wage, though the Public Expenditure Review Commission had strongly advocated it to ensure better policing.

The minister told the house that he had already held such a meeting last week and added "Punitive actions will be taken against the ministries which will fail to expedite implementation of the projects."

He said PCP (Project Concept Paper) has been simplified along with speedy processing of projects and release of funds.

finance minister said.

According to meeting sources, Saifur told them the new paystructure will not change the existing 20 grades. He directed them to take inflation, living cost, calorie requirements etc into consideration in increasing the wage level. In this connection, the commission sought some technical staffs from the minister.

The commission will also examine what differences it would make in the pay structure if the government employees pay their own taxes and if the government pays that. Saifur is of the opinion that there are around one lakh government officials who earn enough to pay tax.

Commission Chairman Mujibul Haq said, "The minister has asked us to work impartially and objectively."

"We will review the pay structures of India and Pakistan, and will try to come up with a balanced report that would be acceptable to both the employees and the government," he added.

## Banglabandha land port

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full-fledged land port by a private company on build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis on 10 acres of land.

On the other hand, India has done nothing but setting up a single L/C station on their side. A 2-km frontier road in the Indian side is in a very bad shape.

Only five trucks came from Nepal since the opening of the land port and the goods were unloaded from truck to truck without using the warehouse at Banglabandha, a shipping ministry source said explaining the situation.

The government staff deployed at the port remain idle as the port is yet to start full operation. There are seven staff in customs, five in immigration, seven in administration and two in the quarantine who spend time without work.

The prime minister said the government was setting up residential youth training centres in each district to turn the youth community into skilled human resource.

Besides, the Department of Youth Development had taken up a technical training project on information technology to groom the educated unemployed youths, she said.

Banglabandha is the only export-oriented land port in Bangladesh while all other land ports are used mainly for importing goods from

India. Nepal has always been interested in importing goods through this land port, the nearest from the Himalayan country.

Nepal imports ready made garments, ceramics, CI sheet, biscuit, battery, cosmetics and other items from Bangladesh through this border.

A border check-post was opened at Banglabandha few years back but it did not function properly due to lack of infrastructure facilities.

Officials used to come from Panchagarh, some 57 km off the land port, for processing the documents.

Moreover, the movement of passengers through this check-post could not be introduced due to lack of immigration office in the Indian side.

Bangladeshi tourists could easily go to attractive places like Darjeeling, Gangtok and Bhutan through Banglabandha border if immigration facilities were developed in the Indian side, the source pointed out.

Besides, a 12-member police team aided by seven security personnel deployed by the land port department is engaged in maintaining security at the port.

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## 2 robbers killed

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of bullet during the bloody shoot-out that rocked the locality.

Sources said some 40 to 50 heavily armed robbers in a truck and a microbus stormed into the Bazar known as Dubai Market at around 2.15am. They first tied up three security guards, two rickshaw pullers and two traders of the market and broke into four jewellers' shops.

They took away 100 tolas of gold ornaments from Al Hossain Jewellers, Nazu Meah Jewellers, Al Fashion Jewellers and Fazey Jewellers. Soon locals and police crowded around the scene as the Muajjin of the market mosque using the mosque's mike cried out for help, locals said.

After an hour-long exchange of gunfire with the police the gang retreated. Except the four, the robbers managed to flee the scene.

In a separate incident, another gang numbered between 7 to 8 looted two phone-fax shops named EEL Tel and Discovery, at around 3.30pm yesterday at Shulok Bohar under Panchali Police Station. They took away 25 and 165 mobile sets from those two shops.

Separate cases were filed.

## Two more

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Earlier, in the morning, an unknown caller phoned Prof Nasreen Khan and Kader of Economics Department and asked her not to go to her campus office in the next seven days.

The caller was quoted as saying they would kill MM Akash, another teacher of the same department, within the next week.

Nasreen's chamber is next to that of Akash.

Khader University Teachers Association President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and General Secretary Prof M Akteruzzaman condemned the threats and expressed grave concern over the evolving extremist situation.

Amidst the desks thumping of the treasury bench lawmakers, Saifur Rahman urged the ministers to be more effective in implementing of the development programmes.

BNP lawmaker Moshirul Haq wanted to know whether the government has plans to remove bureaucratic tangles for implementing development projects on time. Finance minister narrated his ministry steps on implementing the projects on time and further added "We will sit with all the secretaries of the ministries concerned in every month and hear from them about the projects implementation progress."

The minister told the house that he had already held such a meeting last week and added "Punitive actions will be taken against the ministries which will fail to expedite implementation of the projects."

He said he believed Bush was concerned about the impact of AIDS, but said it was now time to step forward and commit resources to that fight.

"We really do need leadership. America has a natural leadership capacity because of its resources, because of its size," he said.

And he appealed to governments around the world to show "international solidarity" by pooling their efforts.

But Dr Anthony Fauci, President Bush's senior adviser on AIDS, said the US decision to distribute money through its own AIDS prevention programmes reflected initial concern on how the global fund would be managed.

At the time the global fund was starting to get rolling, there was a concern on the part of the United States that if they put in this massive amount of money, \$15bn, they wanted to have much more of a direct say in how it was spent," Dr Fauci said.

As the conference continued yesterday, protesters demanding more access to cheaper anti-AIDS drugs interrupted several speakers including a French government minister and a representative of a major drugs company, Pfizer.

The last date of admission without late fee is August 25 while students will be allowed to be enrolled with late fees till September 29.

Humanities group students will be allowed to seek admission either in the humanities or commerce group if they desire, but students of both groups are

barred to enrol in the science group. However, science group students are allowed to enrol in any group they prefer.

## Red tape

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d'Affaires of the Danish Embassy in Dhaka Henrik Larsen said, "It is unfortunate that the DNA lab facilities and equipment are not being used due to slow decision-making process in Bangladesh."

Larsen also said, "We would also like to see the lab is managed by people who have professional background since it is essentially a highly technical matter."

Meanwhile, sources in the Department of Women's Affairs said 70,121 cases of violence against women across the country --