



PHOTO: STAR/AFIP

Story much repeated...rescuers on local boats and rescue vessel Rustom trawl Meghna river in search of victims of the Friday night's ferry capsized that rendered 100 people missing; a woman grieves the death of her two-year-old daughter in the accident.

Tragedy again on Meghna

100 missing as ferry sinks, two bodies recovered

MORSHED ALI KHAN, back from Shaitnal, Matlab

About 100 people went missing when a double-decker passenger vessel sank in the river Meghna, near Shaitnal in Matlab after being caught up in a powerful twister at around 9:30pm Friday night, barely two hours after it had left Dhaka Sadarghat for Rangabali in Patuakhali.

Until around 3:00pm yesterday the body of a two-year-old girl and a woman were recovered from Shaitnal village.

The unidentified woman died after she had swam about half a kilometre from the sinking vessel to the village. Salvage Supervisor of MV Rustam told The Daily Star that it might take another 24 hours before the bodies bloated and floated. There might be some bodies still trapped in the vessel, he said.

The ill-fated vessel MV Salauddin is now lying upside-down on the bed of the turbulent Meghna about 50 feet below the surface.

Divers from the Bangladesh Navy and the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) were desper-

ately trying to clear the ship of obstacles such as fishing nets and ropes in which it was tangled.

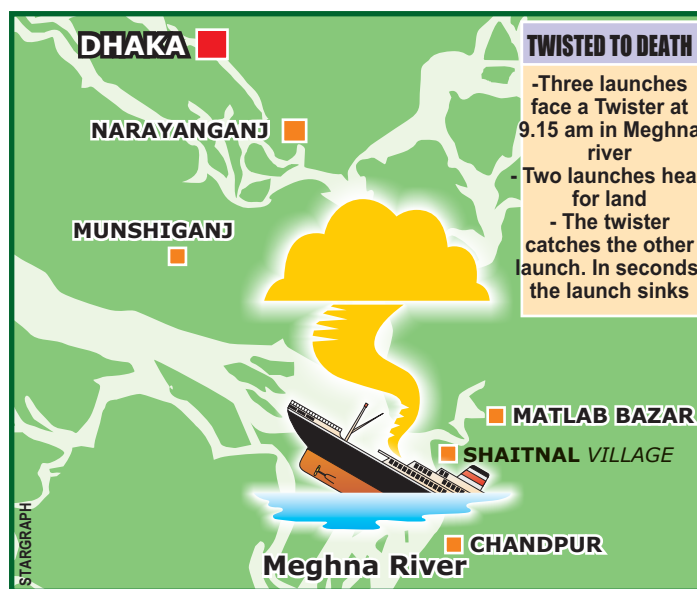
Navy Commander Shamsul Alam said that they were waiting for the salvage unit MV Hamza to arrive from Barisal so that it could join MV Rustam, present at the site since early Saturday morning, to bring the sunken vessel to the surface.

According to BIWTA officials present at the salvage operation site on the river Meghna, with less than 200 passengers the 318-passenger-capacity MV Salauddin left Dhaka at around 7:30pm and made a stop at Kathpotti near Munshiganj.

Officials said that because it was a Friday and it was the last of the three vessels on the same route, it was not overcrowded. But from Kathpotti, according to witnesses it had picked up at least 70 sacks of rice each weighing about 80 kilograms (2.5 maunds).

As it headed for its next destination, Chandpur, it joined a convoy of three other launches heading for Chandpur.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



TWISTED TO DEATH
-Three launches face a Twister at 9.15 am in Meghna river
-Two launches head for land
-The twister catches the other launch. In seconds, the launch sinks

No more tax holiday

Saifur seeks guidance from predecessors on formulation of next budget

SHAHRIAR KARIM

In the face of a tight resource situation, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday sat with his predecessors, former central bank governors and finance secretaries to discuss the issues vital for the next budget.

With foreign assistance drying up, domestic debt creeping up and revenue earning not showing any significant improvement, the finance minister sought suggestions from them about how to manage resources to formulate development budget and accelerate economic growth.

Downsizing the government, improving law and order, making public expenditure prudent, restoring private sector's confidence and widening tax net were the suggestions that came from the former finance ministers.

The first such meeting was attended by former finance ministers Professor Rehman Sobhan, AMA Muhit, M Syeeduzzaman, Professor Wahiduddin

Mahmud, former adviser to caretaker government Hafizuddin Ahmed, former foreign secretary Motiul Islam, former governors Dr Mohamad Farashuddin and Khorshed Alam, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan and National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Dr Shoib Ahmed were also present.

However, immediate past finance minister SAMS Kibria did not turn up at the meeting.

Venting his frustration over the resource situation, Saifur Rahman said, "It seems that the whole country is enjoying tax holiday. The readymade garment sector does not pay any tax, agriculture is also out of the net and there are many other sectors enjoying tax holiday facility. In this context, where do I get tax from?"

Saifur said the tax holiday scheme would be discontinued and a new tax scheme might be in place for the corporate sector on an accelerated depreciation formula.

"I am totally against tax holiday. I am ready to lower

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Bid for judicial council hits a snag

ZAYADUL AHSAN

Differing interpretations of the constitution and the 12-point Supreme Court guideline on separation of judiciary has cast doubt over the government move to set up a unified judicial service.

