

## Cyclone Bijli hits coasts, weakens

STAR REPORT

Cyclone Bijli hit the coastal areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar last night.

Strong wind coupled with heavy rain started blowing at around 7:30pm. It may take another 4-6 hours to cross the coasts, said a late night Met office bulletin.

The storm lashed the offshore island of Sandwip, coastal upazilas of Banskhali and Anowara in Chittagong and Chakoria, Kutubdia and Moheshkhali islands in Cox's Bazar.

At around 10:00pm it was crossing the area with the maximum wind speed of 80 to 90 kmph (kilometre per hour).

In Chittagong city, maximum wind speed at Patenga was 70 to 80 kmph, said Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Zafar Alam from the district control room.

"No casualty or damage has been reported till now. However, we have all preparedness to tackle any situation," he told The Daily Star.

Earlier, the government evacuated people from 11 coastal districts apprehending human casualties.

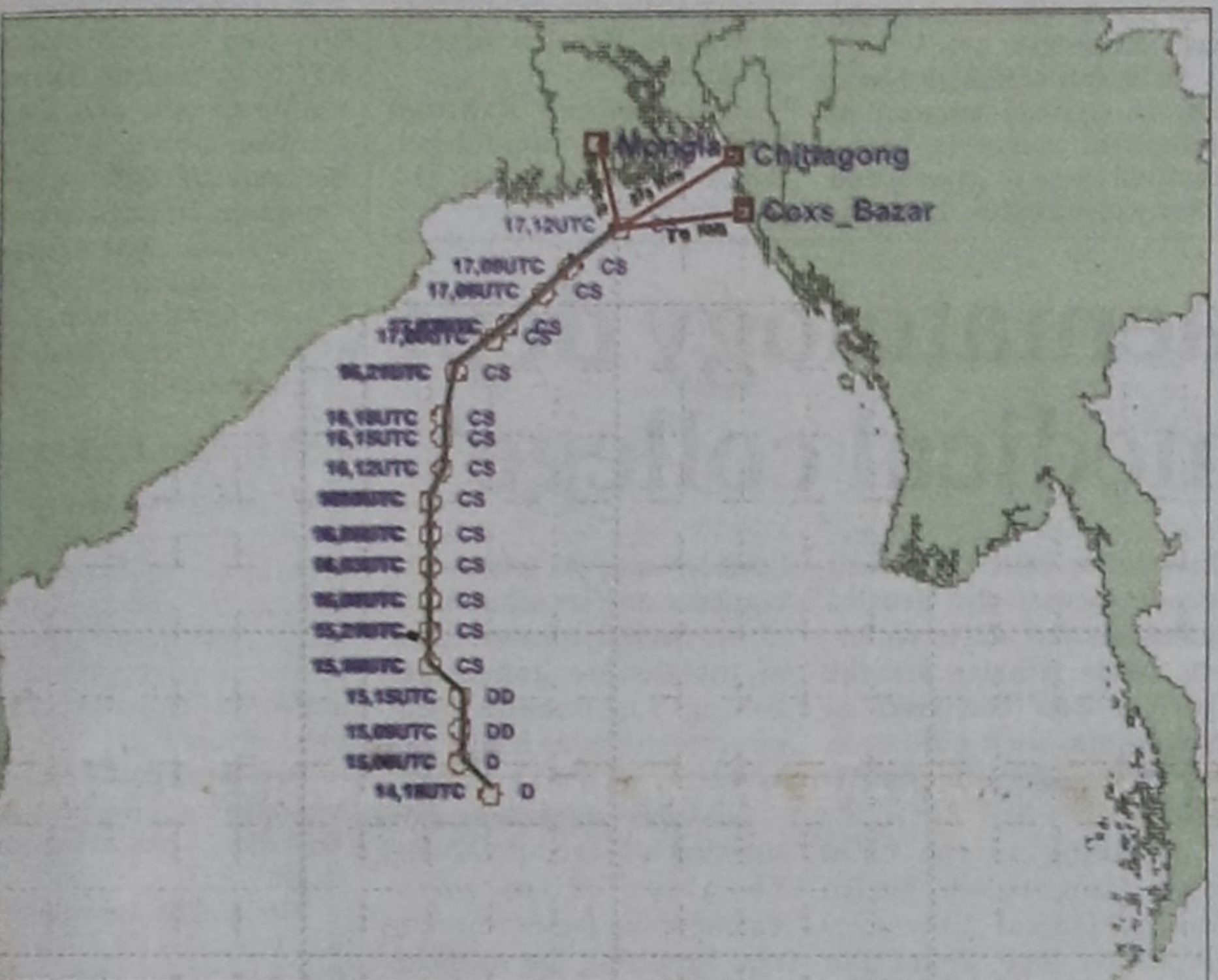
According to the bulletin, the maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to keep hoisted danger signal no 7 and 6.

