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35 drown after boats collide in Sunamganj

Deceased are women, children; male passengers swam ashore after accident in Dhanu river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 35 people drowned when a passenger carrying motorboat sank after a head-on collision with a cargo boat in the Dhanu river in Jamalganj upazila of Sunamganj last night. Local sources said the passenger boat carrying around 100 people capsized in the tributary of the Surma river in Alipur area around 8:30pm. Matiar Rahman, a former member of Fenarbagh union under Jamalganj, told The Daily Star over phone around 12:45am that he along with other villagers recovered 35 bodies. These included 17 of women and 18 of children.

Most passengers of the sunken boat were identified as workers who collect rocks from the Surma at Bholaganj in Companyganj upazila of Sylhet. The boat was heading towards Itna upazila of Kishoreganj from Bholaganj. Mohabbat Ali, a farmer of Alipur area said, he reached the spot immediately after the accident, and joined rescue efforts. The bodies recovered were kept on the riverbank. Around 40 passengers of the motorboat swam ashore while local people rescued several others, said Matiar, a survivor. Some local sources said at about 1:00am a number of passengers were

missing. And none from the local administration or police reached the spot. Safar Ali, another survivor who lost his wife and five other family members, said he had jumped off the boat when it collided with another boat, and swam ashore. He said he found the bodies of his wife Jamela Begum and others of his family among those recovered from the river. The passenger boat sank immediately after it was hit by the cargo boat that was empty, he added. Sunamganj Additional Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman said they heard about the death

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Key Issues

- Return of Hasina, Khaleda to politics during CG rule
- Assessment of Fakhruddin's power as chief adviser
- DGFI's role in promoting Huji thru forming new party IDP
- Credible elections, keeping army out of politics

WikiLeaks sheds light on Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The first batch of US embassy cables related to Bangladesh released on WikiLeaks reveals the role of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) in an effort to absorb the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) into mainstream politics through forming the Islamic Democratic Party (IDP), just before the 2008 general elections. The cable originating from the US mission in New Delhi on April 27, 2007, describes the thoughts of the US, the UK and India in the aftermath of the '1/11' political changeover in 2007. It was four days after the arrest warrant issued against Sheikh Hasina was suspended, and two days after the ban on her re-entering the country was lifted. The subject of the cable is given as "Indian official sees Bangladesh at crossroads, Sri Lanka deteriorating, Burma becoming one-dimensional." Its content describes a meeting between a



joint secretary at the Indian ministry of external affairs, Mohan Kumar, the political counsellor at the US embassy in Delhi, Ted Osius and the British High Commission's political counsellor in Delhi, Alex Hall. In the meeting, Kumar is said to have told Osius that "the caretaker government in Bangladesh has reached a crossroads by allowing Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia to return," stating such a move weakens the government. The cable goes on to assert the role that can be played by the US, the UK and India in cajoling the caretaker government into holding

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

13,680 bullets recovered

None arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered 13,680 bullets from Bakakura village in Jhinaigati upazila of Sherpur yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of law enforcers led by Superintendent of Police (SP) Anisur Rahman of Sherpur, raided the house of Wasir Uddin at about 7:00am and found the bullets of Chinese rifles from an abandoned room. Eight jute sacks containing

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3 PHOTO ON PAGE 20

City dwellers face grave gas crisis

Numerous illegal connections contribute to low pressure

SHARIER KHAN

Gas supply crisis this winter will be the worst ever as thousands of new gas connection seekers have illegally obtained it bypassing the government restriction on the same from July, Petrobangla sources said. This is evident from the fact that there has been a sharp drop in gas flow pressure. Field surveys have also determined that new connections have been installed at many newly built houses and apartments after July, the sources mentioned.

Stoves in many areas of the capital are already facing poor or no supply of gas during certain parts of the day. Officials say it is normal that gas flow pressure dips during winter as the pipelines accumulate gas by-products in liquid form, narrowing those. But this time the pressure dropped way before the advent of winter. Every year, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd provides around 1.25 lakh new connections. Since the imposition of restriction in July, at least around 50,000

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Khaleda flies to China

Asks govt to quit immediately

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government should resign immediately to "protect the country from danger". She made the demand while talking to some journalists at Shahjalal International Airport prior to her departure for China on a five-day visit. BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Afghan kidnappers kill Bangladeshi engineer

