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# Floods affect over 20 lakh

*Situation slightly improves in northern dists, deteriorates in central region*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With more villages having gone under water, inundated over the last 24 hours, the number of flood affected people has reached 20.67 lakh, officials of the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) said.

This is the first time the government has given an estimate of the victims since the floods had begun in different parts of the country a little over two weeks ago.

Meanwhile, the water levels of the Jamuna and the Teesta rivers have started subsiding, marking a slight improvement in the flood situation in the northern districts. But the Jamuna and the Ghagot were still flowing above the danger level.

However, flooding in the central region is likely to deteriorate in a day or two, warned officials of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

Though a large number of people in the flood-hit regions continue to reel from no or scant relief assistance, the disaster management and relief minister yesterday claimed there was a good stock of relief materials in the affected districts.

"The affected districts will get necessary relief support within 24 hours of placing their demands to the ministry," Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said while visiting flood-hit Ulipur upazila in Kurigram.

So far 3,510 tonnes of rice have been distributed among the affected people across the country, said Iftekharul Islam,

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Flood affected people of Rohodoha area in Sariakandi upazila, Bogra are moving whatever they can from their inundated houses. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

## FARUQI KILLING Transport disrupted for hartal

STAR REPORT

Vehicular movement was modest in most of the divisional cities during the eight-hour countrywide hartal enforced by Islami Chhatra Sena yesterday demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the killers of Maulana Nurul Islam Faruqi.

Unidentified assailants slit the throat of Faruqi, a presidium member of the Islamic Front Bangladesh and a presenter of Islamic programmes in two private television channels, on Wednesday night at his East Rajabazar house in the capital.

During the hartal hours between 6:00am and 2:00pm, pickets halted a train for an hour in Chandpur, vandalised at least two vehicles in Narayanganj and barricaded a road in Chittagong.

Meanwhile, Mahmuda Khatun, 50, and Shariful

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## BCL rally in city leads to traffic chaos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of commuters suffered immensely yesterday, thanks to a rally organised by pro-Awami League student body Chhatra League at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital causing huge traffic gridlock.

The road from Matsya Bhaban to Katabon intersection connecting two major thoroughfares -- Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue and Mirpur Road -- was closed for around two and a half hours from 3:30pm, which forced thousands of vehicles to make detours to reach their destinations.

Vehicles were not allowed to ply the road to ensure security of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was the chief guest of the rally, a police official said.

Besides, the flow of traffic carrying rally participants to the venue and frenzied parking of the vehicles around the premises worsened the situation after noon though there was a countrywide eight-hour hartal till 2:00pm yesterday.

Chhatra League organised the rally on the occasion of the National Mourning Day, August 15, to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib.

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# Myanmar pledges to take back Rohingyas

*Process starts with repatriation of 2,415 out of 32,000 within 2 months*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar has agreed to resume the repatriation of registered Rohingyas from Bangladesh within the next two months.

"They have agreed to start work towards repatriation of verified Myanmar nationals within two months.... Although the process will start with a small number of 2,415 out of over 32,000 registered Myanmar citizens, we consider it a major breakthrough," Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque said.

The development came at the 8th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Bangladesh and Myanmar at the foreign ministry yesterday morning.

At the meet, the visiting delegation agreed to start working on the formation of a committee within two months for the repatriation of documented Myanmar refugees and their offspring, said a foreign ministry release.

According to official estimates, about 2,50,877 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh in 1991 following persecution by the military junta.

Of them, 2,36,599 were repatriated till 2005 through bilateral negotiation under the UNHCR supervision. The process halted after a group of 92 Rohingyas was sent back that year. Now, over 32,000 Rohingyas live at two camps in Kutupalong in Ukhaia and Nayapara under Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district.

Official sources say about 19,841 Rohingyas, from 2,976 families, were at the refugee camps in 2004. The number kept rising every year due to their high birth rate.

Yesterday, the Bangladesh side also raised the issue of 3,00,000 to 5,00,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals residing outside the camps. But Myanmar did not respond, meeting sources say.

The meeting was also told that Dhaka is going for a detailed survey on unregistered

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## No need to check them

*EC says it won't scrutinise audited reports on annual income of political parties*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ignoring the demand of experts and the civil society, the Election Commission said it would not scrutinise audit reports on annual incomes and expenditures of political parties.

"As the reports are audited by registered chartered accountants, we don't need to scrutinise those anymore. Those reports are acceptable to us," said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad.

"Besides, there is no legal provision to audit the reports by the Election Commission," he said at a press conference held at the media centre of the EC Secretariat yesterday.

Civil society members and experts believe that there should be a mechanism to examine the reports to ensure transparency in political party funding.

"The Election Commission has introduced the system of submitting annual audit reports by the political parties in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## Shoes that will show the way

AFP, New Delhi

"Wizard of Oz" heroine Dorothy only had to click her ruby red slippers together and they would spirit her home to Kansas.

Now, an Indian high-tech start-up is promising to do the same in real life with a new, GPS-enabled smart sports shoe that vibrates to give the wearer directions.

The fiery red sneakers, which will also count the number of steps taken, distance travelled and calo

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



## ROAD OF HORROR

# So battered with potholes

HELEMUL ALAM

Abu Zafar, a rickshaw-van puller, had to spend Tk 1,450 after his vehicles turned on its side on the pothole-ridden 12-km road from Postagola of Shyampur to Ponchoboti of Narayanganj.

Like other workdays, a local business man had hired him on Sunday to carry some iron materials to Postagola bridge area from Shympur on his rickshaw-van, promising him to pay Tk 300.

But, the accident happened in the middle of the road. "I did not get the money although I almost had made it. It took 1,200 taka to repair my van," he said, adding he had to buy pills worth Tk 250 for his knee injuries which put him out of work the following day.

"I usually earn 500 taka every day," he added. The 12-km road is so battered in many places that vehicles often topple over on the sides hitting potholes hidden under stagnant water.

Thanks to the poor drainage system, even a slight rain is capable of submerging the road in many places.

Visiting the road on Tuesday, this correspondent saw Delowar, another rickshaw-van puller, struggling to carry some flour and rice sacks near Postagola bridge.

At one point, many of the sacks fell down on the ground. "I was pulling my van very carefully but it is quite difficult [to carry goods] on the bumpy road," said a helpless Delowar.

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A pool of water accumulated on the potholed and muddy road from Postogola, Dhaka, to Pagla, Naryanganj. Automobiles plying the road remain at risk of damage and accident due to bumpy ride. Inset, the point near Postogola bridge is in an extremely bad shape. With a dilapidated surface, it is in no way suited for traffic.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think it was justified for State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to say that the incidents of the assassination of Shaikh Nurul Islam Faruqi and Moghbazar's triple murder are "nothing serious"?

Yes

(06%)

No

(94%)

TOTAL VOTES: 251

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think high healthcare cost and poor quality of medical services are major obstacles to eliminating poverty in the country?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

PRAYER TIMING September 1

Fazr	Azan	Jamaat
4:30	5:05	
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:23	6:26
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation