

FLOOD EMERGENCY

Govt seeks \$150m from donors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday asked the donors for \$150 million additional budgetary support and food aid to tackle the post-flood situation.

High officials of the finance ministry at a meeting with the Local Consultative Group (LCG) comprised of representatives from multilateral and bilateral donors sought the financial assistance to cope with the emergency caused by the devastating floods that have blighted millions of lives across the country.

Finance Secretary Dr Mohammad Tareq briefed the development partners on budgetary

allocations for different sectors and the potential impact of floods on implementation of the budget for current fiscal year.

He told the meeting that the government would divert resources from the low priority projects in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) to medium- and long-term rehabilitation requirements.

When the donors asked if the government would make any formal plea to the world community for help to face the floods, the officials replied in the negative, said sources.

"We have sought additional budgetary supports from the donors as it would be quite difficult for us to

implement the current budget due to the floods," a finance ministry official said.

He said the government has also asked for food aid as there is a scarcity of food grains in the international market while prices of essential food items are spiralling upwards due to disruption of supply chains.

"Suppliers did not respond to repeated tenders for procuring rice from the international market," Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan told the reporters, explaining the rationale for seeking food aid.

At the meeting, representatives of the World Bank and Asian

Development Bank (ADB) pledged additional support for Bangladesh, considering the fallout of flooding.

"The World Bank has already had a plan to provide \$300 million and ADB \$150 million in budgetary supports by December. During the meeting, they pledged to provide funds in addition to those," said a source.

World Bank country director Xian Zhu told reporters, "We have agreed to help Bangladesh with additional aid. But size of the assistance hasn't been determined yet."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Army chief warns of stern action for relief looting

UNB, Faridpur

Army Chief of Staff General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday warned of stern action against those indulging in looting relief aid, saying gone are the days of plundering.

"Don't thrust your hands into fire knowingly. If you do, you burn your fingers for which only you are to blame," he said at a meeting with district administration officials and civil society members at deputy commissioner's conference room in Faridpur.

Gen Moeen said the army would remain in the field throughout the relief operation so that no irregularities could take place and everybody gets their due share.

"In the past it was the perception that relief means theft. But for the first time this does not happen now. Stealing relief aid has already been stopped as all are working together," the army chief told his Faridpur audience.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Adviser claims success in price control

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Commerce Adviser Dr Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday said the government is successful in controlling the prices of essentials compared to the ones on the international market.

But he held some businessmen responsible for making extra profit as he found domestic prices irrational in comparison with the import prices.

"The domestic price ratio to international price has marked a fall," Mirza Azizul told reporters on the sidelines of a seminar on inflation at CIRADAP auditorium.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed was, however, skeptical about how long the price could be contained through the short-term measures. "It cannot be contained for long without increas-

ing production," he told UNB after the meeting.

Policy Analysis Unit (PAU), an independent research wing of Bangladesh Bank, organised the seminar titled "Inflation in Bangladesh: The Evidence and the Policy Alternatives" with former finance minister M Syeduzzaman in the chair.

Bangladesh Bank resident economic adviser Prof Syed M Ahsan presented the keynote paper at the seminar attended by economists, researchers, representatives from development partners, bankers and trade body leaders.

Speakers stressed the need for increasing investment, production and supply of essential items, makeup of the shortfall through imports and providing huge money to farmers as well as bringing back

confidence of the investors.

They viewed that the contractionary monetary policy announced by the central bank is unlikely to help address the rising inflation. IMF resident representative Jonathon C Dunn reiterated IMF's policy suggestion to continue tight monetary policy.

Mirza Azizul said the actions taken by the government, including BDR's intervention in the market, contributed a lot in checking the prices.

When sought comments on his government's failure in curbing inflation, he said, "It is one side of the view—one must consider the other side too. What could have been the situation in the absence of the government actions?"

Aziz brought in a reference of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Moudud gets bail in liquor case

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted bail to detained former law minister Moudud Ahmed in a liquor case which was brought under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) following its filing.