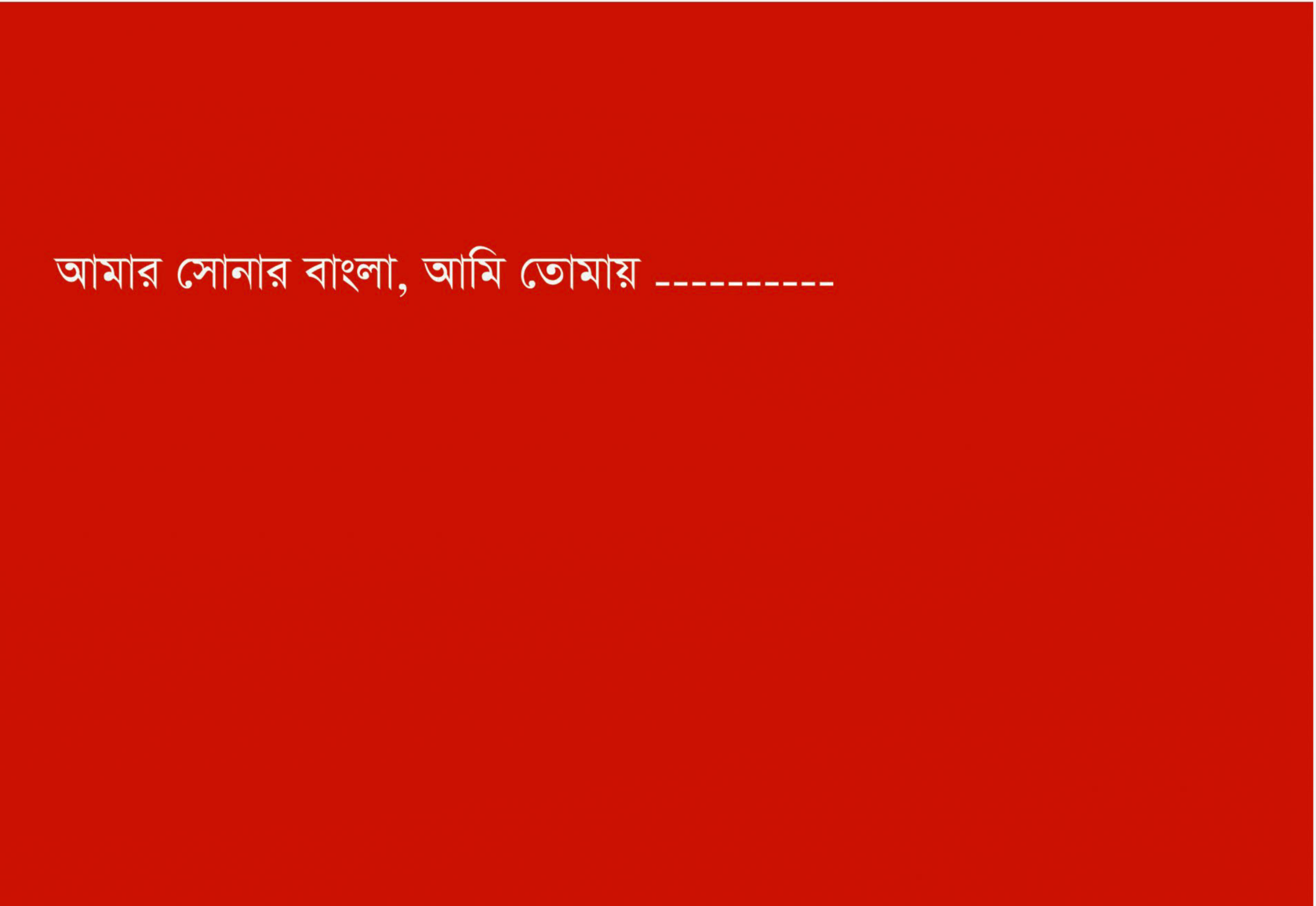
Several others abducted, taken hostage

AFP, Mazar-i-Sharif

Kidnappers killed a Bangladeshi engineer working in Afghanistan and abducted two road workers after storming their camp at gunpoint, officials said yesterday. The incident happened in the north, where Taliban insurgents are increasingly active as Nato has opened up new supply lines, and in an area adjacent to where German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited yesterday. "Seven Afghan and Bangladeshi road construction workers were kidnapped last night,"

said Shirjan Duranai, spokesman for the police in Balkh province. "One Bangladeshi was killed, four workers escaped, while two are still hostages." The nationality of those still being held hostage is not clear, he said, adding that police had launched an investigation. The workers were employed by South Korean company, the country's embassy in Kabul confirmed to AFP. An official there added that their information was that seven people, all Bangladeshis, were still unaccounted for.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



আমার সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় -----

ভালবাসা ছাড়া অসম্পূর্ণ সবই