

# Floods maroon thousands

Downpours, onrush of water from upstream cause people to suffer in Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari

STAR REPORT

Around 60,000 people have been marooned in Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari as the two districts were hit by sudden flood caused by heavy downpour and the onrush of water from upstream for the last two days.

The water level in the Teesta river was flowing 26 centimetres above its danger mark yesterday at the Teesta Barrage point in Doyani area in Hatibandha upazila. The Dharla river water was flowing 3cm below the danger mark at the Khawa ghat point in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

The Teesta was swelling fast as India opened all the gates of Gojaldoba Barrage in upstream to release the "excess" water due to heavy rain there, said Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) sources, adding that all the 44 gates of the Teesta Barrage were kept open due to water pressure from its upstream in India.

Meanwhile, erosion of the Teesta,

Dharla and Jamuna has made 400 families homeless in Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha.

Erosion-affected people took shelter on different high grounds, including roadsides, with their valuables. Many migrated to other places, losing their homes and properties.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports that around 50,000 people were stranded in 70 villages of its five upazilas which are in the char and low-lying areas of the Teesta and Dharla riverbasins.

As water level crossed the danger level, all the 44 gates of Teesta Barrage in Doyani area had been remaining open since yesterday morning. For this reason, many villages were flooded on the Teesta river basin in the downstream of the barrage, said an official of the WDB.

"Four bighas of vegetable land have gone under water. If the flood water doesn't recede today [yesterday], a huge

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Torrential rain and onrush of water from upstream have submerged Sindurna village in Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha, leaving thousands of people marooned. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## BB to get rid of contractual employees

Says Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank will get rid of some 200 of its contractual employees, as they have no allegiance to the central bank, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

"Bangladesh Bank's regular staff are almost non-functional," said the minister.

There are more than 200 consultants at the central bank who have been given contractual appointments, he said.

"They are outsiders and have no allegiance to the Bangladesh Bank," he told reporters at the secretariat.

However, the central bank would not remove the contractual staff forcefully. Muhith said their contracts would not be renewed.

The minister said the BB wants to publish the probe report on the theft of \$81 million from the central bank's foreign reserves after taking actions against some of its officials. The report would be published after the Eid-ul-Fitr, he added.

Muhith said the Anti-Corruption Commission would file cases in connection with the hacking, and the BB would send required documents to the anti-graft watchdog in this regard.

He said the Criminal Investigation Department would continue with its probe into the theft.

Former BB governor Mohammed Farashuddin, who led the three-member body that probed the theft, submitted the final report on May 30.

After submitting the report, Farashuddin said the government should carry out further investigation to find out whether the suspected BB officials were really involved in the \$101 million cyber heist.

Some central bank officials were either involved in the heist intentionally or just got caught up in it, he said, without giving any numbers or ranks of the officials.

## Student shot dead by 'friend'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A student was shot dead allegedly by his friend near the town's Akua Chowrang intersection yesterday.

The dead is Tawhidul Islam Taru, 17, son of Sirajul Islam of the area. He passed Dakhil examinations this year, police said.

Kotwali Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Kamrul Islam quoting locals said Taru's friend Shefayet Ullah-bin-Nasir shot him with a pistol at Shefayet's house around 7:00pm.

Shefayet, who also passed Dakhil examination this year, is the victim's neighbour.

It was not known why Taru went to Shefayet's house.

Taru suffered a bullet wound in his chest and died on the spot, police said.

On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

A pistol was recovered from the spot, the OC said.

Police primarily suspect that the killing might have occurred over a previous enmity.

No one was arrested and no case was lodged as of filing this report around midnight.

## It's time to unite, fight terrorism

FROM PAGE 1

The PM mentioned that the king thanked her for joining the alliance.

Hasina said she expressed her hope to the king that each and every country of the Muslim Ummah would refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of others.

She said her visit to Saudi Arabia has taken the Saudi-Bangladesh ties to new heights.

Hasina hoped the visit would bring dynamism in Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim world and put the bilateral ties between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia on a strong footing.

Describing Islam as the religion of peace, she said, "I always urge the Muslim Ummah to stand against militancy and terrorism... I also urge this whenever I go to the OIC.

