

Floodwaters snap

FROM PAGE 1
"All major highways in the district, except Sirajganj-Dhaka and Sirajganj-Bogra, remains snapped," they added.

District Civil Surgeon's office sources said around 300 people have been infected with diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery and skin infections, mainly due to lack of drinking water which had forced them to drink impure water.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said at least five lakh people in nine upazilas of the district have become marooned and 98 percent of the Sirajganj town went under water. About 90 percent businesses in the town have been closed.

Our correspondent from Nilphamari reports: The repair work of a bank-protection of Teesta Irrigation Project at Jhunagach Chapnai union, damaged Sunday afternoon, has been stalled due to lack of concrete blocks and sandbags.

The 150-foot bank-protection was damaged by gushing water and resulted in the inundation of around 1,500 houses and paddy fields of Uttar Sonakuli and Dakkhin Sonakuli chars.

Gaibandha town may go under floodwater any time as cracks developed at many points on the Gaibandha Town Protection Embankment along the Ghagot river. Seepage continues at three points, our correspondent in Gaibandha reports.

Army personnel of Gaibandha camp have been working round the clock to stop the seepage at different points of the embankment by sandbagging.

Road communication between Gaibandha and Shaghata and Fulchari snapped as two kilometres of road went under floodwater.

Road communication between Gaibandha and Palashbari was disrupted as a gigantic banyan tree fell over the highway early Monday due to incessant rain and storm. Roads and Highways Department was trying to remove the tree.

A 200-metre stretch of Brahmaputra Flood Control Embankment at Councillor Bazar was washed away by surging floodwater. At least 85 villages in seven unions of Fulchari Upazila were inundated yesterday.

According to district Agriculture Extension Department, seedbeds on 805 hectares of land, transplanted aman on 120 hectares and vegetables on 2,105 hectares in four upazilas went under floodwater.

Kazi Mohammad Anwarul Hakim, deputy commissioner of

Gaibandha, said he requires more dry food and drinking water for the flood victims.

Flood-affected people in Sarakandi, Sonatala and Dhunat upazilas are in severe food and drinking water crises, our staff correspondent in Bogra reports.

People, especially the children, are in serious risks of suffering from malnutrition and diseases like dysentery and diarrhoea.

According to district WDB, the Jamuna was flowing 125cm above danger levels at Sarakandi yesterday.

Our correspondent in Rangpur reports that around 10km of roads in three upazilas were completely damaged and 50km of roads were partially damaged by the floodwater, an official sources said.

The flood-affected people in chars of Teesta alleged they were in acute food and drinking water crisis.

Agriculture Extension Department said crops, mainly vegetables and aman seedlings, on around 10,000 hectares of land in the district have been inundated.

Director Mokbul Hossain of Manikganj Agriculture Extension Department said paddy on 2,900 hectares and vegetables on 1,200 acres went under floodwater, our Manikganj correspondent reports.

The water level of the Jamuna yesterday rose at all points and flowed 61cm, 80cm, 84cm, 99cm and 85cm above danger level at N o o n k h a w a , C h i l m a r i , Badurabad, Sirajganj and Aricha deteriorating the flood situation in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur, Bogra, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Sitakunda, Rauzan and Jessore.

The water level of the Padma rose at all points and flowed 105cm and 66cm above danger levels at Goalundo and Bhagyaluk threatening to inundate more areas of Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur districts and Dohar and Nawabganj upazila of Dhaka.

The water level of Meghna at Bhairab Bazar continued rising and was flowing 14cm above danger level yesterday and is likely to rise further inundating low-lying areas in Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria and Narayanganj, FFWC reported. The flash flood situation in Netrakona, Sunamganj and Sylhet is, however, likely to improve.

Ex-BNP MP Salim sued for extortion

UNB, Bagerhat

Ex-BNP lawmaker MAH Salim and 14 other BNP leaders were sued Sunday night for extortion and grabbing a shrimp farm.

