

# Twister tears through Brahmanbaria villages

## 22 killed, over 500 wounded as 1,500 houses flattened

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
*Brahmanbaria*

At least 22 people, including nine women, were killed and over 500 others injured when a tornado cut a swathe through two villages in Brahmanbaria district Sunday night.

The twister flattened about 1,500 flimsy houses, putting thousands of people out under the sky.

Officials put the death count at 22, but unofficial sources claimed over 30 deaths. The toll may rise further as some people are grievously injured, witnesses said.

They said the storm left a trail of destruction in a three-kilometer-long swathe.

The killer twister, packing flurries of wild winds, began at 7:45pm and flattened houses, uprooted trees and sent debris flying at every direction in a 20-minute frenzy.

Many of the injured lost their hands, feet and others limbs, witnesses said.

The frontier villages of Marasani and Nolgouria which took the hardest hits virtually stood in ruins, while Kashimnagar suffered partial damage.

Five each of the families of Abdul Latif Mia and Tajul Mia and four members of the family of Jalfu Mia died in the storm.

The dead are Nurul Islam, 60, his wife Safurunnesa, 45, Atiq Mia, 16, Babul Mia, 8, Ashiya Begum, 40,

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PHOTO: STAR

Houses stand in ruins after a killer tornado cut a swathe through three Brahmanbaria villages yesterday, killing 22 people, injuring over 500 and causing widespread damage.

### Corruption 56 would-be mariners walk out of academy in protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Fifty-six cadets of the 38th batch of Chittagong Marine Academy left the institution on Sunday, protesting corruption and anomalies in the academy.

The cadets came out in a procession in presence of all the high officials, including the commandant and deputy commandant of

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## Money skimmers take DFP for a ride

### Outsiders make documentary to siphon off fund

STAR REPORT

The Ministry of Information has its eyes wide shut to the overwhelming presence of evidences of involvement of some outsiders in the production of a documentary for the Department of Films and Publications (DFP) to skim money.

Evidences proved that a group of influential outsiders led by one of the three assistant press secretaries (APS) to the prime minister made the documentary and siphoned off most of the Tk 8 lakh allocation by the information

ministry for the venture.

The 30-minute documentary, one in Bangla and another with English sub-title, carries propaganda against the Awami League-sponsored convention on human rights and 'repression' on the Hindu community immediately after the last general election. Copies of it were distributed among Bangladesh embassies abroad and foreign missions in Dhaka.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the CD styled 'Glimpses of

Truth', which clearly showed that it was not made by the DFP, but by a group of outsiders.

Officials said it is mandatory to use names of the DFP, Ministry of Information and the monogram of the Bangladesh government in the credit line of any government film or documentary. But neither the name of the DFP nor any private organisation was stated in the documentary.

The credit line of every documentary that the DFP produces should read: 'Presented by the Department of Films and Publications (DFP), Ministry of Information, People's Republic of Bangladesh (along with the official monogram).'

But this particular documentary skipped those words.

Evidence and investigation revealed the APS, who rather prefers to introduce himself as a spokesman of Hawa Bhaban (popularly known as unofficial secretariat of the ruling BNP), a political appointee DPS (deputy press secretary) to the PM and several outsiders were directly involved in the production of the CD.

After the publication of a report in The Daily Star on April 15 under the headline 'PMO staff mint money from puffed up photo, documentary budget', the information ministry sharply reacted

and issued a rejoinder on the same day terming it 'unfounded, factually incorrect and fabricated'.

The information ministry claimed no APS of the Prime Minister's Press Wing was involved in the making of the documentary. Since the DFP is the sole authority to make documentary films on behalf of the government, there is no scope at all for outsiders to get directly involved in the film making process, read the ministry rejoinder.

Following the rejoinder, The Daily Star investigated further and found out that the documentary was completely made outside the DFP and by powerful outsiders.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the DFP explicitly said that none from the DFP was involved in the CD production.

They said the DFP has no technological capabilities to make a video CD because it only works on celluloid film. The DFP has a video wing introduced during the Awami League regime, but it is not working because many of its equipment are out of order and obsolete.

