



Dhaka New Market, a popular shopping destination in the city, remains inundated around 11:00am yesterday, hours after torrential rain triggered traffic chaos on Thursday night. Inset, rickshaws negotiate their way through a waterlogged street next to the market.

Will keep promoting democracy, rule of law

PM tells UNGA, says rights issues should not be politicised to exert pressure on developing nations

UNB, New York

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reiterated that Bangladesh will continue to promote democracy, rule of law and freedom of expression as per its constitution.

She was addressing the 78th session general debate of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters yesterday.

This has been Hasina's 19th speech at the UNGA. Like previous years, she spoke at the UN session in Bangla. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman first addressed the UNGA in Bangla in 1974.

The PM said human rights issues should not be politicised to put pressure on

developing countries.

Noting that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), she said, "On this auspicious occasion, we must reinforce our commitment to our common humanity and take collective action to advance equality, justice and freedom for all human beings."

"Over the last decade, significant reforms have been made to our [Bangladesh's] legal system to ensure equal legal protection and access to justice for everyone."

The premier urged the world leaders to work collectively to ensure peace and economic prosperity for the future generations.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Heavy rain exposes city's poor drainage

Many areas remain waterlogged even 24 hrs after downpour

DIPAN NANDY and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Thursday night's incessant downpour has exposed the capital's poor drainage system as different neighbourhoods remained waterlogged until last night.

The lives and business activities of thousands of residents were disrupted in many parts of Bangshal, Chankarpul, New Market, Panthapath and Kalshi areas that remained inundated in waist-deep water yesterday.

"This is an unlivable city. I don't know what the authorities are doing while rainwater remains stagnant on the streets. They are incapable of doing their work," said Bangshal resident Faruk Ahmed as he walked knee-deep in water that looked filthy and had a repugnant smell.

Shopkeepers in the area were seen draining water out of their shops and trying to salvage the wet grocery items until late in the afternoon.

Buses and three-wheelers barely operated in old Dhaka compounding the residents' sufferings.

Prof Mujibur Rahman who teaches civil engineering at Buet said the city's drainage system often proves to be inadequate during an ordinary rain. "It is no wonder that this system has utterly failed to drain the water after Thursday's torrential rains," he added.

The city saw 113 millimetres (about 4.45 inches) of rain from 6:00pm to 12:00am, the highest in a day this year, said Tariful Nawaz Kabir, a meteorologist at the Met office.

One mm of rain refers to the depth of

rain that would be received in each square metre of space.

Many neighbourhoods in Rampura, Badda, Basahbo, Goran, Kazipara, Mirpur 12, and several dormitory premises on Dhaka University campus remained inundated until yesterday afternoon.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital's emergency section, morgue, and the police outpost remained flooded until yesterday morning, officials said.

As incessant rains began to lash the city Thursday evening, the streets got inundated soon. Vehicles broke down in the middle of streets, resulting in congestion and gridlocks.

Shops at New Market, which sees thousands of shoppers thronging on weekends, did not even open until the evening.

Ariful Haque, owner of Rumky Watch Garden on the ground floor of the market, said the shelves and fittings at his shop were damaged.

"What's more frustrating is that the authorities are not doing anything about our sufferings," he told The Daily Star.

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'We are not worried'

Shahriar Alam says on US visa restrictions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is not concerned about the US visa restrictions as it has nothing to lose, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said last night.

"If any of the people in the government comes under the US visa policy and if that creates problems for the government functionaries, we will talk to the US government," he told a press briefing at his residence.

He also said Dhaka requested Washington to ensure that the policy is enforced judiciously, and not arbitrarily.

"We have nothing to lose, nothing to lose. We are not worried about it," he said, hours after the US said it is already imposing visa restrictions on members of the ruling party, opposition and law enforcement agencies.

Asked if the US will impose more sanctions, Shahriar said there is no reason for the US to impose further sanctions before the election.

"These issues have implications in domestic

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UNDERMINING FAIR POLLS

US taking steps to impose visa curbs on Bangladeshis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US Department of State has said it is already taking steps to impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshi individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

"These individuals include members of law enforcement, the ruling party, and the political opposition," State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement yesterday, but did not mention any names.

"These persons and members of their immediate family may be found ineligible for entry into the United States."

Additional persons found to have been responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process may also be found ineligible for US visas under this policy in the future, Miller said.

"This includes current and former Bangladeshi officials, members of opposition and ruling political parties, and members of law enforcement, the judiciary, and security services."

"Our actions today [yesterday] reflect the continued commitment of the United States to supporting Bangladesh's goal of peacefully holding free and fair national elections, and to support those seeking to advance democracy globally," the statement reads.

Bryan Schiller, spokesperson of the US embassy in Dhaka, told reporters after the announcement that visa records are confidential under the US law, and that Washington will not release the names or numbers of people subjected to the visa restrictions.

The announcement comes when Prime Minister Sheikh

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Visa curbs slapped on law enforcers, members of ruling party, opposition

Donald Lu says in interview with Star

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Washington yesterday said it began applying the visa policy that was announced on May 24 this year. In an email interview, US Assistant Secretary at the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu shared some details of the action with The Daily Star.

DS: Who have you restricted under the US visa policy? What are their roles and positions?

Donald Lu: We have said from the beginning that we will not share the

names of individuals who have received visa restrictions under this policy. Visa records, including individual visa denials, are confidential under US law. What I can say is that we have looked very closely at incidents since we announced this policy. After a careful review of the evidence, we have imposed visa restrictions on members of law enforcement, the ruling party, and the political opposition.

The purpose of this policy is to show that we are a constructive partner for the people of Bangladesh by working to reduce violence and deter actions that undermine a free and fair election.

DS: What have they done, and why did

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Fair polls not possible unless this govt quits

Fakhrul tells rally, urges govt to let Khaleda go abroad for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A free and fair election is not possible without the resignation of the Awami League government, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told a rally in the capital yesterday.

"... The European Union has stated that there is no environment for a free and fair election in the country, which is why they will not send observers during the election. Even the Jatiya Party has said that a free and fair election won't be held until the government resigns. For the sake of a fair election, the government must resign," he said.

Fakhrul made the remarks while addressing the rally on a street near Abdullahpur Polwel Market to materialise the party's one-point movement – the resignation of the incumbent government and an election under a non-partisan caretaker government.

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A motorcycle going against traffic on the Uttara-Tongi College Gate flyover. Such violation of traffic rules puts people's lives at risk. The photo was taken in Tongi Station Road area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Extend LDC trade benefit till 2032

BGMEA requests UK govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has requested the British government to extend the LDC trade benefit for three more years – up from 2029 to 2032 – as the domestic and global fashion industries have been severely impacted by the Covid pandemic.

BGMEA President Faruque Hassan on September 14 wrote a letter to British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Sarah Cooke in this connection. He shared the letter in a WhatsApp group yesterday.

In the letter, Faruque wanted to know about the UK's proposed strategy on Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), under which the British government has determined the tariff rates on goods after the country's exit from the European Union.

The Bangladesh government has also been holding talks with other countries and international organisations for an extension of the LDC trade benefits for three more years. The country is set to

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