



REGD, NO. DA 781

VOL. XVI NO. 246

DHAKA THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

SABAN 27, 1427 HIRI

20 Pages Plus Rising Stars Price: Tk 10.00

25 killed as storm lashes coastal belt

500 trawlers sink in Bay; 2,000 fishermen missing; the dead include naval officer

STAR REPORT

At least 25 people, including a naval officer, were killed while some 2,000 fishermen went missing as around 500 trawlers, boats and a navy patrol ship capsized in the Bay when a violent storm hit the country's coastal belt Tuesday

According to the officials, the fishing trawlers sank in Dublar

Char, Kachikhali, Narkelbaria and Baleshwar of the coastal districts of Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola as they were caught in the sudden storm.

Of the dead, the body of a youth was found at Bishkhali of Laldia area in Patharghata, bodies of four fishermen were recovered at the Kuakata beach in Patuakhali, five in Khulna and 15 in Bagerhat.

Our correspondents from dif-

ferent districts and news agency UNB report that hundreds of people thronged the beach and coastal zones yesterday in search of their relatives after the storm ravaged the coastal area. Some 1,500 fishermen were rescued in the southern shores by the coast guards and the

navy yesterday. Some 25 fishermen were also rescued in the Chittagong coast SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

ORIENTAL BANK

Board members admit taking Tk 175cr fake loans

STAR REPORT

Some members of the dissolved board of directors of Oriental Bank have admitted to the charge of obtaining Tk 175 crore from the bank using fake accounts.

The dissolved board appealed to Bangladesh Bank (BB) early this month to return the bank to them and pledged to pay back the money in next five years.

"Some members of the board, enjoying support of the Oriental Bank's top management, misappropriated huge money and admitted this in their prayer for returning the bank to them," said a source in

But another source said the amount misappropriated is much higher than what the board members admitted to the central bank. "Over Tk 500 crore has been misappropriated by some board members that put the bank in such a bad

shape," the source added. Meanwhile, primary investigations into the charge also found that some members of the Oriental Bank board used false accounts

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The law minister said, "KM Hasan is very competent and was

government.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He however vouched for the

former chief justice's professional

integrity, who is most likely to be

the chief of the next caretaker

one of the best judges of the

KM Hasan was involved

Supreme Court." Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said Lawmakers of the ruling BNP in the parliament yesterday that former chief justice KM Hasan was and main opposition Awami League once again locked horns in involved with the politics of BNP in the parliament yesterday over

in BNP politics in 1979

Moudud tells parliament, says there was no

question of his integrity as judge

At one point of the debate Awami League (AL) lawmakers walked out of the House protesting against the law minister's 'free style' speech

Justice KM Hasan's political affilia-

During almost an hour-long

unscheduled debate, AL lawmakers alleged that KM Hasan has been a controversial figure since he joined BNP and he failed to carry out his duty as a judge because he felt too embarrassed to preside over the hearing of Bangabandhu

murder case. Subjects of the debate that followed ranged from the price hike of essentials, to the ongoing crisis of power supply and also Sheikh Hasina's recent speech

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Thai coup leader pledges new PM in 2 weeks

Gets king's endorsement; Thaksin flies to UK; world leaders shocked

AGENCIES, Bangkok

Thailand's new military ruler pledged yesterday to resign from power in two weeks and restore democracy in a year, after sweeping aside Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in a bloodless coup.

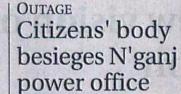
General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, who orchestrated Tuesday night's coup while the billionaire premier was out of the country, said Thaksin had been pushed out in line with the wishes of the people

after months of political turmoil.

"I will resign as interim prime minister within two weeks, and now we are looking for the person who will become the new prime minister," said Sonthi, who added that he hoped to hold new elections in October 2007.

Gen Sonthi in a televised statement said King Bhumibol Adulyadej had endorsed him as the head of the interim governing

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OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'gan,

Civil society members under the banner of Narayanganj Nagarik Committee yesterday besieged a Narayanganj electricity office and demanded relief from the severe power outages before the Ramadan and Durga Puja.

The committee besieged the superintend engineer's office of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) on Bangabandhu street of the city and submitted a memorandum regarding their demand.

A B Siddiqui, convenor to Nagarik Committee, Abdur Rahman, Rafiur Rabbi, Advocate Abul Kalam Azad, Haji M Hasnatullah, Abdus Sattar, Mohor Ali Chowdhury and Jannatul

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Activists of 14-party opposition combine led by local MP Zahid Ahsan Russell hold a rally blockading the Tongi Railway Station yesterday.

Dhaka blockaded for reforms

Opposition enforces hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport was disrupted for sometime at many places during the opposition's six-hour countrywide road-rail-waterways blockade programme yesterday while demonstrators' clashes with the law enforcers and ruling BNP activists left 32 people in Sirajganj and 10 people in Narayanganj district

The Awami League (AL)-led 14party opposition combine also enforces a countrywide 6:00am to 6:00pm hartal today to press home its demand for reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

The blockade badly affected rail

communication as the demonstrators took position at different stations including Tongi, Khulna, Brahmanbaria, Chittagong Chandpur, Sayedpur, Goalanda Natore, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat.

Inter-district bus communication also came to a halt for two hours from 10:00am as a few buses left from Sayedabad, Gabtoli and Mohakhali bus terminals, River communication was, however, almost normal.

The demonstrators halted Chittagong-bound Karnaphuli Express and Mymensingh-bound Ekota Express at Tongi, Mohanagor Express in cantonment and a Sylhet-bound local train at Pubail

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