



Boats ply over an almost submerged Bailey Bridge in Balaghata Pool Par area of Bandarban yesterday. Road communication between Bandarban and Rangamati snapped after the bridge went under water due to heavy rain.

PHOTO: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

Rain disrupts rescue work in Bandarban

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Rafiq Ullah, officer-in-charge of Bandarban Sadar Police Station, said rain was hampering their search for the missing people.

The four missing people are: Ruma upazila Postmaster Jainul Alam, Ruma Krishi Bank officer Goutom Nandi, Health Assistant of Ruma Upazila Health Complex Munni Barua, and Ching Mya Sing Marma of Mong Shwe Prue Para of Ruma.

Aung Thoai Marma, an NGO worker in Ruma upazila, said, "Munni along with 5-6 others was behind me when we were walking on the road damaged by the incessant rain.

"I found myself in a deep ditch after the landslide," said Aung, who was

undergoing treatment at Bandarban Sadar Hospital.

"Nobody forbade us to use the road, nor was there any sign for caution at the spot," Aung mentioned.

In Chittagong, heavy rain-induced landslides yesterday damaged seven houses in Sitakunda and Hathazari upazilas.

Idris Mia Talukder, chairman of Farhadabad Union Parishad in Hathazari, said at least five houses in Tripura Para were damaged as a chunk of mud fell on those early yesterday. Another house in Sobuj Tila area was damaged in another landslide.

In Sitakunda upazila's Jungle

Salimpur area, a house was damaged in a landslide, said Mohammad Nasir, sub-inspector of Sitakunda Police Station.

In Khagrachhari, downpour over the last two days triggered several small landslides in different areas of the Sadar upazila, and a house was damaged at Shalbagan yesterday afternoon.

Three shelters have been opened in the district for the people who are vulnerable to landslide, said Rashedul Islam, deputy commissioner of Khagrachhari.

Our correspondents in Bandarban, Chittagong and Khagrachhari contributed to this story.

Admission still

FROM PAGE 16

The number of seats at the country's 37 public universities is around 60,000, according to the education ministry. Usually, a student having scored at least GPA-3.5 is eligible to apply to a university.

Of the seats in public universities, Dhaka University has nearly 7,000 seats, Jahangirnagar University 2,000 seats, Rajshahi University 5,000, Chittagong University 4,600, Jagannath University 3,000 and Khulna University 1,500 seats.

Every year, admission seekers face a huge amount of pressure when they prepare for separate tests for separate universities.

The candidates buy many admission forms from different universities and spend a lot of time and money for travel and accommodation. They travel, often with parents or guardians, across the country and sometimes have to check in hotels to appear in admission tests.

There are cases when candidates even take separate tests for a seat at separate faculties, even separate departments, under the same university. Sometimes the dates of admission tests of different universities coincide.

On November 2 last year, President Abdul Hamid at a programme at the UGC asked the public universities to hold admission tests centrally to reduce the hassles of admission seekers and their guardians.

But the system would not be introduced this year. The dates of admission tests of most of the public universities for the 2017-18 academic session were finalised on July 15 at a meeting of the Association of Universities of Bangladesh, a platform of vice-chancellors of the public universities.

Officials in the education ministry and the UGC said a number of public universities were not in favour of the system since the existing one was directly linked to some financial benefits.

"Many teachers who are involved in the admission process from holding the tests to checking scripts earn a good amount of money. So, they oppose the cluster system," said a top official of the ministry asking not to be identified.

In the cluster system, students' admission would be controlled centrally, and universities and their teachers would have no involvement.

UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan said the president supported the cluster system, yet its implementation faced opposition from some major universities.

One of the reasons, he said, might be that the universities' authorities felt they would be deprived of the financial benefits coming from the existing system.

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, president of the platform, said, "The issue of cluster system was not on our agenda [at

July 15 meeting]."

Asked about the reason, he said, "I don't know exactly why the process was stopped midway. But I heard that it was halted due to difference in opinions among major universities."

Prof Harun, also the vice chancellor of Patuakhali Science and Technology University, said they rather discussed how to fix the dates of admission tests so that they did not coincide.

REAL TEST AHEAD

Although the number of GPA-5 scorers dropped this year, securing a seat at a public university, which remains on the top of students' wish lists, is a big challenge as the number of seats at public universities is very few compared to the number of students who passed.

