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A woman watches in despair her flood-ravaged vegetable field at Kundarpara of Shibpur upazila in Narsingdi. Most of the farmers lost all their produces on hundreds of acres in the district.

## Fresh flood in many areas as rain-fed rivers swell

### 20 more die; diarrhoea situation remains grim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The flood-affected people, who were preparing to return home following the devastating floods, are now trapped again as many areas were freshly inundated by rain-fed rivers.

All the three major rivers—the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna—saw sharp rise in their water levels, while the Jamuna at Aricha was flowing at the danger level yesterday evening and could go over the mark any time, said Ariful Islam, assistant engineer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

Vigorously active monsoon over the eastern part of Bihar, West Bengal and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and the Ganges and

Brahmaputra and Meghna basins, both in India and Bangladesh, have caused the fresh rise of water levels in rivers.

Many low-lying areas of Sirajganj district were inundated afresh through the Brahmaputra Flood Control Right Embankment at Khalishabari, which was breached earlier by the raging floodwaters, reports our correspondent from Sirajganj.

Sirajganj Deputy Commissioner Ibrahim Khalil at a press conference yesterday urged people not to panic about another flood and urged them to prepare for the fight against the disaster.

The Jamuna at Sirajganj is likely to cross its danger level in the next 24 hours, FFWC said. It, however,

added that the rate of rise of water level is expected to be slower in the next two days.

Floodwater, which inundated low-lying areas of Sirajganj, is also slowly inundating fresh areas in Pabna and some parts of Bogra, reports our staff correspondent in Bogra.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha reports: Flash flood again submerged low-lying areas of four upazilas of the district as the Teesta swelled at all points.

Meanwhile, the Padma in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj is eroding riverbanks threatening to deluge many areas of the two districts, our staff correspondent in Rajshahireports.

### Hand, power loom units incur over Tk 100cr loss

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, from Sirajganj

The recent flood has wreaked havoc on the handloom and power loom industries in Sirajganj and Pabna districts, causing loss worth over Tk 100 crore and rendering over 8,25,000 loom workers jobless, said government officials.

Leaders of handloom owners' associations, however, said the loss would be over Tk 150 crore.

Local handloom board officials said at least 1,58,000 hand looms and 20,000 power looms have been damaged in eight upazilas of Sirajganj and Pabna districts, where more than 8,25,000 loom workers have become jobless.

Sultan Mahamud, handloom board officer of Sirajganj-Sadar, said.

## Octane project back on track as it finds new investors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Tk 350 crore project for producing octane from naphtha that became uncertain due to withdrawal of its main investor Exxon-Mobil has got new foreign investors and the project is now progressing in full swing.

A top official of Mobil Jamuna Fuel Company (MJFC) said Exxon-Mobil's 50 percent equity is now being taken over by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, DAG of German government and FMO of the Netherlands government. The project is set to be completed by 2009.

The government in November last year signed a contract with Bangladesh-US joint venture MJFC to set up the naphtha processing plant in Chittagong for producing octane from naphtha—a by-product of imported crude oil.

This will help the oil importing country to save its foreign exchange for import of 120,000 tonnes of refined octane worth Tk 480 crore a year to meet its entire local demand. It will also help best utilise naphtha—a kind of natural gas-by-product.

The plant will produce the

## Garments unit at Ctg EPZ closed, 50 workers sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Uro Mode Fashion Limited that came under attack by agitated workers on Thursday declared suspension of all of its activities yesterday and hung a notice of closure in front of the factory gate.

According to sources, cancellation of orders by buyers due to the workers agitation forced the closure of the Korean factory at sector-6 of Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

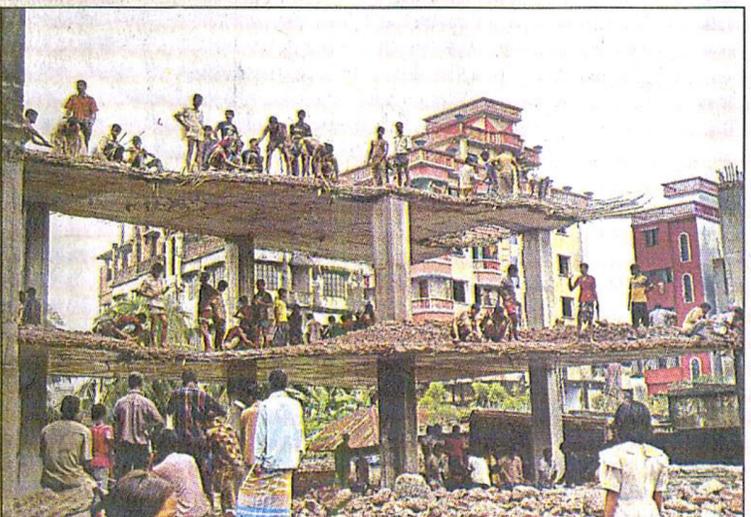
Over one thousand workers out of 2200 of Uro Mode went on ram-

page on Thursday ransacking the Bepza office at CEPZ and the garments factory to protest 'assault' on two workers.

The workers alleged that their two colleagues were beaten up and handed over to police when they went to the management to know about a rumour of their retrenchment.

The CEPZ authority yesterday filed a case in connection with the attack accusing 50 unnamed workers.

Meanwhile, Bepza Chairman



Demolition of the building belonging to S Ahmed Foundation at Shanir Akhra in the capital continues as part of the government's drive to discourage illegal construction. The foundation was named after former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed.

## 3 JMB men arrested in Bagmara, Jhalakathi

STAR REPORT

The law enforcers yesterday arrested three militants of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi and in Jhalakathi town.

They are Khorshed Alam, 25, Abdur Rashid Babu, 26, and Amjad Hossain, 48.

