

Navy ship salvaged, death toll rises to 91

STAR REPORT

The death toll of the recent violent storm rose to 91 yesterday after six more bodies had been recovered while around 1000 fishermen and a navy commander still remain missing. A rescue team however was able to salvage the marooned navy ship.

Coast guards and relatives of the missing fishermen are still searching for them but the choppy sea is disrupting the search, an Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Fishermen of Kuakata shore, who narrowly escaped death during the storm, demanded access to modern technologies in deep sea including mobile network and radio broadcasts.

Meanwhile, the met office said

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No relief for Barapukuria

CMC, Hosaf now offer to take over the coal mine after years of mishandling

SHARIEF KHAN

After turning Barapukuria coal mine project into a liability for the nation by doubling its cost and halving its production capacity, the project's Chinese developer CMC and its local agent Hosaf Group have jointly proposed taking over the mine, highly placed sources said.

The CMC and Hosaf Group in their two-page proposal made earlier this month wanted to take over the mine on the basis of unsolicited negotiation. In the early nineties, Hosaf Group helped the CMC get the mining project contract through unsolicited negotiation under a Chinese Supplier's Credit undermining the national interest.

Sources said that in the last one decade, the CMC and Hosaf drained out hundreds of crores of

taka without delivering the mine as per the original agreement. Any Petrobangla officials and staffs involved in this massive project but opposing the misdeeds have been generously bribed to make sure that neither the CMC nor Hosaf is penalised in any way for their failures and irregularities.

And now the Hosaf-CMC consortium seeks a joint venture with Petrobangla that owns Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) and offers Petrobangla 30 percent equity, keeping 70 percent of the coal production to itself. The Hosaf chief is the brother of a ruling BNP lawmaker.

When the mining project started in 1994, price of coal was less than \$25 dollars a tonne. Now, the global coal price has skyrocketed to \$75 per tonne.

In response of the Hosaf-CMC

proposal, Petrobangla instantly formed a committee headed by its director of mines and mineral.

This proposal came as a result of Petrobangla's delay in repayment of fifth instalment of the Chinese Supplier's Credit that was imposed on it by the previous BNP government.

Petrobangla has paid the Chinese company Tk 600 crore in four instalments since 1995. And now it has to pay the fifth instalment of Tk 62 crore.

"When Petrobangla paid the fourth instalment a couple of years ago, it had to face a lot of hardship as the government takes away almost all of its Tk 2,500 crore plus revenue. Petrobangla borrowed money from the government to make those payments," said one source.

This time the energy ministry

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5 JMB men jailed for 78 years

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced five Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) members to 78 years' rigorous imprisonment in two cases filed for possessing illegal firearms, ammunition and explosives in January this year.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court today is expected to deliver the verdict of a case filed against JMB military commander Aatur Rahman Sunny and five others in connection with an August 17 serial bomb blast last year.

The two cases -- one under the Arms Act and the other under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed with Uttara Police Station on January 5.

The convicts are Wahidul Islam, 20, Shafigul Islam, 30, Hafez Ibrahim, 30, Abdullah Al Faruq, 21, and Hanif, 22.

Judge Mohammad Rabiul

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BNP gets tough to quell inner conflicts

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The ruling BNP has begun to take action against its dissident leaders in different districts to resolve intra-party conflicts ahead of the next general election scheduled to be held in January.

The party leadership has already suspended two leaders and served show cause notices on at least 10 others in different districts for their anti-party activities.

Besides, it has dissolved Sathkira district committee of the party for internal conflict, and a district committee issued show cause notice against five thana level leaders for opposing a Jamaat-e-Islami leader as prospective ruling four-party alliance candidate in the next election, BNP sources said.

"We have identified at least 30 party leaders across the country who are trying to create problem

for incumbent lawmakers, and possible coalition candidate in the next election. Some of them have already been issued show cause notice, and final decision about them will be taken after getting their reply," a top BNP leader said, wishing anonymity.

Earlier, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the BNP at its August 26 meeting decided to take action against anybody breaking the party discipline. At the meeting chaired by party Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, several leaders demanded immediate action against the party's rebellious leaders at all levels.

Meanwhile, the BNP chief received allegations from several grassroots level party leaders against lawmakers and ministers during the exchange of views meetings in last two months.

These leaders even expressed their grievances while talking to the

media after the meetings, and the BNP high command is considering this as anti-party activity.

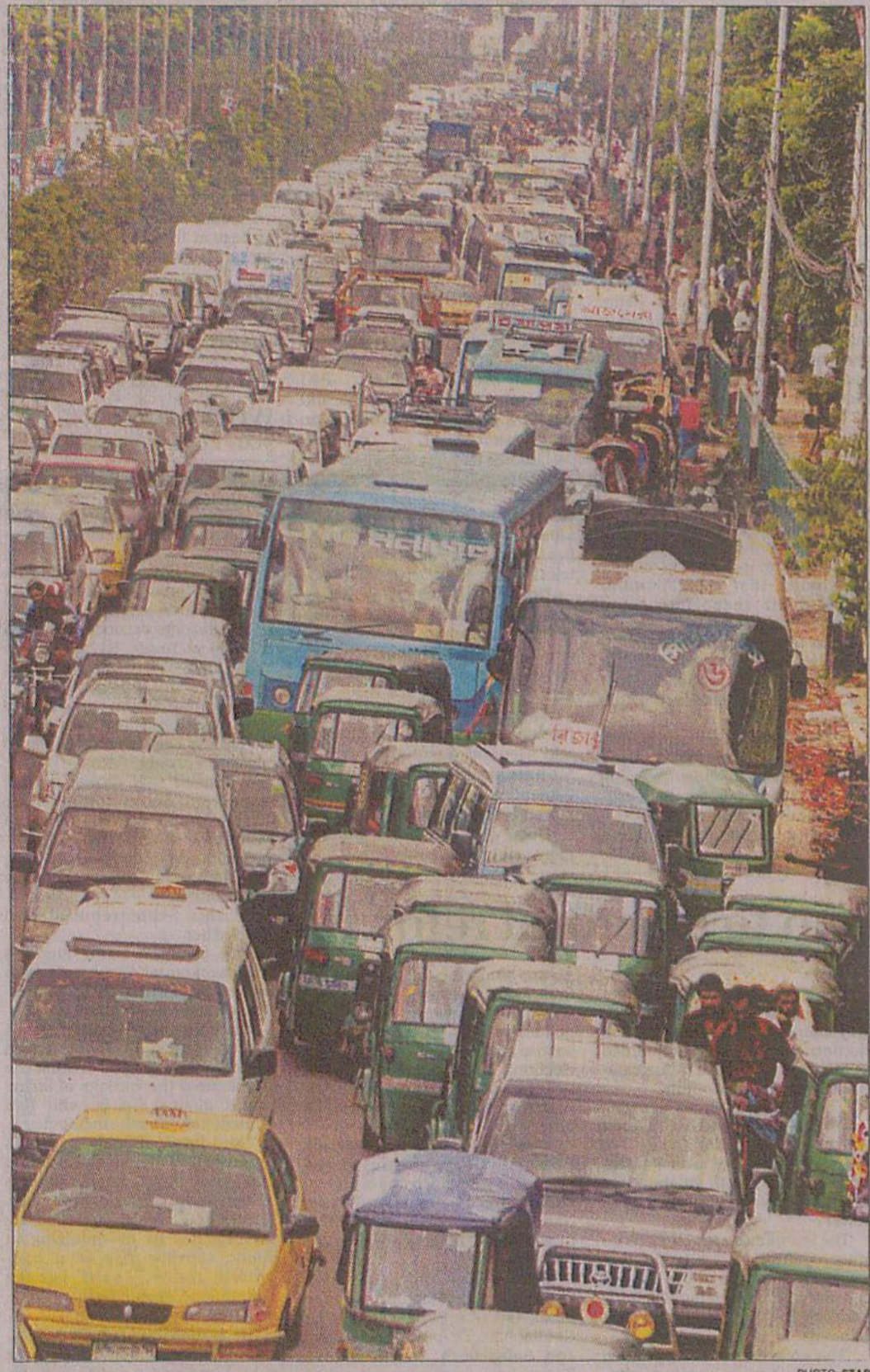
Sirajganj district BNP General Secretary Humayun Kabir has already replied to the show cause notice for his comments to the media after an exchange of views meeting with the party chief.

