

24 24 hours a day!
7 7 days a week!
365 365 days a year!

FedEx Express
 Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
 Licensee of Federal Express Corporation

Call: 9565114 for further details!
 we live to deliver

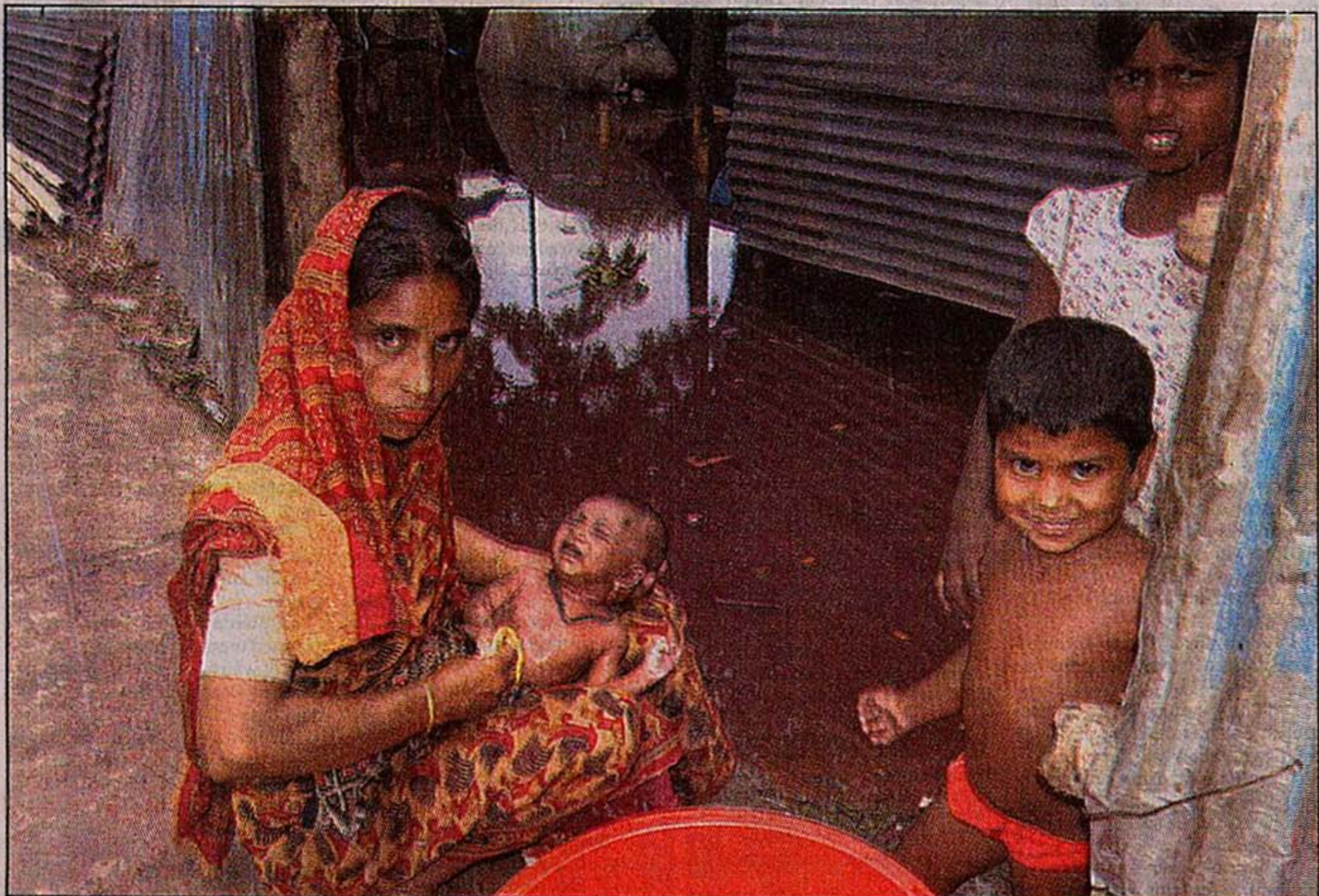
Upgrade your TV into a complete Digital Home Entertainment System

PHILIPS

+ Your TV = Complete Digital Home Entertainment System
 Hear Every Thing Experience Every Thing

Mx 5700D (TL 48,000/-)
 Lx 3700D (TL 33,900/-)
 Lx 3500D (TL 27,900/-)

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS
 Tel: Dhaka: 8110163, 9882192, 9896285, 9569613, Bogra: 66215
 Chittagong: 637669, 653758, Khulna: 720304, 723695



With floodwaters all around, a helpless mother at a Tejgaon slum bathes her newborn baby with dirty, polluted water. PHOTO: STAR

WB, IMF decide \$370m loan this week

Govt seeks waiver on unfulfilled conditions

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh faces a test of confidence by the World Bank and IMF this week as both donors will consider approving three loans totalling \$370 million, sources said.