Khorshed and Rashid were arrested in Bagmara upazila while Amjad was arrested in Jhalakathi town.

Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reported that the law enforcers, acting on secret information, arrested Khorshed at Koira village and Rashid at Sodapara village of the upazila.

The arrestees took part in different operations along with

## Days of former bigwigs in Dhaka jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin now works in the Dhaka Central Jail library while former state minister for labour and employment Amanullah Aman sweats tending a garden in the prison.

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed remains busy writing, and his fellow cabinet members Nazmul Huda and Altaf Hossain Chowdhury idle their days away, chattering to each other, reading newspapers and watching television, Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui, deputy inspector general (prisons) told the private television channel ATN Bangla yesterday.

Tarique Rahman, elder son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, keeps himself confined to his cell. Of the 32 VIPs detained in Dhaka

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## ONE MONTH OF HASINA'S DETENTION AL for legal battle, doesn't rule out alternative steps

HASAN AHMED TUSHER

Awami League (AL) plans to continue legal battle for its detained President Sheikh Hasina until the time is ripe for alternatives including a movement to get her free.

A number of its leaders also observed that it might opt out of any dialogue to be arranged by the Election Commission (EC).

Alongside the legal efforts, the party has been trying to mobilise international support so that pressure builds up on the military-backed caretaker government to free Hasina, also a former prime minister now detained for over a month on extortion charges. During the last one month AL



Family members including

Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and some of the party leaders have been coordinating the campaign abroad. Canadian lawyer Dr Payam Akhavan has been appointed to fight for her.

AL acting president Zillur Rahman said, "We will continue the legal battle to free Sheikh Hasina. And we hope we will get justice."

Earlier, he said that they would not bring any reforms or hold a council until the party chief is freed.

The AL has already decided not to parley with the EC as long as the ban on political activities is in force. Some mid-level leaders said the party might not take part in

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IN CASE OF ABSENCE

## Khaleda to name a leader to run party

STAR REPORT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said she will nominate a leader of her own choice to run the party in her absence and everybody should work under that new leadership.

Asked who will take over the post of the party chairperson if she is arrested, Khaleda said during a teleconference on Thursday night, "Someone will take the responsibility and everyone has to work under his/her leadership."

"They [government] can arrest me if they want, but you should not lose confidence," she said while

talking to leaders and workers of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) unit of Jahangirnagar University at a room of Maolana Bhashani Hall.

Urging the JCD leaders and workers to work together to face any situation, she asked the JCD leaders to keep close contact with party leaders and workers so that they can follow the party programme after the withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics.

During another teleconference with party leaders in three northern districts yesterday, Khaleda asked all party men to remain

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## 'EC should concentrate on voter listing'

### Bhuiyan for lifting of ban on indoor politics before dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics before holding talks with political parties, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) should put all its efforts in preparing a complete voter list.

"The commission should be mainly focused on preparing the voter list so that the roadmap could be followed properly," Bhuiyan told reporters at his Gulshan residence.

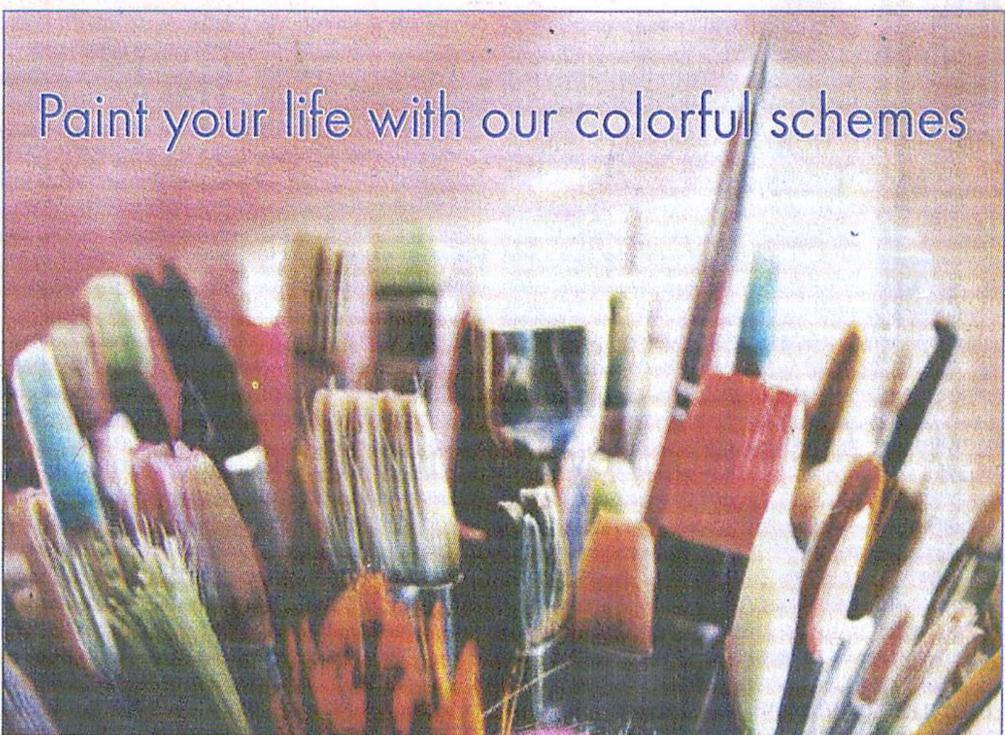
Earlier Wednesday, Election

Commissioner Sohul Hossain told reporters that they are planning to hold talks with the political parties in September regarding the commission's proposals.

But Bhuiyan yesterday said it would be sufficient if the talks are held eight-ten months prior to the general elections according to the EC roadmap.

"There is no problem if the EC delays in holding talks on electoral reforms with the political parties, but the ban on indoor politics should be lifted before the dialogue," he said.

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