Through this new relation with Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh's importance would increase and its image would brighten further in the Muslim world, Hasina added.

**THE ALLIANCE**

In mid-December last year, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of an Islamic military alliance of 34 countries, including Gulf states, Egypt and Turkey, to fight terrorism.

"The formation of the Islamic military alliance emanates from the Islamic world's keenness to fight terrorism and be a partner of the world

in the fight against this scourge," said Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman, also defence minister, at a press conference in Riyadh, reported Saudi Gazette on December 16.

Announcing the formation of the alliance, he said a number of countries, including Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan, have been facing the scourge of terrorism.

It requires very strong efforts to fight terrorism. Undoubtedly, there would be coordination to fight it through this alliance, he added.

The US and some other countries welcomed the formation of the military alliance.

On December 15, a joint statement was issued on formation of the alliance, citing the names of 34 countries.

It said the countries decided to form a military alliance led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism.

"And a joint operations center will be established in the city of Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations to fight terrorism and to develop the necessary programs and mechanisms for supporting these efforts," reads the joint statement available on the website of the Saudi Press Agency.

Appropriate arrangements would be

### 34 MEMBERS OF THE SAUDI-LED ALLIANCE

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Palestinians, Qatar, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

### 23 OIC NATIONS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE SAUDI-LED ALLIANCE

Indonesia, Iran, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Oman, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Brunei, Cameroon, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Suriname, Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, Albania, Guyana, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

tries, including Iran, have joined the anti-terror alliance.

**DEBATE IN BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh's joining the alliance triggered a debate in the country, as a number of political leaders and security experts said Bangladesh cannot join such an alliance without Jatiya Sangsad sanction.

Some of them argued that the joining of the Saudi-led alliance went against Bangladesh's foreign policy principle of friendship to all, malice to none.

At a cabinet meeting in January, Public Administration Minister and Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam questioned Bangladesh's decision to join the alliance. He said that approval from parliament was necessary before joining such an alliance, according to media reports.

In response, Foreign Minister AH Mahmud Ali said the collation was a pact against terrorism, not a military alliance.

As the debate went on, the foreign minister on June 1 said there was nothing mandatory for the members of the Saudi-led alliance.

"This is not a military alliance, rather a centre for cooperation among member states. Cooperation will be extended voluntarily. Nothing is mandatory," he said.

made for coordination with friendly peace-loving nations and international bodies for the sake of supporting international efforts to combat terrorism and ensure peace and security, it adds.

No Shia Muslim-dominated coun-

## Debt burden won't rise much

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Corporation, and Alexander Ignatov, ambassador of Russia to Bangladesh.

Rosatom is helping Bangladesh set up the 2,400-megawatt nuclear power plant in Rooppur of Pabna at a cost of \$12 billion.

Muhith said the debt burden because of the loan from Russia would not increase as its terms and conditions were good, with 30 years as repayment period and several years as grace period.

The minister said the government was not concerned about the safety issue of the power plant as it would use the latest technology and put in place stringent safety measures.

"I have some reservations about the cost. Had we used the traditional sources, we could have produced this amount of electricity with \$3.5 billion."

He said the plant would use a new technology so the cost had gone up.

He said the lifespan of a traditional

power plant was 30 years whereas the Rooppur nuclear power plant's lifespan was 90 years.

Muhith visited Russia from June 15-19. During his trip, he visited an old nuclear power plant where another unit is also being constructed. The cost for the new plant almost equals to that of the Rooppur plant, said Muhith.

"After seeing the plant, I am convinced that there will not be any pollution as many fear."

During the meeting, Muhith also talked about the schedules of the plant.

The Russian delegation advised the government to extend the time for preparatory work by another year, to December 2017 from December this year.

The construction of the power plant will begin in January 2018. The first unit of the plant is expected to complete in 2024 and the second unit in 2025.

## Cannes Gold Lion for Grey

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh! Grey Dhaka has done it," wrote Gousul Alam Shaon, managing director of Grey Dhaka, in his Facebook page, posting a photo where he was seen holding the award with a big smile.

"Grey Dhaka takes immense pride in receiving the world's most prestigious advertising award," he said in a statement yesterday.

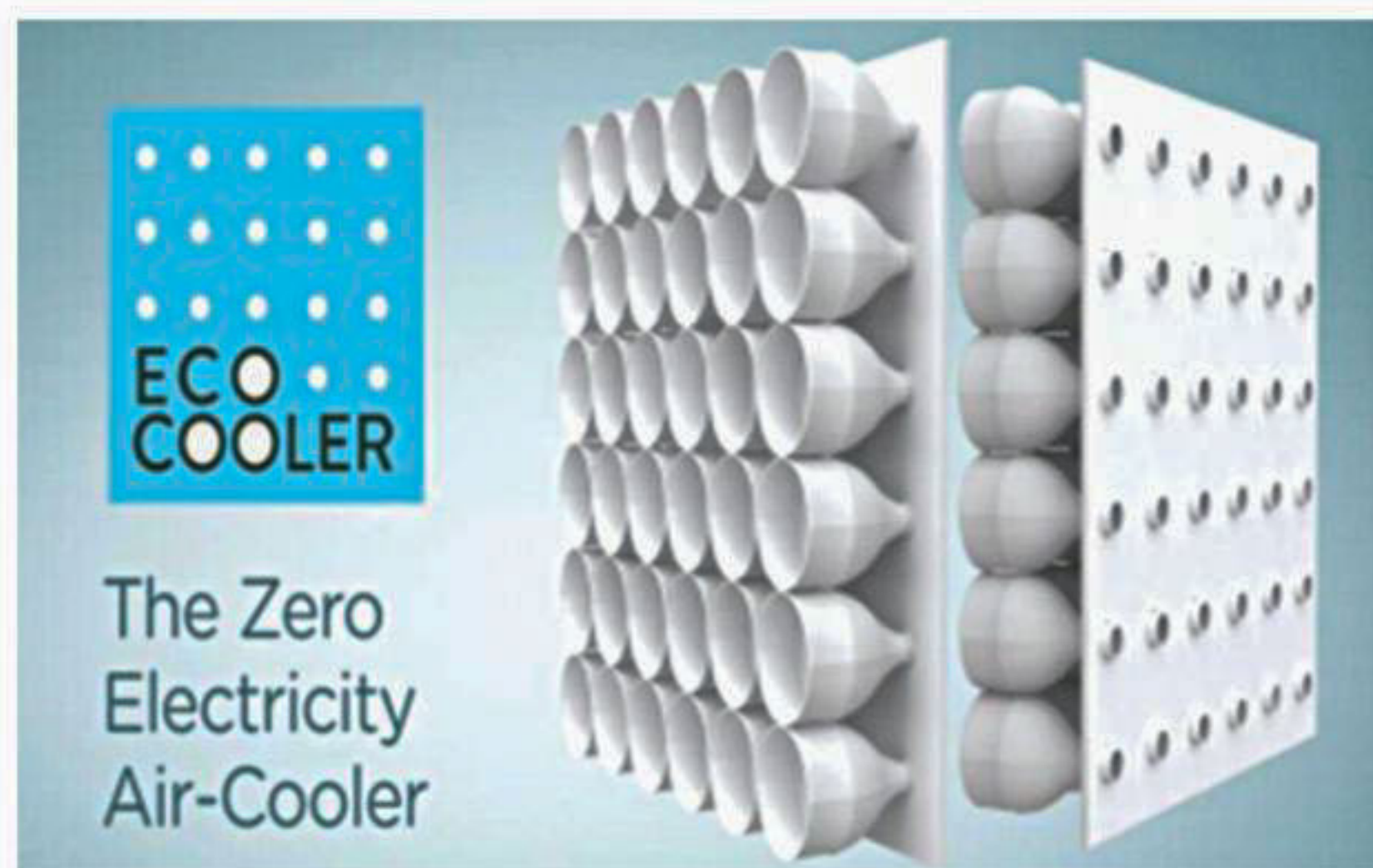
In its way to winning the award in the product design (solution) category, Grey Dhaka beat more than 500 nominees from various countries, according to the statement.

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity is the largest celebration of the great and the good of the advertising world. The festival is now in its 62nd year.

The annual weeklong advertising festival, called the industry's Academy Awards, honours the most creative and effective ad campaigns from around the world. This year's programme started on Saturday.

