

Flood fury brings back 1998 deluge memory

ZIA runway under threat of flooding; Sylhet airport to resume flights today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Floods roll through 41 districts to ravage Bangladesh for long affecting more people in what could be the worst in memory since 1998 that saw the most devastating deluge.

The fast-rising Turag river that swamped lowlands in and around the capital threatens to deluge the runway of Zia International Airport, echoing the flooding of MAG

Osmani International Airport in Sylhet.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will resume flights from the third largest airport in Sylhet to Dhaka today, the civil aviation authorities said after a successful test flight.

The short-lived appearance of the sun gave a little relief to the flood-hit people after days of driving rains, but river erosion and inundation of fresh

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Red Cross to launch int'l aid appeal

STAR REPORT

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) yesterday said it would launch an international appeal to raise \$3.2 million for flood victims in Bangladesh.

The appeal, being planned by the IFRC, is expected to be launched on Monday and will aim to help 500,000

people displaced by the floods, according to AFP.

The United States is monitoring the floods in Bangladesh and coordinating humanitarian relief efforts with donors and other organisations, the US State Department said.

"The US mission to Bangladesh continues to closely monitor the situation in areas of the country

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Massive plan taken to face situation

PM wants NGO action

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said the government is facing the current flood with adequate measures and it has a massive plan for post-flood rehabilitation in all sectors, including agriculture, health and educa-

tion.

She hoped that more non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the affluent people would come forward in aid of the flood-affected people along with the government measures to face the

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The show must go on... students of Jhaupara Government Primary School slish through waist-deep water to attend classes in Keraniganj as floods swamped more areas in the Dhaka suburbs yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

12 business bodies urge AL to withdraw hartal

Party still sticks to its decision for tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of 12 leading business bodies yesterday appealed to Awami League (AL) to withdraw tomorrow's hartal considering the prevailing flood situation, however the main opposition still stuck to its stance.

In a joint statement, business leaders said tomorrow's shutdown would increase sufferings to the people of flood-hit areas as relief distribution and emergency food supply would be hindered and prices of essentials would shoot up.

Over 2 crore people are marooned, many of them living their days out on a little or no food, they added.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star last night that the main opposition is unlikely to with-

draw the programme.

"We have already declared the flood prone areas out of the purview of hartal," he added.

He also asked the government to help the flood-affected people with sufficient relief and other assistance.

Signatories to the statement are Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kutubuddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturing and Exporters' Association President Anisul Huq, Fazle RM, Hasan, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries President AK Azad, Bangladesh

Knitwear Manufacturing and Exporters' Association President Fazlul Huq, Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association President Amir Hossain Khan, SM Shafiquzzaman, president of Bangladesh Drugs Industries Association, Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association President Kazi Manirul Huq, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry President AH Mahmud Chowdhury, Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Monir Ahmed, Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry President M Lutfar Rahman, Barisal Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Alhaj M Ebadul Huq Chand and Mohammad Mohiuddin, president of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Elect AL man to end govt misrule: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged people of Gazipur-2 constituency to vote for her party candidate in the August 1 by-polls to protest what she said were misrule and misdeed of the incumbent government.

"The rule of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition has been marked by violence and corruption... Cast your vote (for our candidate) during Gazipur-2 by-poll to give a befitting reply to the alliance rulers' style of

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23 cops down with dengue

The disease has staged a full-scale return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-three policemen are now undergoing treatment for dengue fever at Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital, indicating a full-scale comeback of the mosquito-borne viral disease in the capital.

Officials of the hospital told The Daily Star last night that the actual number of policemen hospitalised with dengue infection is much higher than the above-mentioned 23. But, they said they had been instructed by high ups at the police headquarters to quote a lower figure.

On Wednesday at least 10 policemen from different barracks in the city were admitted to the hospital with the viral infection and eight more were hospitalised yesterday.

The majority of the dengue-infected police are constables, who live in barracks. However, no police-woman was reported to have contracted the deadly disease.

Physicians at the police hospital said most of the patients are suffering from normal dengue fever (DF).

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GAZIPUR-2 BY-POLLS EC to ask ministry to punish surgeons for seeking 4-party votes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to ask the health ministry to initiate departmental action against two of its officials for violating the public servants' code of conduct as well as electoral rules by campaigning for the ruling coalition candidate in Gazipur-2 by-election slated for August 1.

The EC, a quasi-judicial body, also summoned the four-party alliance candidate, Prof Abdul Mannan, to appear before it on July 25 Sunday. The commission requires Mannan to clarify his position regarding an accusation of transgressing electoral code of conduct, which the electoral inquiry committee (EIC) for Gazipur-2 by-polls has brought against him.

The EIC, earlier, had submitted a report to the commission contain-

ing findings of its inquiries and related information that back up the allegation against the health officials -- Gazipur Civil Surgeon Mazharul Islam and Gazipur District Dental Surgeon Mazharul Alam.