The storm is likely to move in a north or north-easterly direction and weaken gradually, said the bulletin.

Under the influence of the storm, waves up to six to eight feet higher than usual were buffeting the shore. Operations of Chittagong and Mongla ports were suspended following the warning signals, including goods handling activities at all jetties. Chittagong and Cox's Bazar airports remained closed.

Reports received from our correspondents in coastal districts including Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur, and Bhola said it was drizzling almost all through the day and the sea was

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COURTESY: MET OFFICE

This Met office image made yesterday evening shows Bijli's path towards Bangladesh coast.

## 31 Hizb-ut Towhid men arrested in Kushtia

Jihadi books, leaflets seized

AMANUR AMAN, from Kushtia

Police yesterday arrested 31 Hizb-ut Towhid activists, including its Kushtia regional chief, and seized books and leaflets on Jihad from Kushtia town.

They also recovered two kilogram of a white powder, which is yet to be identified.

Police claimed that of the arrestees, six were top-level leaders of the outfit including two alleged militant trainers who are also policy-makers of the organisation.

Acting on a tip off, a police team, led by Officer-in-charge of Kushtia Police Station Babul Sardar, raided the organisation's Pather Disha office at Bara Bazar in the town around 11:00am and made the arrests while they were holding a secret meeting.

Sources said the arrestees admitted that they have long been members of Hizb-ut Towhid.

All the seized books were written by Baiyezi Khan Panni of Tangail district and the leaflets urged people to come forward to establish "real

Islam" following its leader Baiyezi Khan Panni.

Locals said they would often see a group of people gathered at Pather Disha office, owned by Mahbub Rahman. People aged between 15 and 25 used to assemble at the office from different parts of the country. They held daylong meetings and left at night, locals claimed.

Police said it was their monthly gathering yesterday. Several top leaders went there to indoctrinate the youths.

Police, however, refused to give any details about the arrested men saying that they need more time to interrogate them.

The Daily Star correspondent yesterday talked, over telephone, to Abdur Rashid who claimed to be the second-in-command of Hizb-ut Towhid Kushtia region.

He claimed his organisation is not involved in militancy. "Some people of the Bara Bazar area want to occupy our leader's (Mahbub) land," he said.

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## Former minister Aminul seeks review of cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Former post and telecommunications minister Aminul Haque, through his attorney, applied to the deputy commissioner's office of Rajshahi for review of all 13 cases filed against him during the last caretaker government.

Enamul Haque, a High Court practitioner, came to Rajshahi and submitted an application to the deputy commissioner's office on Thursday afternoon in this regard.

The application also appealed to withdraw six other cases against Aminul three in Dhaka and three in Naogaon.

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## Faisal brought to Dhaka for TFI quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh-born British citizen and founder of Green Crescent charity and NGO Faisal Mostafa and his associate Hasan Saifuddin Badal were yesterday brought to Dhaka for interrogation by the Task Force Intelligence (TFI) cell.

