

HEAVY DOWNPOUR
Waterlogging deteriorates in DND dam area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Waterlogging in Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment area has deteriorated further following heavy downpour in last two days.

Lakhs of people, who have been marooned inside the embankment for the last two months, are living a miserable life.

Many of the people are suffering from different waterborne diseases like diarrhoea, skin disease, viral fever, conjunctivitis and jaundice.

According to District Civil Surgeon, some 10 thousand families suffering from skin disease and diarrhoea are being treated under a package programme.

Besides, several medical teams are working round the clock. Deputy Commissioner Faizul Kabir said demolition drive against illegal constructions is continuing to activate the drainage system to reduce waterlogging.

The worst affected areas include Mutail, Shahidnagar, Hajinagar, Boxnagar, Rasulnagar, Amtali, Godnail, Kadamtali, Baghmara, Jalkuri, Islambag, Bhuigarh, Chadmani, Hajiganj, Kutubpur and Pagla.

RMG workers clash over arrear wages in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three security guards were injured when a clash broke out between the two groups of workers over arrear wages and allowances in the city yesterday.

The security guards of Tejgaon Textile Garment Factory were identified as Abul Kalam Azad, 30, Obaidur Rahman, 35, and Abdus Salam, 27.

They said an altercation ensued at around 9:45am between the workers of finishing section and sewing section inside the factory.

As the workers tried to vandalise some properties inside the factory, they tried to stop the fighting.

As a result, the agitated workers started kicking and hitting them with sticks, sources said. The injured guards were sent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for treatment.

Factory sources said workers of the finishing section staged a protest over their one-month arrear wage and overtime allowances but the situation deteriorated when the sewing section workers refused to join the protest.

Around 100 workers took to the street following the clash for an hour from 11:00am.

The situation however returned to normal when police and Rab members were called in.

Russia, Japan to vie for peace deal

AFP, Sydney

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed yesterday to work toward a peace agreement between the countries to end a row that has festered since World War II.

Both said they would renew efforts to strike a deal on the disputed Kuril islands, which lie between the two countries.

"I assure you that Russia is interested in finding the sort of resolution that will let us conclude a peace agreement," Putin said at talks with Abe on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit in Sydney.

"I am sure that Russia will continue this work not only this year, but next, after parliamentary and presidential election are held," Putin said.

Russia will hold a parliamentary poll in December, followed by a presidential election in March 2008, when Putin will step down at the end of his second term.

Abe backed the call. "It is necessary to sign a peace treaty if we want to shift (relations) to a new phase," he told Putin, according to a Japanese official.

Speaking through an interpreter, Abe said the two would also work to hammer out "the initiative to strengthen Russian-Japanese cooperation in East Siberia and the Far East" that Japan has proposed as a confidence-building measure.

Abe first offered in June to lend a hand in Russia's multi-billion-dollar plan to revive the resource-rich but sparsely populated region by providing energy technology and help on tourism, environmental and security issues.

Sixty years after World War II, the two countries continue to dispute ownership over the Kuril islands, which Soviet troops held onto after World War II and Japan refers to as the Northern Territory.



Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed speaks at a dialogue on "Interpreting recent inflationary trends in Bangladesh and policy options" at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. On his right are Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan and Dr Muhammad Farahuddin and on his left is Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud. CPD organised the dialogue. (Story on Page 16)

Accede to UN Convention on Refugees
Legal experts urge govt

RU CORRESPONDENT

Legal experts at a training programme yesterday called upon the government to accede to the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees signed in 1951, and its 1967 Protocol.

They also called for enacting a mandatory national legislation and forming a judicial authority to deal with asylum and refugee issues efficiently.

The speakers called for capacity building of government and NGO officials dealing with the refugees, for better treatment of asylum

seekers and refugees.

The daylong training programme on 'Refugee Law' was organised jointly by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at a local restaurant.

Magistrate Sufia Akter, Rajshahi District Joint Judge Ruhul Amin, Assistant Police Commissioner Joydip Chakrabarti, acting chairman of law and justice department at Rajshahi University Prof ANM Wahid, Joint District Judge of Dhaka MD Aktaruzzaman, Coordinator of BLAST Rajshahi

National Protection Officer of UNHCR Dr Uttam Kumar Das spoke on the occasion.

