

35 fishermen missing in Bay in 2 days

UNB, Bagerhat

Around 35 fishermen of eight trawlers went missing in the Bay of Bengal as their trawlers capsized in the rough sea on Saturday and Sunday.

Sources said the fishing trawlers with some 105 fishermen capsized at Dimer Char, Kachukhali, Kachubari, Gyanpara, Padmasul and Kalar Khal areas at Bay after being caught by storms.

About 70 fishermen managed to swim ashore but 35 others remained missing, sources added.

The ill-fated fishermen hailed from Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna and Bhola districts.

Lt Commander of Coast Guard of Mongla west zone Faisal M Mahmud said they are trying hard to rescue the missing fishermen.

As the sea is still turbulent, the rescue operation is being hampered.

Local meteorological department officials said yesterday the sea will remain turbulent for at least two days.

The have advised all fishermen to remain close to coasts till further notice.

Ex-BNP MP sued by party rival in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal



Jahiruddin Swapan

vice-president of Gournadi College Students Union Zakir Hossain Raza, ward commissioner Jamal Matubbor, upazila BNP activists AFM Rashid Dulal, AFM Farid, Kamal Talukdar, Zafar, Russel, Chhoton and Nayon Talukdar, Agoijhara upazila BNP secretary Md. Bakhtiar and Agoijhara upazila JCD president Md. Khokon.

Magistrate Munim Hassan ordered the officer-in-charge of Gournadi police station to record the case after investigation.

In the case, it was alleged that followers of Zahiruddin Swapan

demanded a toll of Tk 10 lakh from members of Tuhin Foundation when their motorcade stopped at Gourmand bus stand on December 1 last year for tea.

After altercations BNP activists attacked and ransacked four microbuses and the local office of Tuhin Foundation. The attackers damaged and looted property worth Tk 3.75 lakh, injuring at least 13 people.

Local people rescued and escorted them to safety. Seven of the injured people were admitted to local hospital, Arafat alleged in the case.

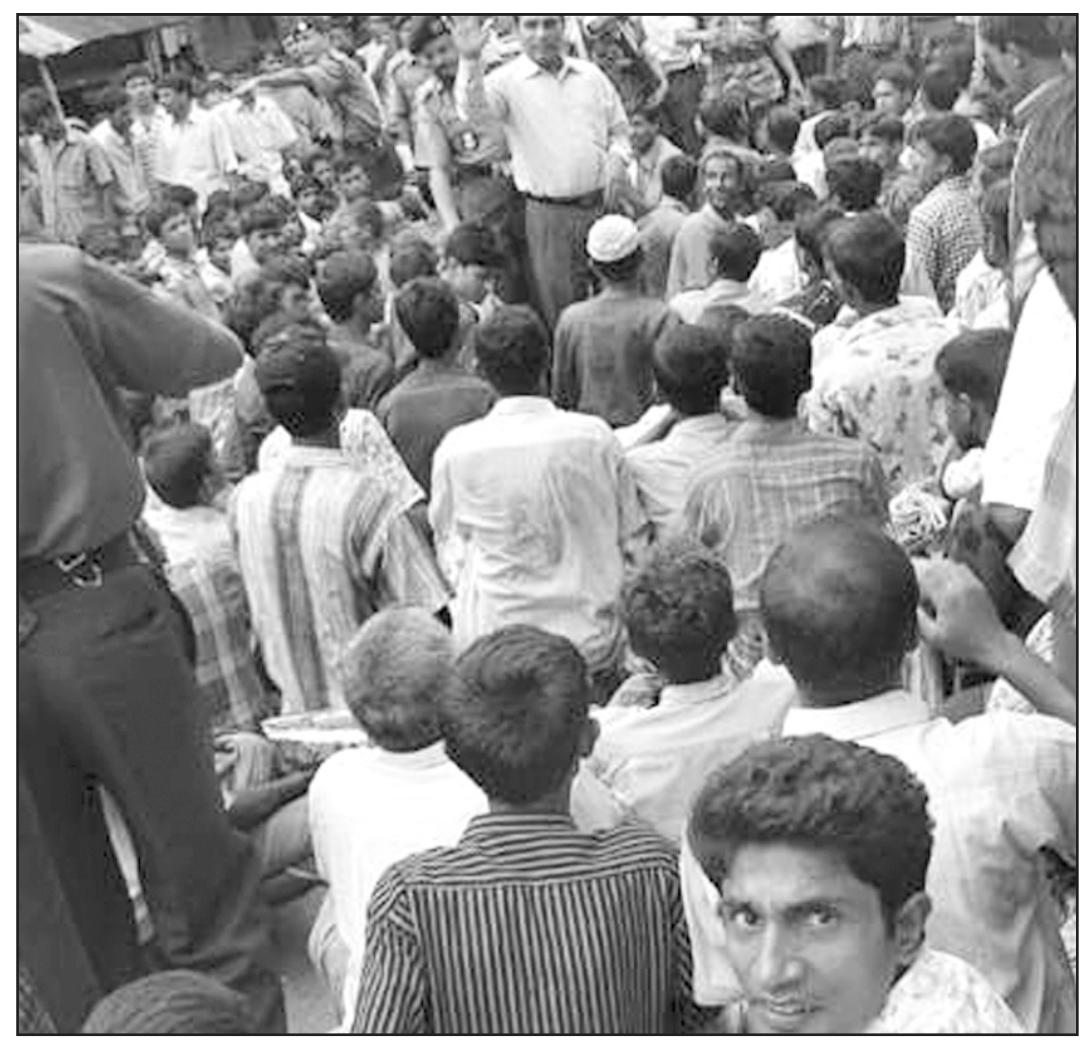
In the case, it was also alleged that the accused persons also snatched Tk 2.96 lakh from AKM Nurul Islam, advisor of the foundation, on August 25 last year at Sharikat.

