

## Flood victims' plea for relief amid govt's inaction

Alleges Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior joint secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that the flood-affected people in the country's northeast region, mainly haor areas, are crying for relief amid the government's inaction to mitigate their miseries.

Speaking at a token sit-in programme, he also blamed the government's unplanned construction of dams and a road in the haor region for the severe flood in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona.

"The haor people of Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona are crying for rice and food. Where will they get food as everything around them has been submerged? How will the food reach them?" the BNP leader asked.

Stating the government is responsible for the flood, Rizvi said, "You (PM) will now see the Padma Bridge in the colourful light and hang onto power with joy in your heart keeping people hungry, starving and inundated. The country's people will no longer tolerate it."

Ganatantra Forum arranged the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding the release of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and adequate relief for flood-affected people.

For unplanned construction of the dams and roads, Rizvi said 50-60 lakh people have now been stranded in floodwaters.

Rizvi also criticised the government for its move to shut down stores and shopping malls after 8:00pm since it has long been claiming to have the capacity of providing an uninterrupted electricity supply.

## BRRTC expanding service to 21 new routes in southwest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Under a major expansion plan, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRRTC) is going to launch its services in 21 new destinations of south-western districts, following the inauguration of Padma Bridge.

Currently, the state-run transport agency is operating 18 buses on Dhaka-Khulna and Dhaka-Benapole routes. It will operate 65 buses – mostly AC buses – on 23 routes from June 26, the day the bridge would be opened to the public.

"We are going to expand our services to almost all districts of the south-western region, taking advantage of Padma Bridge," BRRTC Chairperson Tazul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, different private bus operators have already planned to expand their services in the south-western region, as they think bus service through the bridge is likely to see a boom.

**Satkira, Barishal, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Paisharhat of Barishal, Charmuguria of Madaripur, Kasiuni of Gopalganj, Kuakata of Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Gosaihat of Shariatpur, Mollarhat of Bagerhat, Bhandaria of Pirojpur, and Baufal of Patuakhali will come under the new BRRTC services.**

They think direct connection between Dhaka and the south-western region will cut travel times, and increase fuel efficiency as well as the number of passengers.

Major Md Moktaruzzmaan, general manager (operations) of BRRTC, said they will have fixed and fine tuned the routes by June 25.

"If we get a positive response from passengers, we will increase our services further," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they used to provide services in south-western region from three depots in Barishal, Khulna and Tungipara. Now, most of the services would be started from Dhaka.

Fares would be fixed as per the fare chart of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, another BRRTC official said. Most of the buses would start from Dhaka's Gulistan, some from Abdullapur, Mirpur-12 and Jatrabari, and two from Narsingdi.

BRRTC has given highest priority to Kuakata, as it has

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## HC stays DSA case against Jamuna TV reporter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months the trial proceedings against Jamuna Television journalist Nurnabi Sarkar in a case filed under the Digital Security Act in Mymensingh.

The court issued a rule asking the state to explain why the case proceeding against Nurnabi should not be scrapped.

Lutfunesa Beauty, former vice chairperson of Mymensingh's Trishal upazila, filed the case with Mymensingh Cyber Tribunal on June 15, 2021 after Jamuna Television broadcast a report on corruption allegation against a bureaucrat along with a blurred photo of the complainant.



Boatmakers busy at work at Kayetpara market. In light of the flood situation in Sylhet, the demand for boats has increased, as many residents of Dhaka's low-lying areas fear they might suffer the same fate if the water level of surrounding canals keep increasing. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HELEMUL ALAM

## HELEMUL ALAM

Md Razib Hossain, a resident of Daseshkhali under Khilgaon thana, came to Kayetpara bazar in the capital yesterday to purchase a boat along with his brother.

Razib, who had never purchased a boat before, spent around Tk 6,000 to purchase one. He said he will have to spend Tk 2,000 more to make it functional.

The gravity of the flood situation in Sylhet propelled them to make this purchase, fearing that a similar situation can occur in Dhaka's low-lying areas, he said.

"Several feet of water has already accumulated in the last one week at Fakirkhali under Khilgaon thana. This is why I've decided to purchase a boat for my family to face the worst," said Md Hasan Ali, who purchased a boat for Tk 14,000. He said 1.5 km of the main road

stretching from Ederkandi to Fakirkhali went under water on Sunday and they've been solely dependent on boats for travel.

Many like them have been visiting the almost 150 years old Kayetpara boat market, located under Khilgaon thana. The area falls under Dhaka South City Corporation's ward 75.

Md Rony, a boatmaker said, "During the dry season, we would make five to seven boats in a week, but now, we're making 30 due to the demand."

He said the demand started increasing in the last three months and even more within the last week.

There are five boat makers who usually make around 20 boats every day and sell those to different areas of the country specially at the outskirts of Dhaka, said Rony.

"We're busy making boats from 6:00am to 6:00pm every day at present and can make four boats in a day," said Md Joy Miah, another boatmaker.

He said they sold around 18 boats last week.

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A pedestrian balances himself as he almost slips on the mud accumulated on Beribadh Road in Hajaribagh. In the effect of the downpour over the last few days, the road has turned quite risky to tread on.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No festival planned for opening of Padma Bridge  
Says info minister

UNB, Dhaka

The government is not organising any festival to mark the opening of the Padma Bridge, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said yesterday.

There will just be an opening ceremony and a public rally on June 25, he told reporters at the secretariat, adding that the Padma Bridge has become a "symbol of our ability."

He said people across the country are jubilant as the construction of the bridge has become a reality despite opposition from BNP.

"BNP doesn't want any inaugural programme over the opening of the Padma Bridge and they hatched conspiracy to foil its opening. But their conspiracies have been thwarted," said Hasan.

Referring to the flood situation in Sylhet and

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## PADMA BRIDGE Foolproof security for inauguration

### MEASURES

- » Special security at Mawa, Jazira end of Padma Bridge
- » All law enforcement agencies to work in coordination
- » Steps to monitor water vessels
- » Emergency services like ambulance, primary treatment facilities



### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid fears of "subversive activities", foolproof security measures have been taken for the inaugural ceremony of Padma Bridge.

The decision was taken in a special meeting at the home ministry yesterday, to ensure overall law and order.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal presided over the meeting.

On June 25, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate Padma Bridge, which will connect the capital's land routes with southern parts of the country.

As per meeting decisions, foolproof security measures will be taken during the movement and stay of the PM, cabinet

members, prominent politicians and foreign diplomats.

Besides, measures will also be taken at various venues and surrounding areas at the Mawa and Jazira end of Padma Bridge.

All law enforcement agencies will work in coordination to ensure security. In addition, vigilance has been increased at the site to prevent untoward incidents.

Steps have been taken to monitor the water vessels, so that no accidents take place. Rescue teams of river police and fire service will be present at the site, said officials present in the meeting.

Sufficient emergency services like ambulances, primary treatment facilities and mobile toilets will be available there.

Earlier on June 15, the

PM asked all security forces, including the armed forces, to stay alert before the inauguration.

People who opposed the bridge's construction are now out to derail the grand opening, she said.

Besides, Road Transport and Bridge Minister Obaidul Quader said conspiracies are being hatched for subversive activities to foil the ceremony.

### INAUGURATION OF TWO POLICE STATIONS

Meanwhile, the PM will inaugurate two police stations — Padma Bridge (Uttar) and Padma Bridge (Dakshin) Police Station — today, aiming to ensure safety and security for the bridge.

According to the PM's daily

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## DU STUDENT MURDER Family rejects police probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT



The family has rejected the probe submitted by police to the court in a case filed over the death of Dhaka University student Elma Chowdhury Meghla.

Victim's father Saiful Islam Chowdhury, who filed the case, told the court that he would file a no-confidence petition against it on the next scheduled date.

Talking to reporters at the court premises, the complainant said his daughter was tortured to death, but police submitted the probe report under section 306 of the Penal Code, which means the accused abetted the victim to take her own life.

Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan

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## NSU SCAM Court refuses to hold bail hearing

COURT CORRESPONDENT

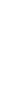
A Dhaka court yesterday refused to hold hearing on the bail petitions submitted for four members of North South University's (NSU) trustee board at the jail gate for one day in a Tk 304 crore money laundering case.

The accused are MA Kashem, Benajir Ahmed, Rehana Rahman and Mohammed Shahjahan.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after their lawyers submitted four petitions.

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## PRAYER TIMING JUNE 21



Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
Jamaat	1-40	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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## LOW-LYING AREAS IN DHAKA Flood fear fuels spike in boat sales

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