Tslimur Rahman, executive director of BLAST, moderated the training programme while MD Aktaruzzaman and Dr Uttam Kumar Das conducted different sessions.

The agenda of the training included basic understanding of human rights, correlation between human rights laws and refugee laws, understanding of persecution, asylum and refugees' rights, conceptual background of inter-

nally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons, institutional mechanism to protect IDPs, UNHCR's role in refugee protection, identity crisis and legal status of Biharis in Bangladesh and Bangladeshi refugees in India in 1971.

Some 50 representatives from the bar association and academic institutes including university teachers, journalists and NGO officials took part in the programme.

After the discussion, certificates were distributed among the participants.



Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), United States chapter, under the banner of "Khaleda Zia Freedom International Movement" yesterday staged a demonstration in front of the United Nations in New York demanding immediate release of former prime minister and party Chairperson Khaleda Zia. They also submitted a memorandum to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in this regard.

Resist criminalisation of politics

Speakers tell seminar

UNB, Chittagong

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday called for resisting criminalisation of politics by atrophied politicians and screening out the black money holders and terrorists from the political parties.

Politics must be freed from black money holders, corrupt elements and terrorists for achieving the objectives of the country, emphasised the participants at the seminar on reforms at Agrabad Hotel in the port city.

Centre for Government Studies, a think tank, organised the seminar, with Prof Dr Ataur Rahman of Dhaka University in the chair.

The speakers said the country is passing through a critical juncture and the people suffering from high price of essentials.

The people need to fight not with sticks and oars but to restore

the spirit of the War of Liberation imbued with the sense of patriotism to save the nation, they said.

They hailed the January 11 changeover that salvaged the nation from chaos and anarchy. The objective of the change can be fulfilled if honest and patriotic leaders emerge from a free and fair election pledged by the end of next year.

Prof. Hasan Mohammad of Political Science of Chittagong University presented a keynote paper in the seminar.

Jatiya Party leader Mazharul Haque Shah, BNP leader M Nazim Uddin, former vice-chancellor of Islamic University Dr Imamul Haque, Jamaat leader Nurul Amin, JSD (Rab) leader Fahim Uddin, IOJ leader Mufti Izharul Islam, BNP leader Ershadullah, Azizur Rahman, Advocate Abu Hanif and Fazlul Haque also spoke at the seminar.

Talk on liberal edn at Brac University

Brac University recently organised a talk on Liberal Education and Pluralism, says a press release.

Prof Nancy S Dye, outgoing president of Oberlin College of USA and senior adviser of Asian University for Women (AUW), was the keynote speaker.

In her talk Dr Nancy discussed the whole concept of liberal arts, its depth of knowledge, the curricula and the participatory teaching.

While talking about pluralism she said, "The pluralism was interested in Oberlin College went beyond American experience. International students were very crucial to that experience."

"I recall Pakistani students telling me they had never met an Indian or Bangladeshi before they came to Oberlin. It made me think more of the role of higher education in bringing students together from a wide set of backgrounds."

Earlier, the introductory remarks were made by Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, vice-chancellor of Brac University.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Pro-VC, Prof Firdous Azim, chairperson of the Department of English and Humanities, and Registrar Mahmood Hasan were present.

Bhuiyan proposes Saifur to take over BNP

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1991 and more reforms might be brought about according to the proposal of the party councillors.

Asked about the right way of implementing reforms Delwar said, "The councillors will submit proposals to the party secretary general who will convene the party council with permission of the party chairperson for approving those proposals."

Delwar said the party will consider if Mannan Bhuiyan, who lost his primary membership of the party for his present stance, wants to get back his membership.

"We want to strengthen the BNP and whoever wants to join the party is welcome," he said when asked if they will accept if the expelled leaders want to come back.

Meanwhile, Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday once again said BNP will go to power through participating in the next election after imple-

menting the reforms.

"We will secure victory in the coming election after reorganising the party through reforms," Bhuiyan told reporters at his Gulshan residence. He once again asserted that they are the mainstream BNP and are getting immense response from party leaders and workers for strengthening the party through reforms.

Sources said the faction led by Bhuiyan is communicating with former lawmakers and district level leaders for support to hold the party council to implement the reforms.