They also attacked an Iftar Mahfil of the foundation at Mahilara in Gournadi, ransacked the venue and looted goods worth Tk 1 lakh, Arafat alleged.

He also said in the complaint that at that time, police declined to record any case against the then lawmaker due to his political influence.

Farmers block highway in Shaikupura for fertiliser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah



Farmers brought out a procession and blocked the Khulna-Kushtia highway at Shaikupura yesterday demanding fertiliser. Traffic on the highway was stopped for about two hours as angry farmers placed logs on it, sources said.

Farmers from Katchua, Nakol, Molmoli and Kulsura villages went to Bhatoi Bazar in the morning for fertiliser.

Disappointed, they came on the road and blocked it.

On information, a team of joint forces led by Maj Anis rushed to Bhatoi Bazaar from Jhenidah.

Jhenidah Additional Deputy Commissioner Mezbahul Islam and Police Superintendent Abul Khaer also reached the spot.

They brought the situation under control by assuring farmers of adequate supply of fertiliser soon.

Contacted, Shaikupura Upazila Nirbhai Officer Mahmudul Hasan of confirmed the incident.

He said there are 10 tonnes of fertiliser with dealers in Shaikupura upazila. Arrangements have been made for supply of more fertiliser and farmers will get their required quantities today, he told this correspondent.

PHOTO: STAR
Additional Deputy Commissioner of Jhenidah Mezbahul Islam assuring farmers of adequate supply of fertiliser. Farmers blocked the Khulna-Kushtia highway at Shaikupura yesterday for the vital agri-input.

Tk 1.5cr rubber stolen from Madhupur gardens in 4 yrs

Theft is main problem for profit-earning BFIDC gardens, officials say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail



PHOTO: STAR

Rubber garden of BFIDC in Madhupur.

workers' leaders and local residents.

Assistant Manager Tozammel Hossain said the extracted rubber was sold in auction to buyers including Bata Shoe Company and Gazi Tyre Industry at BFIDC sales centre in Dhaka.

"We earned a profit of Tk 25 lakh by selling rubber in July", he said.

Tozammel and some other officials said the profit could be more if rampant theft of raw rubber could be stopped.

To stop stealing, 48 security guards were appointed in 2005 to guard the gardens. Of them, 24 were deployed in Chandpur and 12 each in Sontoshpur and Komalapur gardens. A process is on to appoint more 12 security men for Pirojpur garden, the officials said.

Patrol teams comprising security

personnel and BFIDC officials patrol the gardens.

Several cases were filed with Madhupur police station. Thirteen were arrested and six truck-loads of stolen raw rubber were seized in last one year, the officials said.

An organised gang of thieves is engaged in stealing raw rubber. Most of them are from Madhupur upazila in Tangail and Muktagachha and Phoolbaria upazilas in Mymensingh, sources said.

The gang engages local poor people at small remunerations for stealing rubber from gardens, they said.

The authorities sometimes recover stolen rubber and take alleged thieves into custody but this did not produce any result, they added.

Govt sincere to redress flood damage, says Iftekhar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Foreign Affairs Advisor Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said the government is sincere to redress sufferings of flood affected people and help them recover from the damage.

There is sufficient stock of relief materials for flood victims. A vigorous rehabilitation programme would be launched soon to rehabilitate the affected people in different areas of the country, he added.

The advisor was addressing a flood review meeting at Sunamganj Circuit House yesterday afternoon. District level officials and the elite attended the meeting.

Sunamganj Deputy Commissioner Saber Hossain briefed the meeting on the situation and rehabilitation programme.

An amount of Tk 1.24 crore has been sanctioned for house construction and agriculture, he told the meeting.

The foreign advisor said the government will continue its programmes in all sectors to achieve desired goals and called upon officials and others concerned to ensure that the targets are achieved. Election will be held as per the road map, he added.