Take Imtiaz Marfique for example. He was thrilled to bits after receiving his HSC results on Sunday as he got GPA-5. A student from the science group, Imtiaz wishes to study engineering and his first choice is Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

As many as 28,935 students got GPA-5 like him from the science group. But Buet can accommodate only 1,100 students.

"Despite getting GPA-5, you cannot be sure that you will get admission to your desired institution. The real test is ahead and I will have to make it," Imtiaz said.

neer of Chittagong City Corporation, said, "They did it for temporary emergency use.

"The nature of Agrabad area is a bit different from other parts of the city... the area used to be inundated during high tides and to address the problem an embankment was built on Mahesh Khal.

"People in the area were getting its benefit. Since rainwater could not be drained quickly because of the embankment, we had to get rid of it and it brought back the old problem," he said.

"Initiatives have been taken to address the waterlogging problem of Agrabad as well as other parts of the city, but it will take time to implement those," Sudip said.

Despite repeated attempts, Managing Director AKM Fazlullah of Chittagong Water Supply and Sewerage Authority could not be reached for comments yesterday.

'Ruling party men' attack MP Farazi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

An independent lawmaker was allegedly attacked by supporters of a ruling party union parishad chairman in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila yesterday.

Lawmaker Rustom Ali Farazi said he was at an event at Sapleza Model High School in the afternoon when some 35 supporters of UP Chairman Md Miraz Mia swooped on him.

"It was pre-planned. They attacked me because I protested the Miraz's corruption in distributing free rice to fishermen. Policemen present there saved me," he told The Daily Star.

Farazi's personal assistant Masum Billah filed a case with Mathbaria Police Station accusing all 35 men including the president of Sapleza Chattra League, Sumon.

Miraz, also the president of Sapleza Union Jubo League, however, denied the allegation. He said the lawmaker called Chattra League and Jubo League men thieves and robbers. Members of the two organisations went to the event to protest.

Learning about the attack, Kazi Shahanwaz, assistant superintendent of police, rushed to the spot.

Barisal, Barguna

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administration on Sunday that he did not refuse Tariq bail and that he was not sent to jail, High Court's Additional Registrar Md Sabbir Faiz told The Daily Star.

Notwithstanding the claims, Tariq's name was seen on the top of a list of accused persons of the court's custody register on July 19. This paper obtained a copy of the list titled "Hajatkhanar Asami Grohon Register".

Sabbir Faiz declined to comment on the list, saying that they did not get any such lists from the CJM.

Court and administration employees said there were two rooms adjacent to the court. One room is used for keeping accused persons while policemen on guard sit in the other room. Tariq was taken to the police's room.

Obaidullah Sazu, a suspended leader of the Barisal Awami League, filed a case against Tariq last month, for publishing a portrait of Bangabandhu, drawn by a fifth-grader, on an invitation card.

Tariq was the Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Agailjhara upazila in Barisal at the time.

The case against Tariq was readily accepted and he was arrested. In the face of severe criticism, ruling Awami League suspended Sazu, who later withdrew the case.

Responding to a query, the cabinet secretary yesterday said the Divisional Commissioner of Barisal sent a letter to the Cabinet Division requesting punitive measures against Tariq for "distorting the image of Bangabandhu". The letter has been "filed", but "We didn't find anything against him [UNO]."

Taliban suicide blasts kill 60

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Lahore police operations chief Haider Ashraf told Reuters.

KABUL BLAST

The Taliban, which is battling the Western-backed government and a Nato-led coalition for control of Afghanistan, has launched a wave of attacks around the country in recent days, sparking fighting in more than half a dozen provinces.

"I was in my shop when suddenly I heard a terrible sound and as a result all of my shop windows shattered," said Ali Ahmed, a resident in the area of yesterday's blast.

Acting Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish said at least 24 people had been killed and 40 wounded but the casualty toll could rise further.

Another senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about the incident with the media, said the toll

stood at 35 killed. That was in line with a claim on Twitter by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, who said 37 "intelligence workers" had been killed.

Mujahid said in a tweet claiming responsibility for the attack the target had been two buses that had been under surveillance for two months.

Government security forces said a small bus owned by the Ministry of Mines had been destroyed in the blast but the National Directorate for Security, the main intelligence agency, said none of its personnel had been hit.

Three civilian vehicles and 15 shops were destroyed or damaged in the blast, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

LAHORE BLAST

Rescue workers shifted the wounded to hospital and police officers cordoned off the bomb site as army troops also arrived at the scene.

