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# Meagre allocation for agri rehab in 10 north dists

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU,  
back from Sirajganj

A paltry sum of Tk 672 has been allocated for each hectare under the government's post-flood agriculture rehabilitation programme in ten northern districts while official statistics show that Aman cultivation costs Tk 5,600 on an average.

The farmers, however, put the figure at Tk 13,000 to Tk 15,000 for a hectare of land as the cost has greatly increased, especially after the flood.

The government has allocated Tk 7.75 crore for cultivating paddy and other seasonal crops on 1,15,238 hectares of flood-affected

land in the northern districts whereas Tk 64.53 crore is required for the task, officials of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said referring to government statistics.

At least three lakh farmers in the northern districts have become empty-handed due to the flood this year, AED sources said.

Failing to get monetary assistance from the government, many farmers in the region are now forced to borrow money to begin cultivation once again.

"I have spent Tk 15,000 to plant Aman saplings worth Tk 8,400 on a hectare of land after the floodwater receded," Md Mahbubur Rahman, a farmer in Dhunat upazila under Bogra district said.

"Those who have managed to grow saplings have less cultivation cost. Even then they need at least Tk 13,000 for cultivating a hectare of land," he said, adding that it would cost Tk 7,000 before the floods.

The Tk 7.75 crore allocation is for flood-affected districts of Sirajganj, Pabna, Natore, Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Bogra and Rajshahi while no rehabilitation allowances were given for six other flood-hit northern districts including Dinajpur.

Flood-related loss in agriculture sector excluding production loss in Sirajganj district was shown to be Tk 72 crore but only Tk 2 crore has

been given for agriculture rehabilitation in the area.

Another allocation of Tk 2 crore will be spent for cultivation in winter season as Aman production will suffer if the sowing of Aman paddy cannot be completed in ten days.

Like Bera in Pabna, thousands of hectares of land in Sirajganj are still under water.

The farmers of Kurigram, who had planted Aman saplings on loan after the floods, incurred huge losses as their cultivated lands went under water again due to onrush of water from the hills. Besides, a large area of cropland is facing erosion by Dharla river.

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## Nephew of MP Shahidul held in Bheramara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police arrested a nephew of former BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam on Thursday night.

According to police, the arrestee, Rannan, is accused in six criminal cases including two for murder. He had been absconding since January 20, they added.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Bheramara police raided the house of Ishak Malitha, brother of Shahidul Islam, at Choldag village under Bheramara upazila at around 11.00pm and arrested Ishak's son Rannan Malitha.

Police said Rannan was involved in various crimes in the upazila during the tenure of BNP-led alliance government.

They law enforcers were quizzing him at Bheramara Police Station as of 6:00pm yesterday.

## Guard stabbed to death in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists stabbed a security guard to death at West Kazipara in the city's Mirpur area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abbas Ali Sohel, 25, security guard of Napier Homes Ltd.

Sources said a gang of three to four came to an under-construction building at Kazipara at around 3:00pm and was looking for contractor Abdur Rauf.

As security guard Sohel challenged the gang, they stabbed him in the chest and fled the scene blasting bombs.

Sohel was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Police quoting the construction workers said the gang members demanded Tk 1 lakh from the contractor and gave a cellphone number to communicate with them on Wednesday.

They came to the site yesterday to take the money, the workers said.

## Bush urges allies to keep troops in Iraq

AP, Sydney

President Bush said in an interview broadcast yesterday that he would be concerned about China's military if the country ever turned hostile, and he urged allied countries to keep their troops in Iraq.

Speaking to Australia's Sky News network in Washington ahead of a visit to Australia an annual meeting of Pacific Rim leaders, Bush addressed China's growing economy and military.

"My view of China is that they're internally focused to the extent that they want economic growth

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Prayer Timing		
September 1		
Fajr	4:30	5:05
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:23	6:26
Isha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Fresh flood grips new areas in Chandpur, Nilphamari

STAR REPORT

New areas of Chandpur, Matlab South and Matlab North, Haimchar, Hajiganj, Kochua, Faridganj and Shaharati upazilas were inundated yesterday with fresh rise of water in Meghna river and its tributaries Dakatia and Dhonagoda, reports a correspondent from Chandpur.

The Meghna, which had been flowing below danger levels for ten days in Chandpur belt, started flowing above the danger level yesterday, said officials of Water Development Board in the district.