The owner of the shrimp enclosure, Mejbahuzzaman Tipu of Koigardaskathi village in Rampal upazila, filed the case with the Rampal Police Station.

In his case statement, Tipu alleged that the accused, at the behest of the ex-MP and district BNP president, had demanded Tk 10 lakh as toll from him.

"As I did not pay the money, the accused ransacked my shrimp enclosure at Koigardaskathi on May 7, 2002 and took away Tk 5.50 lakh from the cash-box. They also beat up the workers, drove them away and occupied the shrimp enclosure," the plaintiff alleged in the first of its kind.

Asked whether the law ministry sent back the proposals for amending the electoral rolls ordinance with some queries, the election commissioner said the ministry asked them to change the language of the proposals to Bangla.

Sources in the EC Secretariat however said the ministry sought clarifications on some points too, and the commission is now preparing the answers.

"We will send those to the ministry in a couple of days. We hope, an ordinance will be promulgated in a week to amend the electoral rolls ordinance," a senior official in the EC Secretariat said.

If the process takes a week, the field level work of preparing a voter list with photographs for Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) area is unlikely to begin on August 5, the official tentative date for launching the task, although distribution of voter registration forms started in the RCC area yesterday.

The EC also planned to begin the field level work of voter listing in Khulna City Corporation and eight municipality areas by mid-August. Sources in the EC Secretariat said the municipalities are -- Bogra, Rangpur, Comilla, Savar, Mymensingh, Sitakunda, Rauzan and Jessore.

Khaleda received the notice the following day (July 18) and Hasina received it a day later because of a controversy over its (notice) language. Hasina had written a letter to the Commission claiming that the notice was full of mistakes.

Leaders loyal

FROM PAGE 1 ensures transparency and accountability in political parties.

Criticising remarks made by Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah asking dissident leaders to apologise for their "anti-party activities", Ashraf Hossain, joint secretary general of BNP, said such remarks are creating confusion that could lead to a split in the party.

"Attempts to divide the party in such a way is unwanted," he said after meeting Bhuiyan at his Gulshan home. He said each and everyone in the party want the implementation of the reforms.

"The party secretary general announced a proposal for overall development of our political system and anyone can speak on the proposal, they can even bring in new proposals," he added.

"Those who are speaking against us, instead of speaking for reforms, do not want any good to happen in the party," Ashraf said.

When asked why the booklet containing Bhuiyan's reforms proposal did not mention the provision that a secretary general would not be able to occupy the post for more than two terms, he said a new booklet would be published soon and the provision would be included there.

According to party sources, many district, upazila and city unit committees' terms have already expired but the BNP failed to make any changes to those committees. So, the dissident leaders are facing difficulty in finding out who the legitimate councillors are.

A number of leaders think that only the president and general secretaries of valid committees would be treated as councillors while others reckon a committee would remain valid until the formation of a new committee.

"Central leaders of BNP had not bothered about field-level committees and that is why they did not reconstitute many committees on time even though those were long overdue," a BNP leader told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier, Mamun was on remand for 55 days in different extortion cases.

On May 8, ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim filed the graft case against Mamun and his wife Shahina Yasmin.

In the FIR (first information report), the complainant said Mamun and his wife illegally amassed movable and immovable properties worth over Tk 62.21 crore.

Mamun was arrested at his DOHS home in the city on March 26. Police also seized a foreign pistol with eight bullets there.

He was earlier convicted in two cases-- one filed for not submitting his wealth statement to the ACC and the other for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition-- and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

Mamun was shown arrested in 10 other extortion cases.

He gave confessional statements implicating Tarique in most of the cases.

Voter list

FROM PAGE 16
Muhammed Sohul Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the EC is moving to amend the Electoral Rolls Ordinance 1982 for preparing the voter list with photographs in such a way that it will not come in conflict with the court's directive.

Asked what measures the EC will adopt to avoid a conflict with the court directive, the election commissioner said, "Just wait for a couple of days and you will know."

