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CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

Too many cases bog down cops

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Probes into different sensational cases have run into a snag as investigation officers (IOs) at different police stations, particularly in Dhaka metropolitan area, are assigned with cases seven times the number of their officially recommended quota.

The Police Regulation of Bengal, a

British-era law-enforcing guideline, recommends a maximum of eight cases for a sub-inspector (SI) to be tasked with at a time. Whereas, in some instances, SIs at crime-prone and large police stations in the capital are assigned to probe as many as 50 cases, officials concerned said.

Officers-in-charge of the city's police stations said an SI at a large

station has an average load of 25 cases. SIs at some metropolitan police stations like Hazaribagh, Kamrangirchar and Kafrel however are investigating 10 to 12 cases, while those in remote areas do not have even the official limit of eight cases to investigate, police officials said.

Against this backdrop, the home ministry plans to introduce a separate

investigation unit comprising two SIs at each of the 669 police stations across the country to ensure proper and prompt probes into criminal cases.

Besides, the IOs, already burdened with more cases than they can properly handle, are also required to take part in

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Army to help distribute VGF food from Aug 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has asked army personnel to carry out the massive food assistance programme in flood-hit districts beginning from Wednesday under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) scheme.

"The VGF programme begins from August 25 on an emergency basis in six flood-ravaged districts and army personnel have already been asked to move," Siddiqur Rahman Chowdhury, secretary-in-charge of Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, told the Daily Star yesterday.

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Health project uncertain for donors' conditions

Development partners want to see 36 audit objections before further funding

NAIMUL HAQ

Planning Commission, attended by officials of the government, the WB and the DPs.

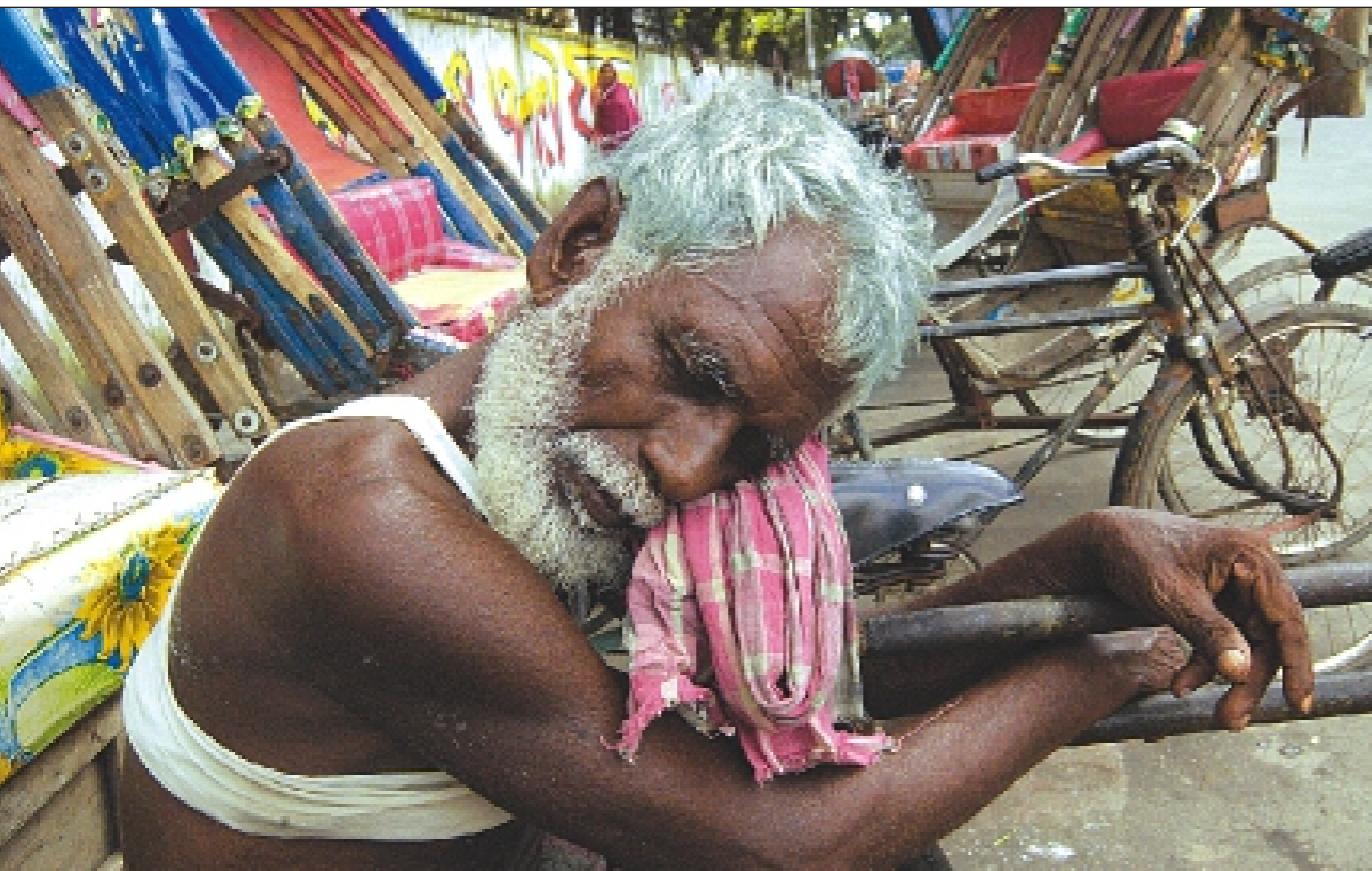
The WB and the donors at the three-hour meeting informed the government that before making a fresh financial commitment, they would like to see 36 audit objections on the previous five-year health and population sector programme (HPSP) resolved by the end of next month.