They were placed on a fresh 10-day remand on Thursday after the first phase remand.

Investigation Officer of the cases SI Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that they sent Faisal and Badal from Bhola under strict security yesterday morning.

Sources said Faisal has close links with outlawed Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and had met executed JMB supremo Shaekh Abdur Rahman several times. He kept contact with Saidur Rahman, the absconding chief of the militant organisation.

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## 9 Shibir men arrested on charges of militancy

BSS, Jessore

Police yesterday arrested nine leaders and activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir including the party's Jessore district unit president in a madrasa on militant charges.

They are Jessore district unit Islami Chhatra Shibir president Abdullah-Al-Mamun and activists Shafiqul Islam, Iqbal Hossain, Mominur Rahman, Rabiul Islam, Mostaq Ahmed, Hadiuzzaman, Saiful Islam and Jahangir Hossain.

A police team led by sub-inspector Kotwali thana Apurba Hasan on a tip-off raided Baniargati Girls Madrasa and arrested these Shibir personnel around 5pm. Later, he told reporters that they were trying to carry out sabotage.

The arrested Shibir activists were being interrogated till filing of this report at 8pm.

## BCL FACTIONS CLASH Barisal Medical College shut indefinitely

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College (SBMC) was closed indefinitely on Thursday night following clashes between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

The SBMC academic council after an emergency meeting asked the students of all five hostels to vacate the dormitories by yesterday morning and postponed all examinations until further notice.

Sources said the two BCL factions -- one led by SBMC unit BCL president Abu Jafar and the other by BCL leader and Intern Doctors' Association president Ramiz Ahmed and BCL leader S M Sayem clashed on the campus at about 9:00pm Thursday night.

Rabiul Islam, a student of 35th batch and a

supporter of Jafar group, was allegedly abducted by the rival group.

Didar, Saif, Tanvir and Al-Amin belonging to the same group were injured in the clash.

The SBMC authorities called in the police to bring the situation under control.

Jafar blamed the rival group for creating chaos on the campus and accused it of abducting Rabiul.

However, BCL leader Ramiz denied the allegation of abducting any of their rival group members.

He alleged that the members of the rival group ransacked eight rooms of Zamirul Reza Pappu Hall and the college library.

Ziaur Rahman Zia, city BCL convener, told The Daily Star that all activities of SBMC BCL

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## 2 murdered, cop mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A security guard and an alleged criminal were killed in separate incidents in the city's Kaflur and Lalbagh yesterday and early hours of today.

Besides, muggers looted valuables from a police officer by stabbing him at Malibagh in the city yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Anwar Hossain, 25, a security guard of developers firm IBBL, and Mohammad Reaz, 25, a suspected criminal of Jagannath Saha Road in Lalbagh.

Abdul Hamid, another security guard who witnessed the killing of Anwar, said three

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FROM LEFT...Muhammad A (Rume) Ali, chairman of Brac Bank, Sabrina Islam, CEO of Reflections, Abdul Monem, chairman of Abdul Monem Group of Companies, and Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, chairman of Meghna Group, pose with The Daily Star-DHL Business Awards at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## BANGLADESH BUSINESS AWARDS 2008 Corporate luminaries honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two businesspersons, one enterprise and one financial institution won The Daily Star-DHL business awards yesterday for their extraordinary performance in different fields.

As part of the Bangladesh Business Awards 2008, Abdul Monem, chairman and managing director of Abdul Monem Group of Companies, has been honoured as the Business Person of the Year.

Sabrina Islam, chief executive officer of Reflections, has been named the Outstanding Woman in Business in 2008.

Meghna Group won the award for the Enterprise of the Year. The Best Financial Institution of the Year award went to BRAC Bank.

Through yesterday's ceremony, the Bangladesh Business Awards, jointly introduced by The Daily Star and DHL Express, were announced for a ninth year

giving the champions of a corporate Bangladesh their due recognition.

