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RAINFALL IN APRILS Highest in 30 years



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This April sees the highest rainfall in the month since 1987.

The country experienced 119 percent more rainfall than usual in the first 23 days of this month, costing standing Boro crops dearly in different areas.

Meteorologist Ruhul Kuddus of Dhaka Met office told The Daily Star yesterday that it recorded 8,904 millimetres of rainfall from April 1-23 as against an average of 4,053mm.

The month's average rainfall was supposed to be 5,286mm, but even a week before it would end, the rainfall volume far exceeded the normal rainfall pattern, he said.

Another Meteorologist Bazlur Rashid of the Met office told this newspaper that even if it did not rain in the remaining days of this month, the rainfall the month already experienced would exceed the month's average by 68 percent.

Bazlur said the country had witnessed 76 percent more rainfall than usual in April in 1987, meaning the country experienced the highest volume of rainfall in April this year after that year.

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Having lost everything to flashfloods in the haors, hundreds of locals wait in front of Bishwambarpur Upazila Parishad in Sunamganj for OMS (Open Market Sale) rice and flour. Many had to return empty-handed as the supply ran out.

PHOTO: STAR

Radiation not alarming

Atomic commission test prompts experts to look for other chemical contamination; last of Sunamganj haors flooded

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) yesterday confirmed that the radiation levels in the samples of water, dead fish and ducks collected from the flashflood-hit haor region were within the permissible limits and not alarming.

The BAEC test results came as a sigh of relief amid an outcry across the border over India's exposing open pits of uranium to a river and subsequent death of fish in the river basin close to Bangladesh's haor-rich district of Sunamganj.

Meanwhile, the overall flood situation in Sunamganj's haor regions continued to aggravate further as new areas in Jamalganj upazila went under water after the

BNP SPREADING PROPAGANDA ABOUT URANIUM : PM -- PAGE 2

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"Strengthen relief operations in the haor areas to make sure all get relief."

PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA AT CABINET MEETING YESTERDAY

Too little help for flood-hit people

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, from Sunamganj

It was the third day he went to the bazaar in Bishwambarpur upazila, stood in a long queue for hours to buy rice and flour at subsidised prices but returned home empty handed.

Nurul Miah, aged 70, travelled by boat for more than an hour along with his family members from Chandargaon yesterday morning to reach the bazaar and then made the same journey back.

"Is it possible for us to come to sadar every day!" he said as the queue broke with the stock at the Open Market Sale (OMS) point finished.

Like Nurul, many people, from the flood-hit haor areas

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POST-RANA PLAZA RMG SECTOR Fair price elusive while pressure on to improve safety

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

A fair price for garment items is still a far cry for Bangladeshi manufacturers though they are in tremendous pressure from global buyers to improve conditions at workplace, notably after the Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013.

According to local apparel makers, over \$1 billion has been invested so far to renovate and retrofit their factories as per the demand of buyers, retailers and brands.

Yet, the retailers and brands have shown no interest in offering a reasonable price of the products they source from Bangladesh. And a low profit margin is tying producers' hands from investing more in improving workplace conditions to avert disaster like Tazreen Fashion fire or Rana Plaza tragedy.

Buyers are still paying the traditional low prices for the products and making super profit. A shirt costing between \$3 and \$5 is selling between \$25 and \$30.

The same is true in the case of high-end value added products, which is 30 percent of the total volume of garment items exported in a year from Bangladesh.

The global posh brands pay between \$8 and \$12 to the local manufacturers for purchasing a piece of value added high-end shirt and the retailers sell the same shirts at \$100 and sometimes even at \$150, garment makers said.

For such a huge gap, the manufacturers and economists blame the faulty global supply chain, which needs a review.

The sector operates in a highly unjust global value chain where a \$5 shirt made in Bangladesh is sold at \$25 at Walmart stores or at much higher prices in countries such as Sweden, said noted economist Rehman Sobhan.

"Where exactly does the \$20 go? Is this a natural working of the market mechanism or a manifestation of an unjust global order?"

He said the current business model forces suppliers to squeeze their workers as much as they can because they have to produce the shirt at \$5.

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Still lost in the depths of sorrow



A Rana Plaza victim's mother.

PORIMOL PALMA and AKHLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

Mazeda Begum's eyes filled with tears as she stood in silence. It was raining heavily and she looked pale. Suddenly, the 48-year-old burst into tears.

Those near the woman from Rajbari tried to console her but in vain. She kept on sobbing.

At one point, she passed out.

Every year on the morning of April 24, Mazeda, who lost her only daughter Lipi Akhter in the Savar Rana Plaza tragedy on that day in 2013, visits a small memorial built near a hyacinth-filled low-land, which once had a nine-storey building on it.

Yesterday was not any different. Like her, relatives, survivors along with different trade union leaders and activists paid tribute to the

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You may collect the application forms from the respective halls and drop the filled-in form into the box placed at every hall gate.

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