

Downpour deluges Dhaka

City life, transport system, flight schedule collapse in rain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Torrential rain pounded the capital intermittently throughout the day yesterday as most of the city went under knee- to waist-deep water, throwing life and trade in a terrible mess.

Thousands of commuters were stuck in traffic jams for hours on the waterlogged streets. To make situation even worse, a large number of vehicles broke down in rainwater that swamped almost every road including the one in front of the Chief Adviser's Office in

Tejgaon.

The Met office recorded 134 millimetres of rain in Dhaka till 3:00pm, which was the highest in the country. The weather will remain unchanged for another day, said a weather official in Dhaka.

The rain that poured down in torrents hampered both domestic and international flight operations.

A Biman flight from London was forced to land at the Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong instead of the Zia International Airport (ZIA) in Dhaka, said an

airport official. On domestic routes, a flight bound for Cox's Bazar was delayed for several hours.

Another flight of the national flag carrier, which was scheduled to leave for Kuala Lumpur yesterday, has been cancelled for technical glitches as well as rough weather, added the official.

Heavy rain left things chaotic in the morning hours as people frantically looked for transport to get to work, and the condition aggravated in the afternoon when they were leaving workplaces.

Many had to wade knee-deep

through water to reach their offices after the public transport system went out of gear. The CNG-run auto rickshaws, taxis and rickshaws that were on the roads braving the pouring rain charged outrageously high fares.

Attendance at schools and colleges were low and many educational institutions were closed earlier than usual. Bazaars and shopping malls wore a deserted look much before the sundown as the shopkeepers had to close the shutters.

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PHOTO: SHAFIQ ALAM

A car tries to power through the stagnant rainwater at Dhanmondi Road-27 intersection in the capital yesterday as the city life virtually grinds to a halt following torrential rain.

Vast areas flooded as rain-fed rivers swell

STAR REPORT

Several districts across the country have been hit by floods in the wake of intermittent rain for two consecutive days crippling normal life while the flood situation in two hilly districts has improved.

The Surma at Kanaighat and Sunamganj, Someswari at Durgapur, Gumti at Comilla and Debidhar, Muhuri at Parshuram and the Khowai at Habiganj were flowing above respective danger levels yesterday morning.

"Most of the rivers in all the basins, except the south-eastern hill basin, observed rise in water levels," a Flood Forecast and Warning Centre bulletin said.

The Flood Forecast and Warning Centre said the flood situations in lower portion of the north-eastern

and upper portion of south-eastern parts are "deteriorating".

Intermittent rain in Pabna flooded low-lying areas of the district destroying crops, our correspondent in Pabna reports.

However, district Relief and Rehabilitation Department sources said the situation is under control and they are monitoring it.

"We are monitoring the situation in the district. River water is yet to exceed the danger level," said Mahatab Uddin, an official of Pabna Relief and Rehabilitation Department.

At least 99mm of rainfall was recorded in Pabna yesterday, a source in the Ishwardi Met Office said.

River-water levels are increasing at different points. The Jamuna, the Padma and the Hurasagar may start

flowing above the danger level in a day or two, sources said. The Jamuna is flowing at 9.55 metres and anything beyond 10.36 metres is considered above danger level. The Hurasagar is flowing at 10 metres and its danger level is 10.97 metres. The Padma is flowing at 12.03 metres while its danger level is 14.25 metres.

"River water is increasing at least one metre a day. If the rain continues, the river water may exceed the danger point in Jamuna, Hurasagar and the adjoining rivers," said Md Osman a Water Division official of Bera upazila.

Over 5,000 hectares of cropland have been inundated in the low-lying areas of Pabna and fish in several hundred ponds were washed away. At least 500 houses

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DU teachers skip classes Protest maltreatment of Hasina, Khaleda

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) teachers yesterday observed a half-day work abstention as part of their two-day programme protesting the arrest of Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina and harassment of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

No classes were held at the faculties of arts and social sciences, but the teachers of business studies and science faculties and the Institute of Business Administration took a few scheduled classes.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh

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Protest the govt 'injustice'

Khaleda tells expatriates of harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accusing the military backed caretaker government of breaching the emergency act, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia urged expatriate Bangladeshis to protest the 'injustice' since 'the government is not treating everyone equally'.

