



A boy walks on a flood-damaged railway line in Sunamganj yesterday. *Top right*, people wade past a truck almost tipping over on a flooded road in the district. *Bottom right*, army personnel on speedboats taking relief materials to flood victims in Chhatak upazila.



PHOTO: AFP/SHEIKH NASIR

## HC blasts Boalmari UNO, official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rebuked Faridpur’s Boalmari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Rezaul Karim for ill-treating two process servers of the district judge’s court and threatening them for an altercation with his official over handing over of a summons.

“You have conducted in such an arbitrary manner (with the process servers) that it will remain as a spotted chapter for a civilised state. You have scandalized and damaged your own career. You could not handle a small issue. How can you serve the people? ... If we write a line about your act in the order, your career will be ruined,” the HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil told UNO Rezaul during the hearing on a suo muto contempt of court rule against him.

Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy told The Daily Star that Faridpur district judge court’s process servers Kamal Hossain and Mehedi Hasan went to the UNO office on April 27. They requested official Ukil Miah to receive a summons of the district judge’s court but the official refused.

The official told Kamal and Mehedi that they could not do anything to him if he refused to accept the summons.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## KALININGRAD RAIL BLOCKADE Russia warns Lithuania of ‘serious’ consequences

Presses offensive in Ukraine’s strategic Donbas region

AGENCIES

Moscow yesterday warned Lithuania of “serious” consequences over its restriction of rail traffic to Russia’s Kaliningrad exclave, as Kremlin forces made gains in Ukraine’s strategic Donbas region.

Kremlin troops were causing “catastrophic destruction” in Lysychansk, an industrial city at the forefront of clashes in the eastern Donbas, the region’s governor said. Ukraine confirmed Russia had taken frontline village Toshkivka.

Governor Sergiy Gaiday said “every town and village” in Ukrainian hands in Lugansk region was “under almost non-stop fire”.

Since being repelled from Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine following its invasion in February, Moscow is focusing its offensive on the strategic Donbas region.

In the eastern town of Sloviansk, which could become a flash point as Russian troops advance from the

north, local people were preparing to withstand attack and the authorities said the community would defend itself.

“We believe they’ll beat the Russian scum,” resident Valentina, 63, said of local Ukrainian forces.

Russia’s war of words with EU member Lithuania escalated yesterday, vowing “serious” consequences over Vilnius’ restrictions on rail traffic to the exclave of Kaliningrad.

Lithuania has shut the route for basic goods including construction materials, metals and coal, which it says it is required to do under EU sanctions that took effect on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Moscow summoned the EU’s ambassador to Russia. Its foreign ministry said Lithuania’s actions “violate the relevant legal and political obligations of the European Union”.

On the ground, the police chief of the Kyiv region said victims of the Russian attempt to seize the capital city continued to be found. So far,

the bodies of 1,333 civilians have been discovered and 300 people still missing.

US Attorney General Merrick Garland was visiting Ukraine to discuss prosecution of individuals involved in war crimes, a Justice Department official said.

EU ministers, meanwhile, backed granting Ukraine “candidate status” to join the bloc, ahead of a summit expected to formally greenlight the move later this week, France’s Europe minister Clement Beaune said.

On the maritime front, Russia’s navy is blockading ports, which Ukraine says is preventing millions of tonnes of grain from being shipped to world markets, contributing to soaring food prices.

In addition to Toshkivka, Ukraine said it had lost control of the eastern village of Metyolkine which has been a focus of fighting for weeks and is now largely under Russian control, reports AFP.

## Symbol of what Bangladesh can do Japanese ambassador on Padma Bridge

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s “far-sightedness and political astuteness”, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki has said the completion of Padma Bridge demonstrates what Bangladesh can do for its economic development and stability.

“Padma Bridge has been built on its own initiative and with its own funding. This is the bridge of national dream and pride. This bridge will truly fulfill the growth potential of Bangladesh,” he told a small group of journalists at his residence yesterday.

The envoy said 2022 will be remembered by the world with so many examples of quality infrastructure, including Padma Bridge inauguration on June 25, and partial inauguration of metro rail later this year.

He said Japan will continue to cooperate with Bangladesh for its development and will stand by this country in its development journey until the day it fulfills Vision 2041 and realises the vision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to build Sonar Bangla.

Naoki said their focus remains on a number of mega projects in Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox’s Bazar in line with the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative for the construction of an industrial corridor.

Naoki on Monday congratulated Hasina in person.

## Relief not reaching those who need it most

FROM PAGE 1

Around 45 lakh people, in all flood-hit areas combined, have been affected. At least 4.04 lakh of them have taken refuge in 1,474 shelters.

A total of 2.95 crore taka, 1,952 tonnes of rice and around 30,000 packets of dry foods were allocated for such a vast number of victims.

Data shows that, upon distribution, each victim will receive only 0.44 kg rice and 6.55 taka.

If the relief is for only those in the shelters, each person will get 4.88 kg rice and 73.75 taka. The 30,000 packets of dry food can only be distributed to the same number of people.

However, Md Mosharrof Hossain, divisional commissioner of Sylhet, said relief stocks are not insufficient but it requires

collective effort by the government, different organisations and individuals to ensure the flood victims get them.

“More relief will be allotted when needed. We are now working on distributing what we already have.”

He also added that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, during her visit to Sylhet, sanctioned another Tk 1.2 crore from the PM’s funds for the victims in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

However, while the administration is relying on private efforts, the cry of those affected is getting louder.

Abdullah Al Mamun, a banker in Sunamganj’s Shantiganj upazila, said, “Many people are in dire need of relief but the supply is too little compared to the demand. An all-out

relief attempt should be initiated.”

