

## Misery in slums

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The small yard was already under knee-deep water.

Five members of the family live in the room -- 10 feet by 10 feet or so. The couple along with their one-year old daughter Beauty used to sleep on the floor, and their two sons -- Imran and Raihan -- on the cot. Normally rainwater does not enter the room but the situation was quite different this time.

Jamila bundled their beddings, put those on one side of their cot and anxiously waited for the water to recede.

Several hundred stranded Pakistanis are staying at this camp in Mirpur Section-11, near the journalists colony. It is one of the densely populated slums in the capital.

The plight of all those living at the camp was similar to that of the family of Farhad and Jamila. Many were shouting to draw others' attention in efforts to find a way out, and children were crying, said Farhad describing the situation to this correspondent yesterday.

"It seemed to be 'keyamat' (doomsday). I never saw such rains in my life," he said.

"At one stage, we found all our utensils and other household goods floating in rainwater inside our room. I told my wife we have to move from here. And I tried to see what others were doing," Farhad recalled.

It was almost waist-deep water on the adjacent road and garbage was afloat there. There is a four-storey old building

inside the camp but it was already over crowded. Many people already took shelter there, he said.

As the situation continued to worsen, Farhad crossed the road and started banging the door at a flat in the journalists colony. This is the only place nearby where they could seek shelter. Jewel Mia, Shamsur and some others also joined him.

But the ground floor of that building was also submerged. So, they had to stay on the stairs of the building, said Farhad. "We spent the whole night standing there."

Most of the slum dwellers in Mirpur, Pallabi, Rupnagar and other areas of the city faced the same situation.

People living in slums beside Rupnagar canal were among the worst sufferers. Rainwater from Rupnagar and Pallabi flows out through this canal. So, their shanties went under water much before those in other slums.

The slum dwellers have taken refuge in different houses, schools and colleges in Mirpur area.

"We could not take out anything. All our clothes, utensils and food are under water now," said a rickshaw puller staying at a college in Rupnagar. Many others have also shifted to the college.

Local people collected money and bought bitten rice for them yesterday afternoon, which was their first meal in the day.

## Suu Kyi verdict set for Friday

AP, Yangon

The high-profile trial of Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi concluded yesterday with the court announcing it will deliver its verdict at the end of the week, a lawyer said.

Judge Thaung Nyunt said the court will make its ruling on Friday, according to defence attorney Nyan Win, who said he preferred not to speculate on the outcome.

"I don't want to guess what the verdict will be," Nyan Win told reporters. Without directly calling Suu Kyi's case politically motivated, he noted: "I have never seen any defendant in a political case being set free."

Suu Kyi's lawyers had expected a verdict next month. Details on why the court set the earlier date were not immediately available.

The detained 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate is accused of violating the terms of her house arrest by harbouring an uninvited American man John William Yettaw who swam to her lakeside home and stayed for two days.

## Obama praises

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Bangladesh for their march towards democracy.

President Obama expressed eagerness to visit Bangladesh when Ambassador Kabir extended an invitation to him. Obama said the visit is already under his consideration.

The ambassador told the US-based Bangla news agency News World that First Lady Michelle Obama too has expressed her eagerness to visit the country.

According to reports online, President Obama at the reception pledged renewed US engagement with the world.

He told the ambassadors diplomacy, which has always been critically important, has become more important in the 21st century because the world has become more interconnected.

Obama said health, education, energy, the environment, the arts and sports all benefit from cooperation among nations.

"And that's one reason why I came into office with a strong commitment to renew American diplomacy and to start a new era of engagement with the world," Obama said.

News agency PTI said US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama served "chicken samosa" among other mouthwatering dishes at the White House reception.

It was a splashy affair, held under the chandelier glint of the Grand Foyer, replete with champagne and the music of the Marine String Ensemble. Musicians performed a handful of light jazz songs including Shadow of Your Smile and Come Back to Sorrento.

## Double blow

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sections of Mirpur, Kafrul, Kazipara and Shewrapara were worst affected by a single power cut that lasted over 12 hours.

"The lights went out around three in the morning and the supply resumed at 4:00pm today (yesterday)," said a resident of Kazipara.

"We had to collect water from the reservoir," he said yesterday afternoon, adding, "We fear our food stored in the refrigerator has gone bad, we are waiting a while before we open it."

Many ground-floor garages of buildings in the capital were inundated, damaging a large number of parked vehicles.

Many buildings could not pump water to their tanks on the roofs while several buildings' basement water tank got contaminated by stagnant water of the streets.

The residents of those buildings had to rely on bottled water.

"There was no water left in the water tank as we could not pump up water from the reservoir due to the power outage. I managed only three buckets of water for the very basic needs," said Raihan Kaiser, a resident of Mirpur-11. "We could not even bathe," he added.

Omar Faruq, a resident of Tallabagh, said sewage water contaminated their reservoir.

Officials of Dhaka Power Distribution Company and Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd said the regular load shedding coupled with the heavy downpour caused outages in different places in the capital.

They said electricity supply system tripped in many areas during the downpour. They blamed poor electricity generation as well.

They claimed that power had been restored in many areas since morning.

Around 1,400MW of power was supplied to the capital against an approximate demand of 1,700MW during peak hours, they claimed.

## Dhaka to seek

**FROM PAGE 1**

The visit takes place amid mounting concerns both in Bangladesh and northeastern India over the probable environmental cost of the high dam to be constructed 500 metres downstream of the confluence of Tuivai and Barak rivers in the Indian district of Churachanpur near the Manipur-Mizoram border.

Barak is the source of water for both the Surma and Kuchiyara two major rivers that enter Bangladesh through Sylhet borders, meeting together further downstream to constitute the Meghna river.

India plans to complete constructing the dam in 87 months at a cost of 5,855.83 crore Indian rupees to generate up to 1,500 megawatts of hydroelectric power.

While India dispels environmental concerns claiming to have no intention to retain and redirect the normal water flow of the trans-boundary river, Bangladesh is concerned about the prospect that India might build a barrage as a part of the Tipaimukh project, 100 kilometres downstream at Fulertal, for using the Barak water for irrigation purposes.

Abdur Razzaq leads the 11-member delegation sans representation from the main opposition BNP that refrained from participating, with an accusation that water experts of their choice were not included in the team.

The lone opposition participant Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad was also uncertain about his visit, as he told The Daily Star that he was not in the best of physical state, requiring consultation of a doctor at a hospital in the capital.

Razzaq, also an ex-water minister, earlier hinted that Dhaka will seek assurance from India that water of common rivers will not be diverted for irrigation purposes, and will propose a joint study to assess the impact of the proposed dam on both sides of the Indo-Bangla border.

The delegation leaves Dhaka for New Delhi at 10:00am today by a Jet Airways flight and is scheduled to meet Indian foreign and energy ministries officials later in the day. The delegation will also make courtesy calls on the Indian foreign minister and energy minister tomorrow.

On Friday, they will fly to Guwahati, the capital of Indian state Assam, and then to the proposed dam site.

"We are likely to return to Delhi on August 2, and likely to return home the next day," AL lawmaker ABM Anwarul Haque, who is also one of the delegates, told The Daily Star.

The parliamentary delegation will submit a report to the prime minister upon its return from India.

Other lawmakers included in the delegation are Awami League's Abdur Rahman, and AKM Fazlul Haq, Jatiya Party's ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, and an independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim.

The expert delegates are Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Professor Monwar Hossain, and Sajjad Hossain of Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers

Commission. The water resources secretary, and a director general of the foreign ministry are also in the team.

About the ambit of the delegation's investigation, Razzaq said, "We will try to assess how much damage to our environment the proposed dam is likely to cause. We will ask our experts to assess the matter."

"We will also try to find out whether any structure has already been built on the Barak river," he said adding that the delegation will try to know the exact nature of the project as well.

On Sunday, Razzaq told reporters that the extent of the Bangladeshi delegation's access to the site will depend on how much its counterpart is willing to allow.

"We will not be able to roam around at will while visiting the Tipaimukh dam site, as we will be guided by the Indian counterpart," said Razzaq.

The delegation chief also said the team's strength has been weakened due to the main opposition's refusal to be part of it.

## 85 missing

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"Our main goal right now is just to get everybody out of the water and get medical attention for those who need it," said Petty Officer Third Class Sabrina Elgammal, a Coast Guard spokeswoman.

The shipwreck happened around 2 pm Monday. By late evening, Turks and Caicos authorities using small boats had rescued about 40 people stranded on a reef 2 miles (3km) southeast of West Caicos island. Many others were later found on a nearby reef, Moorlaga said.

The boat carrying up to 200 Haitians had been at sea for three days when passengers saw a police vessel and accidentally steered the boat onto a reef as they tried to hide, survivor Alces Julien told The Associated Press at a hospital where some survivors were receiving treatment.

Elgammal said information from survivors indicates that between 160 and 200 people were on board when the vessel capsized near this island chain north of Haiti and southeast of the Bahamas. She said the cause of the accident is under investigation.

A Coast Guard cutter has been searching through the night for survivors, and Moorlag said a helicopter and a jet will join the search at first light. He said a C-130 aircraft was expected Tuesday morning to help in the search.

Haitians routinely take to the seas in rickety, overcrowded boats in hopes of escaping poverty in the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation.

In May 2007, an overcrowded sloop carrying more than 160 migrants capsized off the Turks and Caicos Islands. Some of the victims were eaten by sharks. The 78 people who survived accused a Turks and Caicos patrol boat of ramming their vessel as they approached shore and towing them into deeper water.

In May, a boat carrying about 30 mainly Haitian migrants capsized off Florida's coast, killing at least nine people, including a pregnant woman.

## Shades of rain

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one car, but that's all they could do.

The situation at the City Heart Market's basement garage is even worse as it is much bigger. Both the garages have now turned into water tanks, with the water level marking at least three feet above the biggest cars.

"We'll begin pumping out the water from tonight (Tuesday). But I don't think we can finish the pumping in two days," said a landlord heaving a sigh.

But this is not all.

Many residents of different upper floor apartments of the city woke up in the morning to barely save themselves from slipping on the floor. In such cases, rain water invariably filled up the rooftops and then started flowing down the staircases in significant volume, making its way into the apartments of unsuspecting residents.

"I woke up at 5:30am to find that my drawing room and study room were inundated by ankle-deep water," said Rehnema of Uttara sector 5. "The worst part is that water seeped through my main door mattress and wore its dye. The whole water in these rooms is purple. My sofa, cushions and other homely stuffs were partially soaked. It was a disaster I never foresaw last night."

She added, "It took me two hours and three people to clean the mess."

Some people who typically leave their cars parked in front of their houses in Uttara also were not ready to find that frogs and small fish have made their ways into the engines.

But on the brighter side, lakeside residents in Uttara had the joy of catching fish with their bare hands. It was possible because the water of the lake bloated up inundating the adjacent roads and fish started gliding through the streets alongside motorcars and rickshaws.

"I caught two shol (snakehead) fish from the street after the water receded enough by 10:00am," said Helal, driver by profession.

A gatekeeper caught dozens of telapia fish. "I will put these in my landlord's refrigerator and eat one daily," smiled Delwar, the gatekeeper.

There was a festive mood on the streets of sectors 3, 5 and 10 of Uttara as kids were seen running here and there to catch fish.

Some fish even became lunch for jolly apartment owners. "I had a nice lunch with a fresh shol fish bhuna," said Rokeya Begum smilingly.

## BNP terms

**FROM PAGE 1**  
be acceptable to people. There is no alternative to inclusion of experts in the team to make its trip fruitful."

Hafizuddin Ahmed, vice president of the party and former water resources minister also spoke at the briefing.

A House team led by Abdur Razzaq, president of the parliamentary standing committee on water resources ministry, is scheduled to leave Dhaka today for visiting Tipaimukh dam site on Friday.

Mosharraf said the unilateral move to send a parliamentary team comprised of only ruling party lawmakers reflected partisan attitude.

Hafizuddin said Tipimukh project features various technical aspects. So, it is a must to send a team of technical experts to the site. But the government paid no heed to BNP's demand for a House delegation including experts.

The former water resources also said, "India will provide no information to this team. When we were in office, we asked the Indian government to provide aerial survey map, hydrological map, geo-technical data, and other information. But they provided nothing."

Hafiz went on, "If these data and information are provided to the parliamentary delegation, they will understand nothing. Only experts can understand those."

## AL men

**FROM PAGE 16**  
leaders expressed strong opposition to including many of the senior leaders in the committee, who had tried to bring 'reforms' to the party by sidelining Hasina as a part of the 'minus two formula', when the AL chief had been detained between July 16, 2007 and June 11, 2008.

During the closed door session of the council, Hasina said she forgave those leaders who had either compromised with the immediate past caretaker emergency regime or failed to perform strongly in favour of the party during the period.

"She is taking time to pick the new leaders as she has to weigh multiple factors before picking them," said a senior minister who is also a close aide to the AL chief.

Sources said the AL chief almost finalised the appointments, and will announce them within a couple of days. Most of the mid-ranking leaders known as 'reformists' might be kept out of the new committee, they added.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the new central committee will be a combination of old and new leaders.

A senior leader preferring not to be named said, "We don't know what is going on regarding the new committee, and when it will be announced. We have nothing to do, but be frustrated."

Another mid-ranking leader said the possibility of making wrong choices will increase with continuing delay.

## 2 outlaws killed

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outlawed party, and Jahangir alias Jalal, 38, its military affairs commander for greater Rajshahi region.

A Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel and a policeman were taken to hospital after they sustained injuries during the gunfight at Sadupur village at about 1:30am, said a Rab press release.

After the gunfight, the law enforcers recovered an Indian-made automatic pistol, a shooter gun, two bullets, seven cartridges, PBPC leaflets, a mobile phone set and two torches from the scene.

A joint team of Rab and police rushed to the area following a tip-off that the PBPC operatives were holding a secret meeting at Mohadighi Sadupur in Atrai upazila to commit crimes on the occasion of the death anniversary of their spiritual leader Dr Mizanur Rahman Tutul, Rab source said.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the outlaws opened fire on them ensuing a 10-minute gunfight between the criminals and law enforcers.

At one stage, the criminals fled the scene. The law enforcers and local people later found Topu and Jalal lying on the ground with bullet injuries. The injured outlaws were then taken to Atrai Health Complex where doctors declared them dead.

Both Topu and Jalal were accused in more than five cases including police murder and government assets looting cases of Chowbaria in Naogaon and Taherpur of Bagmara, Rajshahi.

The law enforcement agencies were haunting them since the late 90s as many of the arrested PBPC cadres in their confessional statements had mentioned their names to be involved in several murders.

## Downpour halts life

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and Bahar Uddin, 22, in South Kamalapur and Delwar Hossain, 30, in Jatrabari.

News Agency UNB reports that the Nalitabari victims are Azizul Haque, 55, and Muktarunnesa, 65. The two hailed from Haluaghat upazila in Mymensingh district.

As it poured all night the spectre of the floods that devastated Dhaka in 1988 and 1998 haunted the city dwellers.

Many commuters had to spend the night outside home as their vehicles could not reach destinations.

"I spent the night at a garage," said a newspaper reporter who lives in Katashur.

"As the CNG taking me home got on Dhanmondi Road-27, water leapt up to the seats. Shortly afterwards the engine stopped forcing me to take refuge at the garage in a roadside building," he added.

Most of the main thoroughfares including Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Darus Salam Road, Airport Road, Rokeya Sarani, Mirpur-1, Mirpur Road, Outer Circular Road, Bijoy Nagar and the road in front of the Prime Minister's Office reeled under knee-to-waist-deep water for hours.

Passengers of the CNG-run auto-rickshaws had a terrible time as the three-wheelers stopped running without notice.

The rickshaws and auto-rickshaws that braved rainwater in the morning charged many times the usual fares.

Saiful Islam, a private firm employee, said it cost him Tk 200 to come to his office at Karwan Bazar from Mouchak.

Liton Ali of Kazipara in Mirpur said rickshaw-pullers charged Tk 50 for a ride that usually takes around Tk 5.

The manholes or potholes added to the sufferings as vehicles and pedestrians stumbled on them and fell in water.

### Flights Cancelled

Two international flights—one of Malaysian Airlines from Kuala Lumpur and the other of Dragon Airlines from Hong Kong—failed to land at Zia International Airport Monday night because of rain.

"The Malaysian flight is scheduled to fly in again tonight," said an official from ZIA yesterday evening.

Other flights however left the airport and landed there on schedule, he added.

### Bus and Ferry Services Disrupted

Hundreds of motorised vehicles, including CNG-run auto-rickshaws, taxicabs and private cars, were stranded on the waterlogged roads for hours as their engines went out of order.

Meanwhile, only a small number of buses, trucks and auto-rickshaws came out on the roads yesterday, causing sufferings to those venturing out.

Besides, buses running between the capital and Mymensingh, Sirajganj and Tangail had to opt for Gabtoli road instead of the inundated Airport Road.

Ferry services on many routes were also suspended, disrupting bus service on highways.

Operation of launches and speedboats along Mawa-Kawrakandi route remained suspended for inclement weather.

Besides, over 500 vehicles were stranded on both ghats, as ferries were taking three to four hours more than what

## PMO, secretariat

**FROM PAGE 16**  
went out of order due to the flooding.

Officials of Fire Brigade and Civil Defence, Power Development Board (PWD) and Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) were able to pump out the water from the premises in the afternoon.

The three-day conference of deputy commissioners (DCs) was delayed by two and a half hours as the road in front of the PMO remained flooded. Water inundating the PMO premises was also pumped out later.

The conference, which was to start at 10:00am at International Conference Centre of the PMO, started at 12:30pm with the arrival of the prime minister. DCs from across the country were present at the conference.

Trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) was also delayed by an hour due to water-logging in the area yesterday.

Stock market officials told The Daily Star that the submerged ground floor of the DSE building compelled the authorities to start the trading at 11:00am.

they normally take to cross the Padma.

### Other Districts

Our correspondents from different districts including Barisal, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Pabna, Sylhet, Chittagong, Manikganj and Noakhali dispatched similar stories.

They said many thatched and mud houses caved in and the flimsy ones got blown away. Many areas plunged into darkness as electricity went out due to heavy rains.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports: Life in the port city came to a halt due to ceaseless rain.

Loading and unloading of cargoes were suspended at the port.

According to the Met office, over 156mm rainfall was recorded in Chittagong city in 24 hours to 4:00pm yesterday.

Loading of bulk cargoes has remained suspended at different jetties and the outer anchorage in the port area for the last two days due to rain, said port officials.

Vessel operation on the port channel however continued, said Chittagong Port Secretary Syed Farhad Uddin Ahmad.

Reclaiming of some city canals by the Chittagong City Corporation seemed to have prevented situation getting worse in rains.

People in low-lying areas like Muradpur, Bahodderhat, Nasirabad, Badurtala, Agrabad CDA residential area, Agrabad Excess Road and Halishahar however still had to face waterlogging.

### DND Embankment

The low-lying areas inside Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) and Narayanganj-Narsinghdi embankments have been inundated due to incessant rain, paralysing the life of several thousand people.

Many schools inside DND remained closed and production at most of the 1,000 industrial units suspended.

The water level in Shitalakhya, Meghna, Brahmaputra and Dhaleswari rivers continued to rise. The district administration apprehended that if rain continues for next two to three days, the water level would go past the danger mark.

At least 300 houses and 400 shops and go-downs in a market inside Narayanganj-Narsinghdi dyke in Rupganj have gone under water causing a loss of several crores of taka.

Joyanal Abedin, a resident of the area, said construction of five culverts on the link road was scheduled to be completed by January. But that did not happen, leading to waterlogging inside DND area.

## Rice godowns

**FROM PAGE 1**  
wholesale markets at Karwan Bazar, Jatrabari and Shyambazar.

Businessmen in Karwan Bazar said they received goods on time but the heavy rain kept buyers away. Most of the perishable goods rotted away and had to be thrown.

Green chili, one of the dearest in markets at the moment, sold at Tk 22 per kg yesterday whereas it was sold for Tk 50 per kg only a day ago.

A source at Karwan Bazar said, at least 50 to 60 tonnes of lal shak and pui shak (leaves) had to be thrown away as the heavy rainfall had completely destroyed the lot.

The warehouse at Karwan Bazar went under knee-deep water, which mainly caused the rotting of vegetables. Wholesale traders were compelled to sell what they could save at Tk 6 to 10 per kg in the early hours yesterday.

In Karwan Bazar and some nearby markets pui shak sold for as low as Tk 2 per kg and lal shak for Tk 2 per kg. Vegetables like potol, ladies finger, long beans and brinjal sold for Tk 8 to 10 per kg. These items sold for around Tk 12 to 20 a few days back.

In other city markets as New Market, Hatir Pool and Mogh Bazar, traders who could not collect fresh goods sold leftover stock from the previous days at comparatively high prices.

Talking to The Daily Star, Masud Rana, manager of Ekata Rice Agency at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, said the rainwater entered around 100 rice stockrooms there and damaged at least 15,000 sacks of rice. Each sack contains 50 to 85 kgs of rice.

The wholesalers sold the wet rice from Tk 100 to Tk 500 per sack from morning till late at night, he said.

Market sources said people from different parts of the city flocked the market to buy