

# Flood victims

**FROM PAGE 1**  
sites, is now struggling to survive with her sister and mother -- a panhandler.

Two health workers of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) were seen surrounded by around 50 destitute mothers on the terrace of the school. The mothers said they had been living on flattened rice and rice cakes only since cooking facility is not available in the shelter.

"We are running short of drinking water as the supply water lines went under water," they added.

"We generally work as 'buis' [domestic help], but now we cannot go to work as almost all the roads in this area are under water. We also cannot leave our small kids unattended fearing that they might drown," said Nasima Akter, adding that her husband, a rickshaw puller, is also unable to ply rickshaw because knee-deep water on the roads. "Only Allah knows what will happen to us," she sighed.

A rickshaw puller by the name of Harun Rashid said scores of rickshaw pullers in the surrounding areas went jobless due to the floods.

According to DCC health worker Rahima Akter, the DCC medical team is providing medical assistance to around 60 patients every day -- mostly to women and children. They are being treated for diarrhoea, cold, fever and skin diseases caused by drinking contaminated water.

"We have been distributing water purifying tablets, but the stock is too little," she added.

According to District Civil Surgeon's office, over 1,500 individuals received medical treatment from their medical teams since August 1. At least 86 medical teams were at work in flood-affected areas yesterday.

So far, most low-lying areas in the eastern part of the city including East Razarbagh, Basabo, Kalibari, Baghpara, Begunbari, Amulia, Maniknagar, Shekherjaga, Shahibagh, Dakkhingao, Daspara of Sabujgaon, Nandipara, Trimohoni, Nasirabad, Badda, Rampura, Banasree and Khilgaon have been flooded.

Some parts of old and western Dhaka including Kamrangirchar, Jaulahati, Kholamura, Baragram, Ali Nagar, Muslimbagh, Kolighat, Tannery Mor and Munshirhat also went under water.

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday decided to set up camps and provide foods to the flood victims.

The DCC also opened a control room with a telephone-- number 9563508.

Twenty-eight more people died yesterday due to flood-related reasons raising the death toll to 192.

Meanwhile, a total of 3,648 people across the country were affected in diarrhoea and other diseases in 24 hours ended at 12:00 noon yesterday raising the total number of affected people to 18,972 with diarrhoea, 2543 with cold and fever, 2574 with skin diseases and 704 with eye infections.

Nine out of 65 people who received snakebites died so far since July 31.

Abdul Kader, executive director of Samata, an NGO involved in relief operation in Sirajganj, told the BBC Radio yesterday that water-borne diseases might take a serious turn, as there are shortages of drinking water, water purifying tablets and oral saline.

Meanwhile, river erosion took a serious turn in the affected areas, according to reports received from different districts.

Water in all the major rivers of the north and northeastern parts of the

country continued to recede yesterday.

Meanwhile, water in the rivers around Dhaka and Narayanganj, except Buriganga, remained static though were flowing above danger levels yesterday evening, according to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

Mozammel Hossain, a duty officer of the centre, told The Daily Star that water in Balu river was flowing 66cm above danger levels yesterday.

The Shitalakkha was flowing 41cm above danger level and the Turag 6cm above red mark yesterday.

"Though these rivers are flowing above danger levels, water level is likely to go below danger levels in 24 to 48 hours," he said adding it would not be a problem even though there is some rain.

Our Pabna correspondent reported that floodwater caused damage to Faridpur-Bhangura highway and Chatmohar-Sychola road.

At least 27 people were admitted in different hospitals in the district yesterday with diarrhoea, health department sources said.

Akter Hossain, 40, of village Chak-Dighir under Bhangura upazila died of diarrhoea yesterday while a 7-year old boy Ekramul Raishimul under Sujanager upazila drowned in floodwater.

According to our Manikganj correspondent, three members of a family including a navy officer died in boat capsize on Bohora Beel under Daulatpur upazila on Tuesday night.

The victims were identified as Shahidul Islam, 38, the naval staff, his seven-year old son Badhon and his brother's eleven-year old daughter Taru.

Daulatpur Police Station sources said the bodies of Shahidul Islam and Badhon were recovered yesterday morning but Taru's body was still missing till filing of this report.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reported that the flood-affected people in the district are facing shortages of food and drinking water.

A total of 1.5 lakh people are still marooned while road communications between Louhajiang, Sirajdikhan and Srinagar upazilas and district sadar are still disrupted.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will visit and distribute relief in the flood-affected areas of the district today.

## Oxfam launches appeal for flooded South Asia

AFP, London

International aid charity Oxfam launched a one-million-pound (two-million-dollar) appeal Wednesday to help nearly 200,000 flood victims in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Nearly 1,900 people have died from severe floods across South Asia, and millions of people still face hunger even though water levels in the region's swollen rivers have started to recede.

"Across the region people are struggling to cope with what is for many the worst flooding in living memory," said Ashvin Dayal, head of Oxfam in South Asia.

"Millions of the very poorest have lost their homes, their possessions and their livelihoods."

# Rampant graft eats away

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Boro Sarder [senior most post of workers], who joined the Crescent Jute Mills Ltd in 1955 and retired in 1989.

"I fear the other state-owned jute mills will also be shut down soon only because of corruption," he added.

### SHUTDOWN OF PJML

Though once profit making, Peoples Jute Mills Ltd (PJML) in Khalishpur in Khulna began to incur loss immediately after independence as individuals made quick bucks and raised huge property.

Even on the closing day on August 1, hundreds of labourers demanded the high officials of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) should submit wealth statements to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

### CORRUPTION BY BJMC OFFICIALS

Rampant corruption shrouded the PJML in 1972, one year after independence, with the launch of agencies throughout the country for purchasing raw jute. The concerned officials began to buy low-standard jute and rotten jute at low cost showing higher prices. Since then the mill began to incur heavily loss.

"Setting up of raw jute purchase centres opened the road to corruption. And none hesitated to tread on it," said Shahadat.

"Mill authorities transferred labourers and officers to the raw jute purchase centres in exchange of bribes ranging from Tk 20 thousands to Tk 40 thousands. Besides, the authorities received regular money from the centres through the CBA leaders," he added.

The authorities had to count extra money to ferry the raw jute purchased from distant, often out-of-the-way places, and used to submit fabricated transportation bills. Earlier in pre-independence times, the authorities used to buy raw jute at the mill entrance or jetties on the bank of river Bhairab through wholesale traders.

After signing of the JSAC agreement when the BJMC officials became sure about the govern-

ment's apparent reluctance in jute sector, corruption increased further. As a result, raw jute supply to the factory was forced to delay regularly causing late production and irregular supply to the buyers and loss of international markets, sources said.

Following the agreement production decreased sharply as number of labourers and looms in operation decreased, while supply of raw jute was also inadequate, the sources added.

To show its activities, the BJMC had sometimes taken measures too little to do any good. It terminated deputy general manager of PJML Krishna Dulal Roy and another finance official for buying rotten jute in 2005. The Corporation changed the project chief of the factory thrice that year.

"I saw the officials buying cheap mechanical parts made in China and showing those made in European countries in the vouchers during submission of bills," said a mechanic section employee. The PJML employee declined to be named as he is still to be paid his dues.

**CORRUPTION BY CBA LEADERS**  
While being involved in other anomalies, the CBA leaders also misappropriated money allocated for repairing factory jety.

"The CBA leaders also took money amounting from Tk 10,000 to Tk 50,000 from different people and their relatives in case of recruiting employees and labourers," said Abdul Malek, president of CBA PJML.

"They along with many of their relatives usually did not take part in work but took bills. And our general secretary Azizur Rahman Akram is missing since the state of emergency was declared," he added.

Akram took overtime bills for 110 days from January 6, 2005 to March 1, 2007 when the mill remained mostly closed due to workers' agitation and lack of raw jute supply.

The workers alleged both the CBA president and the general secretary recruited many employees and labourers receiving bribes.