Bina Banu, of Sunamganj Sadar upazila’s Iqbalnagar village, said, “Many of us have taken shelter in a building owned by an expatriate. We survived the first couple of days with the food we brought with us. But since then, we have been starving.”

Besides, the demand for fresh water is also shooting up, as there have been no substantial efforts from the administration to provide drinking water.

An elderly woman in Mahmudnagar of Sunamganj Sadar told our correspondent they have been drinking rainwater and floodwater since taking shelter on the Sylhet-Sunamganj highway.

While the government is not being able to reach the people in the remote areas,

volunteers from different organisations have been working round the clock to reach those stranded.

Pritam Das, a relief volunteer, said, “We distributed relief to 600 people in three villages in Ailgaon union in Sylhet’s Gowainghat upazila. In the six days after the flood hit, this is the first time they received relief.”

Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, president of Sylhet’s Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, said, “We have a ministry to manage disasters. However, it is frustrating to see that they have no plan of action for dire situations such as this.

“The relief work must be extended to all the flood-affected people, and every responsible citizen should be involved in the relief work.”

Gaibandha point.

The district administration has allotted 80 tonnes of rice and Tk 6 lakh cash among flood victims.

In Bogura, around 80,000 people have been affected. The Jamuna was flowing 62cm above danger level at Mathurapara point in Sariakandi upazila yesterday noon.

“We have been marooned for the last six days. We cannot cook food. We are in severe crisis of pure water and food,” said Rafikul Mollah, a resident of Kuripara char under the upazila.

The district administration has allocated 45 tonnes of rice and Tk 10 lakh cash for victims.

## Don’t panic, govt stands by you

FROM PAGE 1

people and work for them. During cyclone, flooding or any other disaster, we always stay by the people and we will continue to do so.”

The meeting was organised to review recent flood situation in Sylhet division and rehabilitation of the affected people.

Hasina, also the AL president, said her party during any disaster reaches the affected people faster than others. “Awami League will continue its work for the people.”

She expressed her gratitude towards the local administration, the army and leaders and activists of the AL and its associated bodies who worked on rescuing flood victims and distribution of relief putting their lives at risk.

Hasina reiterated her assurance that all flood-hit people would be rehabilitated. “Don’t panic and don’t worry about the

flood. All of you [affected people] will be rehabilitated.”

She said she has directed all the authorities concerned, particularly the field level administration, to take prompt measures to ease sufferings of the flood victims.

Mentioning her experiences of the 1998 deluge, the PM said steps should be taken to arrange dry food for the affected people.

She also advised the affected people to somehow harvest rainwater.

Hasina asked the authorities concerned to distribute an adequate number of water purifying tablets, required medicines and saline among the flood-hit people.

The PM stressed the need for constructing elevated roads instead of building ones filling land in haor areas like Sylhet, Sunamganj and Kishoreganj for smooth transportation of the people

and goods during such disasters and ensuring their durability.

Hasina asked the authorities concerned to make sure that water cannot enter silos and food can be transported easily from the storehouses during floods.

She instructed the administration to launch a cleaning campaign in the flood affected areas to protect people from infectious diseases like diarrhoea and fever after the water starts receding.

The PM said the middle part of the country might experience flooding in the Bangla month of Shraban while the southern part in Bhadra.

“The entire Sylhet region has experienced flooding three times in a row. This flood is not the last one. So, we should always remain prepared to face floods.”

The PM handed over assistance to deputy commissioners of Sylhet

and Sunamganj from her Relief and Welfare Fund. She later gave away relief items to some affected people.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin and Deputy Minister for Water Resources AKM Enamul Hoque Shameem accompanied the PM during her visit to the flood affected areas.

At the meeting, the deputy commissioner of Sunamganj handed over a framed-picture of baby boy “Plabon” to the PM.

The baby was born on June 18 in the shelter of the Sunamganj DC office and the premier herself named him.

Earlier in the day, the prime minister offered ziarat at the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA) in Sylhet.

## EC initiative suffers setback

FROM PAGE 12

questing experts present at the meeting.

“We invited them – some joined and some did not. It is their own matter.”

The election commissioner said he had a meeting with BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam in late May and personally requested the BNP leaders to take part in the views-exchange meeting on EVMs.

In the first phase of the meeting on June 19, three political parties – Gono Forum, Krishak Sramik Janata League and Bangladesh Jatiya Party – out of 13 invited refrained

from taking part.

Meanwhile, eight political parties – Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, National People’s Party (NPP), Jamiate Ulamaye Islam Bangladesh, Islamic Front Bangladesh, Islami Oikya Jote, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, Bangladesh Islami Front and Khelafat Majlish – attended yesterday’s meeting.

At the event, representatives of different political parties recommended introduction of paper slips in the EVM system so that voters can understand which symbol they voted for.

Mohiuddin Ahmed, NPP technology adviser, proposed e-voting and said EVMs should be sent to polling centres directly from Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory.

Bangladesh Islamic Front Organising Secretary Jahangir Alam said EVMs at least ensure that voting would take place on election day. “It is a matter of question whether all will serve the purpose of the government or the people ...”

He added that it should be ensured that no musclemen could poke their noses into elections. Chief Election

Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said they would remain 100 percent honest.

“Ballot rigging and booth capturing took place but you [political parties] could not stop it,” he told the parties there.

“There are some dilemmas among political parties over EVMs. We will try to clear that. We are listening to you [political parties] and giving importance to that. We are yet to make any final decision on using of EVMs [in polls].”

The EC would sit with 13 more political parties, including ruling Awami League, on June 28.