

## SC to rescue nation from any crisis

CJ says freedom of judge's mind a must for independent judiciary; political divide in judiciary deplored

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court judges will weigh in for sure to rescue the nation from any crisis, asserted Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhl Amin yesterday.

"I want to assure the nation that the Supreme Court played a role in the past at the critical juncture of the nation. It is doing so at present and will do so in future to pull the nation out of mire," the chief justice responded to concerns expressed at a seminar over prevailing crisis including call for reforms in judiciary. But he said judges couldn't be



Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhl Amin

compelled to work independently by enacting laws. "It has to be in their culture. If a judge is not committed to work freely, law cannot make him/her independent," Ruhl Amin told the seminar-- Judicial Reform and Independence of Judiciary--attended by a host of judicial heavyweights including a former chief justice, leading jurists and judges.

Meanwhile, the speakers unanimously urged the judges to work independently for a free judiciary, asking the lawyers to rise above their personal and political interests and contribute unitedly to sustain it.

The chief justice appeared

skeptical about the outcome of a change in judge recruitment process unless the culture is changed first. "We forgot to look at any issue from a neutral perspective. That is why we are in trouble now," he said in an oblique reference to political divide in judiciary.

"We all agree on the freedom of judges. But I don't differ on the talked-about recruitment of judges through forming a committee. But if we don't change our culture first,

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## It's time to help flood victims, not to do politics

Says Gen Moeen

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said it is the high time for the politicians to do politics through helping out the flood-hit people.

"Forget about party politics right at this moment and start serving the flood victims," he said while talking to journalists after distributing relief at Amulia in Demra.

He also noted that it is the prime responsibility of each citizen to stay beside the flood-affected people and extend their cooperation to them at this hour of urgent need.

Blasting real estate companies for tricky with their clients, he said, "You see a huge signboard here. Advertisements say plots are ready, but you see the land is still under 10-foot-deep floodwater."

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## EMERGENCY POWERS RULES

# Graft case co-defendants may be allowed bail

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The caretaker government is going to amend the emergency powers rules once again allowing co-defendants in corruption cases to appeal for bail, a right which has been suspended since March.

According to the proposed amendment to the rules, women, children of up to 18 years of age, and single women, who are co-defendants in cases filed under the emergency powers rules, will be entitled to appeal for bail. Courts will decide whether they will be granted bail until the cases are resolved in trial courts, sources in the home ministry said.

"But a co-defendant in a case will have to serve the time, if convicted," said a ministry official. He said no principal accused however will be

entitled to get the benefit of the amendment.

The home ministry on last Thursday sent the draft of the amendment to the law ministry for vetting, and a gazette notification is expected to be issued in a couple of days amending the rules, the sources added.

Apart from the proposed amendment pertaining to bail, the rules are also being amended to empower the government to transfer cases, filed under the emergency powers rules, to special courts for trials.

The National Taskforces on Prevention of Serious Crimes and Corruption will also be brought under the jurisdiction of the emergency powers rules with retrospective effect from January 12 to strengthen their activities, the sources said.

The government on March 21 amended once before the Emergency Powers Rules 2007, which had been first formulated on January 26 under the authorities given by the Emergency Powers Ordinance 2007, suspending defendants' right to appeal for bail until a case is resolved in trial courts.

The suspension of the right to petition for bail caused uproar within the legal community and rights activists.

Facing severe criticisms, the caretaker government on April 8 brought further amendments to the Emergency Powers Rules allowing bail in some cases under the penal code. But persons facing trials for offences specified in the

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## Stand beside flood victims

Hasina asks AL men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Shiekh Hasina yesterday called upon party leaders and activists to stand by the flood-hit people with whatever they have at their disposal.

She made the call through Barrister Fazle Nur Taposh, one of her counsels, when he met her at the sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

"Shiekh Hasina said without waiting for instructions, all leaders and activists of Awami League and its front organisations should help the flood victims as they did during the devastating floods of 1998," Taposh told a private television channel.

