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Flood tightens grip on North

5,000 more marooned; many without relief

STAR REPORT

With over two lakh people already marooned in several northern and north-eastern districts, more low-lying areas, especially those in the Jamuna basin, are feared to go under water in the next few days.

Though the flood situation in Nilphamari and in some places of Rangpur has improved, vast tracts of shoals in Sundarganj and Phulchhari upzilas in Gaibandha were flooded yesterday, leaving more than 5000 people marooned there.

The water levels of the rivers upstream, mainly the Brahmaputra and the Ganges known as the Jamuna and the Padma respectively once they flow inside Bangladesh, may continue to rise for another two to three days, said Ripon Karmaker, duty officer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

This may result in the flooding of low-lying areas of Sirajganj, Bogra, Tangail and Jamalpur, he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the water level of the Jamuna was already close to the danger level at several points.

Though the Ganges in India is still swelling up, the Padma waters are still below the danger level. The situation in north-eastern region, which falls in the Meghna basin, has been improved a little as rainfall decreased, he added.

According to a 6:00am bulletin of the FFWC yesterday, the Teesta, the Surma and the Kangsha were flowing above the danger level yesterday.

The water levels at 59 measuring points out of 83 of the rivers across the country showed a rising trend while the levels fell at 22 points and remained steady at one point. One point was unreported. The numbers were 63, 17, two and one respectively on Saturday.

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A policeman pumps out water from the residence of Dhaka SP on Shaheed Capt Monsur Ali Road in the capital's Ramna area yesterday. The SP has been staying out of the house -- at office or relative's. Downpours over the last few days and a sewerage line damage due to Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover construction led to the waterlogging in and around the neighbourhood. The photo was taken around 3:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FAKE FREEDOM FIGHTER CERTIFICATES

Around 70,000 under scrutiny

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Amid widespread allegations of forgery for obtaining freedom fighters' certificates, the government is going to conduct a massive scrutiny of the relevant official records.

About 70,000 people have obtained the certificates, although their names are not included either in the "Red Book" or the Indian government's list, according to sources in the Liberation War Affairs Ministry.

Most of the allegations of forgery are against them, the sources added.

The Red Book or "Mukti Barta" was prepared by the Awami League government during its 1996-2001 tenure, which contained around 1.54 lakh freedom fighters. The Indian government in 1973 had sent a list of 69,509 freedom fighters who received training in that country. Of them, the freedom fighters who applied for certificates were included in the Red Book.

"The ministry will start the scrutiny next month. It will be complete in two months," Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque told The

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Hospital releases body thru deal of bill payment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After 51 hours of Mohammad Aslam's death, the management of United Hospital discharged his body to his family members around 6:00 pm yesterday as a deal was reached between the family and the hospital authority.

As per the deal the deceased's family will have to pay Tk 15 lakh in five months and the family's failure to do so will entitle the hospital authority to take the matter to the court, said members of Aslam's family.

Sabina Sultana, Aslam's widow, received the body along with other members of the family. They paid Tk 40,000 yesterday and offered to pay another one lakh by next Sunday.

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Fighting escalates in eastern Ukraine

Kiev forces push into rebel city; separatists down warplane ahead of key talks

AGENCIES

Kiev forces battled into a key rebel bastion yesterday as Moscow denied fresh claims that Russian rocket launchers had crossed over into Ukraine to bolster the separatists' flagging insurgency.

In Berlin meanwhile the foreign ministers of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France gathered for a crisis meeting, and Germany's Frank-Walter Steinmeier said talks would be "all about finding a roadmap toward a sustainable ceasefire".

Kiev's military said it hoisted the

national flag over a district police station in a northeast suburb of the second-largest rebel bastion of Lugansk after a fierce battle with pro-Russian separatists Saturday.

Around the region fierce clashes continued between government and rebels, with Ukraine's military saying a MiG fighter jet was shot down not far from Lugansk and the pilot parachuted to safety.

Lugansk has been the scene of some of the heaviest clashes, and local authorities said that power and water were not working for a 15th day running in the increasingly deserted city.

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'Chased by BSF', Bangladeshi drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members recovered the body of a Bangladeshi national from the Mathabhanga river along Kazipur border in Meherpur on Saturday night.

The dead, Abdur Razzak alias Shamim, 24, jumped

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| PRAYER TIMING August 18 | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|
| Fazr | Azan | Jamaat |
| 4-25 | 5-00 | |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 4-45 | 5-00 |
| Magrib | 6-38 | 6-41 |
| Esha | 8-00 | 8-30 |

Source: Islamic Foundation



The playground of Sehakathi High School in Patuakhali Sadar upazila has been turned into a paddy field. The authorities might have felt that students don't have to take part in sports. They also seem to have forgotten that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: STAR



School ground now for rice cultivation

SOHRAB HOSSAIN,
Patuakhali

In its quest to make some extra bucks, a Patuakhali school has set a bizarre example, sacrificing its playground to cultivate rice.

Aman seedlings have been planted last week on the playground, equivalent to approximately two football fields, of Sehakathi High School, some five kilometres from Patuakhali town, and will be fit for harvest in December.

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Scientists get a rare glimpse at black hole

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have caught a better-than-ever view of the way that black holes can drag space and time around with them as they spin, a finding that could lead to new understanding of Einstein's theory of relativity.

Nasa's Nuclear Spectroscopic Telescope Array (NuSTAR) captured the effect when a compact source of X-rays, known as the corona, moved towards the black hole and was pulled into it. That blurred and stretched the X-rays, a phenomenon that is rarely captured and has never been studied in such detail before.

Some of the light that falls into supermassive black holes is never seen again, but other high-energy light comes from the corona and a disk of superheated material that surrounds it.

Scientists don't know the shape and temperature of coronas — though artists have produced sketches of how the formations could look — but know that they contain particles that move close

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GAZA TRUCE TALKS RESUME Israel warns on security issues

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel warned yesterday it would not countenance any long-term truce deal that did not answer its security needs as Gaza ceasefire talks resumed in Cairo.

Egyptian-brokered indirect negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are taking place during a five-day lull in the fighting which is due to expire at midnight (2100 GMT) today.

The aim is to broker a long-term arrangement to halt over a month of bloody fighting which erupted on July 8 and has so far claimed 1,980 Palestinians lives and 67 on the Israeli side.

But as the Israeli team landed in Cairo, Prime Minister

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ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO HONG KONG BMET denies report on Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) yesterday rejected a report that Bangladeshis were illegally entering Hong Kong by boats through Shenzhen of China.

"The Bangladeshi consulate in Hong Kong would have informed us had there been any issue relating to Bangladeshis," said Begum Shamsun Nahar, director gen-

eral of BMET, an agency of Bangladesh government.

"We don't have any information on human trafficking in that region," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

The South China Morning Post, an English newspaper of Hong Kong, reported on Saturday: "A large-scale people-smuggling operation that uses Shenzhen as a staging post has seen hundreds of illegal

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