The test has already become hard for Bangladesh, as it failed to fulfil some major conditions of the IMF for getting the third tranche of \$70 million poverty reduction growth facility (PRGF) programme. It has requested waiver of these difficult conditions.

The World Bank will discuss approving a loan of \$200 million tomorrow in Washington for poverty reduction through a project styled "Development Support Credit phase 2".

The World Bank wants the government to increase gas prices and increase and adjust petroleum prices in the light of the sharp rise in global oil prices.

It argues that an increase in the energy prices will have "limited impact" on the real income of the poor and that a hike in the gas prices will also have little impact because only 4 percent of household, mostly the "urban non-poor", have access to piped gas.

The IMF Board on Wednesday will discuss at Washington Bangladesh's request for "waiver of performance criterion" at the second review meeting on the three-year PRGF.

The third phase of this loan was supposed to be disbursed in June.

But it was held back on Bangladesh's failure to fulfil some major conditions including introduction of private management in the Agrani Bank by March and bringing some changes to the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The IMF is providing this loan in seven tranches on a half-yearly basis -- each at \$70 million -- upon fulfilling a set of conditions in each phase.

Bangladesh so far has received two tranches and utilised the funds to supplement its poverty reduction measures through the budget.

Although each of the tranches is not big, the credit is viewed as prestigious as it helps Bangladesh bring in credits from other international donors, finance ministry sources said.

Hasina asks govt to open more flood centres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the government to open more centres at the flood-hit areas and distribute adequate relief among the victims.

"It's the fundamental responsibility of the government to provide the flood victims with food and shelter. If the government fails to do so, people will reply at the right time", Hasina, also the Awami League (AL) president, told a gathering of flood-hit people during a visit to Manikganj.

The AL president, who distributed relief at Noayabari of Shibbalay, Banajuri of Gheor and Thana Road of Manikganj Sadar, also urged the affluent people to help the flood victims.

The government seems to be reluctant to stand beside the flood victims who are passing their days in miseries, she alleged.

The AL leader said the government has allocated so far only 28 paise for each person in the flooded areas.

Recalling the devastation of the

Govt meets with 56 NGOs today to discuss flood

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has called a meeting of 56 leading Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) today to discuss the flood and relief operations.

The meeting will be held at the conference room of the Press and Information Department of the information ministry.

The NGOs include Concern Bangladesh, Islamic Relief, Action Aid, Care Bangladesh, Oxfam, Samata, Caritas, Save the Children UK, save the Children US, BRAC and World Vision, Bangladesh.

Minister for Food and Disaster Management Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, State Minister Asadul Habib Dulu and State Minister for NGO Affairs Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad will exchange views with the

Fear of attack on al-Aqsa Mosque

Reports Israeli newspaper; helicopter fires missiles on Gaza militant's home

AGENCIES, Jerusalem

Israeli authorities fear Jewish extremists could be planning an air attack on Jerusalem's disputed mosque compound in a bid to derail plans to uproot settlers from Gaza, Haaretz newspaper reported yesterday.

Security sources told the daily they were studying the possibility that militants would try to crash an unmanned drone packed with explosives or even a suicide bomber to crash into Muslim worshippers during a prayer session.

Public Security Minister Tzahi Hanegbi warned Saturday of a high risk of an attack by Jewish extremists against Islamic holy places on the compound, which is known as the Temple Mount by Jews and Al-Haram al-Sharif to Muslims.

The compound shelters the Dome of the Rock (Omar Mosque) and Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, as well as the Western Wall which is the holiest site for the Jews.

Jewish extremists are fiercely opposed to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to pull all 8,000 settlers and Israeli troops out of the Gaza Strip by the end of next year.

Authorities fear that the extremists want to trigger a violent backlash by Palestinians that would make it impossible for Sharon's government to implement the departure from Gaza.

In the early 1980s, the Shin Beth

Hasina leaves for India today

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition Leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will meet Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi as she leaves for New Delhi today on a four-day visit to India.