Malek's son also supplied electronic parts, yarn holders and other materials through a process plagued with corruption.

Malek, however, denied the allegations of corruption in recruitment.

The CBA leaders also misappropriated more than half of Tk 7 lakh taken from the factory on different occasions in the name of giving loans to the workers. The CBA after the PJML was laid off in a letter to the authorities recommended cutting of Tk 265 from each worker's dues to realise the money.

The workers also alleged the CBA leaders supplied labourers to political programmes during the tenures of different governments in exchange of money. Though in political programmes, the labourers were shown at work in the attendance sheet.

### ROAD TO CLOSURE

The situation worsened when the government stopped giving subsidy to the jute sector in 2003-2004 fiscal year, resulting in immediate stop to payment of labourers' wages.

After the JSAC was signed about 100 labourers were retrenched and about 200 looms were reduced from PJML in phases.

In August 2003, three mills including the PJML and Star Jute Mills Limited were laid off for 45 days without any prior notice. In September the labourers agitated demanding opening of their work place.

The PJML remained closed for over a year in phases in 2004 and 2005 for want of raw jute when the labourers remained workless and arrears began to be piled up.

During the period only 300 out of over 3,000 labourers worked and the production came down to 10-15 tonnes a day against the target of about 70 tonnes.

The then government opened the mill fearing workers' unrest without taking any measures to make the mill effective. The mill resumed operations in the beginning of 2006 but partially.

The PJML labourers demanding

their dues agitated again in April 16 this year and stopped working in the factory.

As the three other state-owned jute mills experienced the same, workers of Platinum Jute Mills Ltd, Crescent Jute Mills Ltd and SJML took to the street on April 17 and staged agitations. The mills were laid off on April 19, triggering huge labourers' unrest that left several hundreds injured.

Around 5,000 labourers were retrenched from the factories including 300 from the PJML following the movement.

At long last the PJML established in 1952 was shut down on August 1.

Workers stopped operation in SJML on August 6 demanding wages, while CJML and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill is in operation with workers hired on daily basis.

When attempted to contact, the DGM of PJML denied meeting the reporter, who was not allowed to enter the BJMC zonal office in Khulna.

"Jute industry in Bangladesh is highly potential due to some comparative advantages considering global market, skilled manpower, friendly environment and high quality of our jute. Still the government can revitalise the sector taking comprehensive packages including bank loan reschedule and research," said Prof Anu Mohammad.

"The policy taken by the government was aimed at destroying our jute sector though in words it seemed pretty good," he added.

"Corruption was abundant in PJML but we could not investigate everything. We don't know whether it was corruption or misappropriation. We have taken some measures to revitalise the sector, but if people of all sector involved in jute and jute industries don't come forward it would be tough to keep the three state-owned jute mills running," said BJMC Chairman Md Atharul Islam.

## Khaleda

**FROM PAGE 1**  
release signed by Mohiuddin Khan Mohon, former assistant press secretary to the former premier.

"She along with her entourage, will leave her cantonment house in a motorcade at 7:00am on that day for Sirajganj," it said.

"There is no bindings for political parties to help flood affected people. Khaleda Zia as a former prime minister needs highest security while visiting flood affected areas. But in this moment we could not provide her sufficient security. She will not be permitted to help flood victims till her security is ensured," Tapan Chowdhury said while addressing at a press briefing at secretariat.

He also said that the decision on providing sufficient security to Khaleda Zia in her tour of flood-affected areas would be taken at top high-level meeting.

"Only home ministry can tell when Khaleda Zia will be able to visit the flood affected areas. Now, all BNP leaders and workers except Khaleda will get permission for visiting the flood affected areas and helping the victims," he also said.

He welcomed the political parties, development donor agencies, NGOs and other organisations for beginning their assistance programme to the flood victims.

"I welcome political parties for coming to help flood victims. Many political parties have already started their assistance programmes for the flood-affected people. BNP leader Hannan Shah phoned me that he and other BNP leaders and workers would go to Serajganj today," he said.

