



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Star Lifestyle



COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 138

DHAKA TUESDAY JUNE 3, 2008

JAISHITHA 20, 1415 BS • JAMADIUL AWAL 28, 1429 HIJRI • 24 PAGES PLUS STAR LIFESTYLE PRICE: Tk 10.00

www.thedailystar.net

Dhaka down with downpour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Spells of torrential rain played havoc with city life yesterday, submerging many streets and causing daylong gridlock in a virtual collapse of city's traffic management system.

Hundreds of city service buses, private cars, lorries, three-wheelers and taxicabs haphazardly inching forward was the common picture across the rain-soaked capital almost the whole day.

Thousands of commuters were trapped in the gridlocks without knowing when they could reach their destinations. Many said that yesterday's traffic congestion was the worst they had experienced in years.

Met office recorded 85 millimetres rain in 12 hours yesterday, the heaviest downpour Dhaka has seen so far ahead of the monsoon.

A number of major thoroughfares as well as lanes and bi-lanes of the city were inundated as the

drainage system has been clogged with dumped rubbish.

The sufferings of the commuters worsened as the road digging works of different utility service providers in different parts of the city interrupted smooth vehicular movement.

Roads around Gabtoli, Mohakhali and Sayedabad inter-city bus terminals, major intersections at Jatrabari, Bijoy Sarani, Sonargaon Hotel, Bangla Motor and Hotel Sheraton, long stretch of Mirpur Road from Lalimata to New Market, roads from Matsya Bhaban to Shahbagh and most roads at Dhanmondi were found choked up with vehicles in the afternoon.

"It took me two hours to come down from Gulshan to Karwan Bazar," said Md Asfaq Khan, a service holder.

From the footbridges at Farmgate and Shahbagh, bumper-to-bumper traffic was seen moving

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Torrential rains sent many Dhaka roads under water yesterday forcing traffic to divert to major thoroughfares, causing gridlocks that lasted hours. The photo shows Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar.

Gono Forum for national unity govt

Govt talks to business leaders today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gono Forum leaders yesterday proposed a review of the constitution and post-election national unity government to ensure a non-partisan commitment to good governance as they joined the ongoing pre-poll dialogue.

They also proposed a four-point set of reforms including removal of black money, violence, militancy and partisan state mechanisms to ensure that the next elections are free, fair and credible.

Meanwhile, besides the ongoing talks with political parties, the government will hold a parallel dialogue with civil society groups starting with the business leaders today and regional dialogues at divisional headquarters.

"We should make a pledge to make a post-election national unity government to ensure good governance and make democracy

effective," said Gono Forum head Dr Kamal Hossain at a joint press briefing with five advisers at the Chief Adviser's Office.

"Democracy cannot stop at elections and all political parties, headed by the winner of the elections, will have to make a pledge to unify around a national consensus on key issues," he said.

Dr Kamal cited South African legend Nelson Mandela's post-apartheid olive branch to his former white oppressors when he offered a number of apartheid-era leaders positions in his cabinet.

He also proposed a "constitutional review commission" to strengthen checks and balance mechanisms, significant increase in parliamentary posts of women through direct elections, amending Article 70 and greater activities by the Public Accounts Committee.

He asked the government to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Talks, polls won't be meaningful Says AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday said the ongoing dialogue and upcoming election could not be held in a meaningful way as the caretaker government has complicated the situation through "arrest, torture

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

BNP ally IOJ to join talks with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Okyo Jote (IOJ), a component of BNP-led four-party alliance, will join the dialogue with the caretaker government despite BNP's decision not to participate in it without party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

IOJ Chairman and former lawmaker Fazlul Haque Amine said

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Hasina calls for a halt to mass arrests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former premier Sheikh Hasina yesterday put out a call to the government to immediately stop the ongoing "mass arrests", and to work for making the ongoing politico-electoral dialogues and announced elections successful instead.

"Mass arrests are going on like governments of the past used to do, to harass leaders and activists of Awami League, which is pushing the country towards a confrontation. The government should take lessons from the past... Otherwise they will face the same fate the previous governments faced," Advocate Kamrul Islam, a counsel of the detained Awami League (AL) president, quoted her as saying after a hearing on charge framing in the MiG-29 purchase scam case against her and six others.

Kamrul also said Hasina told her lawyers that when the people

started to raise their voices after becoming fed up with the last 18 months' activities of the government, it started rounding people up. Movements cannot be suppressed through mass arrests, he quoted Hasina as saying.

Meanwhile, Judge Golam Mortuza Majumder of the Special Court for Dhaka Division set up on the premises of the parliament building in the capital, deferred the hearing on charge framing in the case till June 11 following yesterday's proceedings.

The court also extended the duration of the bail for former army chief Gen (ret'd) Mustafizur Rahman, an accused in the case, till the next hearing, following a petition by defence counsels.

Hasina was produced in the court at 9:45am. All the seven accused were present in the court during yesterday's hearing.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Major changes in army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some important changes were made in the top echelon of Bangladesh Army yesterday, according to highly placed sources.

However, no official announcement was made, but the sources said the president already approved the changes.

According to the competent

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

1,493 more arrested in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces during the last five days of their nationwide special drives arrested 8,325 people and recovered 33 firearms and 34 explosives.

Out of the arrestees, 1,493, including 151 in the city, were arrested in the last 24 hours till

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Falu gets 5yrs for gobbling up relief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday handed down five years' rigorous imprisonment on Mosaddek Ali Falu, detained former BNP lawmaker and political secretary to former premier Khaleda Zia, for misappropriating relief materials.

Judge Tanzina Ismail of the Special Court-6, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, also fined Falu Tk 5.35 lakh. He will have to serve one more year behind bars if he failed to pay the fine.

The court ordered confiscation of the relief materials and also acquitted the other accused Monirul Islam Sohel, an absconding employee of ntv, as charges brought against him were not proved.

The army-led joint forces seized 982 pieces of corrugated iron (CI) sheet from a labourer's shed adjacent to Falu's Dhaka Shanghai Ceramics Factory in Savar on



February 9 last year.

The next day, Sub-inspector Ismail Hossain of Ashulia Police Station filed a case against Falu and Sohel for misappropriating the iron sheets meant for relief to the underprivileged. The first information report (FIR) says Falu in connivance

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

introducing **EBL Parséloan** Partial secured loan up to Tk. 10 lac against a minimum of 30% cash security Interest rate is 16%, if you transfer your existing loan For details, please visit any EBL branch near you or SMS <PARSELOAN> to 01819-278800

9th anniversary

On this august occasion we convey our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to our respected Customers, Patrons, Well Wishers & Stakeholders.

Special Savings Schemes of Standard Bank Ltd.:

- 5 Lac and 20 Thousand Taka Savings Scheme : Deposit Taka 5,000 monthly for 6 years, get Taka 5,20,000 on maturity
- 10 Lac Taka Savings Scheme : Deposit Taka 4,500 monthly for 10 years, get Taka 10,00,000 on maturity
- Standard Bank Double Income Plus (DI+) : Deposit gets more than double by 6 years
- Standard Bank Life Secured Double Income Program (LSDIP) : Deposit doubles in 7 years scheme covered by insurance to ensure a better life for future generation
- Standard Bank Regular Deposit Program (SRDP) : Attractive rewards on monthly savings after completion of term
- Standard Bank Regular Income Program (SRIP) : Regular monthly attractive earning

Welcome to our Real Time On-line Banking

Head Office : "Chamber Building" (3rd Floor), 122-124 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, PABX : 7175698, 9558375, 7169134, Fax : 7176367, 7169078, E-mail: sblho@bangla.net, SWIFT : SDBLBDHH

Web: www.standardbankbd.com

from USD **699** UK return

For our most attractive prices, book now at ba.com or call 8802 8815111 (Dhaka) / 0821 715333 (Sylhet).

Terms and conditions apply. Fares exclusive of taxes and surcharges.