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Flash floods hit greater Sylhet dists

Part of embankment washed away; Boro crops damaged

STAR REPORT

Incessant rain for the last nine days coupled with the onrush of water from the hills in bordering areas have triggered flash floods in the greater Sylhet region and adjacent districts, inundating vast areas of farmland and causing sufferings to Boro farmers.

The rainfall in Sylhet from March 28 till yesterday was four times more than it had rained in those days last year, Abdul Mannan, a meteorologist from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, told The Daily Star.

Heavy rainfall was also recorded in the bordering Indian states of Meghalaya and Assam, causing the flash floods, said Sazzad Hossain, an executive engineer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

Such flash floods usually strike the hilly areas of greater Sylhet in the second half of April, but they have come early this year, Mannan said, adding, "As far as my knowledge goes, such early flash floods had last hit the regions six to seven years back."

The early strike has left the local farmers with no chance to harvest their crops, mainly Boro.

"We were hoping to have a good yield this year. But the flash flood has shattered all our hopes," said Lokman Ahmed, a Boro farmer of Dharmapasha in Sunamganj.

Thousands of farmers in Sylhet, Moulvibazar and

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People stand around and watch as water rushes in through the breached Kirtankhola embankment in Khaliyajury upazila of Netrakona yesterday flooding vast areas of their crop land. Inset, floodwater gushes through a badly damaged embankment in Patharchaili Haor area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

TEXTBOOK ERRORS 4 more NCTB officials transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday transferred four officials of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) to public colleges outside Dhaka over the errors in this year's school textbooks.

The education ministry issued a circular to this end, asking them to leave their current positions by today. Otherwise, they will be considered as stand-released from noon, according to the order.

The NCTB staff are Prof Abdul Mannan and associate professors Gaurango Lal Sarker, Mosleh Uddin Sarker and Hannan Mia.

The move came more than a month after a high-powered probe committee formed by the ministry submitted a report holding seven, including the four NCTB officials, responsible for the mistakes.

Faced with severe criticism for embarrassing blunders in textbooks, the ministry formed the probe body to find out errors in the

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Rajshahi mayor joins office

HC stays suspension orders of Mujibnagar upazila chairman, vice chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul joined office yesterday, a day after the High Court stayed the government's second suspension order against him.

Several hundred people greeted Bulbul with flowers around 500 yards away from the Nagar Bhaban. He went to his office around 11:30am, said Mahbubur Rahman, public relations officer of the RCC.

On Sunday, the LGRD ministry suspended Bulbul, also the president of the city BNP, saying that a Rajshahi court accepted charge sheets against him in two cases filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

Meanwhile, the HC yesterday stayed the government orders suspending Meherpur's Mujibnagar upazila Chairman Amirul Islam and Vice Chairman Jarjis Hossain.

Talking to reporters at Nagar Bhaban, Bulbul said: "I will increase my work five-fold and turn the last 15 months of my

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Russia, West clash over 'gas' attack

Kremlin stands by Syrian govt while US, UK, France blame regime forces, demand probe; death toll 72

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia denied yesterday that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was to blame for a poison gas attack and said it would continue to back him, setting the Kremlin on course for its biggest diplomatic collision yet with Donald Trump's White House.

Western countries, including the United States, blamed Assad's armed forces for the worst chemical attack in Syria for more than four years, which choked 72 people to death in the town of Khan Sheikhoun in a rebel-held area on Tuesday.

Washington said it believed the deaths were caused by sarin nerve gas dropped by Syrian aircraft. But Moscow offered an alternative explanation that would shield Assad: that the poison gas belonged to rebels and had leaked from an insurgent weapons depot hit by Syrian bombs.

Two US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, rejected Russia's account: "That strains credulity," said one. "Russian assertions do not comport with reality."

The United States, Britain and France have proposed a draft UN Security Council resolution that would pin the blame on Damascus. But the Russian Foreign Ministry called the resolution "unacceptable" and said it was based on "fake information".

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia would take its case blaming the rebels for the poisoning to the United Nations.

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Trump drops Bannon from his security council

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday removed his chief strategist Steve Bannon from the National Security Council, reversing his controversial decision early this year to give a political adviser an unprecedented role in security discussions.

Trump's overhaul of the NSC, confirmed by a White House official, also elevated General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Dan Coats, the director of National Intelligence who heads all 17 US intelligence agencies. The official said the change moves the NSC "back to its core function of what it's supposed to do."

It also appears to mark a victory by national security

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Brexit happened 450,000 yrs ago!



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Brexit might feel like it's been going on a while. But it's been 450,000 years in all, according to new research.

Scientists have shed new light on how ancient Britain separated from Europe, a movement that happened in two stages. The new research shows how exactly Britain left the European continent, before which the two had been stuck together.

And it also proves that the split was caused by a set of chance, unlikely circumstances. If that hadn't happened, Britain would continue to stick onto mainland Europe, jutting out in the same way that Denmark does today.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE AL men beat up teachers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

A school headmaster and an assistant teacher were assaulted allegedly by some members of the local Awami League unit in Rajshahi's Durgapur yesterday during a dispute over the formation of a school managing committee.

Witnesses said members of the local AL unit got into a disagreement with Headmaster Mokbul

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 6
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Ekush gets a mother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ekush, a newborn who was recovered from a dustbin in the port city on the eve of Amar Ekushey, has finally got a mother.

A Chittagong court handed over the baby boy to Shakila Akhter yesterday, six days after it had awarded his custody to the 42-year-old.

During the handover at a jam-packed courtroom, Chittagong Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Jannatul Ferdous, who is also the judge of Chittagong Children's Court, told Shakila: "Today you are getting the child who is known to the entire nation. I hope he would be brought up as an enlightened person."

The judge said her husband was critically ill and was admitted to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). But she made it to the court, considering it her human responsibility.

She also thanked Shakila, her husband, doctors, nurses, police, lawyers, the media and all

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Shakila Akhter with baby Ekush in her arms at a Chittagong court yesterday. The baby was found abandoned in a trash bin in Chittagong on late February 20 night and childless Shakila had appealed, along with 15 others, to become its parent. The court chose Shakila.

PHOTO: STAR

Suicide blast in Lahore kills 6

Army census team hit; Taliban claim responsibility

REUTERS, Lahore

The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on an army census team that killed at least six people and wounded 18 in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore yesterday.

Punjab government spokesman Malik Ahmed Khan said the blast, which hit an army vehicle taking part in Pakistan's first census in nearly two decades, killed four soldiers and two civilians.

Scores of people have been killed since the beginning of the year in a series of attacks that have dashed hopes of an end to the violence of recent years and stepped up pressure on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government to improve security.

TV footage showed security personnel blocking off the street around the site of the explosion, close to an elite police training school which was the site of a Pakistani Taliban attack in 2009.

The apparent targeting of personnel involved in the census, the first in 19 years, underlined the challenge to government institutions in Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state of some 200 million people.

The army has been closely involved in the census, with soldiers accompanying civilian enumerators, a move authorities say is needed to prevent collectors being intimidated by local political figures trying to slant sensitive population data in their areas.

Pakistan army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said the census would be completed "at any cost".

"These sacrifices will only strengthen our resolve and with the support of entire nation we will cleanse the menace of terrorism from our soil," he said in a statement.

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