"Leaders of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) went Serajganj and Manikganj for distributing their relief among the distressed people. Besides, some development donor agencies like United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have started their assistance programmes in 15-flood affected areas like Faridpur, Jamalpur and Netrakona," he pointed out.

He also said that a co-ordination committee led by Deputy Commissioner was formed in each district for monitoring the relief distribution activities.

He claimed that there is no shortage of foods and other items and the news of relief shortage published in different dailies is not true.

"We will overcome the flood easily if the government relief and other assistance programmes are distributed properly," he said.

He also pointed out that a total of 192 people died due to flood and around 96 lakh people is now flood affected.

He also said that they opened 1601 shelter houses to assist the affected people.

Home Ministry's Joint Secretary Mohammad Mohsin and officials of Food and disaster Management Ministry were present at the press briefing.

## Student boom

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before that we should think about the necessity of admitting additional students and also our capacity."

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of teachers, and officials of the admission section said there is much haziness in the existing rules and regulations, which should be reviewed.

VC SMA Faiz said he supported the matter as the deans take decisions after discussion with the departments.

# Koreas hold

**FROM PAGE 16**  
leader and former President Kim Dae-jung.

The Uri Party and liberal politicians welcomed the announcement but the Grand National Party condemned the summit as a political ploy to affect voter sentiment ahead of the December presidential election. Critics said the government may have struck "inappropriate deals" with the North to achieve the summit. Cheong Wa Dae denied such allegations. The North Korean leader proposed the meeting, according to Kim Man-bok, chief of the National Intelligence Service. Kim visited Pyongyang twice this month to discuss the details of the meeting. Kim said the agreement was finalized Aug.5.

A preparatory meeting is to be held in the inter-Korean border city of Gaeseong as early as possible to fine-tune the details. The government plans to launch a summit promotion committee headed by the presidential chief of staff and a separate preparation team led by the Unification Minister.

Cheong Wa Dae will present the summit plans to the National Assembly and also to the Cabinet meeting for approval before the president makes an official announcement.

The presidential office declined to comment on the summit agenda, but experts have narrowed it down to the North Korean nuclear program and discussion for declaring a peace regime on the peninsula.

"There is the possibility of the two Koreas issuing a declaration of some kind to reaffirm peninsular denuclearisation," said Kim Tae-woo, senior research fellow at Korea Institute for Defence Analyses.

Earlier, Roh had said while the government was open to a summit with the North, Pyongyang's nuclear issue would have to be resolved.

There has been considerable progress in the six-party talks for denuclearising North Korea, but it is still an on-going process, as a timeline has yet to be set for the complete disablement of the North's nuclear weapons programme and the corresponding economic and political incentives that would be provided to the North are still unsettled. Working level meetings of the six nations negotiating to end North Korea's nuclear ambition are scheduled for next week, ahead of the six-

# US airstrikes kill 32

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Wednesday that hundreds of additional Iraqi security forces had been deployed in Kazimiyah, but that American troops would stay away from the shrine out of religious sensitivity.

"There's paranoia surrounding this shrine. If anything happened here, it'd make the Golden Dome look like a precursor," Miska said, referring to the al-Qaeda bombing of Samarra's Askariya shrine, which destroyed the mosque's golden dome and set off a wave of sectarian bloodletting that continues today.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, meanwhile, arrived in Iran on Wednesday for talks expected to focus on bilateral relations and improving the security situation in Iraq. It was the Iraqi premier's second visit to Tehran in less than one year.

"We are here today to boost commercial and security relations with neighbouring countries," al-Maliki told The Associated Press on the plane to Iran. He said he would focus on overcoming "terrorism challenges" in the region.

Iraq, which like Iran is majority Shia, has managed a difficult balancing act between Tehran and Washington since the US-led invasion in 2003, trying to maintain good relations with its powerful neighbour while not angering the Americans.

The US has accused Iran of providing money and weapons to Shia militias in Iraq. Iran denies the charges.

