



People wade through flood water on Jamalpur-Madarganj road submerged at four places and closed to traffic since Tuesday afternoon. The photo was taken yesterday.

# Misery mounts in north

FROM PAGE 16  
seen taking shelter in makeshift tents on the highway.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sayed Hasan Imam, executive engineer of Sirajganj Water Development Board said the Jamuna water has been increasing rapidly in the last four days. The water may continue to increase for a few days, he said.

While the north remains severely affected by the flood, the rising water levels are threatening Dhaka district as well. Sazzad Hossain, executive engineer, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), mentioned that the rivers around Dhaka are slowly going above the danger level.

"The water level in Tongi khal is currently at 5.46 m with the danger level considered to be 6.8m," he said. "The other point of danger is the Turag river, near Mirpur. Currently the water level there stands at 5.14m with the danger level at 5.94m, with a mere 80 cm preventing it from flooding," he added. The Balu river on Demra currently has a water level of 5.09m,

cloping in on the danger level of 5.75m, he further mentioned.

"We predict that the danger level may be crossed on the 20th or 21st of the month," he said.

In the areas already affected by the flood, the loss of homes and properties isn't the most tragic tale. A total of nine people, four in Dinajpur, three in Faridpur and two in Kishoreganj, died yesterday in the floods. The total death toll has reached an alarming 39 in the last four days, said the director general of the Disaster Management Department.

To meet the crisis, the government has cancelled holidays of all medical officers in the flood affected areas and also deployed more army personnel as the situation has deteriorated in the northern part.

A platoon of soldiers was sent to Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Panchagarh districts with essential life-saving equipment, said a press release of Inter-Services Public Relations yesterday.

As the water cascades down from

upstream, people in the central part of the country are also suffering. The rapid rise in Jamuna's water level has added to the tribulations of the people from Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Tangail, Manikganj, Munshiganj and Faridpur area.

Like Sirajganj, the overall flood situation in Tangail, Manikganj, Faridpur and Mungshiganj has also deteriorated.

In Faridpur, 146 villages have gone under water within a day as the water level of the Padma is currently above the danger level. In Manikganj, different places on the banks of the river Jamuna along with croplands have gone under water.

On a hopeful note, our correspondents report, that the water level of the Teesta and Dhara rivers have gone below the danger level and that the water has started to recede in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur and Kurigram except long living areas.

Though the situation is improving, the lack of pure drinking water is only

adding to the worries. Standing crops and vegetables have been damaged and thousands of educational institutions remain shut either because they were hit by the floods or are now functioning as shelters.

Visiting different flood hotspots our correspondents report, most of the victims have not got any relief materials.

"I got a quarter kilogram of flattened rice (Chira) as relief in last four days," alleged Jyoti Bala Roy, 62, of Malihar village, who took shelter at across Government Primary School under Biral upazila of Dinajpur on Saturday when her village flooded.

Like her, many flood affected people of Biral upazila of Dinajpur are still without access to government relief.

Reaz Rahman, director general, Bangladesh Department of Disaster Management said, so far 16 lakh people were affected in 20 districts due to the flood.

They have distributed total 4.5 metric tons of rice and Tk 1.5 crore to those affected districts, he added.

# Sri Lanka police chief slammed

AFF, Colombo  
A video showing Sri Lanka's top police officer angrily assaulting an employee who refused to participate in compulsory morning meditation sessions has ignited a firestorm of controversy in the Buddhist-majority nation.

In leaked CCTV footage, Inspector-General Pujiya Jayasundara can be seen shaking a lit torch over the collar and making threatening gestures after the man fallen to join the meditation session at police headquarters.

Jayasundara, who was claimed to pray and Buddhist rituals held elevate him to the top police job, raised eyebrows in February when he made daily meditation mandatory for the 85,000 officers and staff under his command.