There has been a strong opposition from the BCS administration cadres against the proposed judicial service.

The government plans temporary assimilation of BCS (administration) and BCS (judiciary) cadres for the mooted judicial service. The BCS administration cadres argue that the constitution provides for a separate service structure for them.

To work out the differences, the cabinet committee has invited representatives from both administration and judiciary cadres to a meeting tomorrow. "We will listen to both," said Law Minister Moudud Ahmed.

The concept of a unified judicial service is a major component towards separation of judiciary.

However, with both administration and judiciary cadres arguing on their own interpretation of different constitutional provisions, the process, which has gathered momentum in recent times, looks set to hit yet another snag.

Now, the government is seriously considering the option of seeking

the Supreme Court's explanation of these articles.

Should that happen, the government would be compelled to seek a fresh deadline to implement the court's 12-point guideline. The seven-month old government has already sought deadline extensions five times in this regard.

However, a highly placed source said that the government would go for a unified judicial service anyway. Till the service is established, a temporary sub-cadre would be formed to accommodate judicial magistrates, the source added.

Meanwhile, the cabinet committee on separation of judiciary met

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

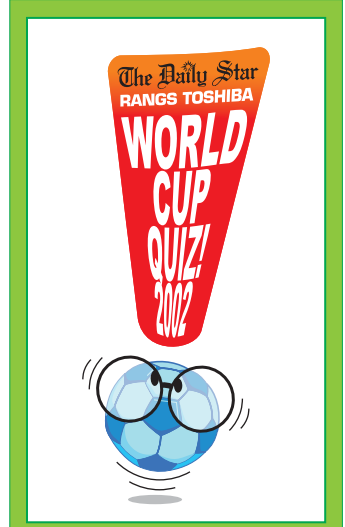
INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

The president must act
Column: Between the Lines
Kuldip Nayar

Law and Our Rights 5

Internet domain name disputes; and
Towards a social movement against dowry



See the rules and coupon of
The Daily Star
RANGS TOSHIBA
WORLD CUP QUIZ
Round 2 on Page 15

Criminals gather round home minister in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

After state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar, it was now Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury's turn to speak strongly against criminals, surrounded by some listed criminals.

The home minister was seen accompanied by the criminals while he was visiting the Buddhist temple at Hingala under Raozan upazila yesterday, where a Buddhist monk, Gyanojoti Mohasthabir, was killed last Sunday.

The alleged criminals who were snapped along with the home minister were identified as Abu Hanif alias Champaiya, Rezaur Rahman Azam alias Kura Azam, Billal Talukder, Abbas chairman, Hasan Chowdhury and Taiyab Sultan, sources and eyewitnesses said.

Of them, alleged notorious criminal Champaiya has three criminal cases pressed against him, including one murder case (BCL leader Abu Taleb murder) in which charges were pressed against him. Besides, he was arrested by the BDR with firearms a few days before the last parliamentary elections in October and was freed on bail after the polls.

Kura Azam is a listed criminal and has several cases against him. Among others, Abbas chairman had 10 cases against him, Billal Talukder and Hasan Chowdhury have two cases against each of them, while Taiyab is a listed criminal with the Chittagong Metropolitan Police, police said.

9 big launch disasters kill 682 in 10 yrs

RAZIUR RAHMAN

At least 682 peoples were killed in the last 10 years in nine major incidents of launch capsizing in the country, excluding the one on Friday.

Besides, there were so many incidents of sinking of small launches, trawlers and other water vessels.

The casualties in Friday night's launch capsizing is yet to be ascertained. The launch sank in the Meghna at shaitnal in Chandpur district with 160 to 200 passengers apparently due to a twister. But officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Department of Shipping declined to specify the reason of the accident.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Secret camera to monitor exams

MAHBUB ZAMAN, back from Sylhet

The government has taken up an 'action plan' containing stringent measures to check unfair means in public examinations.

The measures include installation of close circuit camera in trouble-prone examination centres, cancellation of the centres as well as Monthly Pay Order (MPO) for teachers and educational institutions in case of detection of unfair means.

Besides, examinees found carrying 'unwanted papers' even if those are not linked with question papers will be expelled.

This was announced by State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon yesterday.

A campaign to implement the plan will be conducted in nine areas across the country. As part of the campaign, the Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Sylhet and the district administration organised a seminar and an exchange of views session at the divisional town yesterday.

Speaking at the seminar on 'Holding Examination in a Cheating-free Atmosphere and Development of Standard of Education and Management', the state minister directed officials concerned to finalise a list of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Five senior BAF officers sent into retirement

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Five senior officers of the Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) have been sent either on compulsory or forced retirement over the last few days, sources said.

Those sent on compulsory retirement include two air commodores and one group captain while two officers on premature retirement are wing commanders.

Air Commodore Zakiul Islam was assistant air chief, posted as a senior instructor at the Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) while Air Commodore GDP Mirza Akhter Maroof was air officer commanding at the Jessore Base.

Group Captain Munshi Golam Mustafa was director of armaments while Wing Commander Hasnat and Wing Commander Idris belonged to the MT Engineering Branch.