Baghdad residents awoke to find themselves facing a vehicle ban earlier than expected.

The Iraqi military spokesman Brig Gen Qassim al-Moussawi announced a curfew banning all cars, trucks, motorcycles and carts from moving in city streets that had been slated to begin at 10 pm Wednesday would begin 5 am instead. It was to last until 5 am Saturday.

Soldiers were deployed about 100 yards apart on streets in western Baghdad and traffic was barred by barbed wire and warning signs.

Pilgrims wearing traditional white frocks and waving green Shia flags walked from all points of the capital toward the golden-domed mosque where al-Kadhim is believed to be buried in the northern neighbourhood of Kazimiyah. Many men wore wet towels on their heads for relief from the heat.

On a major highway, tents decorated with posters of radical Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr provided a shady place to rest.

Iraqi military vehicles played religious songs on loudspeakers. Security forces frisked men and searched women's bags while offering them water.

nation talks next month.

Regarding the idea of a peace regime, President Roh has on several occasions supported replacing the current cease fire with an official peace regime.

Humanitarian issues, such as aid for North Korea and future meetings for split families will likely appear on the agenda. Pyongyang may also touch on the South's hostage situation in Afghanistan, pundits said.

On the business front, the two Koreas may reaffirm their mutual support for inter-Korean projects centering on the Gaeseong Industrial Complex and Mt Geumgang tours.

Measures for easing inter-Korean military tension may not be addressed since the two sides are far from reaching a consensus on any of the related issues such as moving the Northern Limit Line.

That the venue will again be Pyongyang is expected to arouse critics since international customs call for meetings to be based on the principle of reciprocity.

"North Korea suggested Pyongyang because it would be the more dignified place to hold a summit and the president accepted this idea," said the NIS chief.

Seven years earlier during the first summit, the two Koreas promised reunification efforts and economic cooperation.

## Airlines sue

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In the FBI lawsuit, the companies asked to interview a "limited number of former and current FBI employees" who had participated in investigations of al-Qaida and al-Qaida operatives before and after Sept 11, 2001.

Government spokeswoman Yusill Scribner said she had no immediate comment on the lawsuits.

A victims' compensation fund established by Congress has paid \$6 billion to 2,880 families of those who died in the attacks and more than \$1 billion to 2,680 injured victims.

But 41 cases filed on behalf of 42 victims remain pending in federal court in Manhattan because some victims declined to pursue the usual court route rather than accept payouts from the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001.

Talib Madhloom, a retired 53-year-old teacher who was making his way east to the shrine said it was important to honour al-Kadhim despite the heat and security concerns.

"We get bravery, courage and patience from the martyrdom of Imam Moussa al-Kadim," he said. "He was poisoned to death while he was unjustly imprisoned for 14 years and he was named for his self control over his anger."

An 11 year-old girl walking in central Baghdad held the hands of her two younger brothers as they walked ahead of their family. She was heading to an Iraqi Red Crescent tent seeking water. "We came early in the morning from Rashid area. We are so tired," she said.

Um Mohammed, 50, had crossed into Baghdad from the volatile province of Diyala to the north.

"Al Diyala people came on foot after conducting dawn prayers this morning. The road was packed with walking people from Diyala," she said. "I came with my daughters and daughters-in-law. I could not walk as fast as they did, so I told them to go ahead of me. My knees could not hold me anymore, so I had to sit down every now and then."

By Wednesday morning, some 1,500 pilgrims had already passed through one of several checkpoints into the area, according to an Iraqi police lieutenant who identified himself only as Fadil, because of security concerns.

Some 400 plainclothes Iraqi agents, part of a mostly Shia organization called the Public Order Committees, would take up positions at checkpoints, Miska said.

US officials said more than a million pilgrims were expected Thursday in Kazimiyah, but some Iraqi officials put the figure at four million.

While the streets of Baghdad were relatively calm with the driving ban, violence struck Iraqis elsewhere.

A roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in the northern city of Kirkuk, killing one officer and wounding six others.

Gunmen also targeted the former mayor of the Shia holy city of Najaf who is now an official at a water treatment centre in a drive-by shooting. The official, Talia Hillal, was wounded and his driver was killed in the attack, the latest in a series of assassination attempts against clerics, academics and security officials.

# UN, EU ready

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Organization (WHO) are concerned about the spread of water-borne diseases, viral fever and skin infections, and are providing emergency medical kits and other supplies in the affected areas.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, Veronique Taveau of Unicef warned that the needs would be long-term and that many thousands could remain homeless for weeks.

She warned that the situation in Bangladesh, where nearly 8 million people are affected, could worsen rapidly over the coming days.

### EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union yesterday said it is ready to help Bangladesh overcome the current flood and its aftermath.

The assurance was given by a EU delegation, led by Ambassador of the Netherlands Kees Beemsterboer who is currently holding the chair of the European Union in Bangladesh, during a meeting with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at the foreign ministry.

"We're willing to discuss how we can help to improve the situation. We want to play our part in doing some reconstruction and we can help in other ways too," Kees Beemsterboer told reporters after the meeting.

### PRINCE CHARLES

Prince of Wales has expressed grave concern and sympathy for those affected by flooding in Bangladesh.

In a message to President Iajuddin Ahmed, Charles said he and his wife were deeply distressed to hear the shocking devastation caused by floods in Bangladesh.

"Our hearts go out to all those who have lost their loved ones or have been displaced from their homes, and to the many who are battling to survive every day. Please know how deeply we feel for yourself and the people of Bangladesh for whom we have the greatest affection," according to a press release from British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

Meanwhile, responding to the current floods in Bangladesh, the UK through its Department for International Development (DFID) has already given \$2.5 million (Tk 17 crore) for immediate aid, providing food, water, shelter and medicines for 50,000 people in the ten worst-affected districts.

The DFID is supporting the government of Bangladesh's ongoing relief work, channelling \$1.8 million (Tk 12 crore) aid through UNDP. The UK has also authorised DFID's Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) to offer further flood relief efforts in their operation areas in five districts in the northern region--Jamalpur, Sirajgonj, Bogra, Gaibandha, Kurigram. Up to \$2 million (Tk 14 crore) will be spent for this worst-hit region by CLP.

Through UNDP and CLP, one million people have already received help.

## Tarique, Koko

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draft by courier on July 26.

Later, a lawyer of the two paid the income tax return following the procedure prescribed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

BNP leader advocate Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas said Tarique paid about Tk 4.75 lakh to legalise Tk 18 lakh, which was not mentioned in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission recently.

NBR sources said Koko, who is a shareholder of Dandy Dyeing Company, an inland shipping company and an ad firm, paid Tk 39 lakh in taxes to legalise about Tk 1.5 crore.

The NBR authorities are examining the statements of Tarique and Koko.

Sources said if the probe finds that the properties are earned legally, the NBR will accept their income tax returns.

## EU happy

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overall situation of the country. There are clear indications that the situation is improving," said the Dutch ambassador.

He also said that they are focusing on the issues cited by the EU Troika that visited Bangladesh in June. But, he did not elaborate his comments on issues concerning human rights in Bangladesh.

## Tax evasion

**FROM PAGE 16**

evading income tax.

The accused family, facing 11 income-tax cases filed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), will be tried in absentia as they remained fugitive, court sources said.

After framing charges, Judge Begum Shamsunnahar fixed today for commencing their trial with testifying by the prosecution witnesses.

Meanwhile, another two special courts set August 12 for framing charges in connection with tax-dodging cases filed against detained ex-minister Mirza Abbas, former state minister Amanullah Aman and detained ex-BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed.

## DND area

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affected people.

Thanking various institutions, organisations and individuals for their spontaneous financial support to the Chief Adviser's Relief Fund, he said the relief fund received an amount of Tk 11 crore until Tuesday and it has been allocated for the 15 worst affected districts.

Earlier, the head of the caretaker government visited the flooded