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PHOTO: STAR

A large pandal on the compound of ICDDR,B in Dhaka has become the last resort for hundreds of diarrhoea patients seeking admission there as water-borne diseases continue to spread alarmingly with floodwaters receding.

# Diarrhoea continues to spread in flood-hit areas

First official report of 4 deaths from the water-borne disease

STAR REPORT

At least four people died of diarrhoea across the country during the last two days, the first diarrhoeal deaths in this year's flooding. Over 1,000 diarrhoea patients checked into an already overcrowded International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in the capital yesterday.

The four who died of diarrhoea were from Sherpur, Jhenidah, Sirajganj and Sunamganj.

Meanwhile, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said at present it is holding 14 districts as flood affected. The districts are Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Chandpur, Narsingdi,

Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj and Gazipur. It expected significant improvement of the overall flood situation in the next 72 hours. It also expected the water levels of all the rivers to go below their danger marks in the next few days.

Filthy floodwater spreading diseases across the flood-affected

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## BNP's 2 groups start flood relief work separately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two groups of BNP led by party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan separately started relief operations among flood victims yesterday.

Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah distributed relief materials in Sirajganj on behalf of Khaleda while Lt Gen (ret) Mahbubur Rahman represented Mannan Bhuiyan in the relief work in Brahmanbaria.

The BNP chairperson, meanwhile, alleged yesterday that the

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# Voter listing with photo kicks off in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday kicked off the field level task for simultaneously preparing a fresh voter list with photographs and national identity cards from Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC).

The field level task for preparing the voter list across the country will be completed in phases while the voter-listing task in Khulna City Corporation and eight municipality areas will start in this month.

According to the EC's roadmap announced on July 15, the task for preparing the voter list will be com-

pleted in October next year for holding the stalled ninth parliamentary election in December 2008.

The EC Secretariat and its field level offices across the country have started making all out preparations to begin the task, which is expected to start on a large scale sometime in September-October.

The field level task for preparing the voter list in RCC area was earlier scheduled to begin on August 5, but it was delayed by a week as the chief adviser changed his decision to inaugurate the task due to the floods. The reason behind delay of beginning the task was also

absence of a new law, which was made on last Thursday.

Now that the field task for preparing the voter list in RCC area has begun, the EC is expecting that Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will visit the area on August 14.

Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reports: Turnout of aspirant voters especially women was quite high at most of the registration centres in the morning on the first day of the task.

Many prospective voters, who went to the centres to have their

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## Road crash kills 4 in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Four women were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident at Bhatari under Hathazari upazila yesterday afternoon.

Police and locals said a jeep carrying passengers from Bhatari to Boro Dighir par skidded off the Bhatari link road and fell into a ditch at around 3:00pm, killing three women on the spot and injuring 16 others.

One of the dead was identified as Shammi Akhter, 35, wife of Mohammad Sekandar Mia of Sitakunda. Shammi died on way to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, while the rest are undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Identity of the remaining three dead could not be known.

## Anomalies in 65 DU students' admission papers

DU CORRESPONDENT

Three departments of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday submitted their reports on irregularities in admission, finding inconsistencies in the admission papers of 65 students.

Of them, 54 are from Public Administration department while eight are from Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology department and three from Applied Physics, Electronics and Communication Engineering department, sources said.

On the basis of the reports, the fact-finding committee formed to probe the allegations of admission forgery would take primary decision whether the admission of these students is fake or not, said Member Secretary of the committee Siddiqur Rahman Khan.

He said the alleged students of Chemistry and Chemical Technology Department and three of Applied Physics, Electronics and Communication Engineering Department got admitted under quota system. But the departmental authorities doubted that their admissions were fake, he added.

Meanwhile, department of Geology and Computer Science and Institute of Social Welfare and Research submitted their reports without any new findings.

The DU Syndicate cancelled

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