Government spokesman Rajiha Senarathne said the incident risked further embarrassing Sri Lanka's police force, whose reputation has already been tarnished over allegations of abuse during the long-running civil war and thereafter.

"If our police chief is behaving like this, then we will have to accept when international organisations accuse our police of routinely using torture on suspects," Senarathne told reporters in Colombo.

There are serious questions about issuing such instructions in a multi-cultural, multi-religious society like ours."

He declined say whether the police chief had himself attended the morning meditation session prior to the assault.

Jayasundara is no stranger to controversial outbursts, having been put on notice after publicly declaring he could "bend the law without breaking it", government sources said.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said no internal disciplinary action was being taken against Jayasundara, but an investigation was under way into how the footage was leaked.

He was the first police chief appointed by an independent commission set up in the aftermath of the civil war. He can only be removed by parliament.

# Rohingyas

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Bangladesh (BCG) denied any such intrusion.

Li Col Ariful Islam, commanding officer of BCG Battalion-2 in Teknaf, said there was no Rohingya trespass in recent days. He, however, added, the border guards have increased vigilance along the border after military in Myanmar began an operation in Rakhine.

Rohingya intrusion usually takes place whenever Myanmar military deploys forces to begin an operation.

"The border guards are put on alert and are ready to face any situation," the CO said, adding, "If anyone is found trying to enter Bangladesh, we send them back after giving minimal support."

MD Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, said the latest military operation in Rakhine has increased their anxiety and the administration has already taken zero tolerance to stop any intrusion.

"We are working closely with all government agencies giving top priority to stop repetition of intrusion that took place in October last year," he observed.

Police said a visit to Balukhali camp yesterday, this correspondent met members of Rohingya community Amir Hakim, 30, Abdur Rahim, 34, Sara Khatun, 50, and Delwar Begum, 28. They claim they have entered Bangladesh through Tumburu border point and taken shelter in that camp.

Mohammad Nur, secretary of the camp management committee, said they provided shelter to 100 new Rohingyas in last four days.

Earlier in October last year, around 75,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh centring an attack in an army camp in Rakhine.

# Jubo League leader

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protection dams were breached during flash floods.

The ACC probe found that though BWDB engineers were aware of the possibility of flash floods, they "on purpose didn't begin dam construction work at the right time and abused power for their and others' benefit."

"Though there is no provision for giving sub-contracts, such malpractice had taken place in some cases," the ACC mentioned in the FIR.

Besides, construction work was kept suspended in some cases for a long period in breach of the terms of contracts, but the BWDB didn't take any action, it said.

Nur Trading, owned by Khairul, was awarded five packages under separate work orders for constructing embankments in five areas in Sunamganj.

Though his firm was supposed to complete two of the packages by March 19 last year, it could finish only half the work by that time. Later, his firm got the deadline extended by the BWDB till March this year. Yet, it failed to complete the job.

His company also couldn't complete the work of the other packages by the deadline of March this year. It could finish only 30 percent of the work by that time.

Talking to The Daily Star, ACC Assistant Director Faroque Ahmed said Khairul was arrested while he, along with his daughter, was checking in to catch a flight.

"We were informed that he was leaving the country. With the help of airport police, we arrested him."

The ACC official said Khairul was produced before a court that sent him to jail in the afternoon.

Earlier last month, the ACC arrested suspended BWDB executive engineer Afzar Uddin and contractor Bachhu Mia from the capital's Mottijheel area in connection with the case.

The ACC also wrote to the public administration ministry to take stern action against the secretary of the water resources ministry, the BWDB director general and 14 other officials for showing gross negligence in discharging duties.

It made the move on the basis of its findings in the probe into alleged irregularities in constructing and maintaining dams in hilly areas.

The water resources ministry and the BWDB have been refusing the allegations for long. They rather put the blame on excessive rains and rats for the damage of embankments.

# Earn people's

FROM PAGE 16  
Order and re-demarcating the constituencies.

Non-partisan returning officers should be appointed, the use of election should be prohibited in election campaigns and voting rights of expatriates ensured. The EC should also allow candidates to submit nomination papers online and journalists to access candidates' affidavits but forbid war criminals from participating in the polls.

Nayveen Nizam, editor of Bangladesh Pratidin, said, "We have given opinions on how to create an environment to ensure participation of all political parties."

Journalists also urged the commission to play a neutral role and implement the existing laws, he added.

Muhammad Shafigur Rahman, president of the Jatiya Press Club, said he was not in support of army deployment as, according to him, army should be deployed only in national disasters and that the other law enforcement agencies were enough to oversee elections.

Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, president of the Bangladesh Federation of Journalists, said, "Election is a political festival. Steps should be taken so that all political parties participate. The Election Commission should earn the trust of all political parties."

Senior journalist Mahfuz Ullah said journalists had requested the EC to ensure that January 5 election would not be repeated. There should be major reshuffles at the field-level administration before the election.

Shayma Datta, editor of Bhorer Kagoi, said political consensus was very important for a free, fair and inclusive election. "The commission should give emphasis on earning trust of the political parties. It has to go a long way to earn that trust."

Regarding army deployment, he said, "The objective is fair election, not to hold a fair election any force can be deployed."

Mattiar Rahman Chowdhury, chief editor of the daily Manabjain, said, "Army has been deployed in elections in many countries across the world. We are not inhabitants of an alienated island that army should not be deployed."

Senior journalist Amanullah Kabir suggested creating a level-playing field for all political parties.

The EC will hold talks with electronic and online media editors and senior journalists today at its office.

# 12 JMB men

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Hossain, Nazrul Islam, Shakhwat Hossain, Sarwar Hossain, Shabat Hossain, Toufiqul Islam, Rajibul Islam, Chandu Mia, Babul Master, and Jahangir Hossain.

Police arrested nine of these men while two others were killed during shootouts. Three of accused are on the run.

Police said Nazrul Islam and Saddam Hossain were killed during gunfights with law enforcers last year.

Masud Rana, Liton Mia and Abu Saeed and Shakhwat Hossain were handed death sentences for killing Japanese national Kunio Hoshi in Kautia upazila of Rangpur on October 3 of the same year.

# Delhi set

FROM PAGE 2  
cities, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin and Shanghai are the top-rated cities in terms of rate of growth. But overall expansion of China will slow.

Delhi will surpass the fastest growing Chinese city Tianjin by almost two percent as the Indian capital is projected to grow at 8.5 percent a year, compared to Tianjin's 6.4 percent growth rate.

The only two cities outside India and China which feature in the list are Manila and Ho Chi Minh City.

The other Asian cities with growth rate of four to six percent are Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur.

Brisbane, Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul and Taipei figure in the list of the cities projected to witness two to four percent growth.

Some of these cities like Singapore and Hong Kong are already known for being among the most expensive cities in Asia, with very high property rates.

Japan's cities like Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka, which are currently facing demographic challenges and a shrinking pool of working population, are likely to remain at the bottom. Osaka stands last in the rankings as its working-age population

# Greece asks EU for air support to battle fires

AFF, Athens  
Greece on Tuesday pleaded for assistance from European neighbours to help battle wild fires including a blaze ravaging a forest near Athens.

In total 146 fires have broken out across Greece since Sunday, and the fire service has been sought under control, authorities are worried about three on the coast near Athens, in the western Peloponnese and on the island of Zakynthos.

The government "has asked for the activation of the European civil protection mechanism for air support... because of the danger posed by the fires," fire service spokeswoman Stavroula Malliti told a press conference.

She said Greece was asking for four CL-415-type water bombers, which are built for aerial firefighting and can fly up to 322 kilometres per hour (200 miles per hour) and scoop up 1,620 gallons (6,000 litres) of water in about 12 seconds.