A division bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury also issued a rule on the government to explain why placing the case under the EPR should not be declared illegal.

The rule is made returnable in eight weeks, says the court order.

Police sources, however, said Moudud would not be set free despite the HC bail because he has already been shown detained under the stringent Special Powers Act.

Earlier on July 9, the HC stayed the proceedings of the case following a quashment application of Moudud and also issued a rule on the government to explain why the case should not be set aside.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Fair elections possible within timeframe

Says CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh has the capacity and set-up necessary for holding a free, fair and neutral general election within the declared timeline.

He made the remarks when the outgoing ambassador of the Netherlands in Dhaka, Kees Beemsterboer, made a farewell call on him at his office.

The Election Commission (EC), the CA said, is carrying out the gigantic task of preparing a digitised voter list with photographs along with national ID cards according to the road map it announced for holding the elections by December 2008.

The Dutch ambassador said his government appreciates the caretaker government's performance.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

CASE AGAINST HASINA Supplementary charge sheet submitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan police yesterday submitted a supplementary charge sheet against detained Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and cousin Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in a Tk 2.99 crore extortion case.

Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Obaidul Haq, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court.

In the charge sheet, the IO said he had found Hafizuddin Khoka, a vital witness in the case, who would provide evidence to prove the charges against the accused. Hafiz's whereabouts could not be traced at the earlier stage of investigation.

Hafiz, a close friend of Selim,



Five children of a family sleep on the pavement near Curzon Hall of Dhaka University in the capital yesterday as their parents left them in search of food. The family recently took refuge in the capital after their home in Bagirpara, Mymensingh was washed away during the flood. Many made destitute by the floods are now heading for towns and cities in search of work.

PHOTO: SHARIFUL ISLAM

Judicial service, ACC organograms okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved organograms for the Judicial Service consisting 4,500 posts and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) having 1,281 posts.

This measure of the government is seen as a key step towards separation of the judiciary from the executive as per directives of the Supreme Court (SC) as well as

strengthening the ACC further.

After a meeting of National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reforms (NICAR) held in the Chief Adviser's Office, presided by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosen informed the journalists of the approval.

He said almost all formalities have been completed to separate the judiciary from the executive

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

BDR to enforce soya bean, palm oil prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will start market monitoring in the capital from tomorrow to ensure selling of soya bean and palm oil at Tk 80 and Tk 76-78 a litre.

The edible oil importers and refiners at a meeting with the officials of Bangladesh Rifles at the BDR headquarters yesterday agreed not to make profit on oil selling till the Eid-ul-Fitr.

As the meeting presided over by Col Halim fixed the price of soya bean and palm oil at Tk 80 and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Swelling Padma floods new areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rise of water level of the Padma, due to vigorous monsoon rains upstream, caused inundation of new areas of the south-central part of the country, including Gopalganj, Satkhira and Faridpur.

North-western districts of Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore, Pabna and Kushtia are also vulnerable to flooding as the Padma is likely to continue to swell in the next two days, according to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre

(FFWC).

The rise of water level of the Jamuna, Brahmaputra and Meghna also caused flooding in low-lying areas of Gaibandha, Chandpur, Sirajganj and Pabna last week and the situation there remained unchanged. Many flood victims had to stay in the flood shelters or on the embankments and could not return to their homes.

Reports say many areas of three unions of Faridpur Sadar upazila and Tungipara, Kotlalipara and Muksudpur upazilas of Gopalganj

went under floodwater as the Padma and Madhumati kept on swelling.

Around 1,000 families in Satkhira took refuge in flood shelters and more than 150 fish farms were washed away.

"Flood situation will deteriorate in the south-central part of the country if the Padma continued to rise," Saiful Hossain of FFWC told BBC Bangla Service yesterday.

The flood situation of low-lying

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

TEXTBOOKS

No historian to correct Liberation War history

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Education ministry's flimsy attempt at correcting the history of the Liberation War in textbooks through two committees of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) without a historian on their side has made the process all the more questionable.

Academics and historians talking to The Daily Star also questioned the way the education ministry furtively approved the committee reports that would end up getting into the 'corrected' textbooks.