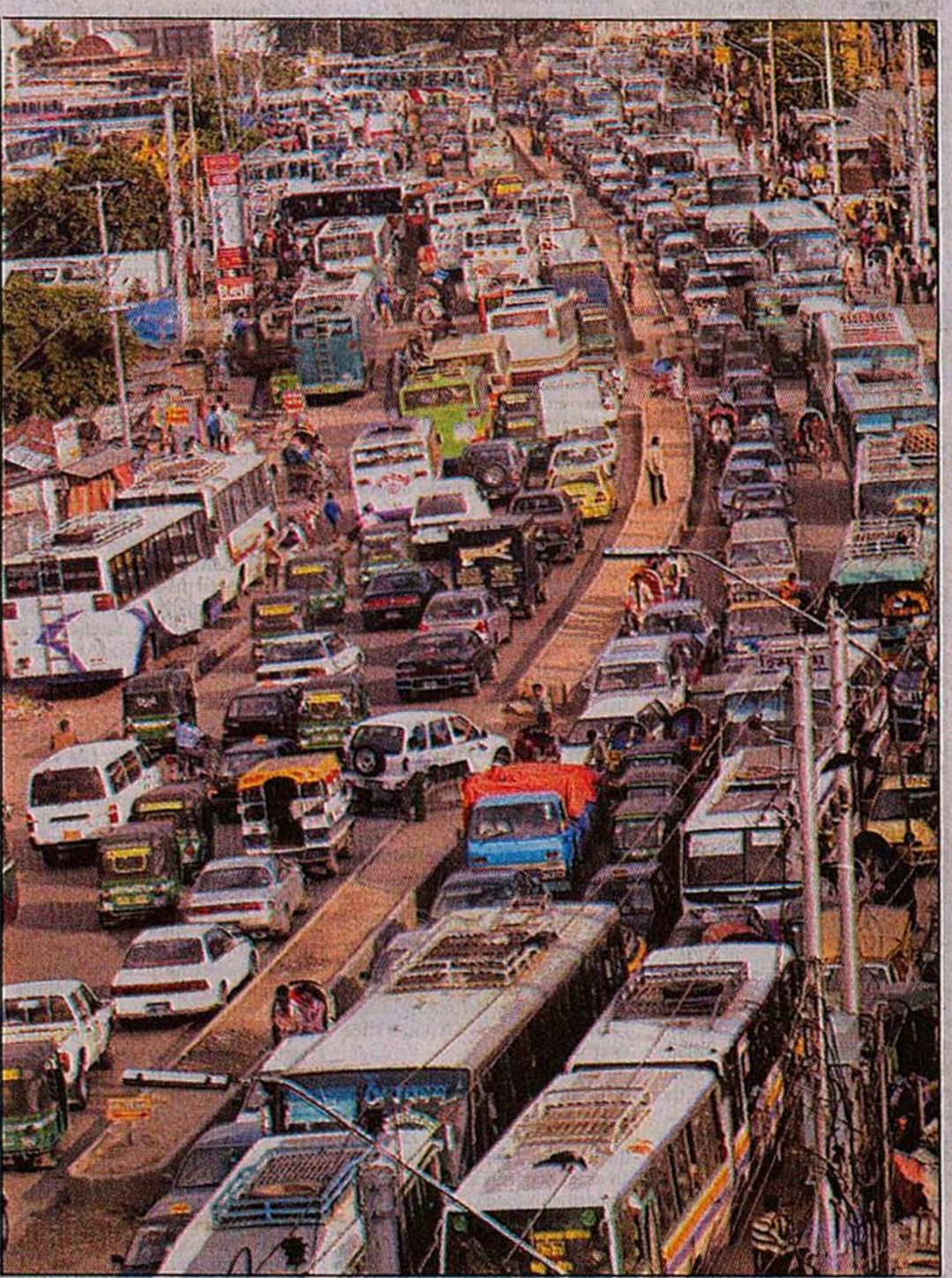
Hasina along with her sister Sheikh Rehana is going to India on private tour to visit Ajmeer Sharif and offer prayers at the holy place.

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri called on the opposition leader at her Dhanmondi house at 12:45pm yesterday and extended an invitation to meet Prime Minister Singh and other top Indian leaders.

Deputy High Commissioner S Chakravarty accompanied Veena Sikri.

Abul Kalam Azad, press secretary of the Indian high commissioner, told reporters that Veena invited the AL chief to meet the Indian prime minister and other top leaders and Hasina gladly accepted the invitation.

The AL chief will return home on July 29.



