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Group of youths showed the way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They did not have any rescue operation experience. Nor did they have any technical sophistication to do what trained professionals equipped with the best-available equipment in the country failed to.

But in an example of mind over matter, five youths made a claw out of scraps and pulled out a four-year-old boy yesterday from an around 300-foot well shaft 23 hours after his fall.

The boy, Jihad, could not be saved. But that they successfully located and pulled out the boy in less than half an hour after the government called off the rescue bid saying there was no sign of the boy inside the borehole, made them heroes in public eyes.

It was a coordinated effort of Anwar Hossain, Nur Mohammad Litu, Abu Bakar Siddique Bablu, Shafiqul Islam Faroque and Kabir Murad Bhuiyan, aged between 17 and 35.

Anwar is a CCTV camera technician, Litu a ninth grader of Shahjahanpur Railway Colony High School, Bablu a supplier to super shops, Murad a Textile Engineering student of Ahsanullah Science and Technology University, and Faroque, a trader.

They did not know one another until they all gathered at Shahjahanpur Railway Colony from different areas in the capital hours after the news of Jihad's fall spread.

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The young men holding the claw they devised in a matter of hours grabbing iron rods from a nearby construction site to rescue Jihad from the well. People looking at a TV screen, top, to view the images being fed by the camera, right, mounted on the claw inside the well.

PHOTO: COLLECTED/RASHED SHUMON

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ill-equipped for rescue

Tragedy exposes it again

STAR REPORT

Jihad's case is just the latest in a series that starkly shows how ill-prepared the country is for dealing with any rescue operation.

One can recall the Rana Plaza incident when the building collapsed trapping thousands inside. The equipment that the fire service had was inadequate. In the end private companies like Beximco and Orion supplied huge cranes to pull apart the beams and slabs.

On top of that, as official rescuers looked on, hordes of brave hearts risked their lives, searched every nook and corner and rescued many of the trapped souls. One of the volunteers even died trying to pull off a daring rescue.

When the Rangs building tragedy happened at Bijoy Sarani during the caretaker government rule, rescue operation was frustrating. The scene of dead workers

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Chinese minister in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Dhaka last night on a three-day visit to Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Foggy country shivers in cold

STAR REPORT

The mercury dropped further yesterday and most parts of the country remained blanketed in thick fog.

The situation is unlikely to change in the next two days, according to the Met office.

The lowest temperature was recorded in Ishwardi of Pabna at 7.2 degrees Celsius yesterday while the temperature of Dhaka was 12.6 degrees Celsius.

On Friday, the lowest temperature was 9.4 degrees Celsius in Jessore and Dhaka's temperature was 13.4 degrees Celsius.

Due to a light depression over the

Bay, the cold wave is sweeping all over the country, Mohammad Shah Alam, director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, told The Daily Star.

"There is a possibility of rain at the end of this month, and after that, the temperature of some regions may go down further," he said.

The country may experience another cold wave either on January 4 or 5 next year, Alam added.

The ongoing winter chill has battered life in many places, especially in Pabna, Jessore and Kushtia, report our correspondents.

Farmers and day labourers are mainly bearing the brunt of the ongoing cold spell. Many poor people are

trying to combat the bone-chilling cold with the heat from burning straw and old rubber tyres.

Many preferred to stay indoors yesterday.

The price of warm clothes in different markets and roadside shops in the capital has also shot up.

In some districts, dozens of hospital admissions were reported. Most of the victims were elderly people and children suffering from cold-related complications.

Meanwhile, two international flights -- Biman Bangladesh Airlines 'BG 028' from Abu Dhabi and an Air Arabia flight from Sharjah, UAE -- were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

North Korea berates Obama over Kim film

Calls him a 'monkey', blames US for Internet blackout

AFP, Seoul

North Korea yesterday called US President Barack Obama a "monkey" for inciting cinemas to screen a comedy featuring a fictional plot to kill its leader, and blamed Washington for an Internet blackout this week.

The isolated dictatorship's powerful National Defence Commission (NDC) threatened "inescapable deadly

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Robber killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Chief of a Sundarbans robber gang was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab members at Suterkhali in the district's Dakop upazila on Friday night.

The dead, Abul Kashem, 45, led the gang named after him. He was son of Nur Ali Gazi in Kalabogi village of the upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, a special team of Rapid Action

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think it was justified for State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to deny the involvement of BCL activists in Wednesday's attack on BNP men at the capital's Bakshibazar?

Yes (16%)

No (84%)

TOTAL VOTES: 174

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think, time and again our authorities show that they lack proper sense of their responsibilities and technical know-how?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

PRAYER TIMING December 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Ship in wrong hands!