Names of some DFP officials were however used in the CD in an apparent attempt to avoid legal consequences. Talking to The Daily Star, a DFP official said

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## 4 murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trader and an alleged criminal were gunned down, a young girl strangled and a teenage 'mugger' beaten to death by a mob in the city yesterday.

Six unidentified armed criminals ambushed Momtajur Rahman Sohel alias Mollah Sohel, 35, some 100 yards from his residence at north Shajahanpur at around 8:45am. He was on his way to his office in Purana Paltan.

The criminals pumped 49 bullets into Sohel, completely tearing his head and throat.

His relatives rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

The victim's elder brother Motiur Rahman said business rivals might be behind the murder. Another source said Sohel was involved in criminal activities and might have been killed by his rivals.

No case was filed with the Motijheel Police Station till the



Momtajur Rahman Sohel

writing of this report yesterday evening. Police have failed to arrest anyone in this connection.

In another incident, rivals gunned down alleged criminal, Sujon, 27, at 11:30am yesterday when he went to Dholaikhal in Sutrapur.

Six bullets hit his head, four his throat and 10 his left hand.

The gang of 10 criminals left the scene before the eyes of the police,

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# NCBs in capital crunch

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The vulnerability of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) will increase when they will need to maintain more fund as capital from next month.

Their capital shortfall was already to the tune of Tk 1,456 crore on December 31, 2002, Tk 1,271 crore more than what it was six months ago.

But they will need to maintain at least nine per cent of their risk-weighted assets as capital up from the previous eight per cent from June. This will increase their shortfall by Tk 500 crore right away, according to banking sources.

Alarmed by the low-level of capital adequacy, the Bangladesh Bank has asked the finance ministry to pour money into the NCBs to

keep them above the danger limit.

Under the Bank Company Act 1991, the ministry is bound to recapitalise the state-owned banks if their capital falls below the minimum.

A finance ministry official told The Daily Star that chances are slim that the recapitalisation would be done soon because of the cash crunch. Moreover, the government also wants to see what shape the NCBs take after the recent move for reforms, which includes privatisation and management transfer to private hands.

The Bangladesh Bank this year has asked the banks to increase their capital from Tk 40 crore to Tk 100 crore or nine per cent of their risk-weighted assets, whichever is higher. The NCBs are in a position to meet the Tk 100 crore limit, but

they fall far short of the requirement for risk-weighted assets.

The four NCBs were supposed to have Tk 2,955 crore as capital against their risk-weighted asset on December 31, 2002. But they actually had Tk 1,998 crore.

On that date, Sonali Bank had Tk 409 crore, Janata Bank Tk 668 crore, Agrani Bank Tk 213 crore and Rupali Bank Tk 164 crore capital shortfall.

The five state-owned specialised banks have Tk 227 crore capital shortfall. However, BASiC, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha do not have any shortfall. But Bangladesh Shilpa Bank and Bangladesh Krishi Bank have huge capital shortfall.

## 10 Geneva Camp refugees get voting rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Born and brought up here, 10 residents of the Geneva Camp for stranded Pakistanis yesterday got voting rights when the High Court (HC) declared them citizens of Bangladesh.

The HC order followed writ petitions by Mohammad Akib Khan and nine others including three women, who reside as refugees in the Geneva Camp at Mohammadpur.

This is for the first time that a legal battle has enabled some residents of the camp to be recognised as Bangladeshi nationals.

On October 14, 2001, the HC had issued a rule on the Election Commission asking it to explain why these 10 persons should not be considered as Bangladeshi citizens and enlisted as voters.

On completion of the hearing yesterday, an HC bench comprising Justice Hamidul Haq and

Justice Zinat Ara made the rule absolute.

The Geneva camp now houses around 20,000 stranded Pakistanis while their total number in 66 refugee camps in the country is around 4,00,000.

However, many of them, especially those born after independence, believe that they are Bangladeshis but deprived of the basic rights of citizens.

"Those born at the camp and those who have been residing in Bangladesh since the 1947 partition of India are all citizens of Bangladesh," said Advocate Ruhul Kuddus Babu, one of the lawyers for the petitioners. "Their citizenship cannot be taken away just because they live in the Geneva camp or that they opted to go to Pakistan."

Prior to the October 2001 election, the writ petitioners had applied to the Election

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