Thousands of people in 25 char areas of Haimchar and Matlab North are still marooned and in serious need of food, water and

medicines.

Around 100 patients with eye infection got admitted to government and private hospitals, while patients with diarrhoeal diseases were also on the rise in the area, said eye specialist Dr Shafiqul Alam.

A flash flood caused by heavy rainfall in the last couple of days and onrush of water from the Indian territories affected more than 2,000 people of five unions under Dimla upazila in Nilphamari district on Thursday, reports our correspondent.

The Teesta was flowing 34cm above the danger level at 2:00am on Thursday, said officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) at Dalia division.

However, the situation improved as the water started receding and was flowing below the danger level at 4:00pm yesterday, Executive Engineer of Dalia division of BWDB Atiqur Rahman said.

Indian authorities opened all the gates of Gojal Doba barrage on Thursday, contributing to the rise of water level in Teesta river.

Most houses in Char Karibari, Purba Khari Bari, Kishamoter Char, Bhasanir Char, Tapurchar, Char Jharsingewar, Baishpukur, Vendabari, Khogarchar, Fakrater Char and Sadhur Bazar villages -- all in Dimla upazila -- are under two to three feet water.

Erosion has taken a serious turn at Purba Khari Bari and Tapurchar

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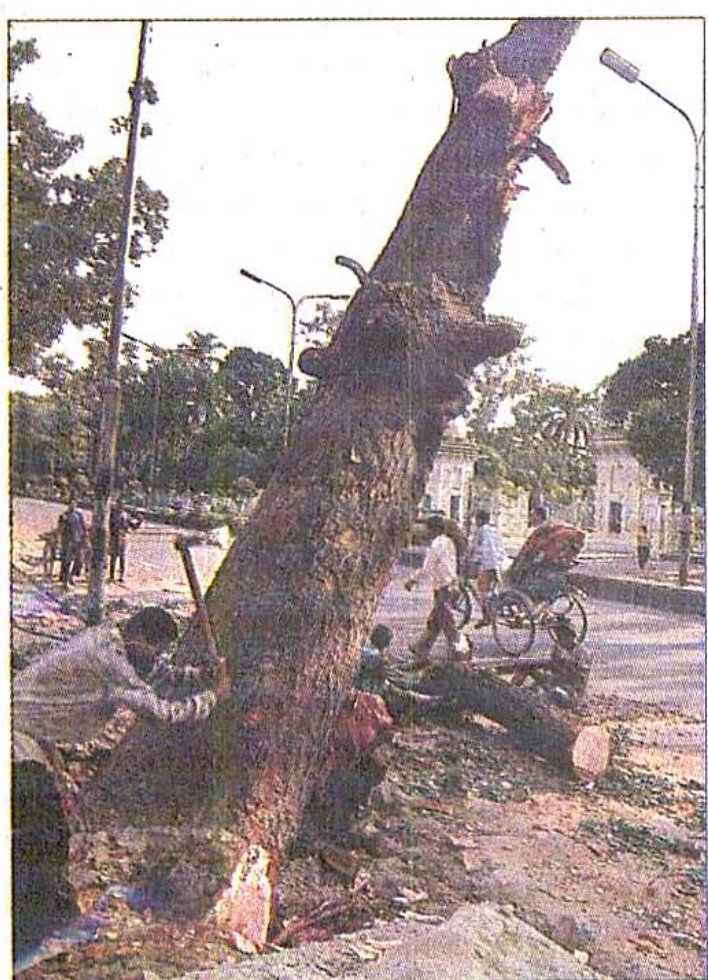


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation workers yesterday felling this truncated tree that tilted precariously on the road beside the Supreme Court.

## Cholera death toll in India jumps to 166

AFP, Bhubaneswar

The death toll from an outbreak of cholera in eastern India has jumped by over 50 percent in two days to 166 with many more people being treated for the disease, officials said yesterday.

Government administrators in the four affected districts in the poverty-stricken state of Orissa supplied the cholera death toll, which stood at 105 on Wednesday, to AFP.

But the opposition said around 500 people have died from cholera and attacked the government for not declaring an epidemic.

Officials denied they were facing a cholera epidemic and insisted that the situation was under control.

"We have no epidemic," Orissa health secretary Chiny Basu said in state capital Bhubaneswar.

The health control room in Bhubaneswar set up to monitor the outbreak of the disease said over 6,000 people were being treated for cholera and dysentery. Authorities could supply no break-up of the figures.