'Captain', 'chief engineer' of capsized Cambodian ship found to be Bangladeshi labourers

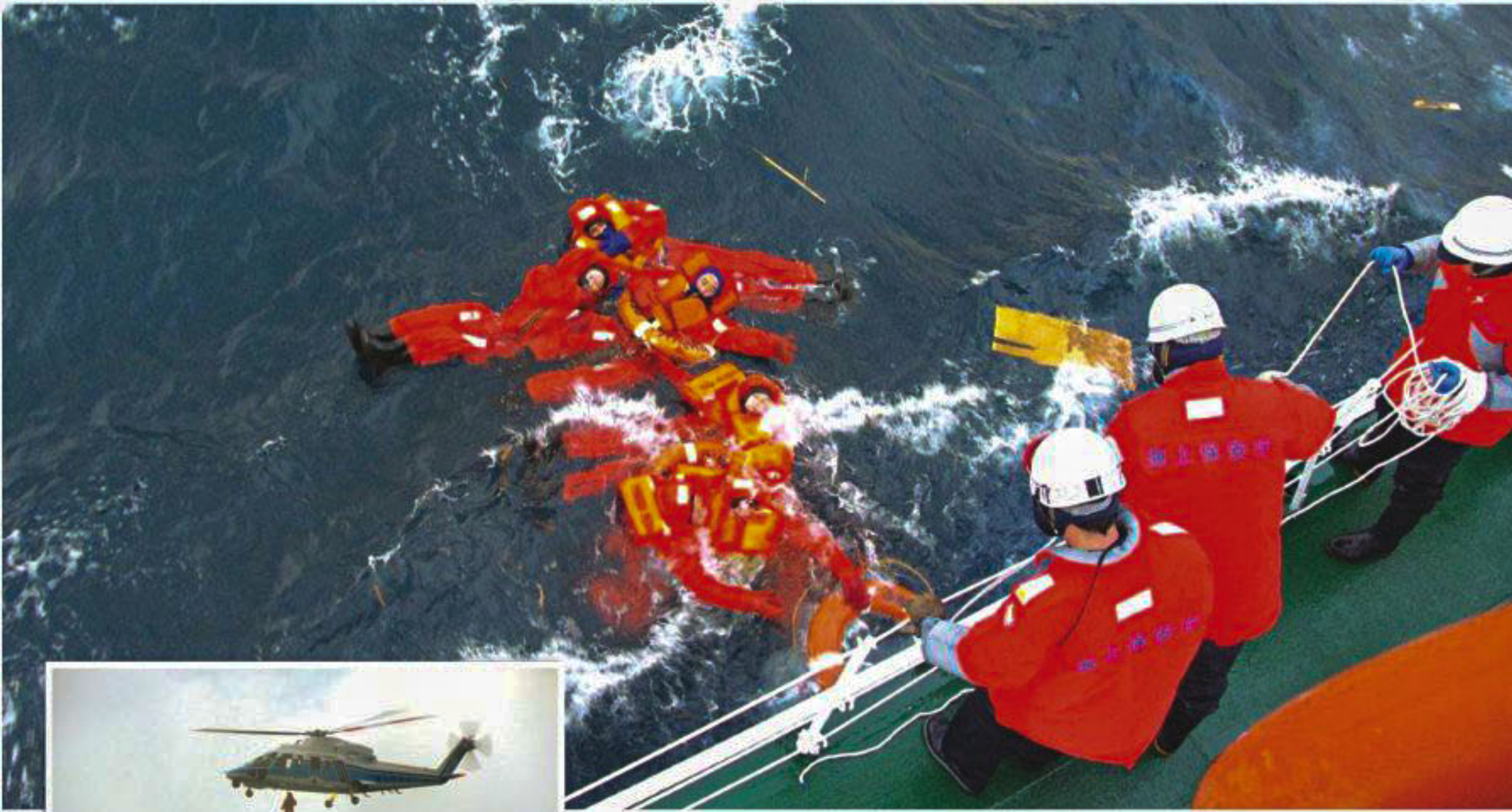
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They had little knowledge of navigation and vessels, yet they were the captain and chief engineer of a ship. And the consequence is the loss of three lives and the ship.

The duo are from Bangladesh. They were taken to Tokyo after being rescued from northern Japan coast where their ship -- Cambodia-registered "Ming Guang" -- capsized with scrap metals on its way to South Korea early Thursday.

Mostofa Kamal, the "captain", who is from Bagerhat, was a labourer in Mongla port. He studied up to class three at a primary school, Mohammed Nore-Alam, counsellor at Bangladesh embassy in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Japanese Coast Guard personnel fish crew members of Ming Guang out of the chilly waters between Honshu and Hokkaido islands on Friday. The crew members abandoned ship after it started listing and finally sank.

PHOTO: AFP

ASSAM VIOLENCE

India seals Bhutan border

AGENCIES

Even as the Indian Army intensified its counter-insurgency operations against the National Democratic Front of Boroland (Songbijit), the exodus of panic-stricken Bodo and Adivasi people continued unabated.

Government sources in New Delhi said that the border with Bhutan -- where NDFB(S) is believed to have bases -- has been sealed.

In five attacks within the space of an hour, Bodo militants dressed in military uniforms dragged out men, women and children from

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Comfortable

হবে তো?

আমরা আসছি আপনার চলার সাথে হয়ে...