



Graffiti vs Regime

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The triumphs and challenges of a generation in flux

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Revolutionary changes needed to deal with floods

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DU campus becomes major flood relief hub

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FLOODS IN CTG, SYLHET DIVISIONS

44 lakh marooned

15 die; more areas inundated as floodwaters breach embankments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More areas in Cumilla and Chattogram were flooded in a span of few hours yesterday with strong currents washing away parts of embankments along the Gumti and Halda rivers.

As many as 44 lakh people remained marooned in 11 districts including Cumilla and Chattogram.

BSS reports that 15 people died and 48 lakh were affected in the districts. Four died in Cumilla, four in Chattogram, one in Feni, one in Noakhali, one in Brahmanbaria, one in Lakshmipur and three in Cox's Bazar, said Hasan Ali, assistant secretary at the disaster management ministry.

As the downpour stopped in Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Feni and India's Tripura the level of water in rivers fell slightly, said a bulletin of the flood forecasting centre in Bangladesh.

"But seven rivers are still flowing above the danger level. The situation may significantly improve in two days," said Sarder Uday Raihan, executive engineer at the centre.

DEVASTATION

Thousands of people in Feni, where the crisis is most severe, are left with no cell phone signal as over 94 percent of the towers there went out of order.

Family members who live in other parts of the country have not been able to contact them for several days.

The telecom regulator said 1,807 or 14.8 percent of the towers in 12 districts went out of order.

Kamrul Hasan, secretary of the disaster management ministry, told reporters at the Secretariat that 77 upazilas of different districts were almost completely submerged.

After the embankment along the Gumti river collapsed in Burichong, Cumilla, early yesterday, around 5 lakh people were marooned within hours.

Mahfuz Babu, a resident of the Mainamati area, said, "Very late at night, I saw floodwater gushing into the village."

The authorities were taking the people to 35 shelters.

Due to broken and unstable bridges and flooded roads, different upazilas in Brahmanbaria, Chattogram and several other districts became inaccessible.

At least 2,62,400 people were marooned in Fatikchhari, Hathazari, Sitakunda, and Mirsarai upazilas of Chattogram.

Officials said the Halda was flowing 108 cm above the danger level at Narayan Hat at 1:00pm yesterday.

The sheer force of water breached an embankment in 22 places, causing more flooding in Hathazari, said Sohag Talukder, sub-divisional engineer at the Water Development Board.

In Fatikchhari, 1 lakh people were stranded while the roads from Heyanko to Fatikchhari, Jhankar to Raozan, Nazirhat to Kazirhat, and some other areas were closed.

In Brahmanbaria, the road between Kasba and Akhaura was closed as a bridge collapsed and another became unstable.

In Akhaura, at least eight regional roads were closed.

Railway communications in Chattogram have been closed since Thursday.

In Moulvibazar and Habiganj, the levels of water in the Kushiya, Manu, and Khawai rivers began to fall yesterday morning.

At least 188,739 people were evacuated to 3,160 shelters and the authorities deployed 637 medical teams in the affected regions.

1,88,739 people in 3,160 shelters

637 medical teams deployed

Barely any cell phone signal in Feni



A couple with their children makes their way through floodwaters heading home from a shelter in Ghopal of Feni's Chhagalnaiya upazila yesterday. They would see the condition of their belongings which have been badly damaged in flooding. In the distance, some locals wait for boats to transport them to other areas.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Support pours in for flood victims
Thousands join rescue efforts, provide relief items

MUNTAKIM SAAD

People from all walks of life, alongside numerous non-profit organisations, have stepped up their efforts to rescue and provide relief to the millions affected by the floods in Sylhet and Chattogram divisions.

In an outpouring of support, students, professionals, social media influencers, athletes, artists and people across all religious backgrounds are rallying to aid those affected.

Many have even travelled to the flood-hit areas carrying boats and other equipment on trucks to assist in the rescue efforts.

On Facebook, some are sharing posts to raise funds for the victims.

Teachers and students from various universities

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Star INTERVIEW

'Hasina used DGFI to force me to leave the country'

Ex-chief justice SK Sinha says he is ready to return to prove innocence

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, who was allegedly forced to leave the country about seven years ago as a sitting chief justice, has said he is ready to return to Bangladesh and prove that all the cases filed against him are completely false and fabricated if the government ensures his security.

"I will go back to Bangladesh. I'm now waiting for a green signal," he said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star from abroad via video call on August 14.

Justice Sinha, known as SK Sinha, described how then prime minister Sheikh Hasina had kept him under tremendous pressure and forced him to leave the country through DGFI personnel as "he fought for the independence of the judiciary, ignoring her directives and interference".

The former chief justice claimed that the conflict between the

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BB in talks with IMF for extra \$3 billion loan

AGENCIES

Bangladesh is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for an additional \$3 billion loan, according to BBC and Bloomberg reports.

In an interview with Bloomberg, Bangladesh's new central bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur said the loan is needed to recover from the recent political turmoil that the country went through. The bank is also buying dollars from local banks to meet unpaid debt.

Bangladesh secured \$4.7 billion in funding from the IMF last year. Mansur said he was in a conversation with the Washington-based financial body to "augment" and "front load" this amount by an additional \$3b, reports BBC.

He said Bangladesh was also seeking an additional \$1.5b from the World Bank and \$1b each from the Asian Development Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The country is only just emerging from weeks of

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Former SC judge Manik, ASM Feroz detained



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BGB personnel yesterday detained AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, while fleeing the country.

"Former judge Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik was detained by BGB members at the border while trying to flee to India," BGB's Public Relations Officer Shariful Islam told The Daily Star last night.

He was detained from the Dona border in Sylhet's Kanaighat upazila yesterday evening.

Lt Col Khandakar Md Asadunnabi, commanding officer of 19 BGB Battalion, said, "We will hand him over to police after completing

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Some parts of this footbridge's escalator have been stolen before it is even opened to pedestrians in the capital's Farmgate. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TAX-FREE IMPORT BY LAWMAKERS Customs halts release of 44 luxury cars

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

The customs department is not releasing 44 luxury vehicles that former lawmakers imported under a duty-free facility.

Customs halted the release because those who imported the vehicles are no longer MPs.

Before the Awami League government fell early this month, seven cars brought under the provision were released, but the vehicles have not been registered with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) yet.

NBR data shows that the import price of these 51 vehicles -- mostly Toyota Land Cruisers and Land Cruiser Prados -- is approximately Tk 61 crore.

The cheapest Land Cruiser was imported for a little under Tk 98 lakh. If the duty is to be paid, the vehicle would cost over Tk 8.10 crore.

Most of the vehicles were imported from Japan and Singapore and have 3,000cc to

4,000cc engines.

Lawmakers are entitled to import a duty-free car once every five years. The tax on such vehicles can be up to 810 percent, but MPs do not have to pay it.

When President Mohammed Shahabuddin dissolved the parliament on August 6, a day after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country amid an unprecedented student-led mass uprising, the lawmakers lost their membership in parliament and the privileges, like tax free cars, that come with it.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mohammad Fyzur Rahman, commissioner of Chattogram Custom House, said, "The MPs get the tax-free cars to carry out parliamentary duties. We halted the clearance process of these cars because these will not be used for parliamentary duties."

According to NBR documents, the seven cars that have been released

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