The decision imposing the conditions was conveyed to the government yesterday at a high-level meeting at the

areas but the government declined.

"Earlier, we had requested the government in writing many times to resolve the audit objections on 36 areas of spending during the HPSP but they still remain unresolved. As a result, the visiting WB mission and the donors cannot make a specific pledge on the funding," said a source present at the meeting chaired by Economic Relations Division (ERD) Additional Secretary Bodur Rahman.

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Sixty-year-old Abdul Hai, a rickshawpuller from Jhalakathi, takes a nap in hours of hunger near Jagannath Hall after he migrated to the capital in search of job.

Secy-level JRC meet in Dhaka next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A secretary-level meeting of the Joint River Commission (JRC) between Bangladesh and India will be held in Dhaka on September 14 to 15 to resolve water-sharing issues of seven common rivers including the Teesta.

Upon repeated requests of Dhaka for a ministerial meeting on water sharing of common rivers, New Delhi finally agreed to hold the secretary-level talks, the BBC Bangla

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Wild elephants on the loose

Habitat loss in India forces them to wander inside Bangladesh, ravage villages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Driven by habitat loss in India, more than 100 wild elephants have crossed into the forests in the central region and are trampling life and property in frequent village raids.

After making the shrinking Sherpur and Mymensingh forests their homes two years ago, the giant animals are killing about 40 people and damaging property worth about Tk 3 crore a year on average.

"The elephants have emerged as a new scourge. They are raiding villages as their habitats have fragmented," said Syed Zaker Hossain, a leading wildlife expert.

He said herds of the beasts used to visit Sherpur from northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya to drink water and eat fresh rice in the fields.

But fragmentation of the habitat has forced them to stay in Bangladesh and raid villages for fodder.

Focusing on the damage, a joint

Minister blames Basila erosion on brick kilns, DCC road

Rules out dumping protective sandbags into the river

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Unplanned and illegal construction of several brick kilns and a one-kilometre-long Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) road caused the erosion in Basila, which recently devoured 11 houses on the outskirts of the capital, the water resources minister said yesterday.

M Hafiz Uddin Ahmed ruled out

dumping sandbags into the river to protect the area from further erosion. "We have done it elsewhere but to no avail," he said. He urged locals to learn to live with it as each year rivers gobble up 10,000 hectares of land in Bangladesh.

"The illegal brick kilns have redirected the course of the river Buriganga and the Basila road (built without effective drainage system) has caused river waters to create more current in the river," the minister noted.

He pledged a flood-protection embankment along the river during the next dry season.

Asked when authorities would

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Fresh drug shame hits Games

AFB, Athens

A weightlifting drug scandal and yet another twist to the saga of disgraced Greek sprinter Kostas Kenteris overshadowed US swimming star Michael Phelps' Olympic gold medal win Thursday.

Phelps' drive for a record-equalling

seven gold medals was ended at the hands of Australian rival Ian Thorpe this week, but the 19-year-old can still wrap up his Athens campaign with a remarkable six golds.

He will seek to add the 200 individual medley title to his 400m

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FLOOD AID APPEAL
Administrator of UNDP hopes donors' response

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Mark Malloch Brown expects donors to financially respond to the UN flash appeal launched on August 12 in the wake of health and food crises that gripped flood-ravaged Bangladesh.

At a press briefing yesterday, Brown, also chair of the UN Development Group, appreciated the government's flood preparedness although he said it was far from perfect.

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