He however said the court issued the directive based on the existing electoral rolls ordinance. "We are going to change the existing ordinance eliminating the bar on preparing the voter list with photographs," he added.

Sohul said there is no scope for taking the voter list of 2000 into consideration in preparing the voter list with photographs, which will be the first of its kind.

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When his attention was drawn to the fact that Hasina cannot submit a flawless statement since documents have been seized from her residence and Bangladesh Bank refused to provide her accounts details, the ACC secretary said, "ACC has nothing to do with the Bangladesh Bank in this regard. Now she has time till August 8. Wait and see."

The ACC on July 17 issued notices to two former prime ministers Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia directing them to submit their wealth statements within seven working days. Khaleda's notice was sent to her residence while that of Hasina to the sub-jail.

Khaleda received the notice the following day (July 18) and Hasina received it a day later because of a controversy over its (notice) language. Hasina had written a letter to the Commission claiming that the notice was full of mistakes.

The foreign adviser also said that he is scheduled to meet with the Chinese and Indonesian foreign ministers on the sidelines of the meeting, with a number of other bilateral meetings likely.

Ittehkar will call on Philippines President Gloria Arroyo today, according to a foreign ministry press release.

The foreign adviser will sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation on the sidelines of the July 31-August 2 Forum that renounces the use of force and calls for greater economic and political cooperation.

Asian's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation is the grouping's founding non-aggression pact aimed at promoting regional stability.

The ARF will be attended by the foreign ministers of the 10 ASEAN member states, and the 17 other ARF members, including Bangladesh, the United States, European Union, India and Pakistan.

The United States, however, has decided not to send Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, as the ASEAN secretary general said that it would "dampen" the forum.

COURT'S DIRECTIVES

Adjudicating two writ petitions on voter lists, the High Court (HC) on January 4, 2006 asked the EC to update the voter list prepared in 2000.

The erstwhile EC led by Justice MA Aziz however did not comply

control. They arrested 25 students from the spot.

Acting Principal of the institute Abdul Malek said they decided to close down the dormitories following the clashes but examination would be held as per schedule. Additional policemen were

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SERVICE RETURN CASE Court summons Sheikh Helal, his 4 brothers

COURT-CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned former Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Helaluddin and his four brothers to appear before it in person on September 18 in a case filed for not submitting service return of the Tungipara Paribahan Limited for years.

The amendment was aimed to prevent Benazir and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif -- whom Musharraf ousted in a bloodless coup in 1999 -- from taking the office for a third time, as both have ruled the country twice.

"An alliance between Benazir and Musharraf is a necessity in the prevailing situation. It's also the desire of the international community, particularly the United States," Niizi said.

Musharraf met Monday with his current allies, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League, to brief them on his talks with Benazir, officials said on condition of anonymity.

Benazir's contacts with the president have drawn severe criticism from other opposition parties which are accusing her of trying to shore up Musharraf's regime.

Sharif, who also lives in exile, has reminded Benazir of a pledge she made in a pre-democratic charter they both signed last year against any dealing with the military ruler.

Islamist leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman also criticised Benazir and said any deal with Musharraf would be contrary to Pakistan's national interests.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Supreme Court is to begin hearing a challenge to President Pervez Musharraf's military role in the first such case since the country's top judge was reinstated, officials

India focuses

FROM PAGE 16
Ministry EA Ahmad, told newsmen in Kolkata.

His remarks came after a round of talks with a Bangladesh delegation led by Additional Secretary of that country's communications ministry ATKM Ismail.

He said India wanted to be satisfied about proper fencing from the Zero point to 150 metres into both sides of the border before the service begins.

India and Bangladesh, however, agreed yesterday on matters like the train's name, the number of compartments, crew members and their areas of operation, he said, adding that issues like customs and immigration infrastructure creation on the Bangladesh side and the frequency of trains still remained unresolved.

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