



A drone view shows the waterlogged Shareghata area of Khulna's Dumuria upazila. Residents of almost half of the 56 Ashrayan homes have moved to stay with their relatives after the area went under water about two months ago due to monsoon rains. The rest of the occupants still have to endure appalling living conditions. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

How Hasina's flight was kept off radar

ZYMA ISLAM and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

When the air force transporter plane carrying Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka on August 5, it took off as a training flight and turned off its transponders to blur its flightpath and location.

The transponders, which transmit location, heading, altitude and speed, and the automatic geolocator system, were not turned on until the aircraft was close to Indian airspace in West Bengal, several sources told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of flight AJAX1431's progress strip from air traffic control. The flight progress strip is a small card which the ATC use to track a certain plane in the air so that planes don't collide mid-air.

This paper also obtained a recording of the radio communications between the cockpit of the Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft and the ATC in Dhaka.

The flight progress strip shows that Hasina's plane took off from Dhaka's Bangabandhu Airbase, on the west of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, at 3:09pm.

Just 30 minutes prior to this, tens of thousands of protesters took control of the

Gono Bhaban, Hasina's then official residence. Army chief Waker Uz Zaman was initially scheduled to address the nation at 2:00pm to formally announce Hasina's resignation. This was later postponed to 3:00pm, but he eventually made his address around 4:00pm.

In an interview with a New York-based nagoriktv.com in the last week of August, Waker said that he did not know that Hasina was flying away.

"When I was holding discussions with the political parties, somebody informed me that she is going to exit the country, she is on the run. I did not know that she was leaving the country. I think that if she had stayed, it could have been a risk to her life. Definitely, nobody would have wanted an extra-judicial killing to have happened. The situation was extremely volatile," he said.

The plane turned on its transponders and automatic geolocator system when it reached waypoint "BEMAK" on Dhaka-Kolkata route. The aircraft suddenly showed up on radar. It first headed towards Kolkata before changing course for Hindon Air Force base

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Landslides kill six in Cox's Bazar

Heavy rains send parts of the town under water



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Six people from two families were killed in separate landslides triggered by incessant rain in Sadar and Ukhiya upazilas of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

Among the deceased are Akhi Moni, wife of Mizanur Rahman from Dakshin Dikkul in Sadar upazila, and her two daughters Miha Jannat Naima and Latifa Islam.

The three other victims are siblings Abdur Rahim, Abdul Hafeez and Abdul Waheed, all residents of Rohingya refugee camp-14 at Hakimpura in Ukhiya.

Relatives of Akhi Moni said they heard a loud noise coming from near Mizanur's

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Half of Noakhali still reeling from flood

Clogging of canals leads to prolonged inundation

ANWARUL HAIDER, and MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Sixty-year-old Kofil Uddin watched helplessly as floodwater crept into his home at Bhabani Jibanpur village in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila on August 10. More than a month has passed, but the house is still under knee-deep water.

Floods devastated much of Chattogram and Sylhet divisions in Bangladesh last month following a sudden surge of water from the upstream in India, coupled with heavy rainfall. Although floodwater has receded in most areas, more than half of Noakhali remains under water.

Kofil and other locals, along with officials and experts, have blamed the clogging of canals by encroachers for the prolonged floods in the district, which one of the elderly residents called unprecedented in living memory.

Md Abdullah, 70, another resident of Bhabani Jibanpur village, said he had never seen such destruction by floods in his life.

"We've been marooned by flood for one month," he said and complained that he received no relief when he stayed in the Chhoyani Girls High School for 15 days during the flood.

After the floods affected at least 21 lakh residents in the district last

month, 60,000-70,000 people are still living in shelters, said Noakhali Deputy Commissioner Dewan Mahabubur Rahman.

As long as the educational institutions have been turned into flood shelters, the authorities are unable to resume academic activities and they have requested the local administration to move the people to other places.

The canals in the district are also filled with garbage, while fish farms and unplanned sluice gates, regulators or cross dams have blocked the natural flow of water into the Meghna river.

Besides elongated suffering of the locals by the flooding, the effects of climate change have fuelled further concerns about the possibility of saline water from the sea entering the district and getting stranded in the low-lying areas, which will impact farming and source of fresh water.

Kofil said rain and flood water of Begumganj upazila flows through Gabua canal via Lakshmipur into the Meghna river. A sluice gate was constructed three kilometres upstream from his village around 10 years ago. "This has been an obstacle to the natural drainage system. As a result, the flood water is not rereading significantly."

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Dengue claimed at least 20 lives over last 12 days

5,200 hospitalised: DGHS

HELEMUL ALAM

The dengue outbreak is becoming deadlier with at least 5,200 hospitalisations and 20 deaths from the mosquito-borne disease reported in the first 13 days of this month.

The government recorded 6,521 dengue cases and 27 deaths throughout last month.

This year, 18,041 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country and almost two thirds of them were from outside the capital, the health directorate said.

Inadequate mosquito-killing activities, surveillance and awareness are the main reasons why more people are getting infected outside Dhaka, experts said.

Unless urgent steps are taken, the situation will be worse, they added.

So far this year, the disease borne by Aedes mosquitoes has claimed 103 lives, and at least 10,154 were admitted to hospitals outside Dhaka.

Of the total cases, 61.9 percent of the patients are male and the rest are female. Of those who died, 51.5 percent are female, according to DGHS data.

Moreover, 2,613 patients are aged 21 to 25, 2,440 are aged 26 to 30, and 2,227 are 16 to 20.

Ten patients died in each of 06-10 and 46-50 age groups.

Entomologist Monzur A Chowdhury said corruption and lack of initiatives in lean season were responsible for the rising number of cases in Dhaka and elsewhere.

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The capital's Mugda Medical College and Hospital is swamped with dengue patients as the disease is prevalent in the city. Doctors said 130 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at the hospital yesterday noon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

US TEAM'S VISIT Economy, trade high on agenda

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A high-profile US delegation is arriving in Dhaka today on a two-day visit that will focus on trade and challenges in the economy, including a dollar shortage and money laundering.

This will be the first visit by any US delegation to Dhaka after the formation of the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, which has undertaken a massive reform process in the state institutions and the economy following the fall of the Awami League government.

The delegation includes Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, who will fly to Dhaka from India and join other delegation members.

Brent Neiman, deputy under secretary for International Finance at the US Department of the Treasury, and officials of

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