The incident

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College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Mirpur Government Bangla College and Government Titumir College -- that were brought under the umbrella of Dhaka University in February.

Earlier, the colleges were under the National University.

Prof Moazzem Hossain Molla, principal of Dhaka College, said he had notified the heads of different departments about last Tuesday's decision on that very day and asked them to inform the students of the matter.

"As far as I know the heads of the departments informed the students present on the campus of the matter. But I think many students were unaware," he said.

IK Selim Ullah Khandaker, principal of Kabi Nazrul Government College, echoed the same.

Many students said their fellows in other colleges under National University already sat for their final year exams and some even received test results.

DU sources said one of the main reasons behind the delayed decision was the long-standing disagreements between the DU VC and National University VC Prof Harun-or-Rashid, also a former pro-VC of DU.

Prof Harun had stepped down from the post of pro-VC in June 2012 after disagreements with the VC on several issues, including the appointment of his son as a DU teacher and defeat of the pro-Awami League Blue Panel in the DU syndicate elections, the sources said.

2 Shariatpur men

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victim.

The law enforcers detained Farid based on the allegation of the victim's family. Zakir was arrested later on, Ehsan said at his office.

Talking to this correspondent, an official of Shariatpur police said both the arrestees gave confessional statement under section 164 before magistrates, admitting their crime.

They strangled the girl to death after failing to rape her. Later, they dumped the body at the jute field.

The arrestees removed the organs from her body believing those would give off stench, he said quoting them.

Three-day DC conf'ce

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On the first day, sessions of 19 ministries and divisions, including education, disaster management and relief, power and energy, finance, planning and information will take place.

During the conference, the DCs will raise various issues of their respective districts and place recommendations.

According to a draft working paper of the conference, some divisional commissioners proposed to upgrade their post to first-grade (equivalent to secretary) and construct administrative convention centres in each district.

In his proposal sent to the cabinet division, the DC of Narayanganj suggested giving the civil bureaucrats the scope for working at UN peace keeping missions.

The DC of Kishoreganj proposed fixing minimum educational qualification for the president and members of the governing bodies of schools,

colleges and madrasas.

The DC of Natore proposed to reschedule the license fees of jewellery and cloth traders while the divisional commissioner of Barisal proposed to introduce vocational education in the curriculum at secondary and higher secondary schools and madrasas to create skilled labour.

Some DCs proposed bringing the village police under a rationing system similar to the one for the police and a salary hike along with provision of bicycles and mobile sets for them.

Rajbari's DC recommended allocating Tk 10,000 for the burial of each freedom fighter.

To prevent the influx of drugs and stop smuggling, the DC of Feni proposed strengthening border patrol while the divisional commissioner of Rajshahi suggested constructing ring roads and installing lights to ensure security in areas along the border.

HC cautions Akhaura OC

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does not take place in the future.

The court also directed the religious affairs ministry to take necessary steps so that Azad Hossain Bhuiyan, the man who was reported as dead, can go to Saudi Arabia for performing hajj.

The bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan passed the order. Azad had filed the writ challenging the legality of the police report.

A permanent resident and businessmen of Akhaura, Azad said in the petition that he had already deposited the required fees and his passport to the authority for the hajj pilgrimage. He needed the clearance document.

But the OC submitted a police verifi-

cation report to the Special Branch office, saying that Azad had died. The report was posted on the website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs on June 20, he said.

He prayed to the HC to direct the authorities to correct the police report so that he could go to Saudi Arabia for hajj.

Following the petition, the HC on July 17 issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in a week why the police report should not be declared illegal and also summoned OC Mosharraf before it for his explanation.

Advocate AM Aminuddin and Advocate Shaharia Kabir Biplob appeared for the OC, while Advocate M Khaled Ahmed and Advocate Kaiser Zahid Bhuiyan argued for the petitioner.

Their daily dinghy

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knee-to-waist-deep water when the tide is high and the recent downpours only made things worse.

This forced the office to buy a boat so that its employees could get into and out of the office.

Ashish said the boat was bought from a shop just over two weeks ago for Tk 26,000. The shop got it from a ship-breaking yard.

He said not only office staffers, important taxpayers use the boat to get to the office as well.

"The problem became unbearable when rainwater inundated the area for three consecutive days last month," said Abdul Aziz, an assistant to the commissioner of Chittagong Taxes Zone-4.

"We could not go out for emergencies even as vehicles could not get through."

Despite having a serviceable staff