MEMORANDUM TO BAN KI-MOON
BNP supporters in New York demonstrated in front of the United Nations office on Friday and submitted a memorandum to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

The US BNP chapter organised the demonstration under the banner of "Khaleda Zia Freedom

International Movement".

The BNP leaders in the US handed the memorandum to UN Deputy Secretary General Elin R Alradi, accusing the Bangladesh government of violating human rights.

BNP leaders Abul Hashem Bulbul, Zillur Rahman Zillur, Sharafat Hossain Babu and Belal Mahmud were present at the event.

In the memorandum, the BNP leaders demanded immediate release of Khaleda Zia, withdrawal of the state of emergency in Bangladesh, and holding of parliament elections at the earliest.

Bulbul quoted the UN deputy secretary general as saying that they are observing the situation in Bangladesh and expecting that the government will hold the elections within the timeframe. The UN will not remain silent if human rights are violated in Bangladesh, the official said.

AUG 22 CU INCIDENT
7 more give deposition

CU CORRESPONDENT

Another seven people gave deposition before the probe committee formed to investigate August 22 incident on Chittagong University (CU) campus on the fourth and last day yesterday.

With this, a total of 19 people gave depositions before the committee in four days, sources said.

Arts Faculty Dean Prof Mansur Uddin Ahmed, who heads the four-member committee, said they would scrutinise the depositions and call the provosts and others to give their depositions.

"We will also allow any one interested to give deposition and try to submit the report within the time frame of one month," he added.

Mentionable, at least 40 students, teachers and cops were injured in a clash between the students and the cops on the university campus where some outsiders allegedly took part.

CU authorities formed the committee following the incident.

35 injured in Jhenidah road crash

UNB, Jhenidah

At least 35 passengers of a Dhaka-bound bus from Meherpur tumbled into a roadside ditch at Hatgopalpur on yesterday morning.

Of the injured, 19 were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital in a critical condition while others were taken to local health complex.

According to the survivors, the accident occurred when the driver took a turn to save a cow on the way and lost his control over the steering. The bus rammmed into roadside shops and fell into a ditch. The bus ravaged seven barrels of fuel oil kept in front of a shop.

The bus of Purbasha Paribahan was carrying some 50 passengers, they said.

Rain paralyses

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of rain in 24 hours ending at 3:00pm yesterday.

Many low-lying areas of Halishahar, Agrabad CDA Residential Area, Shantibag, Pahartali, Bakolia, Badurtala, Sholokbahar, Korbaniganj and Chaktai have become waterlogged due to the continuous rain. More than a hundred houses in Khulshi, Bayezid and Pahartali areas were damaged due to hilly onrush.

Water of the river Halda at Narayan Hat point was flowing over the danger mark. The croplands in Satkania, Chandanaish, Patiya, Racoan and Hathazari upazilas went under water, sources said.

Khadiza was swept away in front of her house at Kabir Colony under Khulshi Police Station at around 1:00am. Her body was found some 400 yards from her house at around 5:30am, sources said.

Two more girls identified as Shahida, 7, and Sharmin, 8, of the same colony went missing during the heavy rain at the same time, the sources added.

In another incident, Zillur fell into a roadside drain at city's Alankar intersection and was carried away by gushing water at around 12:30am. His body was later recovered from the drain.

The Fire Service and Civil Defence said no incident of landslide was reported as of 4:30pm yesterday.

The Met office has removed the signal for depression over the bay effective for the last three days.

In its forecast, the office said that the sea will remain turbulent and asked the water-traffic to ply safely. The Chittagong division may experience moderate to heavy downpour till 6:00pm today, it added.

All scheduled flights left Chittagong without any delay, said Fakrul Islam, senior traffic assistant at Shah Amanat International Airport.

Loading and unloading of goods were normal at Chittagong Sea Port, sources said.



Helal Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank Ltd, hands over a cheque for Tk 50 lakh on behalf of Pubali Bank to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the flood-affected people at the latter's office recently. ATM Hasanuzzaman, chief financial officer of the bank, was present on the occasion.



Inamur Rahman, managing director (current charge) of Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company Limited (BIFC), hands over a cheque for Tk 10 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed for the flood-affected people at the latter's office recently.



Old students of Faujdardhat Cadet College in cooperation with the members of local Khandura Prativa Sangha distribute relief among the flood-affected people at Nasirnagar upazila in Brahmanbaria recently.