

Flood-hit north awaits relief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

With further worsening of flood situation in Rajshahi and Naogaon districts, victims are still waiting for relief.

More areas in six upazilas of Rajshahi and Naogaon have gone under water marooning thousands of people.

Diarrhoea situation worsened further with a daily average of 20 patients visiting upazila health complexes.

Scarcity of food and water is prevailing in the affected areas.

A portion of the WDB embankment in Bagmara breached flooding

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Sri Lanka lift Pak tri-series

BBC ONLINE

Sri Lanka dismissed Pakistan for just 168 in only 38 overs to win the tri-series by 119 runs in Lahore on Saturday.

Sri Lanka recovered from losing their first wicket without a run on the board to rattle up 287, Kumar Sangakkara top scoring with 68 off 69 balls.

Pakistan started solidly but their middle-order offered little resistance to Sri Lanka spinners Upul Chandana and Sanath Jayasuriya.

Jayasuriya picked up 5-17 off

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
2	17		5-34
3	18	4-37	5-33

Prayer Timing		
October 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-37	4-43
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-34	5-39
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Paltan intersection in Dhaka, congested with vehicles every other day, sees unusually thin traffic yesterday as rickshawpullers enforced a dawn-to-dusk strike to protest seizure of unlicensed rickshaws, which are blamed for chronic traffic congestion in the capital.

US troops in Iraq revolt over safety

AP, Washington

Relatives of soldiers who refused to deliver supplies in Iraq say the troops considered the mission too dangerous, in part because their vehicles were in poor shape.

The Army is investigating up to 19 reservist members of a platoon that is part of the 343rd Quartermaster Company, based in Rock Hill, S.C. The unit delivers food, water and fuel on trucks in combat zones.

Convoys in Iraq are frequently subject to ambushes and roadside bombings.

Some of the troops' safety concerns were being addressed, military officials said. But a coalition spokesman in Baghdad said "a small number of the soldiers involved chose to express their

concerns in an inappropriate manner, causing a temporary breakdown in discipline."

The military said troops are being interviewed but have not been detained while an investigation continues. But the relatives said they were told the soldiers had been confined.

Teresa Hill of Dothan, Ala., who said her daughter, Amber McClenny, was among in the platoon, received a phone message from her early Thursday morning saying they had been detained by US military authorities.

"This is a real, real, big emergency," McClenny said in her message. "I need you to contact someone. I mean, raise pure hell."

McClenny said in her message that her platoon had refused to go

Blasts hit Baghdad churches, hospital

4 GIs, 1 translator killed in car bombing

REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad

Explosions damaged churches and hit a hospital and hotel in Baghdad yesterday in fresh challenges to Iraq's US-backed interim government.

The government, trying to pacify the country before elections in January, has vowed to restore state authority in rebel bastions such as the Sunni Muslim city of Falluja, if necessary by force.

A rocket or mortar attack in the compound of the Ibn al-Bitar hospital in central Baghdad killed one person and wounded five, witnesses and hospital officials said.

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Commuter chaos on rickshaw strike

Pullers threaten hartal if their demands not met by Oct 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A dawn-to-dusk rickshaw strike in the capital yesterday, the first day of Ramadan, caused immense sufferings to the commuters while the rickshawpullers threatened to go for tougher agitation programme including hartal to press for their six-point demand.

The commuters were forced to walk to their destinations as almost all the three-wheelers were off the

roads during the strike called by Bangladesh Rickshaw-Van Malik-Sramik Sangram Parishad (an association of rickshaw-van owners and workers).

The Parishad at an emergency meeting at its office yesterday gave a three-day ultimatum to meet their demands, threatening to enforce hartal and non-stop strikes in the capital if the government did not fulfil them by October 19.

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Go local, says PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the countrymen to give preference to local products, including clothes, during their festival shopping to encourage local producers.

"Eid-ul-Fitr is ahead. People of Bangladesh buy new clothes on the occasion. I call upon all to purchase clothes made by local handlooms during the Eid festival," she made this appeal to the people to help thousands of poor weavers severely affected by the recent devastating floods.

In a message, the prime minister said the recent floods had left heavy losses in many sectors,

including the handloom, throwing the weavers into acute financial crisis.

She said the government has taken up rehabilitation programme to activate the handloom industry and people of the country should come forward in aid of the weavers.

Buying clothes made by local handlooms during the coming Eid, Durga Puja and other festivals, the prime minister said, would benefit the poor weavers, revitalise the handloom industry, save country's foreign currency and also keep a positive impact on national economy.