Malliti said Cyprus had already offered 60 firefighters, while France said it could not contribute any manpower or air support because it is battling its own fires in the south and Corsica.

Local authorities said a blaze in the southern town of Lucera, near Nice, had finally been brought under control Tuesday after burning for 48 hours.

Greece called in the army to assist firefighters around 100,000 kilometres (30 miles) west of Athens, where a fire has been burning since Sunday.

Nearly 300 firefighters, 100 soldiers, five air bombers and seven helicopters had been mobilised in the region, where firefighters said where fires are smouldering in a zone of forest and scrubland dotted with vacation homes.

At least five properties were destroyed and three others evacuated, authorities said as smoke from the blaze clouded the skies over the capital on Tuesday morning.

Firefighters were also battling flames near the town of Amalada in the western Peloponnese and on the tourist island of Zakynthos, where several fires were raging -- some thought to have been started deliberately.

Authorities have ordered the evacuation of vulnerable people, children and the elderly.

"Such a situation is unheard of," regional fire chief Vassili Moutopoulos told local media on Monday.

He had 22 fires on Zakynthos just in the last 24 hours.

Efforts to control the blazes were complicated by winds reaching speeds of 40-50 kilometres per hour, according to the fire service.

Blazes also sparked controversy between the opposition and the cash-strapped government, which was accused of negligence, with local officials decrying a lack of support.

"This crucial hour, the priority is to battle the fires, the office of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said. "The time for review will come later."

Soaring temperatures and tinder-dry forest floors across southern Europe have led to a rash of devastating wildfires, notably in Portugal, where 64 people died in a massive inferno in June.

Tuesday some 1,450 firefighters and firefighters were battling at least four blazes in the central Santarem and Castelo Branco regions, emergency services said.

# Father, friend of suicide

FROM PAGE 16  
claimed he had plans to carry out an attack on the crowd in the shopping area of Bangladeshu on National Mourning Day at Dharmadonji 32.

Abdur Rouf, an uncle of Saiful, yesterday claimed that Saiful went to Dhaka as his childhood friend Shafiq Islam, 22 and Sami, 23, promised that they would help him get a job there, reports their Khulna correspondent.

He added that Sami worked in a private firm and Shaiful studied law at a private university in Dhaka.

According to Rouf, the two along with another young man Ishan, also from Khulna, lived in a mess in Dhaka where Saiful stayed for a few days after he came to Dhaka on August 7 from Khulna's Dumuria upazila.

He also said that Saiful decided to leave for Dhaka after he had a disagreement with his father on August 4.

Police Superintendent of Police Nizamul Haq Mollah said Sami told them that Saiful went to his mess saying that someone was about to send him to Mauritius.

Sami told police that he knew nothing more, the SP told The Daily Star.

Sami also admitted that he came back to his village a few days after Saiful went to Dhaka as he contracted a fever.

Sami's father Abu Obayed Mosaddekh alias Diki is a freedom fighter and a ruling party activist. He said his son has been living in Dhaka for the last three years. He admitted that Saiful was a good friend.

Meanwhile, the doctor who conducted the autopsy on Saiful, said he died in a bomb explosion.

# Obama tweet

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1994 autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom" Saturday that said, "No one is born hating another person because of his color or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

The quote was split into three tweets, the first of which included a photo of him greeting a group of children through a window tank by photographer Pete Souza at a day care facility next to his daughter Sasha's school in Bethesda, Maryland, in 2011.

The tweet has been retweeted more than 3 million times, making it the most liked tweet of all time, behind a tweet from Ariana Grande following the attack at her concert in Manchester in May. A Twitter spokesperson told CNN.

Obama's reaction to the Charlottesville attack is also the fifth-most retweeted behind a tweet from a teen who wanted free chicken nuggets from the Whites, Ellen Degeneres' tweet from 2014 and a tweet from singer Louis Tomlinson to his One Direction bandmate Harry Styles and Ariana Grande's previously mentioned tweet.