Ohidul Islam, president of Chuadanga BNP has been suspended for anti-party activities.

The party unit here is plagued with persisting conflicts between activists loyal to the incumbent and former lawmakers. Former lawmaker and Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal President Shamsuzzaman Dudu did not get nomination in the last election due to intra-party conflicts and he could not even visit the area in the last few years.

A vice president of Gournadi Thana BNP in Barisal has been suspended for complaining

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A large number of vehicles plied the city streets after four days of torrential rain only to be stuck in gridlocks on the second day of Traffic Month yesterday. The photo was taken from Satrasta intersection.

Vegetable prices double on Ramadan eve

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Four days of torrential rain caused an inadequate supply of vegetables to the kitchen markets in the capital pushing the prices very high ahead of the Ramadan.

Wholesalers said the supply of vegetables decreased as harvest was not possible due to the sudden rainfall across the country.

The prices of green chilli, aubergine, cucumber, palwal, jhinga, papaya, bitter gourd, pumpkin, kakrol, long beans, tomato, and other vegetables almost doubled in some cases.

The price of green chilli jumped

to Tk 70 per kg from Tk 20-25 in the retail market while the price of aubergine rose to Tk 40-60 per kg from Tk 15-20.

Tomato, the price of which was around Tk 50-55 per kg in retail markets two or three days ago, is now selling at Tk 65-70.

Cucumber that sold at Tk 15-18 per kg is now selling at Tk 24-30.

Palwal is being sold for Tk 14-20; the price was only Tk 10-12 before the spell of rain.

The price of jhinga has shot up to Tk 24-28 per kg in retail markets from Tk 15-18.

Bitter gourd and kakrol, which

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Ramadan begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The holy Ramadan starts today with the month-long fasting at daytime by Muslims.

In some places, people began fasting yesterday out of confusion over moon sighting. Fazlul Haq Amini, chief of an Islami Oikya Jote faction, directed his followers to go on fasting from yesterday as he claimed that moon had been sighted in Noakhali.

The Islamic Foundation however dismissed the claim of Amini.

UNB adds: President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition

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3 gangsters die in mob beating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobs beat three alleged criminals to death in separate incidents in Keraniganj and the city's Ramna area yesterday.

At Khajurbagan Bastuhara slums in Keraniganj, locals captured three -- Nadim, 35, Arif, 32 and Mainuddin, 30 -- after chasing them for almost a kilometre.

The chase started on the other side of the Buriganga after the three had shot timber trader Dilip Pal Chowdhury, 50, inside his shop at Farashganj. As the timber shop

employees shouted for help, people nearby rushed to the scene. But the gang fired on them, injuring at least four people there.

Later, while fleeing they shot six more people to clear their path. Among the injured was the man whose boat they used to ride across the river.

On capture, the mob battered them badly, leaving Nadim and Arif dead on the spot while Mainuddin was rescued and arrested by Keraniganj police.

Police and locals suspect the

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Hannan's brother remanded in Ramna blast case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Banned Islamist outfit Harkatul Jihad's (Huji) operations commander Mufti Abdul Hannan's brother Mohibullah alias Mofizur Rahman was placed on a four-day fresh remand in the Ramna Batamul blast case yesterday.

On completion of his five-day remand, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced Mofiz, also an arrestee in a murder case filed with Gopalganj Police Station, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka and sought another 10-day remand for further interrogation.

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20 hurt as cops club agitating RMG workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 20 garment employees of Integrity Apparels were injured when police swooped on the agitating workers after they barricaded the streets at Tongi protesting the authorities' sudden lay off declaration yesterday.

The barricade halted traffic movement at Tongi for half an hour while panic spread in the area following the chase and counter chase between the workers and police.

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Rejoinder and our reply

The Police Headquarters in a rejoinder to a report headlined "Half-trained cops made sentinels of balloting" published in The Daily Star on Saturday claimed that the report is exaggerated and not based on facts.

The Police Headquarters statement said 821 sub-inspectors (SIs) were appointed this year against vacant posts in the police department and placed in different police stations as per the rules of Police Regulations of Bengal.

Accordingly, the SIs were supposed to undergo training at the circle assistant police super (ASP) offices.

But, their placement was

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