An army of vehicles chokes Mohakhali road throughout the day as flood and sewer waters submerged the vital Tejgaon-Gulshan road yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

US national stabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals yesterday stabbed a US national in Motijheel.

David Anderson, a 42-year-old teacher, and his friend Nicole Myers, both members of a New York-based social movement Humanist Centre of Cultures, came to Bangladesh on July 21 and checked in at Hotel Orchid Plaza in Nayapaltan in Motijheel.

"Two youths knocked on the door of our room No. 603 at 1:25pm and said something in Bangla which we could not figure out," David told reporters.

As David asked the two to go to the hotel reception for help, one of them pulled out a pistol and attempted to load its magazine.

"I promptly grabbed the firearm from him but the other youth took it away from me and stabbed me twice in my cheek and hand," David said

Heavy Iraq clashes leave 13 dead

2 Pakistanis feared kidnapped; US soldier dies of injury

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq's police and National Guard have killed 13 suspected militants in heavy clashes near Baghdad in one of the fiercest battles the fledgling security forces have faced since the handover of sovereignty.

The police and National Guard were attacked by rebel mortar fire and rocket-propelled grenades as they provided security to US forces conducting raids near the rebellious town of Buhruz, 55 km (35 miles) north of Baghdad, the US military said.

During the fighting yesterday, which lasted around an hour, US warplanes patrolled the skies and US artillery guns opened fire to suppress the insurgents' mortar positions, Major Neal O'Brien of the US 1st Infantry Division said.

It was one of the first major battles between Iraq's security forces and insurgents since the handover of sovereignty on June 28 and by far the largest death toll. No Iraqi security forces or US troops were killed.

The fighting came as Iraq's months-long hostage crisis took another turn for the worse -- two Pakistanis working for a Kuwait-based company were feared kidnapped after going missing.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said the two, an engineer and a driver believed to be working for the al-Tanimi Group, disappeared on Friday as they drove to Baghdad.

"We are trying to find out the details. It is feared they have been kidnapped," a Foreign Office spokesman said. "We will try our best to get them released if they are kidnapped."

Over the past 15 months, nationals from nearly two dozen countries have been kidnapped in Iraq, sometimes by criminal gangs, but

Govt may deploy army for water supply in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government may deploy army personnel for betterment of water supply in the flood-hit areas in the city in a day or two if the situation does not improve.

The decision was taken at a meeting at the local government and rural development (LGRD) and cooperatives ministry.

"We're trying to do everything within our means. We've taken several measures to meet water crisis during the flood and will do the same to face the post-flood

4 cops hurt in Khulna bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four Policemen were severely injured in a bomb attack, second in last 12 days, early yesterday at Shantala area under Jessore Sadar Police Station.

Police said unidentified miscreants hurled two powerful hand bombs on a police patrol van. The vehicle was badly damaged in the explosions that rocked the entire area.

The injured, Constable Rukunuzzaman and Constable Abu Saeed, were admitted to Jessore General Hospital with condition stated to be critical, said hospital sources.

Senior officers of Jessore police visited the scene of the attack and



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia chairs a preparatory meeting for the 13th Saarc Summit at the International Conference Centre yesterday. PHOTO: PD

10-km human chain in Rajshahi for gas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

People from all professions in Rajshahi yesterday formed a 10-km-long human chain demanding gas supply in Rajshahi through pipeline within this fiscal year.

Professionals of different organisations, cultural workers, students and teachers of schools, colleges and universities took part.

Rajshahi Gas Andolon Parishad (RGAP) organised the hour-long human chain stretching from Rajshahi University main-gate to the deputy commissioner's office at 10:00am.

After the programme, RGAP Convenor and journalist Mahtab Uddin addressed a public meeting on the court premises. He said the government should immediately announce its stance on the public demand for gas in Rajshahi. "Otherwise, the people will stage tougher movements," he added.

GAZIPUR-2 BY-POLL Mannan asked to give undertaking not to break rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday asked ruling alliance candidate MA Mannan to give an undertaking that he will not violate the electoral code of conduct in future in the August 1 parliamentary by-election of Gazipur-2 constituency.

The EC, a quasi judiciary body, delivered the judgement rejecting Mannan's clarification on the allegation of violating electoral rules,

2 BNP leaders among 5 hurt in Barisal blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Unknown assailants exploded two bombs and injured at least five people including two leaders of the ruling BNP in stadium area in the city yesterday.

The critically injured are

Prayer Timing		
July 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation