



Troops join work to repair cyclone-hit embankments

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Members of the army yesterday joined the civil administration to accelerate repairing of the breached embankments in the cyclone Aila-hit southern districts of Satkhira and Khulna.

Sources in Jessore Cantonment said a company of troops was sent to the Aila-affected areas in the morning to assist rebuild the embankments following an instruction from the army headquarters.

"We will send more troops there once we get further such instruction," a senior army officer told The Daily Star yesterday requesting anonymity.

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Billboard crash kills 2, hurts 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were killed and eight others injured when a poorly-mounted hoarding collapsed on them in front of a market at Gulshan-1 during the storm that swept through the capital yesterday evening.

The collapsed hoarding also wrecked four cars and a motorbike.

Of the deceased, one was identified as Saiful Islam Sobhan, 15, an employee of Arjun Fast Food at Gulshan Shopping Centre in Gulshan-1 while the other was an unidentified driver of one of the wrecked cars.

"All on a sudden a billboard with its base pillars fell on our car while we were passing Gulshan-1 intersection. After one and a half hours' hectic efforts, fire brigade officials rescued me from the

smashed car," Abdul Mannan, driver of a private car told The Daily Star.

The street in front of the market was closed off to traffic and the authorities concerned were trying to remove the hoarding as of filing of this report at 10:30pm.

Fire brigade sources said Saiful was standing in front of the market during the storm. The hoarding fell on him and the vehicles around 6:50pm from the top of the six-storey market.

Sources said the injured were all in the parked cars. They were rushed to local clinics.

The driver died at United Hospital in Gulshan, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Hafiz Akhter.

The body of Saiful was rushed to

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The huge hoarding that falls on the street from six-storey high at Gulshan-1 in the capital yesterday Inset, firemen try to rescue a driver from a car wrecked by the hoarding. He later died in a city hospital.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

No letup in plunder of trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The tree felling at Kailin Punji near Nahar Tea Garden in Srimangal of Moulvibazar continued for the third consecutive day yesterday.

Timber trader Salim Uddin yesterday engaged additional 240 people to expedite the process. Now with additional manpower, around 300 people are using handsaws for chopping down the trees.

Salim, owner of M/s Salim Timber and Traders, embarked on felling trees on Saturday at a betel leaf enclosure after a High Court bench directed the forest department authorities and local administration to allow him to

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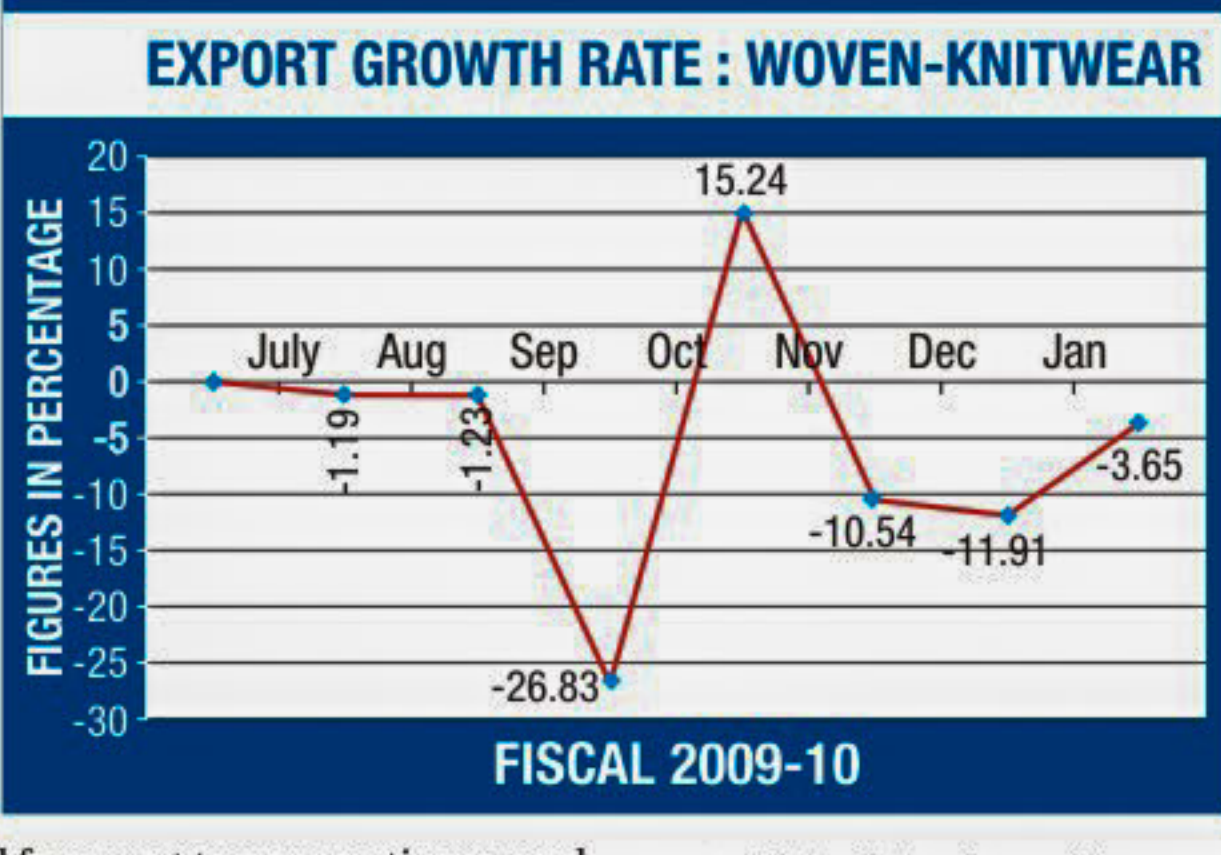
Power cut, gas crunch hit RMG sector hard

INAM AHMED with ARUN DEVNATH

Faruque Hassan found himself in a sticky situation last month when his garment factory could not complete the orders. He still had 20 percent job to finish, but frequent power cuts and low gas pressure had eaten up his shipment time. Worst still, his buyer would not accept any partial shipment -- they want the whole lot in one go.

In the end, Faruque, owner of Shafi Processing Industries Ltd, sorted out his trouble in a costly way. He chartered a flight and sent his apparels. For this he had to pay Tk 6.5 crore from his own pocket as airfreight.

Faruque's case is all too similar to many garment owners' today. As power cuts have turned frequent too many times, and as gas pressure dipped, machines remain silent for hours in factories. Only last week, this newspaper ran a picture of Sinha Textile with its boilers sitting idle with its workers. In the last one and a half months, about 100 chartered planes left Dhaka airport with shipments.



And each airfreight means loss for the exporters as they have to foot the bills from their pocket. Every kilogram of goods put on a plane costs \$4.30, and the worst part is that the buyer would not pay for it. They would not even refund the shipment cost factored in the free on board (FOB).

To minimise their costs, exporters are now first shipping their goods to Singapore or Dubai and airlifting them from those business hubs. This minimises the loss in airfreight.

To make things worse, Bangladesh's productivity in the apparel sector has not improved, and remains at a much lower level compared to other competitors like China. Against Bangladesh's productivity of 35 percent, China's is about 80 percent, and major Southeast Asian countries' are in the 70 percent range.

There are a few factories which have opted for lean production style -- a process in which every work is calculated for time, and then the production line is put

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Test Dhaka's supply water

HC asks govt also to obtain WHO report on purity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to get water supplied in eight areas of the capital tested by Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution and Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and submit the test reports to it within two weeks.

The areas include Azimpur, Moghbazar, Dhanmaondi, Eskaton, Elephant Road, Banani, Khilgaon and Lalbagh.

The court also directed the government to obtain a report from the World Health Organisation on whether there is trihalomethane (THM) in water supplied for the city dwellers, and submit the report to it within four weeks.

Presence of THM in water beyond a certain level is said to increase the risk of cancer.

An HC bench issued the directives upon a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a rights and

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River vessel workers on strike

KAILASH SARKAR

Water transport workers went into a country-wide work stoppage for an indefinite period in the first hour of today, after a tripartite meeting of over four hours among the government, workers, and the owners failed to reach a consensus yesterday.

Shah Alam, vice-president of the workers' association Nounjan Shramik Federation, told

BDR chief for shoot order on drug traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The border troops will be ordered to shoot drug traffickers on sight if necessary, BDR chief Major General Mainul Islam said yesterday.

"We'll show zero tolerance for drug smugglers," he told a press briefing at the BDR Pilkhana headquarters.

He said the jawns hesitate to open fire on the suspected drug runners as the 7.62 bore rifles they use now would surely cause fatalities.

"We will issue them shotguns so the possibility of fatalities is minimised," he continued.

Explaining the rationale for the decision, he said since the BDR members rarely shoot, drug traders dare to snatch away the seized dopes from them.

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BSF to remove border post from Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Indian Border Security Force yesterday came up with a commitment to remove their newly set up 'border post' inside Bangladesh territory and 'sub-post' on Naljuri border in Jaintapur in Sylhet.

They made the fresh commitment at a battalion commander-level flag meeting with Bangladesh Rifles at Tamabil international check post, BDR officials said.

The BSF set up the 'border post' 120 yards inside Bangladesh territory and the 'sub-post' on the Zero Line nearby days ago.

BORDER DISPUTES Indo-Bangla jt working group meets soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Delegations from Bangladesh and India will soon sit at a Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) meeting to resolve border disputes in line with Mujib-Indira Land Boundary Agreement 1974.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said this in parliament yesterday, but did not specify probable date for the meeting.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun said BSF killed 68

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BDR spl court accepts fresh mutiny case

Accused 310 jawans to be produced today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special court set up at Darbar Hall, Pilkhana accepted a fresh mutiny case against 310 BDR jawans of 36 Rifle Battalion of Dhaka sector yesterday.

The special court-5, headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam, took the complaint into cognisance and ordered the prosecution to produce the accused before the court today [Tuesday]. The court resumes today at 10:00am.

Of the 310 alleged mutineers, 241 have already been arrested and detained in Kashimpur and Dhaka Central jails while the rest 69 are still working for Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

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Congratulations

Mr. A.S.M. Rafiqul Islam (Noman), Managing Director of Zaber & Zubair Fabrics Ltd. is receiving National Export Trophy (Gold) for the year 2007-2008 as the highest exporter from Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

We would like to convey our heartiest felicitations to "Zaber & Zubair Fabrics Ltd.," concern of **Noman Group**, for achievement of National Export Trophy (Gold) for the year 2006-2007 & 2007-2008 as the highest exporter & 2006-07 in Home & Specialized Textile sector.

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