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Collection growth rises 19pc,
a five-year high

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BOOST FOR MODI?

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar shakes
up Indian politics with resignation

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SUNKEN

Capital deluged in incessant
rain; traffic chaos on
waterlogged streets
causes public sufferings

WASIM BIN HABIB

It was a city under water. North, south, east or west, there was hardly any thoroughfare, lane or by-lane that was not submerged.

This is what the city dwellers woke up to yesterday, as incessant rain turned the capital into a swamp, paralysing normal life and causing a traffic chaos.

The monsoon rain began in the early hours and continued till afternoon with brief pauses. The Met office recorded 64mm of rainfall in 12 hours from 6:00am yesterday.

City planners say it is the inadequate storm-water drainage system, not the rain, that sank the capital.

At places, human waste and dirt came out of sewers.

City dwellers suffered a traffic nightmare as they remained stuck in gridlock for hours in the rain. The waterlogging brought the city's traffic to a standstill.

Buses, cars and three-wheelers haphazardly inched forward throughout the day.

Traffic policemen, who were manning some important intersections, seemed helpless.

Students off to schools and people going to work braved rain and waded through the water on the streets. There was a dearth of transport as well. Hundreds of people, absolutely drenched, were seen waiting for vehicles.

Many guardians carried their children on their laps or shoulders to and from schools.

The authorities of Viharunissa Noon School and College sent text messages to the parents,
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Half-submerged vehicles negotiate Mirpur Road at Subhanbagh in the capital yesterday. People on the pavement near Dhanmondi Road-27 intersection waded through knee-deep water, *below*. A boy, after picking up his younger brother from school on his bike, tries to make his way across waist-deep rainwater in Moghbazar Wireless area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON/ANISUR RAHMAN



Result of govt negligence, inaction

TAWFIQUE ALI

A moderate rain for a couple of hours and much of the capital goes under ankle to knee-deep water. Why?

Urban experts attribute this dire state to the partial or complete destruction of the city's natural drainage network of 46 canals and four rivers, numerous water retention areas such as ponds and ditches, extensive low-lying areas and flood flow zones in the name of development.

The low-lying wetlands and flood flow zones earmarked in the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) have all been filled up, in many cases with government permission, they say.

According to the DAP and the Flood Action Plan,
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Admin must retain judicial powers

Say DCs on 2nd day of their conf'ce, they
want to go on UN peacekeeping missions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Commissioners yesterday reiterated their demand for retaining the executive magistrates' power to run mobile courts that had been declared unconstitutional by the High Court in May.

On the second day of the annual three-day DC conference at the public administration ministry, they also wanted the opportunity to work for the UN peacekeeping missions.

After meeting them, Public Administration Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam said he supported their demand for the authority to conduct mobile courts. "The government gives power to different organisations...Therefore, the government will consider the issue and resolve it," he told reporters.

The minister, however, did not elaborate on the matter.

On July 2, secretaries in a meeting with the prime minister also made the same demands.

In a judgement on May 12, the High Court observed that executive

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4 killed in 'shootouts'

2 of them suspected killers
of ASP Mizanur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two suspected muggers, who were wanted for the murder of ASP Mizanur Rahman Talukder, were killed in a "gunfight" with detectives in the capital's Rupnagar Beribandh area early yesterday, police said.

The dead are Jakir and Mintu, said Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch (DB).

In another incident, two alleged robbers were killed in two "shootouts" with police in Kushtia early yesterday.

The "gunfight" in the capital took place when a DB team responded to the muggers' firing, said Masudur Rahman, DMP deputy commissioner (media).

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BASIC BANK LOAN SCAM

Investigate Bacchu, board members

HC asks ACC, gives it 60 days to complete probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to probe the alleged involvement of former BASIC Bank chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu and its board members in a Tk 40 crore loan scam.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Shahidul Karim gave the ACC 60 days to complete its enquiry into how the loan was approved by the state-run bank's Shantinagar branch in 2010.

ACC lawyer Syed Mamun Mahbub told The Daily Star that the Board of Directors of BASIC Bank and its then chairman Bacchu approved the Tk 40 crore loan to Syed

Mahbubul Gani, managing partner of Ms Syed Traders, ignoring the bank's credit committee's recommendations.

He said the officials had approved the loan without proper documents of the borrower.

According to a Bangladesh Bank enquiry, about Tk 4,500 crore was siphoned out of BASIC Bank between 2009 and 2013 when Bacchu chaired the board of the bank.

However, this is the first instance in which the bank's former chairman has been brought under the purview of investigations in connection with swindling out money in the name of loans.

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7-MURDER CASE HC hearing ends, verdict on Aug 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on August 13 will deliver verdict on the death references and appeals in sensational Narayanganj seven-murder cases.

The bench of Justice Bhabani Prasad Singh and Justice Mustafa Zaman yesterday fixed the date for delivering the judgment after concluding the hearing on the death references and appeals in two cases.

The judges heard arguments from the state and the defence counsels for 33 days. The hearing began on May 22, Assistant Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star.

If a lower court sentences any person to death, its judgement is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The case documents and the judgement reach as death reference to the HC from the lower court in
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Shrubs cover high-voltage power cables in Bashabo near Khilgaon Flyover and bring them close to the pavement. The weight has caused the electric poles to lean to one side. This may cause an accident any time.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Anisul warns of severe flood next month

Flood forecasting centre
still not sure about it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud has warned of a possible, large-scale flood in the country late next month and instructed the deputy commissioners to prepare to tackle it.

"Since the country experienced a double rainfall, we have been warned of a high magnitude flood," he told reporters yesterday, but did not say where this warning came from.

"This will happen in the third week of August. That's why the water development board has been asked to make necessary preparation in this regard," he said, briefing journalists after yesterday's session of the three-day conference of the district commissioners that began on Tuesday.

However, an official of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, which is under the water resources ministry, said they could not forecast a flood five/six days before it actually occurs.

Asked to comment about the minister's warning, he said, "There could be a high magnitude flood only if the monsoon remains very active in the upstream of the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna river system and if there is a huge rainfall."

But currently, the water level of all these rivers is far below the danger mark. Also, it is impossible to forecast accurately at this moment if there would be heavy rain in the third week of August, the official said, asking not to be named.

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