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City dwellers suffer after morning rain

DIPAN NANDY

The pre-monsoon showers have yet again exposed the persistent drainage problems in the capital as last morning's heavy downpour left many Dhaka streets submerged and residents struggling to navigate the knee- to waist-deep murky waters.

Office-goers and school students were among the worst sufferers.

On April 17, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said there would be no waterlogging in the capital during the upcoming rainy season.

However, last morning the waterlogging situation in Dhaka North was worse than in Dhaka South.

Thousands of residents in Mirpur and surrounding areas faced major disruptions to their daily lives as the streets were flooded with waist-deep water.

Dhaka experienced 87 millimetres of rainfall and a thunderstorm [nor'wester] at 52 km/h between 6:00am and 9:00am, Omar Faruq, a meteorologist at the Bangladesh

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A student wades through ankle-deep murky waters on her way to school. Due to poor drainage, the street in front of her house quickly got waterlogged after the morning rain and remained under water until the afternoon. The photo was taken around 10:30am yesterday near Outer Circle Road in the capital's Mouchak area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Rano, a doyen of Marxist politics, passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent leftist leader and Marxist theorist Haider Akbar Khan Rano breathed his last early yesterday.

Rano, 81, was suffering from chronic lung disease for several years and was admitted to Health and Hope Hospital in the capital on May 6, his niece Ananya Laboni told The Daily Star.

He was known for his steadfast role in the Liberation struggle and in efforts to uphold the ideals of non-communalism, democracy and socialism in the country.

Under the banner of Co-

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Withdrawals put BASIC Bank in liquidity crisis

MD MEHEDI HASAN

BASIC Bank is experiencing a deep liquidity crunch as depositors have been withdrawing money for weeks following news that the state-run lender is going to be acquired by a private commercial bank.

A commercial bank has to maintain 13 percent of its deposits as the Statutory Liquidity Ratio, which is the reserve requirement that banks are expected to keep to be able to offer loans. BASIC currently falls short of meeting the requirement by Tk 1,800 crore.

Amid the crisis, BASIC's management wrote to the Financial Institutions Division of the finance ministry on May 7, requesting that government agencies be ordered to deposit money with the bank at low interest rates.

In a letter, the management also requested that the government clarify its position on the decision to merge BASIC with City Bank.

BASIC had previously incurred losses due to high levels of bad loans and high interest-bearing deposits, but it had never faced an SLR shortfall, said the letter.

Since the decision to merge the two banks was made in early April, BASIC has been facing an unusually high withdrawal of deposits, six officials of the bank told The Daily Star.

As of Thursday, depositors had withdrawn around Tk 2,500 crore, according to data from the bank.

Government institutions like Bangladesh Power Development Board, different agencies under the power ministry, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, Shahjalal Fertilizer Company Limited,

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- » Faces Tk 1,800cr in SLR shortfall
- » Depositors withdraw Tk 2,500cr
- » Has no collateral to borrow from BB
- » Uncertainty over paying employees

Israel expands Rafah evacuation order

Fear of imminent attack forces tens of thousands to flee; US report criticizes Israel but does not block arms

AGENCIES

Israeli strikes yesterday hit parts of Gaza including Rafah where Israel expanded an evacuation order and the UN warned of "epic" disaster if an outright invasion of the crowded city occurs.

AFP journalists, medics and witnesses reported strikes across the coastal territory, where the UN says humanitarian relief is blocked after Israeli troops defied international opposition and entered eastern Rafah this week, effectively shutting a key aid crossing and suspending traffic through another.

At least 21 people were killed during strikes in central Gaza and taken to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah city, a hospital statement said.

Bodies covered in white lay on the ground in a courtyard of the facility. A man in a baseball cap leaned over one body bag, clasping a dust-covered hand that protruded.

The feet of another corpse poked from under a blanket bearing the picture of a large teddy bear.

In Rafah, witnesses reported intense air strikes near the crossing with Egypt, and AFP images showed smoke rising over the city.

Other strikes occurred in north Gaza, witnesses said.

Israeli troops on Tuesday seized and closed the Palestinian side of the

Rafah crossing -- through which all fuel passes into Gaza -- after ordering residents of eastern Rafah to evacuate.

The army yesterday said troops were engaged in "operational activity" at the crossing, where they fought against "armed terrorists" and found "numerous underground tunnel shafts".