The victims contracted the illness from drinking dirty water and contaminated food, officials said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Four of a bridal party killed in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Four members of a bridal party were killed and 30 others injured in a road accident on the Bogra-Rangpur highway yesterday.

The dead were identified as Sakina, 50, Ferdous, 8, Hosneara, 17, and Rozina, 52. Hosneara died on way to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at around 4:00pm when a bus carrying a bridal party from Rangpur collided head-on with a speeding truck at Baropur under Bogra Sadar upazila, killing three members of the party on the spot and injuring 31 others.

Of the injured, 15 were admitted to the hospital, while the rest given first aid.

The drivers and helpers of the bus and truck fled the scene.

## Militants to set free 120 Pak soldiers

AP, Dera Ismail Khan

More than 120 Pakistani soldiers seized by Islamic militants near the Afghan border soon will be released after the intervention of local tribal elders, an official said yesterday.

However, a militant leader said nearly 300 soldiers were being held, a claim that could not be independently verified, and that there had been no decision on whether to release them.

The troops were travelling in a 16-vehicle convoy providing security for trucks hauling food Thursday in the South Waziristan tribal area when bad weather forced them to stop and set up camp, a security official said on condition of anonymity because of department policy.

The soldiers who were travelling between Wana, the main town in South Waziristan and Ladhra, another town in the region were surrounded by militants who believed they were conducting a military operation.

The incident came two days after militants freed 18 soldiers and a Pakistani government official who were kidnapped in the region earlier this month. It also occurred

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# Sharp fall in jute prices in Rangpur, adjacent districts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Jute farmers in Rangpur and adjacent districts have been incurring heavy losses -- around Tk 100 to Tk 150 a maund, as demand for the fibre saw a sharp fall.

After surveying different markets in the region, it was found that a maund of the finest quality tossa jute (golden) is now selling at only Tk 550 to Tk 600 while the local variety (white) is selling at Tk 400 to 440.

"I sold 33 maunds of jute for Tk 17,160, when my cost of production was Tk 19,730," lamented Momin Ali, a farmer from West Khashbagh in Rangpur sadar upazila.

Another farmer from Joyrampur of Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur,

Nirmol Mohanta, said he also incurred losses when he was able to make only Tk 7,980 by selling 19 maunds of local variety jute, which cost him Tk 10,200 to produce.

The sluggish trend in the regional jute markets is partly due to closure of a number of jute procurement centres in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Rangpur districts, said an official at Department of Jute in Rangpur requesting anonymity.

While many jute procurement centres closed their doors following the recent closure of state-run jute mills in the area, others are incapable of making purchases due to fund shortage or failure to renew their licences, said sources at the Rangpur jute department.

