

Grisly deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rain was pouring down without any break at around 10:00am, forcing Phuli, 35, a mother of two children, to stay inside her thatched house, dangerously close to a hill at Kusumbag Residential Area near Garibullah Shah Mazar under Khulshi thana.

Phuli held firmly her two little kids -- Kawsar, aged 3 and Farzana, aged one and a half -- and was waiting for a break in the downpour to get out and find safety.

Then all hell broke loose. Within

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

President, CA shocked

AGENCIES, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in landslides in Chittagong.

In separate condolence messages, the president and the CA conveyed their heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Walls of mud turn Ctg into city of death

79 die as hills come crashing down after overnight rain; many swept away by current; port closed; no power supply

STAR REPORT

At least 79 people were killed and hundreds more injured and missing as torrential rains sparked a series of devastating landslides in Chittagong, plunging the country's second city into chaos, with power supplies snapped, the port and airport closed and residents seeking safety on their roofs.

The heaviest rainfall in quarter of a century saturated the hillsides in and around the city giving residents no chance to escape when a tide of mud and water swept down on their homes in the early hours of yesterday morning, burying whole families under mud and debris while they slept. The powerful current simply washed others away.

The rainfall, coupled with severe water logging, meant that even by yesterday evening large areas of the city remained

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO STAR

FROM LEFT... Law enforcers, firemen and locals join their efforts to rescue the injured and recover bodies at Kushumbagh in Chittagong city yesterday following a mudslide there. Wasa intersection in the city goes under almost knee-deep rainwater.



Country was riddled with graft, looting

Says army chief

UNB, Sylhet

Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said the country had been riddled with corruption and there had been extensive looting, which prompted the current drive against the corrupts.

"The country was riddled with corruption...There had been extensive looting. It can be seen in every-day newspapers. With people's help, that looting is being resisted," he told the opening ceremony of Trust Bank's corporate branch in the city's Chouhatta area.

"With your cooperation, the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Mayor Minu held again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu was finally detained and sent to jail again yesterday, a day after he was freed on bail.

Police arrested him at his office at Rajshahi City Bhaban at around 11:00am and took him to Boalia Police Station. He was produced before a metropolitan magistrate court at about 1:00pm that ordered to send him to jail.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Rejoinder, our reply

MGH group has protested a part of a report run by The Daily Star on June 10 under the headline "Koko owns Dubai house under fictitious name."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Businesses come to a rain halt

STAR REPORT

The wheel of economy in the port city of Chittagong came to a grinding halt due to heavy rainfall yesterday with vessel operations and loading-unloading at the premier port of the country being suspended following heavy waterlogging on the port premises.

The inclement weather also took a heavy toll on the export oriented industry and the food warehouses of the city.

According to sources, operation of the Chittagong port stopped in the morning then resumed at noon for some time just to be suspended again in the afternoon with the onset of a heavy downpour again.

The operation of the exclusive Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) stopped in the afternoon as the entire computer network collapsed due to the downpour, said a

high official of Saif Powertec, the private operator of the terminal.

"The situation is very bad, we remained stuck in a small room the whole day due to heavy rain outside," he said adding that movement of containers at the jetty and delivery of goods from the port were severely hampered since morning.

The operation of the new mooring container terminal (NCT) also stopped in the evening while handling of containers and bulk operation at all general berths had been suspended since morning.

The four sophisticated quay gantry cranes at CCT started to operate in the morning at a very slow pace until completely stopping in the evening, the Powetec official said. The port also remained in dark due to a power outage.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Falu took Tk 50cr from Orion to run Amar Desh

Babar says Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait gave Tk 300cr to BNP poll fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker Mossaddak Ali Falu took Tk 50 crore from Orion Group Chairman Obaidul Karim, former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told interrogators yesterday.

However, Falu denied taking Tk 50 crore but admitted to taking some money from Obaidul Karim with the consent of immediate past primer Khaleda Zia for running the daily Amar Desh. He said he took help, as he could not bear the loss of his newspaper.

Sources said Babar also divulged to the interrogators that former premier's son BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique

Rahman and his friend Giasuddin Al Mamun took Tk 150 crore from Sheba Telecom, which later became Banglalink. Sources said the money was taken by extortion.

During interrogation under the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) Mossaddak Ali Falu, owner of private satellite channels ntv and Rtv and Bangla newspaper daily Amar Dash, said Abu Sufian, a director of Bashundhara Group, gave him Tk five to seven lakhs for "party expenditure".

Falu told the interrogators that Harris Chowdhury, former political secretary to the prime minister, Lutfozzaman Babar, Tarique Rahman and Giasuddin Al Mamun were the most corrupt persons in

BNP.

BELHASA GROUP

Babar during interrogation said Belhasa Group paid Tk 50 crore to Mossaddak Ali Falu for obtaining the work order to construct the Jatrabari flyover. He said Sadeque Hossain Khoka also received considerable amount of money from the group.

Sources claimed he told interrogators that Khaleda Zia had helped to pass the work order of the flyover in the cabinet.

He said Inqilab Group and businessman Salman F Rahman complicated matters by participating in the tender. Sources said he told questioners that large bribes

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Mindless hill-cutting caused mudslide

PINAKI ROY

Indiscriminate hill cutting during the last three decades has led to the disappearance of over one hundred hills and partial destruction of hundreds others in Chittagong city, causing environmental hazards and raising the incidence of landslide, experts said.

Landslides in last two days killed at least 70 people in the port city,

raising such death toll during the last three decades to over 200.

Experts attribute such landslides mainly to the hill cutting, said persons working in the field.

"We warned several times that the places where landslide occurred had become vulnerable due to hill cutting. But proper measures were never taken to stop the practice," Dr Shahidul Islam,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



FILE PHOTO

Mindless cutting of hills in Chittagong city leads to erosion of the hills leaving people in danger of landslides.

BRIBERY

Justice Fazlul Haque might be quizzed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers may interrogate former forest adviser in Iajuddin-led caretaker government Justice Fazlul Haque for allegedly taking bribe on various counts including transfer of forest department officials while he was in office.

Sources said that during interrogation, detained Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Osman Gani alleged that the former adviser (when in office) used to take bribe for issuing transfer orders or withholding transfer of forest officials, and helped a private company obtain allotment of khas land from the land ministry.

Moreover, there are allegations that Fazlul Haque used to transfer officials for money when he was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Huda, Mosharraf sued for graft, extortion

Charge framing against Huda, Sigma adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing until June 18 against detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda in connection with a graft case.

Meantime, another graft case was filed against Huda with Munshiganj Sadar Police Station on Sunday night while an extortion case was filed in Comilla against former minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and 11 others.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the hearing of the case against Huda and his wife following a time petition by the

defence lawyers.

Deputy Director of ACC Shafiqul Islam of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case against them with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21 for taking Tk 2.4 crore in bribe from Mir Zahir Hossain, the owner of Mir Akter Hossain Ltd, a construction firm.

Under a tight security, Huda was produced before the court at 11:30am while his wife was absent from it yesterday.

On June 4, the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) pressed charges against Huda and his wife Sigma in connection with the case.

Assistant Director of the ACC

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Mahi resigns to protest party's 'undemocratic practices'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahi B Chowdhury, organising secretary and a presidium member of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), yesterday resigned from both positions of the party protesting undemocratic practices within the party.

When asked if his decision was influenced by the ongoing campaign against dynastic politics, Mahi, a former lawmaker and son of LDP president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, told The Daily Star, "No....This [decision] does not have anything to do with the move against dynasties."

"I wanted to see democracy in the party and I will announce my next course of action on June 13

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4