

Flood situation worsens further in Sylhet

More areas in the city, villages inundated as rivers swell

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The flood situation in Sylhet continues to worsen as rivers are swelling due to the onrush of water from upstream, inundating city neighbourhoods and rural areas yesterday.

Around 1 lakh more people were affected by the flood yesterday, raising the number of flood-hit people to around 7.38 lakh in Sylhet, according to the district administration's statistics.

Neighbourhoods of 28 city wards, out of 48, and 832 villages in 14 upazilas have gone under water, say the statistics.

The Surma was flowing 11cm above the danger level near Sylhet city at 6:00pm yesterday and the Kushiyara 24cm above the danger mark at Amalshid point under Zakiganj upazila, according to Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) in Sylhet.

About 26mm rainfall was recorded in Sylhet in 24 hours till 6:00pm, said Dipak Ranjan Das, executive engineer of BWDB.

Meanwhile, 122mm rainfall was recorded in India's Cherrapunji on Monday and water is flowing downstream. That is why the rivers in Sylhet are swelling, he added.

City dwellers are facing difficulties preparing food as many areas are without electricity and gas.

"Our entire area has gone under knee-deep water. All houses have been inundated. Many have already left their homes and taken shelter elsewhere," said Sajidur Rahman, of Sylhet city's Upashohor area.

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Scotland opener George Munsey hits a boundary against holders England, en route to totaling an impressive 90 for naught in their allocated 10 overs, in the teams' opening T20 World Cup match at the Kensington Oval in Barbados yesterday. Unfortunately, the rain-affected Group B fixture was abandoned eventually. Meanwhile, a Group D affair in Texas saw the Netherlands begin campaign with a six-wicket win over Nepal after restricting the latter to 106 all out.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers' injury woes in WC continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh are not only struggling with batters' form but are concerned over key pacers' availability before their opening T20 World Cup game against Sri Lanka on June 8.

It has been another instance of injury troubles for Bangladesh's pace battery in a major event, a unit which has promised so much over the past few years. Taskin Ahmed had been carrying an injury since the tour of South Africa in 2022 – where he rattled the Proteas in Bangladesh's ODI series win against the hosts. The injury resurfaced during the 2023 World Cup in India as Bangladesh's pace attack failed to have the impact they were expected to make.

This time, Bangladesh went to the United States with Taskin still in rehabilitation, following an injury in his rib area suffered during the home series against Zimbabwe. The team management wants Taskin to play the opening match following an assessment on June 5.

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Benazir, Aziz have nothing to do with AL

Says Obaidul Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has said former IGP Benazir Ahmed and ex-army chief Aziz Ahmed do not belong to the ruling party and they became chiefs of their respective forces based on their merit.

Addressing a representatives' meeting of the AL at its Dhaka district office in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday, he said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has the courage to bring the two to book if their wrongdoings come to light.

Dhaka City (North) Awami League organised the meeting to mark the historic Six-Point Day and the AL's founding anniversary.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said his party did not give any person top positions of the police, army, Rab or the civil administration violating rules and regulations.

On the other hand, former premier Khaleda Zia made Moen U Ahmed, who was ninth in line, the army chief by violating rules, he said.

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Pressure for Gaza truce deal rises

Qatar urges clear positions from Israel, Hamas; 71 more Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

REUTERS, Dubai

Qatar, which has been mediating on Gaza between Israel and Hamas, stressed yesterday that there should be a clear position from both parties to reach a ceasefire deal.

"We are waiting for a clear Israeli position that represents the entire government in response to the US's Gaza proposal," said Qatari foreign ministry spokesperson Majed Al-Ansari.

"The ceasefire deal should immediately end the long suffering of all people in Gaza and the hostages and their families and provide a roadmap for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the crisis", Al-Ansari said.

Qatar said that it is still waiting to reach language that is agreed by both parties.

US President Joe Biden on Friday laid out a three-phase ceasefire proposal from Israel to Hamas to end the offensive in Gaza that

has killed tens of thousands and caused a humanitarian crisis.

The offer calls for a ceasefire, the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the reconstruction of Gaza.

United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk yesterday expressed his support for the US-

proposed ceasefire deal, describing the situation in the Palestinian territory as "beyond catastrophic", reports Reuters.

Turk said norms and standards on the conduct of war had been brutally violated in Gaza, and any initiative that can lead to an end in hostilities was welcomed.

Biden swiped at Benjamin Netanyahu in an interview with Time magazine published yesterday, saying there was "every reason" to conclude the Israeli prime minister was dragging out the Gaza offensive to save himself politically.

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GRAFT ALLEGATIONS

Benazir may not appear before ACC tomorrow



DIPAN NANDY

Former police chief Benazir Ahmed is unlikely to appear before the Anti-Corruption Commission tomorrow because he has yet to respond to its summons, according to sources.

Although the ACC sent the summons notice to his Gulshan residence last week, no one from Benazir's family received the letter. Till yesterday, the letter remained at the guardroom of their Gulshan residence amid speculations that the ex-

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Lines of illegally parked CNGs and pickups have reduced the Padmar Mor Road in Hemayetpur to half its width, while also hogging space on the adjacent footpath, hampering both pedestrian and vehicular movement. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

YOU ASKED, WE DELIVERED!

Thank you for your questions related to climate and environmental concerns. See page 3 and 7 of today's paper for the special supplement published with the answers to selected questions.

Chinese probe lifts off from far side of Moon



AFP, Beijing

A Chinese probe carrying samples from the far side of the Moon started its journey back to Earth yesterday, the country's space agency said – a world first and a major achievement for Beijing's space programme.

The ascender module of the Chang'e-6 probe "lifted off from lunar surface" and entered a preset orbit around the Moon, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said.

It was the first craft to ever successfully take off from the satellite's far side, with state news agency Xinhua describing the launch as "an unprecedented feat in human lunar exploration history".

Analysis of the samples it is bringing back will allow scientists "to deepen research on the formation and evolutionary history of the Moon", Xinhua quoted Chang'e-6 mission spokesman Ge Ping as saying.

Taiwan detects 23 Chinese aircraft around island

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's defence ministry said yesterday it had detected 23 Chinese aircraft around the island in a window of less than three hours.

China maintains a near-daily military presence around self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing claims as part of its territory.

"Since 8:20 am (0020 GMT), we have successively detected a total of 23 aircraft... including 16 that crossed the median line," the defence ministry said, referring to a line bisecting the Taiwan Strait that separates the island from China.

The ministry statement, issued at 10:40 am, said that the aircraft included fighter jets, transport aircraft and drones.

Taiwan's "military is using joint intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance methods to closely monitor the situation".

Yesterday's surge comes after China sent in 19 aircraft, eight naval vessels, and four Chinese coast guard ships around Taiwan within a 24-hour period ending at 6:00 am, according to Taipei's daily report.

Tensions on the strait have been ramped up since the May 20 inauguration of Taiwan's new President Lai Ching-te.

China said his inauguration speech – in which he vowed to defend Taiwan's democracy and freedom – was akin to a "confession of Taiwan independence".

Three days later it launched war games around Taiwan, encircling the island with warplanes and ships as a "punishment" for "separatist acts".