After hearing the case and studying the EIC report, the EC directed the surgeons to give separate undertakings that they will never repeat such offence in future.

The surgeons, however, denied the charge during the hearing held at EC Secretariat, saying Mannan had dropped in on his own volition and joined an ongoing conference of health assistants in Gazipur and made a political speech.

Acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Safur Rahman and his colleagues -- M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali-

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A must-win game for Tigers today

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Bangladesh will have to beat Sri Lanka today to stay alive in the Eighth Asia Cup when the two sides meet in their second Super League match at the Premadasa Stadium.

Bangladesh Television and ESPN will telecast the day-night game live from 2:45pm.

After meek surrenders to India and Pakistan, the Tigers desperately need their batting to click against the in-form hosts who are yet to lose a match in the competition so far.

Statistically speaking,

Bangladesh have lost all ten matches against the former world champions and in their previous six Asia Cup meetings the margins of defeat have hardly been inspiring either.

However coach Dav Whatmore, who is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the Lankan team after spending six successful years as coach, believes that Bangladesh are not out of the tournament yet.

Captain Habibul Bashar, worried about the team's continuous

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PM asks media men to maintain professionalism

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the media men to maintain professional honesty, responsibility and the highest level of caution.

Reaffirming her government's commitment to ensure freedom of press, she hoped that accuracy, creativity and truth should be the resort of the media personnel.

"Be cautious so that your coverage does not harm or hurt anyone," she told media people at a function organised to celebrate the first founding anniversary of private TV channel ntv at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the evening.

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Living like Noah

MORSHED ALI KHAN, back from Manikganj

All along the near submerged 12-kilometre road from Uthala to Zafarganj in Manikganj district, hundreds of men, women and children have taken shelter under the most subhuman conditions.

Under makeshift polythene roofs, the families are sharing the space with their cattle and their last pitiful possessions -- a few kitchen utensils they could retrieve while leaving their submerged homes to save their lives. All around the road, wherever eyes travel, swelling floodwater was raging through the villages.

At 1:10pm yesterday two families

of about 15 members arrived on a mechanised boat to unload their last belongings on the Uthala-Zafarganj Road. Sahera, mother of four children, looked distressed and fatigued. She said they came from Boistomir Char under Teota union 10 kilometres away, hiring the boat for Tk 1,000.

"O God, we have lost everything to this terrible flood, we could not even save the roofs of our house," she grieved. As Sahera and her family members unloaded the goods on the road, a venomous snake slithered out of the stack, which the men immediately beat to death.

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CTG ARMS HAUL New probe officer assigned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A new investigating officer (IO) yesterday took charge of the two cases filed in connection to the April 2 arms haul in Chittagong, who also will lead an investigation cell in conducting further probe into the mysterious gunrunning.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Mir Nawsher Ali replaced ASP A K M Kabir Uddin as IO in the cases -- one under Section 19(Kaa) of the Arms Act for illegal possession and transportation, and the other under Section 25/B of the Special Power Act for smuggling of firearms.

Following detection of a number of flaws and loopholes in the charge sheet Kabir Uddin submitted to the court, the Criminal Investigation

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Govt warns of price hike

STAR REPORT

The commerce ministry yesterday warned of price hikes of essentials in the next few days because of the worsening floods.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury told an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday that although prices were still under control, the worsening floods submerging roads and highways could push the prices in the next few days.

The commerce ministry convened the meeting in the wake of the disastrous floods across the country to assess the impact on prices of essentials.

The minister urged the retailers and wholesalers to sell essentials at fair price, otherwise, he warned, the

government would take steps to ensure a fair price.

Representatives of the agriculture ministry, shipping ministry, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), Bangladesh Bank, National Board of Revenue (NBR), Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Police and BDR attended the meeting.

A team of The Daily Star yesterday visited some retail shops in the city's Karwan Bazar and found the prices creeping up.

Non-vegetarians appear to be hard-hit with the beef and mutton prices becoming dear by Tk 10 a kilogram.

"The price of sugar has gone up

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Army was not deployed at each centre

EC tells HC

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government did not deploy the army at each polling centre during Dhaka-10 by-election on July 1 in line with a court order, the Election Commission (EC) said in a reply to the High Court (HC) yesterday.

The EC report signed by acting

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Safur Rahman came after the HC asked the EC to submit a report on whether the army was deployed at all polling centres.

Sources close to the EC said the commission in its two-page report described what the acting CEC and

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The British Council wishes to make it clear that a pamphlet released in Dhaka on Tuesday 20th July containing lists of "Best Teachers of 2004" and "Best Schools of 2004" is a hoax and was NOT a British Council publication. We neither have nor publish any rankings of this nature.

The abuse of our logo and material in this way is unlawful, and we shall take appropriate action against the perpetrators.