

## Dhaka Paralyzed by Floods

THE misery of flooding has reached the capital. Especially, in low lying areas in the eastern part of Dhaka, where the water has reached the knee deep level and above, city dwellers are going through hell trying to fight the flood water. Most of the houses have water in the ground floor. This foul smelling water is usually black. People are commuting in rafts and boats and many have left their houses to stay with friends or relatives. With the shortage of drinking water, there is a real fear of an onslaught of water

borne diseases. There is also the strong fear that the DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Dhaka) dam may break down with the force of the river waters as the water level is rising. Last Sunday, cracks were seen in the dam causing panic among the residents of the surrounding areas. Residents, police and staff from the roads and highways department got together and repaired the crack, which apparently occurred because rats had probably bitten off part of a pipe in the dam causing flood water to get in. For many of the 60 lakh people who live in these areas, this could be a temporary reprieve.



### Floods Taking Hundreds of Lives

More than 200 people have died, either drowned in the floodwater or after being afflicted by diarrhoea and other water borne diseases. There is fear that as the flood situation worsens many more will die, due to lack of access to clean drinking water. Moreover, people have no access to medicine and relief has been slow or inadequate according to villagers. Meanwhile, railroads and dams all over the country are also being damaged by the flood waters causing further misery. This year's flood is affecting at least 41 districts and more than 20 million people. The devastation of the floods all over the nation has prompted the Awami League to withdraw their dawn-to-dusk hartal on Saturday, July 24, 2004.



## HC Hearing on Election Farce

THE Election Commission's reply to the High Court (HC) regarding the army deployment in each polling centre is the official admission of a well-known fact. Although the electorates are already aware of the truth, the HC hearings complete the picture. The Election Commission (EC) report signed by acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Safiur Rahman came after the HC asked the EC to submit a report on whether the army was deployed at all polling centres during the by-poll in the Dhaka 10 constituency. The EC report also reviewed the media reports on the by-election. The HC bench of Justice Abdul Wahhab Miah and Justice Zinat Ara also issued a contempt rule on July 12 on four government officials who were instructed on June 29 to deploy necessary numbers of army personnel at polling centres. The HC issued the rule after Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) candidate Abdul Mannan filed a contempt petition against the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Defense Secretary KM Ehsanul Haq, Home Secretary Omar Farooq and acting Principal Officer of Armed Forces Division at the PM's office Iftekhar Illias Rasul. When the EC asked Returning Officer Mia Mostak Ahmed to submit a report on army deployment, he did not send it in time. On a surprise visit, the acting CEC inspected nine polling centres in the Ramna-Tejgaon constituency where he did not find the army.