Indicating that the drafts of the corrected history may have been externally tampered with, a few members of the two committees said they were not fully aware of how much of the final reports prepared by them remained.

The ministry in a dubious move arranged training and 43-day vacation for the official in charge of supervising the work of these com-

mittees a few days after the committees started working.

The supervising official, a joint secretary of the education ministry, did not even have the scope to see the reports of the committees.

Sources said the only thing that all the committee members and officials concerned knew about the correction was that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be referred to as the 'Father of the Nation' and Ziaur Rahman as 'proclaimer of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu' on March 27, 1971.

"I don't know about the correction of history or changes made in the textbooks. No meeting was ever held centring the correction of history in the textbooks," a member of the committee for the secondary textbooks told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Immobile policemen

Lack of patrol cars deters crime combat

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Crime control in the capital is facing a serious setback because of severe shortages of patrol vehicles at all the police stations in the metropolis.

Police officials said despite the ongoing state of emergency, crimes like snatching on the city streets and theft are quite rampant and the main reason for this is most police teams have to patrol the city on foot.

Earlier, the police used to meet the vehicle crisis by illegally taking private vehicles from people, but the police headquarters recently ordered to stop the illegal practice.

The police have the right to requisition any private vehicle for the need of the department and other government agencies and organisations. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) requisition around 100 vehicles every day, police officials said.

They, however, said this huge requisition of private vehicles is

tainting the police's image with the vehicle-owners.

They said many of these requisitioned vehicles are being used by other forces and government institutions like the joint forces and the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha. The DMP have to supply the fuel for the vehicles they requisition.

"On an average 20 mobile courts work in the city every day and we have to supply minibuses with fuel for these mobile courts," DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed told The Daily Star recently.

VEHICLE CRISIS AT CITY PPS
Police officials at different city police stations said most of their teams now patrol the city streets on foot because of severe shortage of police vans at the stations.

Police sources said there are around 130 police vans at the 33 DMP police stations and the number of police vans available at each police station is less than half the station's requirement.

Ironically, most of these vehicles now in operation are age-old and so worn out that half of them are always at the workshop for repairing. These "running" vehicles often need to be pushed to start.

"Whenever I get on a police van, panic seizes me that the engine may catch fire any moment," a sub-inspector (SI) of Tejgaon PS said.

"When it rains we have to get out of the police vans and seek shelter at the houses of people for whose security we patrol their locality in these vehicles," said another SI of Ramna PS.

The Tejgaon PS needs at least 10 vehicles to patrol the area but it has only three while the Ramna PS, which was recognised as the top model police station a few months back, has only four pick-up vans against a need of around 10.

"When organised gangs are using modern jeeps or minibuses

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Anisul Huq new Bangabandhu murder case state counsel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed Supreme Court lawyer advocate Anisul Huq as a state counsel for the Bangabandhu murder case, the hearing of which resumed on August 7 after six years at the Appellate Division.

Advocate Anisul yesterday received the appointment letter issued by the solicitor wing of the law ministry.

The government also appointed two more lawyers to assist Anisul Huq. They are advocates Mosharaf Hossain Kazal and Nurul Islam Sujon.

Anisul had earlier worked as a special prosecutor of the Bangabandhu murder case, but the BNP-led four-party alliance government cancelled his appointment after assuming power in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Muggers shoot man to snatch Tk 10.5 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers shot and injured two people and snatched Tk 10.47 lakh from the manager of a filling station in Siddhirganj yesterday.

The incident took place in front of the entrance of a bank on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Simrail of Siddhirganj.

The injured were identified as Sadequr Rahman Babu, 38, manager of Plana Filling Station and Bashir Uddin, 45, a pedestrian.

Badal Hossain, supervisor of the filling station, told The Daily Star that Babu, manager of the filling station, along with two supervisors went to Simrail branch of Dutch-Bangla Bank in a car with the money at around 9:00am for having a demand draft (DD) issued by the bank.

The manager got out of the car and headed for the entrance of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6