"The government does not follow the emergency act, it imposed restrictions on our movements while it is not touching those who are speaking about reforms," the former prime minister said during a tele-conference with leaders of the Australia chapter of BNP on Saturday night.

She also said, "The government is harassing us but it is not taking any action against those who did wrong and got involved in corruption."

"I didn't do anything wrong but the government is harassing us

instead of those with links to corruption," she said urging the expatriates to raise public opinion against the 'injustice'.

"You have to protest the injustice as there is no chance of protest

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Hasina asks all not to allow 'injustice'

AL ready for all-out legal battle

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked people to be united against 'injustice' and hoped that she will be freed if due and transparent processes of law are followed in conducting her trial.

The AL is gearing up to launch an all-out legal battle against the government for Hasina's release. The plan even includes hiring of high profile lawyers from Europe and the US.

Hasina also expressed her doubt that due process of law will not be followed in her case as the caretaker government is determined to punish her by any means to keep her out of the next election, her legal counsel Advocate Shahara Khatun said.

Shahara and barrister Fazle

Noor Taposh met the AL chief at the sub-jail yesterday to discuss legal aspects of the case filed against her.

"People must not lose their morale. All will have to be united. Be calm and patient and face the

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From nobody to tycoon

STAR REPORT

The way Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, the son of a small bamboo trader, turned the virtual king of the hill districts beats the pace of a meteor.

The former BNP lawmaker is alleged to have carried out a reign of unbridled violence and corruption as well as stirring up hostility between the indigenous communities and the Bengali settlers in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) during the five-year term of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

His splendid mansion, "Baithak", in the middle of the wilderness in Khagrachhari, now under government custody, stands for unbridled corruption.

At the beginning of the BNP-led administration in late 2001, he had a tin-shed house on the same land he had grabbed from the government and locals. Almost overnight, that house was replaced by the majestic mansion, reports our Khagrachhari correspondent.

Wadud along with his brother and nephew terrorised the people of Khagrachhari by severely

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Wadud Bhuiyan jailed for 20 yrs in graft case

STAR REPORT

The Chittagong Divisional Court yesterday sentenced former BNP lawmaker Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan to 20 years in jail and fined Tk 10 thousand for concealing information about Tk 6.36 crore of his assets in the wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Special Divisional Judge Mohammad Habibur Rahman also ordered the confiscation of Bhuiyan's movable and immovable properties and said Bhuiyan would have to spend an additional three months in jail if he fails to pay the Tk 10 thousand fine, reports our Chittagong correspondent.

Bhuiyan's lawyer Salehuddin Mahmud later told reporters that they will appeal in High Court against the verdict.

Bhuiyan's name became synonymous with unchecked violence and corruption during the last BNP-Jamaat rule. The former MP from

Khagrachhari was also accused of provoking polarisation between indigenous communities and Bangalee settlers in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) when he was the



Wadud smokes in prison van, after verdict. Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan

chairman of CHT Development Board.

Bhuiyan's relatives and several local BNP leaders and activists were seen weeping after the verdict while many people distributed sweets to 'celebrate' the verdict.

Our Khagrachhari correspondent reports: The verdict was given according to the rules 15 (b) of the Emergency Powers Act, 2007 and Bhuiyan is to serve 10 years and pay a fine of Tk 10 thousand under section 27, serve seven years under section 2 and three years under section 25 (2) of the ACC Act.

Bhuiyan was arrested at the start of the crackdown on corruption on February 4 and he submitted his wealth statement to the ACC on February 25.

ACC Assistant Director Nurul Alam filed a case with Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station on March 21 after his investigation found that Bhuiyan had concealed Tk 6 crore 36 lakh 29 thousand and 354.

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