

47 die as boat sinks after hitting launch

8 missing in the accident in Daira river in Kishoreganj

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

At least 47 persons, mostly women and children, died and eight went missing after a motorboat capsized on the Daira river at Mithamoin upazila of the district yesterday.

Of the dead, 17 are women and 22 children.

It was the second such disaster in a week. The night before Eid-ul-Azha, at least 87 people died in a launch capsized at Lalmohon in Bhola.

Administration sources in Kishoreganj said the motorboat, MV Chand Miah, went down after it collided head-on with Azmeriganj-bound launch MV Al Helal at around 8:00am.

Of around 80 people it was carrying, some 33 managed to swim ashore, said Sub-Inspector Abdul Motalib of Mithamoin Police Station.

Locals launched a rescue operation immediately after the accident. The bodies they recovered were identified to be of Sharuna, 28, Nurul Amin, 24, Ruhina, 34, Zafar, 2, Sabita, 25, Shapla, 12, Amjela, 12, Aklima, 12, Shafatullah, 6, Shilpi Begum, 20, Tamzid, 20, Razia, 16, Ratna, 15, Nila, 5, Aleya, 24, Mahmuda, 22, Fazlul Haque, 30, Amanullah, 8, Shilpi Akhtar, 20, Jewel, 12, Anika Akhtar, 10, Chandni, 12, Surajoni Das, 28, Shuvo, 5, Dhrubo, 8, Omar Chowdhury, 6, Tulfi Khatun, 23, Ismat Ara, 7, Moti Miah, 65, Tofazzal Hossain, 5, Niamunnesa, 3,

Monwara Khatun, 32, Rozina, 10, Kamala Rani Baishnab, 32, Mou, 12, Bilkis, 25, Zinnat, 6, Jonaki, 19, Rubia, 60, Khadija, 45, Dholu Miah, 12, Jahed, 10, Abu Shahed, 7, Sonia Akhtar, 11, Zahurul Haque Bhuiyan, 32, Afia Akhtar, 7, and Abdur Rouf Miah.

Divers from fire brigade headquarters in the capital reached the scene at around 4:00pm. They salvaged the engine boat at around 7:00pm but could not yet trace eight passengers.

The rescue efforts were called off after the divers confirmed no bodies were trapped inside the vessel.

The district administration has formed a three-member committee to

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Locals and fire-brigade divers search for missing passengers in a motorboat that capsized in Daira river in Kishoreganj yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Launch operators defy restriction on overloading

STAR REPORT

Launch operators in country's southern parts continue to defy the restriction on carrying excess passengers as people are returning from Eid holiday to their work places with the tragic Bhola launch capsized still fresh in their minds. It left 85 passengers dead.

Similar practice of carrying passengers much beyond the capacity of launches and other modes of passenger vessels is also visible on the Mawa-Kavrakandi route in the Padma River.

Launch owners and port authorities, however, are blaming each other for the failure to check overloading, which is solely responsible for accidents in the waterways and such accidents take place more during rush hours especially before and after the Eid vacation.

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JRC discusses sharing of Ganges water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day meeting of the technical committee of Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) of Bangladesh and India kicked off in Dhaka yesterday, with a discussion on sharing the Ganges waters.

JRC Member Mir Sajjad Hossain is leading a six-member Bangladesh delegation while a seven-member Indian delegation is being led by SP Kakran. The venue for the talks is the JRC office in Dhanmondi.

A member of the Bangladesh delegation told

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BNP NATIONAL COUNCIL Hectic lobbying on for positions

Khaleda declared elected chairperson

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP leaders at different levels are lobbying for coveted positions in the standing and central executive committees as the party plans to include new faces in them.

Meanwhile, election commission for BNP Chairperson Election-2009 declared Khaleda elected yesterday, the last day of withdrawing nomination paper for the post of chairperson.

Commission Chairman TH Khan made the announcement at a press briefing.

The proposal for creating a post for Tarique Rahman might come from the councillors, as the party's top leadership could not reach any decision on the matter.

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Yunus urges all to work more, speak less

BSS, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the nation would be benefited if we work more and speak less.

No big achievement will be attained unless we become a dedicated and adventurous nation, he said.

Dr Yunus was addressing a reception to three outstanding personalities of the decade (2000-2010) at the city's Hotel Radisson for their invaluable contributions in their respective fields.

