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Rain worsens floods in northeast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The flood situation in Sylhet and Sunamganj has worsened for excessive torrential rain in the districts and India's Meghalaya and Assam.

In Sylhet, Gowainghat, Kanaighat, Companiganj, Jaintiapur, and Sylhet Sadar upazilas are the worst hit by the flood.

Thousands of people in the low-lying areas remained marooned in the district.

In Sunamganj, the situation is worse in Chhatak and Dowarabazar upazilas along with Tahirpur, Bishwambazarpur, Sunamganj Sadar upazilas and municipality area.

Eighty families of Chhatak upazila have been taken to six shelter centres in the upazila, said Shafiqul Islam, relief and rehabilitation officer in Sunamganj.

A total of 245 tonnes of rice have been allotted for the people of the flood-affected areas, he said.

Meanwhile, 298 tonnes of rice have been allotted for flood-affected people in Sylhet district, said, Nurul Islam, relief and rehabilitation officer in Sylhet.

According to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the Surma, the Sarigowain and the Someshwari rivers are flowing above the danger level since early Wednesday.

The Surma was flowing 114cm above the danger level in Sylhet's Kanaighat point at 3:00 pm yesterday.

The river at the same time was flowing 8cm above the danger level at Sylhet city point and 35cm above the danger level at Sunamganj town point.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Two men bringing home a boatful of paddy straws. As the low-lying areas in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila have long been inundated, the straws have become scarce and expensive in the region. As a result, locals look to buy it from other areas. The photo was taken recently in the upazila's Nandirgaon.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Khaleda now in cabin from CCU



UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, now undergoing treatment at Evercare Hospital, was moved to a cabin from the coronary care unit yesterday.

"Madam was taken to a cabin from the CCU in the afternoon," Khaleda's personal physician Prof AZM Zahid Hossain told UNB.

He said Prof Shahabuddin Talukder, head of the medical board formed at the hospital for her treatment, along with a team of cardiologists visited the BNP chief at the CCU.

"They decided that the next follow-up treatment would be given keeping her

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

CLIMATE CHANGE Govts' inaction 'dangerous'

Says UN chief

AP, BERLIN

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday warned of a "dangerous disconnect" between what scientists and citizens are demanding to curb climate change, and what governments are actually doing about it.

Guterres said global greenhouse gas emissions need to drop by 45 percent this decade, but are currently forecast to increase by 14 percent.

"We are witnessing a historic and dangerous disconnect: science and citizens are demanding ambitious and transformative climate action," he said at a climate conference in Austria. "Meanwhile many governments are dragging their feet. This inaction has grave consequences."

Guterres said Russia's war in Ukraine risked worsening the crisis, because major economies were "doubling down on fossil fuels" that are to blame for much of the emissions stoking global warming.

"New funding for fossil fuel exploration and production infrastructure is delusional," he said in a video message to the Austrian World Summit, initiated by former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "It will only further feed the scourge of war, pollution and climate catastrophe."

Guterres urged countries to instead end all coal use by 2040, with rich nations doing so by 2030, and focus on replacing fossil fuels with renewable sources of energy, such as solar and wind power.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Metro rail can save Tk 3,500cr every year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's first metro rail, once launched, will save around Tk 3,500 crore annually in terms of travel time and vehicle operation costs, metro rail authorities said.

The electricity-run trains to be operated on the Uttara-Motijheel route -- formally known as Mass Rapid Transit Line-6 or MRT Line-6 -- will reduce the number of other vehicles significantly, and thus cut 2.02 lakh tonnes of carbon emission annually, they said.

Once the action plan for building a broader 130km metro rail network for the capital and adjacent areas is implemented by 2030, it will create jobs for 12,000 engineers.

It would also create a scope to increase jobs threefold by developing forward and backward linkage industries and services.

When the network is developed, 50.4 lakh passengers would be able to use the metro rail daily, they said.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit

Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing agency, revealed the information at a seminar at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

DMTCL organised the seminar to inform about the progress and possible impact of metro rail, and to receive licence for MRT Line-1.

Siddique also said the physical works of MRT Line-1, which would be the country's first underground metro line, will start by September this year.

The 31.24km line will have two parts -- around 19.87km from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur with 16.4km underground lines, and around 11.36km elevated lines from Notun Bazar to Purbachal.

The government has taken up a plan to build six metro rail lines by 2030.

The 20.1km MRT Line-6 from Uttara-Motijheel via Agargaon is being implemented at a cost of Tk 22,000 crore. However, the line would be extended up to Kamalapur and the cost would

escalate by around Tk 11,000 crore.

Siddique said they will be able to achieve the target to start commercial operation of metro rail from Uttara to Agargaon within December this year.

The overall progress of the project is 80.10 percent while the first phase saw 92.49 percent and second phase saw 79.47 percent progress till May this year.

Once complete, the metro rail -- with 16 stations -- will be able to carry 60,000 people an hour, reducing travel time between Uttara and Motijheel to around 38 minutes. It now takes more than two hours to travel the distance.

IMPACT OF MRT

Siddique, citing different sources, said the country loses Tk 33,888 crore annually due to severe traffic congestion and its impacts in the capital.

Citing a study, he said once the MRT Line-6 is operational, it would save Tk 8.38 crore in travel time cost and Tk 1.18 crore in vehicle operational cost daily,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'I now ask you for justice'

15-yr-old girl appears at HC after lower court acquits rape accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Sir, I have been raped. We are very poor. We have no money for moving the case. I want justice from you."

These were the words of a 15-year-old girl, as she spoke directly to the High Court bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Shahed Nuruddin while they were deciding on which case to hear next.

In a rare instance, this teenager appeared before the bench yesterday morning along with her mother, all the way from Nilphamari, to seek justice for herself.

The lower court concerned in Nilphamari had earlier acquitted the accused in the rape case she had filed.

The judges and lawyers present at the courtroom were astonished and curious, as the girl approached them.

Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, presiding judge of the bench, then asked her what happened to her and who the woman with her was.

"She is my mother," the girl replied, adding, "I am 15 years old. I have been raped by a member of the BGB [Border Guard Bangladesh]. The lower court in Nilphamari has acquitted the offender. We have no money to fight the legal battle. I now

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



A roofless passenger stand on Bashabo's Atish Dipanker Road. While such structures are meant to provide shade from sun or rain to passengers waiting for transport, this one seems to be of little help as the authorities concerned remain oblivious to its poor condition. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Tigers begin WI tour with first Test today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be hoping to turn their fortunes in the longest format of the game under the leadership of Shakib Al Hasan when the first Test against the West Indies begins in Antigua today.

The match is scheduled to begin at 8:00pm (BST). However, even just a day before the first Test, it was uncertain whether Bangladeshi fans would be able to watch the matches as no TV channel officially acquired the broadcasting rights for a series that features two Tests -- part of the ICC Test Championship -- three T20Is and three ODIs.

Interestingly, the last time the Bangladeshi viewers were unable to catch the Tigers live due to a lack of interest from

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

An eccentric young star system found

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have discovered the most eccentric, off-kilter belt of comets surrounding a nearby star to date, a surprising observation for scientists looking for a stellar sibling to our own Solar system.

In a presentation at the 240th meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Pasadena, California on Tuesday, researchers described new radio telescope observations of the star HD 53143.

A relatively young star at about a billion years old, and located around 60 light years away in the Carina constellation, HD 53143 turned out to be surrounded by a much more complicated and eccentric -- meaning elliptical rather than circular -- disk of comets than earlier Hubble Space Telescope observations suggested.