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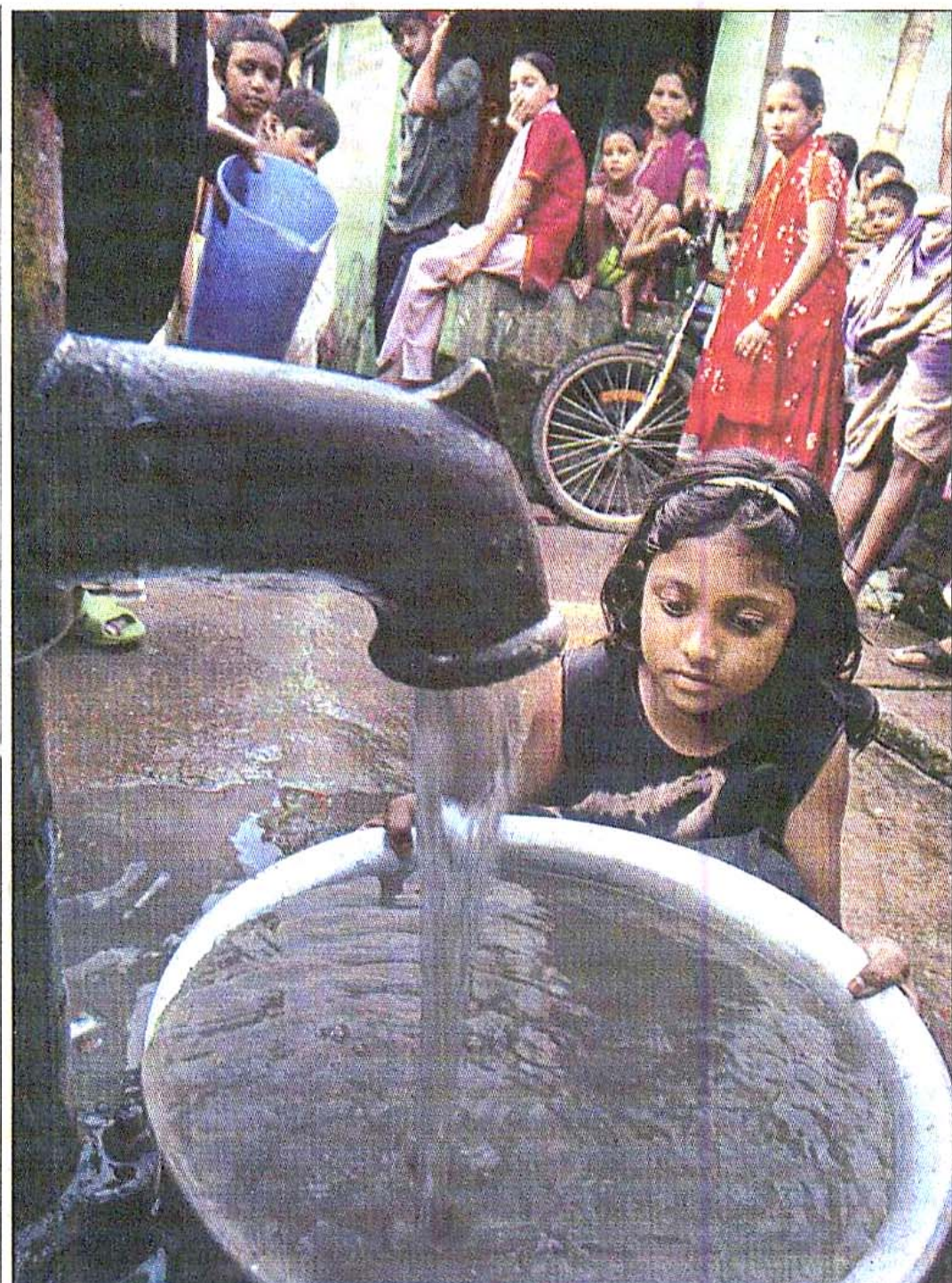


PHOTO: STAR

Stinking water from this tube-well connected to a Wassa line at Block-1 of Geneva camp at Mohammadpur in the capital poses serious health hazards. Several users were admitted to hospitals in last two days.

## IDB to provide \$9.2m for 3 sectors

AGENCIES, Dhaka

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) will provide \$9.2 million for the development of agriculture, rural infrastructure and the power sector in Bangladesh.

Three agreements were signed between the government and the IDB following a meeting between Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam and visiting IDB President Ahmed Mohamed Ali at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital yesterday.

Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) Mohammad Aminul Islam Bhuiyan and the IDB president signed the agreements on behalf of their respective sides. The finance adviser was present.

Of the amount, \$8.686 million will be spent for implementation of the greater Rangpur Agricultural and Rural Development project, \$0.295 million for carrying out feasibility study on Bhola 150MW Combined Cycle Power Plant and Barisal-Bhola-Borhanuddin 132KV transmission line project and \$0.218 million for feasibility study on the Eastern Refinery project.

Earlier, the finance adviser and the IDB president discussed the bank's cooperation in areas like agriculture, education, health,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Teenage boy, girl commit suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy and a domestic help allegedly committed suicide at two places in the capital yesterday.

Shahriar Alam, 14, a class X student of Motijheel Model High School, was found hanging from the ceiling fan inside his room on Outer Circular Road in Rajarbagh early yesterday.

His father rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Family members said they scolded him over study on Thursday night. He went to his room at midnight.

As his father entered Shahriar's room to see whether his son was sleeping or not he found Shahriar hanging from the ceiling, they said.

Meanwhile, domestic help Sanowara Akter, 14, was found hanging from the ceiling fan with a scarf inside the employer's bedroom at Madartek in Sabujbagh in the capital.

Sanowara, daughter of Hasmat Ali of Thakurgaon, had been working at the residence of Monwar Sajjad alias Sujan for about two years.

Sujan told this correspondent that he along with his wife went out to attend a marriage ceremony at Banasri after sunset.

On returning home, they found Sanowara hanging from the ceiling, he said.

Being informed, police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue in the morning for autopsy.

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

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The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

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Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students.

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