The Oncology Club
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Ulfa chief not held in Bangladesh

Asserts Sahara; Indian home secy says he surrendered in Meghalaya

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh government yesterday finally spoke about the rampant international media speculations regarding United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa's arrest in Dhaka and his subsequent transfer to Indian custody.

Terming the media reports baseless, Bangladesh Home Minister Sahara Khatun told reporters, "Since we did not arrest him, there is no question of pushing him back," adding, "Media reports about the Ulfa chairman's arrest in Bangladesh is baseless and untrue."

The Indian authorities however formally announced yesterday afternoon that the Ulfa chairman surrendered to Indian Border Security Force (BSF) earlier in the day at Dawki in the

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Lawmakers join human chain on Kuakata beach

Campaign for fighting climate-change fallout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Lawmakers formed a human chain on Kuakata sea beach yesterday in efforts to bring issues of climate change high on the agenda of the government's priorities, as Bangladesh happens to be among the most vulnerable nations.

The programme was
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Two more outlaws killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Two top cadres of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) were killed in a "shootout" in Jagati village of the district early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Rokon, 28, son of Korban Sheikh of West Mojamur, and Sagar alias Hatkata Sagar, 39, son of Shamsuddin of Chourhas of Kustia town.

According to police, a gunfight between the

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The Garo people celebrate their traditional Wangala festival at the city's Banani Bidyaniketan High School yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Another land commission for indigenous people mulled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is thinking about forming a separate land commission to settle land disputes of indigenous people who do not reside in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the prime minister is considering the land commission.

"Settling their land disputes was an election manifesto of Awami League. To implement it, either a separate land commission will be formed or the CHT Land Commission will be entrusted with additional responsibilities," he said.

Razzaque said this while addressing Wangala, a thanksgiving festival of the Garos, many of whom live in greater Mymensingh, at Banani Bidyaniketan organised by Wangala Celebration Committee in Dhaka.

He said he saw in his constituency how the indigenous people were deprived of their right to land when officials of

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DISTRIBUTION OF AGRI INPUTS

1.42cr farmers to get special cards

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government is going to issue "Krishi Card" (agriculture cards) for the farmers by the end of this month for distribution of agricultural inputs, loans and other subsidies in a more transparent and effective manner.

A database of 1.42 crore farmers, including the landless and the marginalised, has already been prepared, while the agriculture ministry has finalised the draft card and sent it for printing at the district headquarters.

"Everything is in the final stage and we

expect to start printing the cards in third week of this month," Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

She said the cards, a new idea for the country's farmers, would be printed at district level instead of Dhaka and distributed at union level with an aim to make the best use of all the agricultural inputs and subsidies.

Earlier, the agriculture ministry prepared several samples of the proposed cards incorporating all the information on the farmers such as their detailed identity, category (landless or

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SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP Bangladesh rout Bhutan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh left all their off-field turmoil at the touchline as they breezed to a 4-1 victory over an insipid Bhutan in their opening match of the Bangabandhu SAFF Championships at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Striker Enamul Haque grabbed a brace and his partner Zahid Hasan Emily and defender Pranotosh bagged the other goals as Bangladesh took the game to their opponents from the kick-off and forced repeated mistakes from the team ranked a lowly 196th in the world. The victory will go a long way to dispelling the doubters as Bangladesh put on a fine display to delight the

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40 killed as gunmen storm Pak mosque

AFP, Rawalpindi

Militants stormed a mosque popular with army officers in Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi yesterday leaving at least 40 people dead in an onslaught of gunfire, grenades and explosions.

At least four gunmen launched the deadly attack, opening fire and tossing grenades into the crowd gathering for Friday prayers in the city adjoining the capital Islamabad, witnesses and officials said.

Rawalpindi is home to the military's headquarters and a frequent target of Taliban insurgents, who have staged a wave of fierce attacks

in recent months to avenge military offensives against them across the northwest.

Army spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP that up to five gunmen launched the strike on the mosque frequented by military officers, and said security forces were searching for any surviving attackers.

"They exploded bombs inside the mosque," he told AFP. "They opened fire on the worshippers.... There is no hostage situation."

An official military statement said: "The death toll is now 36 and 45 injured." Four militants were also killed, the statement added.

Witnesses reported at least five blasts, while

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