Grey Dhaka, the Bangladeshi wing of New York-based advertising agency Grey, came up with an idea to keep rural housing in Bangladesh, which has no electricity, cool, say its officials.

It teamed up with Grameen Intel Social Business, a Dhaka-based social business company, to create a cooling system consisting of used plastic bottles and a piece of cardboard



A model of the zero-electricity air cooler made from plastic bottles.

that fits in any window.

The device is made on a board, with bottleneck-sized holes cut in a grid pattern. Re-purposed plastic bottles are cut in half, and their narrow ends are put into the holes.

Based on the direction of the wind and the pressure created by the airflow, hot air enters the open end of the bottles and cool air comes out of the other end, making the room cooler, say Grey Dhaka officials.

The Eco-Cooler designed by Ashis Paul, creative supervisor of Grey Dhaka, does not need electricity.

After Ashis Paul came up with the

idea, Grey carried out trial runs in a number of slums in Dhaka in April last year and piloted a project in Nilphamari and Rajbari in August the same year, add the officials.

Volunteers from Grameen Intel Social Business taught many locals in the northern Bangladesh how to make the Eco-Coolers with discarded plastic bottles, said one of its officials.

Grameen Intel Social Business is a joint collaboration between Grameen Trust, set up by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, and US-based technological giant Intel Corporation.

Grey Dhaka says the Eco-Coolers have been installed in some villages in Nilphamari, Rajbari, Manikganj, Rajshahi and Rangpur.

As of February, the two organisations have ensured the cooling system in more than 25,000 households.

The blueprint for making the Eco-Cooler was put up online for everyone to download for free.

The innovation can help millions of people across the country beat the heat during hot summer when the temperature goes up to 40 degrees Celsius. It also comes with almost zero-cost and zero-carbon emission, say Grey Dhaka officials.

With availability of discarded plastic bottles, the device might also help reduce the demand for electricity during scorching temperatures in a country where many still do not have access to electricity.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Manami Sunjia Hossain, a senior official of Grey Dhaka, said the solution was so easy that anyone could make the device anytime.

"This is one of the cheapest solutions. It offers a huge potential for the developing countries where many people can't afford air coolers."

She also said Grey Dhaka had already received response from many companies in France, Japan and China.

## 'Democracy deficit' not a problem for progress

Says Tawfiq-e-Elahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury has claimed "democracy deficit" is not a big problem in accelerating the economic progress of a country.

Instead, economy of a country advances if it has good leadership, stability and peace, he told the launching of the World Investment Report 2016 at the Board of Investment yesterday.

The report was prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The report shows that Bangladesh has crossed the \$2 billion mark in attracting foreign direct investment in 2015.

The amount is the highest ever. This is an achievement that gives courage, he said, adding, "We will be able to achieve all the targets if we work together."

He said Bangladesh stepped into a good phase of economic advancement. "If we all become tolerant to some extent and get some strength during this transition phase, we will be

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FEUDING GROUPS

## Tension at Sayedabad bus terminal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sayedabad bus terminal became busy as usual and all buses left it on schedule yesterday, a day after a group of transport workers enforced a 10-hour bus strike there.

Still, there was tension between the workers as their two feuding associations -- Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union and Dhaka Zila Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union -- were yet to reach any consensus.

The two workers' bodies have been fighting over collection of "illegal toll" from buses for the last couple of years.

The two sides clashed on Monday, and the next morning, the Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union enforced the strike, snapping Dhaka's road communications with 35 districts through the terminal.

After around 10 hours of stalemate, the group withdrew the strike on assurance that ministers concerned and leaders of the transport sector would resolve the feud within three days.

Visiting the terminal yesterday, this correspondent talked to many workers who were worried about further strikes in upcoming days.

"We don't know what will happen next. We're just looking forward to our leaders," said Sohrab Mia, a helper of a bus.

The strike on Tuesday also hit the intercity bus services and their workers, apart from the commuters and the long-route travelers.

"I earned only Tk 150 yesterday [Tuesday] due to the strike. Otherwise, my daily income is around Tk 350," said Kalam Hossain, a conductor of a Chittagong Road-Mohammadpur route bus.

Karam Ali of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Union said they were taking preparations for holding a meeting to resolve the crisis.

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