- » UN chief warns of 'epic disaster'
- » UNSC seeks enquiry into mass graves in Gaza
- » Death toll in the Palestinian enclave now 34,971

The development came a day after the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to grant the Palestinians additional rights in the global body and backed their drive for full membership, vetoed by Washington at the Security Council.

While mediation efforts towards a truce and hostage release appear to stall, Hamas's armed wing released a video of a captive seen alive in Gaza -- the third such footage released in less than a month.

The man is seen speaking in the 11-second clip, which is superimposed with text in Arabic and Hebrew that reads: "Time is running out."

The new evacuation order for eastern Rafah, posted on social media platform X by military spokesman Avichay Adraee, said the designated areas had "witnessed Hamas terrorist activities in recent days and weeks".

Since October 7 last year, Israel's offensive has killed at least 34,971 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry.

A US State Department report on Friday said it was "reasonable to assess" that Israel violated norms on international law in its use of weapons from the United States but it did not find enough evidence to block shipments.

The State Department submitted its report two days after President Joe Biden publicly threatened to withhold certain bombs and artillery shells if Israel goes ahead with an all-out assault on Rafah, where the United Nations said 1.4 million had been sheltering.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged to "eliminate" Hamas battalions in Rafah, after the army in January said it had dismantled the Hamas command structure in northern Gaza.

UAE hits out at Netanyahu for saying it could help run Gaza

REUTERS, Cairo/Dubai

The United Arab Emirates hit out at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday after the Israeli leader said the Gulf state could be involved in aiding a future government in Gaza after the war.

The prominent and influential Gulf state, is one of few Arab states with official diplomatic ties to Israel, which it has maintained through Israel's more than six-month war in Gaza, although relations appear to have become frayed.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan rebuked Netanyahu in an early morning post on X, saying Abu Dhabi denounced the Israeli leader's comments.

"The UAE stresses that the Israeli prime minister does not have any legal capacity to take this step, and the UAE refuses to be drawn into any plan aimed at providing cover for the Israeli presence in the Gaza Strip," he said in an Arabic post.

Sheikh Abdullah said the UAE would be prepared to support a Palestinian government that met the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, which he said included independence.

In an interview that aired this week, Netanyahu said the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other countries could possibly assist a civilian government with Gazans in the enclave after the war.

BLOGGER ANANTA MURDER Family still awaits closure

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

The ageing mother of slain blog writer Ananta Bijoy Das, who was killed by Islamist militants nine years ago, is still waiting for closure.

An Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal in Sylhet sentenced four militants to death on March 30, 2022, and acquitted an accused in the case.

But three of the convicts are still on the run.

However, officials say hearing on the death references and an appeal filed by the state may take a few more years.

Ananta's mother Pijush Rani Das, aged around 70, has different illnesses and his father Rabindra Kumar Das died in 2019, when the trial proceedings were going on.

Ananta's brother-in-law Somor Bijoy Shee, a lawyer, said, "All we can do is to wait for justice to be served. We hope his mother gets to see it."

Ananta was a banker and the editor of a magazine called Jukti, which was known for promoting freethinking.

In the morning of May 12, 2015, the 31-year-old was hacked to death near his home in Subidbazar area while on

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Northern lights or aurora borealis illuminate the night sky north of San Francisco, California. The most powerful solar storm in more than two decades struck Earth, triggering spectacular celestial light shows from Tasmania to Britain and threatening possible disruptions to satellites and power grids as it persists into the weekend.

PHOTO: AFP

Nasa creates visualisation of falling in black hole

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa has used an ultra-powerful supercomputer to create what it claims is a realistic visualisation of what it would look like to be sucked into a black hole.

Scientists at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland produced the simulation to see how the universe would appear once beyond the event horizon of a supermassive black hole.

The project took five days to run on the US space agency's Discover supercomputer, producing around 10 terabytes of data.

"People often ask about this, and simulating these difficult-to-imagine processes helps me connect the mathematics of relativity to actual consequences in the real universe," said Jeremy Schnittman, an astrophysicist at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center, who created the visualisations.

"So I simulated two different scenarios, one where a camera -- a stand-in for a daring astronaut -- just misses the event horizon and slingshots back out, and one where it crosses the boundary, sealing its fate."