Sir David Bell, chairman of The Financial Times Group, joined the gala event as special guest at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka. Bell is also the chairman of Pearson, an international media and education company that owns The Financial Times. Pearson is also the owning company of Penguin and Longman, which together form the world's largest English language publisher.

In his speech, Bell focused on the financial crisis that gave way to a crisis of confidence -- first in the banks and then among consumers -- that led to an output crisis.

"And quite unusually, it has affected most of the world simultaneously," he said. "People refer to it as a synchronised crisis."

But every cloud has a silver lining. "We believe perhaps the worst is over," Bell said.

"The US housing market which drives huge activity is doing a little better. Lower energy prices have helped stimulate the world. Credit conditions stopped tightening and companies are going to rebuild their stocks," he said.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, governor of Bangladesh Bank, attended the programme as chief guest. Also present were The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and DHL's Senior Vice President Malcolm Monteiro.

As the names of the awardees were announced, the audience responded with cheers and applause hailing the "business heroes". Their profiles and business activities were presented on screens in a hall packed with guests.

In his immediate reaction to the award, Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, chairman of Meghna Group, said he was inspired by Taiwanese companies when

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## PM issues cheques, MP's men take away

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The local Awami League (AL) law-maker's men in Bagmara upazila have allegedly taken away cheques worth Tk 19 lakh granted by the prime minister for the victims of the cruelties committed by Bangla Bhai-led vigilante gangs.

They are now pressing the recipients to hand them the rest two of the 21 Tk 1 lakh cheques distributed on Wednesday.

The victims said they have been threatened not to speak to the media about the matter.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Adviser HT Imam distributed the cheques among those who had suffered at the hands of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB) cadres in 2004 and 2005.

During the cheque-giving cere-

mony at Bhwaniganj School playground, the prime minister held a teleconference with Bagmara residents.

She said her government would ensure justice for those who fell prey to executed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) second-in-command Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai and his henchmen.

After the meeting, some local AL leaders including upazila AL General Secretary Zakirul Islam Santu, Mougachhi Union AL General Secretary Abdur Razzak Mollah and upazila Jubo League President Abdus Salam asked the recipients to meet them with the cheques at Enamul Haque's cold storage the next morning.

Ataur Rahman, a torture victim, said after he and Parjan Bibi went

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Prime minister's adviser HT Imam along with two lawmakers distributes cheques from the prime minister's relief fund among victims of Bangla Bhai and JMB's atrocities at Bagmara, Rajshahi, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Bangla Bhai's bodyguard arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police yesterday arrested a fugitive bodyguard of executed JMB leader Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai at Kornipara of Gabtoli in Bogra.

Russell, also a member of the banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), has been absconding since the government launched a drive against the militant organisation four years ago.

Acting on a tip off, police arrested Russell from a bush adjacent to his home, acting Officer-in-charge of Gabtoli Police Station Tofazzal Hossain said.

Sources said police came to know about Russell's return as soon as he reached home

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## Shamim Osman back, stages showdown

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Controversial Awami League (AL) leader Shamim Osman returning after around eight years' self-exile staged a huge showdown in Narayanganj yesterday marking the historic Mujibnagar Day.

Several thousand people participated in the procession that drew huge attention of the people in the town.

Accused of criminal activities during the AL rule Shamim was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment during the immediate past caretaker government.

He fled to India and then Canada after AL's poll debacle in 2001 national election.

Shamim was accused in a number of criminal cases including the explosion in AL office at Chashara in June 2001 that left 22 people killed.

He returned home in 2006 and after a brief stay left the country again before 1/11 political changeover in 2007. Meanwhile, all the cases filed against him were stayed by the High Court.

Asked about the showdown the AL leader said, "It was not my showdown rather it was a rally of the district AL marking the historic Mujibnagar Day and as a political activist I took part in it."

Convener of the District AL Mofizul Islam, General Secretary of the city AL Khokon Saha, and Chandan Shil, among others, took part in the procession that started from the Osmani

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