

LATEST BBC POLL Two-thirds of Britons fear race violence

AFP, London

Around two-thirds of Britons fear race relations are so bad that they could spark violent clashes, according to a poll published by the BBC yesterday.

A total of 64 percent said they thought racial tensions were certain, very likely or fairly likely to result in violence.

Asked how much tension there is in Britain between different races and nationalities, 24 percent said a great deal, while 52 percent said a fair amount.

And 59 percent said that they either strongly agreed or tended to agree with the statement that there were too many immigrants in Britain.

In addition, 49 percent said that the government should encourage immigrants to leave Britain, compared to 43 percent who said they should not and eight percent who did not know or declined to answer.

There have been a handful of racially-linked riots in Britain in recent years.

In 2005, groups of young Afro-Caribbean and Asian men clashed in Birmingham, central England, over two nights, leaving two people dead.

And in 2001, inter-racial violence saw groups of youths go on the rampage in Burnley, Bradford and Oldham in northern England, all

Food prices

FROM PAGE 1

Some countries, such as China, were in a strong position to allow their currencies to rise and should do so to help ease the pain from higher-priced food imports, he said.

Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia have partially "insulated" their economies from global commodity inflation" by allowing their currencies to rise in the last few years, he said.

However, he said "that may not be so good" for some countries such as Vietnam that have a large current account deficit.

While a steady stream of foreign direct investment has largely helped Hanoi, "allowing the currency to appreciate substantially might undermine competitiveness and that might further increase the current account deficit."

China, with a huge current account surplus and a very competitive economy, "has been allowing its currency to appreciate faster, he said.

Longer term, Kuroda said the solution to high food prices was raising productivity through increased government investments in the farm sector.

The ADB was a key player in infrastructure development in Asia and would help member countries with irrigation, electricity, roads and other infrastructure that could boost farm production, he said.

Chicken prices

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Rice prices, however, increased by Tk 10-15 per maund on the wholesale market Thursday following the government's decision to procure Boro rice at Tk 28 a kg. Rural markets also witnessed price hike as well. Prices, however, did not increase further yesterday.

Edible oil prices saw fresh hike in last one week. The price of non-brand soya bean spiked by Tk 108-110 per kg which was sold for Tk 103-105 a week ago.

Super palm oil was selling for Tk 101-103 a kg yesterday. A week ago, it sold at Tk 95-96.

The price of per kg palm oil, which rose in both wholesale and retail markets, stood at Tk 97-98 yesterday while it was Tk 91-92 a week ago.

However, the price of green chilli has decreased. Green chilli was sold at Tk 6-7 per kg at Karwan Bazar wholesale market yesterday.

Akkas Ali, a farmer, told The Daily Star that he came to Karwan Bazar from Narsingdi as the price of chilli fell considerably in Narsingdi.

Nepal Maoists

FROM PAGE 1

"In history, monarchs have been beheaded and also had to flee. Let that not be repeated in Nepal," said the school teacher-turned-revolutionary.

Gyanendra ascended the throne in 2001 when his brother and predecessor, King Birendra, was shot dead along with eight other family members by a drunk and lovelorn crown prince, who in turn killed himself.

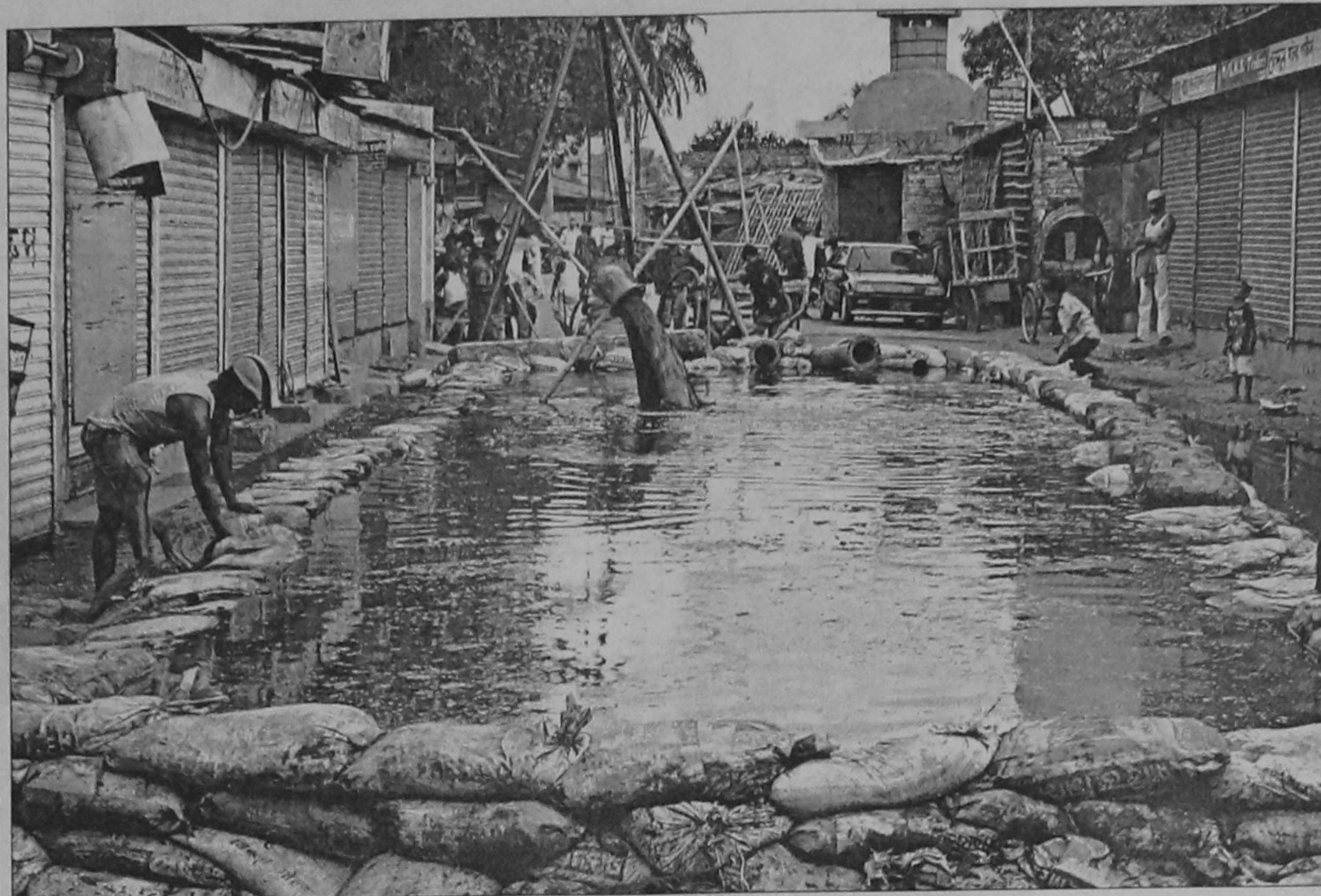
In 2005 he seized absolute power to fight the Maoists, but instead fuelled a wave of republicanism that led to a historic 2006 peace deal culminating in last week's polls.

Until two and a half years ago, Prachanda lived underground and was a terrorist wanted by Interpol.

The party he leads has now become Nepal's biggest, and is set to lead the country's next government.

With the count from the April 10 elections still in progress and 601 seats in a constitutional assembly up for grabs, the former rebels have won nearly half of the 240 seats allocated by the first-past-the-post system.

They are also on track to win around a third of the 335 seats allocated by proportional representation, election official Diliram Bastola told AFP.



Workers of Dhaka Wasa pile up sandbags closing the box-culvert road at Kamalapur kitchen market yesterday to clean drains without using suction pipes. As a result, the environment has become heavy with the stink of garbage.

Maj Hafiz

FROM PAGE 1

the pro-reform group.

Khandaker Delwar Hossain, secretary general appointed by the chairperson, has told his colleagues that steps regarding action against Hafiz would be taken on instructions from the party chief. He said he would soon send a message to her.

"We won't spare anyone of those plotting against the party to serve the interests of certain quarters," a senior leader siding with Delwar told The Daily Star.

Pro-Khaleda faction, meantime, wants the demand for release of Khaleda and her two sons to be on the agenda for the meetings preparatory to the formal dialogue between government and political parties, said sources.

Following an SMS invitation from the caretaker government, the faction leaders on Thursday decided to join the pre-dialogue talks that might be held anytime this week.

They said their agenda for the meeting would be settled through further discussion at party forum.

"We would place a four-point demand including release of Khaleda Zia and her sons and withdrawal of the case against Tarique, his wife and mother-in-law," Hannan said.

On April 7, Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman made a phone call to Rizvi Ahmed and invited Delwar group for talks. In reply to the invitation, the leaders said they needed the chairperson's consent before joining any dialogue with the government.

Then on Thursday, Delwar told reporters that he had got positive response from the party chief regarding meeting the advisers.

AL: Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

Presidium member Abdur Razzak, criticising the government's dual stand.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of Jail Week 2008 at the Prisons Directorate on Thursday, Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin said at this moment the government is not considering releasing the detained AL president abroad for treatment.

Razzak yesterday demanded immediate unconditional release of Hasina, saying, "It will be good for both the nation and the caretaker government if immediate effective steps are taken to send our ailing party president abroad [for treatment]."

He was speaking at a signature campaign programme organised by Awami Juba League at the party central office on Bangabandhu Avenue. Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu inaugurated the programme.

AL Presidium member Tofail Ahmed said if the government does not free Hasina immediately, there would be no alternative left for the party except launching movement.

He said the country's political arena is now unstable and Hasina's release is the only way to overcome the situation.

AL leader Suranjit Sengupta said, "If the home adviser's remark is correct, then the dialogue must fail." He urged the government to clear its stand on the matter.

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2 former secys

FROM PAGE 1

violating the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) only three hours after he was released from the Dhaka Central Jail.

Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, who was accused along with former premier Sheikh Hasina in the barge-mount power plant corruption case, was also sent to jail by the court that sent him to jail.

Lutfor Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon police station, told The Daily Star, "We arrested Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury on Green Road on charges of the violating the EPR at about 10:00am."

"Toufiq-e-Elahi was arrested as he was trying to assemble people violating the EPR," the OC said.

Sources said Dr Toufiq was released from the Dhaka Central Jail at about 7:00am on bail in the barge-mount power plant corruption case filed with Tejgaon police station on September 2, 2007.

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson's former secretary Khandaker Shahidul, who was accused along with Khaleda Zia in the NIKO corruption case, was also sent to jail after the Anti-Corruption Commission officials arrested him from his Dhanmondi residence on Thursday night.

The ACC officials produced the former secretary before the court that sent him to jail. The court also asked the Dhaka Central Jail authorities to provide him with proper medical treatment and a division status in line with the jail code.

Shahidul's lawyers sought his bail but the court did not pass any order on the appeal. The lawyers also submitted Shahidul's medical certificates to the court.

They said there was no specific allegation against the former secretary.

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20 lakh deprived

FROM PAGE 1

About 1.40 lakh people buy rice every day three days a week from 687 OMS dealers across DCC areas. Under the programme, each dealer sells 5 kg of the staple to 204 people a day.

From today, 2.06 lakh people will be able to reap the benefit. Each dealer will sell rice to 300 people a day three days a week, said Pias Costa, director general of the food directorate.

Also from today, about 18 lakh people across the country will be able to buy rice from 6,800 OMS dealers.

Besides, 60 truckloads of rice are sold to 36,000 city dwellers every day four days a week under the direct sales programme of the food directorate.

Meanwhile, about 1.30 lakh people in the DCC areas are getting the benefit of buying rice from 75 OMS outlets each daysix days a week.

Of the 17 unions, over 6 lakh people mostly from low income bracket live in Sultanganj union that includes Kamrangirchar, the most densely populated DMP area.

Residents of Kamrangirchar said most of them are helpless in the wake of skyrocketing prices of food items. They have no alternative to trekking to the fair price outlets in the city corporation areas. Particularly, the women have to spend a major part of their time queuing up for rice at BDR and OMS outlets or direct sales points.

Shahinor Begum of Rasulbagh in Kamrangirchar said she goes to Azimpur staff quarters playground to buy rice twice a week since there is no BDR outlet in her area.

"I start for the BDR outlet at Azimpur at the crack of dawn and return home in the evening. I have to leave my three minor kids to a neighbour. I could have spent the time earning some money if the people were here in Kamrangirchar," she said.

Wahid Hossain, a former OMS dealer of Kamrangirchar, told The Daily Star, "I was an OMS dealer each time the governments in the last 10 years undertook the programme for Kamrangirchar area. But this year they did not give me any deal."

The officials concerned told him that they would not appoint any

dealer for Kamrangirchar since the area is not under city corporation or upazila.

Monir Hossain, chairman of Sultanganj union parishad, told The Daily Star that Kamrangirchar, a five-square mile area flanked by Buriganga, is one of the poorest areas under DMP.

"Programmes like BDR fair price outlets or OMS is essential for those living here since most of them are needy and cannot afford to live in the city," he said.

From today, about 10 people. While visiting Pramanikar, Gaoalervita and Shibrampur villages of Kanthalbari union under Sadar upazila, our correspondent saw about 250 damaged houses. About 150 houses of Morakata, Char Kunigram and Velakopa villages, in Sweeper Colony, Munshirpara, Mollapara, Old Post Office, Para and Old Railway Station Para areas and along the Dhara river embankment in Kurigram municipality were upazila during the storms.

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