WORKSHOP TOLD S-W dists at high risk of HIV/AIDS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Speakers at a workshop held here yesterday said the southwestern (S-W) districts in the country are at high risk of HIV/AIDS as no entry points are checked here properly.

Ad-Din Care Centre, Jessore, organised the workshop titled, 'Life Skills Education Youth Friendly Health Services and Accessing Condom for Youth-2007' in collaboration with National AIDS/STD Programme of Bangladesh Government (GOB) and Save the Children.

Heled at Kushtia Pourasabha auditorium, the workshop was presided by Kushtia civil surgeon (CS) Dr Abu Taher while it was attended by Mohammad Hossain, director of health of Khulna division as chief guest.

Among others, Kushtia convenor of TIB Prof Sudhin Kumar Lahiri, Advocate Nargish Chowdhury and journalist Amanur Aman addressed.

2 outlaws surrender in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two cadres of the outlawed Janajuddho faction of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBPC) surrendered to police yesterday.

The outlaws are Mithay, son of Ansar Ali and Akkas, son of Azgar Ali of Katchubaria in Mirpur upazila.

Earlier, the outlaws communicated to Mirpur police through cell phone and expressed their willingness to surrender on Sunday morning, police said. The outlaws also wanted assurance from police that they would not be 'crossfire' after surrender.

However, they did not deposit any firearm during surrender.

BJMC chairman assures arrear payment before Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Angry workers made an attempt to assault Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) chairman Ataharul Islam when he went to Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills here yesterday noon.

The BJMC chairman was accompanied by four members of a high level team who came here from Dhaka.

However, security forces rescued him from wrath of over 100 retrenched workers who laid a siege in front of the mill gate.

While addressing the workers, the chairman regretted his failure to give assurance to them in payment of arrear wages and other dues as the government is yet to allocate fund for them. He assured his sincere effort to convince the government for allocating fund for them

Political will need to protect Sundarbans'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion held here Sunday evening said political will is a must for preservation of biodiversity of the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world.

Rupantar and Swadeshi, two local NGOs, jointly organised the discussion on the occasion of a premier show of 'Badaboner Kantha', a documentary film on the Sundarbans, jointly produced by Steps Towards Development, a national NGO and Rupantar.

Heled at Satkhira Deputy Commissioner's (DC) conference room, the discussion was presided by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC-Revenue) Mahmud Hasan while it was attended by Satkhira DC Mohammad Kefayetullah as chief guest.

Speakers hailed the two NGOs for producing the documentary to create awareness among people living around the Sundarbans. The film depicted how over six lakh people

'COMPETENCY' TEST

Pry schoolteachers in northern dists apprehend losing MPO

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A large number of teachers of non-government primary schools in the northern districts are worried of losing Monthly Payment Order (MPO) following issuance of a recent government order asking them to face competency tests.

The Primary Education Directorate issued the order on July 31. The order asked the teachers to face the 'competency' tests by November 18. For failure, the official order warned, suspension of MPOs.

There are 900 non-government primary school teachers in the entire northern districts.

Under the official Compulsory Primary Education Programme, the government is providing salaries to the teachers through MPOs since 1991. But the government put a condition to enjoy the benefits of MPO. Officially, it has been assessed that the teachers who passed only the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination are 'incompetent' teachers. In a similar manner, the teachers who have

third division in both the SSC and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations are treated as 'incompetent' teachers. Teachers of such categories must face competency tests conducted by the Education Department.

However, the teachers having SSC and HSC certificates with at least one second division are treated as 'competent' teachers. Many teachers have entered the teaching profession fulfilling the official requirements before 1991.

Earlier, the government took several attempts to hold 'competency' tests but in face of stiff opposition from teachers' associations and political parties, the attempts were foiled.

On contact, Babu Griza Prosonya Roy, Nilphamari district president of Bangladesh Non-government Teachers' Association said 98 percent of non-government primary school teachers underwent the required training courses like Certificate-in-Education (C in Ed) from Primary Teachers' Training Institutes (PTI) in their districts. They also received subject based

and cluster based trainings to acquire competency, he said.

While contacted, Mansoor Ali, general secretary of a faction of Non-government Primary School Teachers' Association said to this correspondent over cell phone that most of the teachers entered the teaching profession fulfilling the government requirements before 1991. Many of them are near to their retirement age. If some of them fail to pass the competency tests, they would face acute economic hardship following suspension of MPOs, he said terming this 'inhuman'.

Meanwhile, a writ petition was filed, opposing the government move, with the High Court (HC) Division of Supreme Court on August 21.

Non-government Primary Teachers' Association office secretary Rezaul Haque submitted the writ petition on behalf of the teachers. The HC division bench comprising of Justice Sayed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed issued a 'Rule Nisi' on the government on August 26.



PHOTO: STAR

A flood-affected woman at Rahmatganj in Sirajganj cradles her goat while moving to safety yesterday as her house in the town was inundated again in a fresh spate of flood.