



The river Teesta is flowing at only one centimetre below the danger level of 52.40cm at Teesta barrage point in Doyani area of Hatibandha upazila, Lalmonirhat, on Thursday noon. Inset, a couple from Gaddimari village, a Teesta char (shoal) area, is going to the mainland on a raft.



PHOTO: STAR

# RISING WATER LEVEL IN TEESTA

## One lakh people under flood threat

S DILIP ROY in Lalmonirhat and SUBBRATA ACHARYA in Kolkata

About one lakh people are under threat of floods on the shoals and chars of the Teesta river in five upazilas in Lalmonirhat as the river is about to cross the danger level due to heavy downpour upstream across the border. Many char areas have been flooded in the last 24 hours, bringing untold sufferings to residents of those areas. The Teesta was flowing only one centimetre below the danger level of 52.4cm at Teesta Barrage point of Doyani in Hatibandha upazila as of yesterday afternoon. Mostafizur Rahman, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) at Dalia, said all 44 gates of Teesta Barrage have been kept open since Wednesday night due to pressure of upstream water. "The Indian Cajoldoba Barrage authorities have informed me that they kept open all the gates of the barrage

due to pressure of water flowing from upstream Sikkim," he added. He said they have been monitoring the water level of the river. "We will alert the char and shoal people if the river crosses the danger level," he said, warning that the water level might cross the danger level anytime. Mobarak Hossain, 35, of Char Gaddimari village in Hatibandha said their shoal was flooded yesterday morning and they were using bamboo made rafts to maintain connection with the mainland. Mofazzal Hossain, chairman of Rajpur Union Parishad in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said char and shoal people always live in flood situations during the rainy season as the river overflows following normal downpour upstream. The riverbed has lost its depth because of silt and mud settling there for years, said WDB Executive Engineer of Lalmonirhat Abu Bakkar. He added

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## 3 lakh Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 1  
in Rakhine province. Almost all of them were sent back through mutual understanding between the two countries. Again, over 2.5 lakh Rohingyas entered Bangladesh through Cox's Bazar and Bandarban border points in 1991-92. The government then set up 21 temporary camps for them in the two districts. With the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the government registered the names of Rohingya refugees in these camps. Of the 21 refugee camps set up between 1991 and 1992, only two now exist -- one at Nayapara in Teknaf upazila and the other at Kutupalong of Ukha upazila under Cox's Bazar. The RRRC office under the disaster management and relief ministry has been overseeing food, medical treatment and accommodation of the refugees with the assistance of various local and foreign agencies. Sources in the RRRC office said a total of 2.36 lakh Rohingyas have been repatriated from 1992 to 2005 with the help of the UNHCR through discussions between the two countries. According to the RRRC office, the last batch of Rohingyas -- two members of a

family -- were sent across Teknaf's Naf river to Myanmar on July 28, 2005. Though repatriation of Rohingyas has remained stalled since 2005, this persecuted group have not stopped coming to Bangladesh. Following a large-scale attack on Rohingyas in Myanmar in June and October of 2012, thousands fled the country and tried to enter Bangladesh, despite Bangladesh government's strict measures for not allowing anymore Rohingyas. After the repatriation stopped in 2005, the Myanmar government had agreed to take back only 9,910 Rohingyas out of the 32,878 registered refugees in the two camps, after extensive dialogue mediated by UNHCR between Bangladesh and Myanmar. But not a single Rohingya was taken back by Myanmar in the last 11 years. Even a repatriation camp and a jetty set up at Kerantoli on the west bank of Naf River for the Rohingya repatriation activities have just disappeared. However, 856 refugees staying in Nayapara and Kutupalong camps have been rehabilitated in Canada, Britain, New Zealand, the US, Norway, Ireland, Sweden and Australia through the joint efforts by the UNHCR and International Organisation of Migration (IOM).

After the Rohingya repatriation came to a halt, high-level government delegations have visited Myanmar and requested the country to solve the refugee problem. Myanmar has time and again assured Bangladesh of taking back the Rohingyas, but there has been no visible measure from the country yet. Nayapara refugee camp is situated near the river, 72km from Cox's Bazar district town. A little away, about 17,000 unregistered Rohingyas have been living in temporary sheds in a village named Leda under Hnila since 2008. A similar slum of around 35,000 unregistered Rohingyas can be seen living near the Kutupalong camp, beside Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway, 40km off the district town. The slum was built about 12 years ago. An official at the RRRC office preferring anonymity said they remain in constant worry about the safety of Nayapara and Kutupalong camps. Both camps are open and do not have boundary walls, so it is easy for anyone to enter and exit. The official also said the Rohingyas living illegally in temporary sheds near the camps have been a huge threat to law and order.

## Delhi contacts

FROM PAGE 1  
with Bangladesh's foreign ministry and police. "The High Commission of India, Dhaka, has contacted both Bangladesh Police and MoFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], and has been assured of full support and protection. We are also in direct contact with the RK Mission in Dhaka," he said. Police presence at the Ramakrishna Mission complex in Gopibagh has been strengthened, Swarup added. The official said the first secretary (consular) in the High Commission visited the RK Mission yesterday morning to review the security. The Dhaka Ramakrishna Mission is a branch of the Belur Math in Kolkata. A police official in Dhaka on Thursday said the priest received the letter on a IS letterhead, with the perpetrator identifying himself as one A B Siddiqui. "Bangladesh is an Islamic state. You can't preach your religion here. If you continue preaching, you'll be hacked to death with machetes between the 20th and 30th," the officer quoted the letter as saying. Suspected Islamists have killed a number of secular activists, Hindus and other religious minorities across Bangladesh in recent months, prompting the authorities to launch a nationwide anti-militant clampdown since Friday.

## Target tolerance

FROM PAGE 1  
Islam across the country against militancy and violence in the name of religion, he told this paper by phone yesterday. In the beginning, it quotes verse 32 of Surah Al-Ma'idah of the holy Quran: "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption, it is as if he has slain the entire mankind. And whoever saves one, it is as if he has saved the entire mankind." The fatwas will be delivered as sermons in mosques and religious gatherings and be spread through social media. "Islam prohibits taking anyone's life because of his faith, whatever that may be. Islam has not allowed any individual to judge others," said Masoud. "The fatwa unequivocally said these killings of non-Muslims, minorities and secular activists are forbidden in Islam. "We hope that the people who have been misguided in the name of Islam will learn true things from this fatwa and will return to normal life," he added. The scholar noted that counterterrorism efforts are unlikely to be successful without changing such twisted thought process of radicals who are "brainwashed" into thinking that they will go to heaven by carrying out a suicide attack, for example. "It's a matter of great regret that some miscreants are spreading terror activities and panic in the name of Islam to serve their vested interest. They are portraying Islam as a cruel religion... These fanatics are not only the enemy of Islam and Muslims but also of humanity." According to him, it is not possible to eradicate the menace by law enforcement agencies only as the criminals are ready to kill themselves in the name of religion. The first thing needed is to remove the obscurity of Islam from their mindset. Masoud said they plan to distribute 1 crore copies of the edicts as booklets across the country in phases. Over the last three years, suspected militants have attacked and killed university professors, writers, publishers, secular bloggers, gay rights activists, foreigners, policemen and members of religious minorities, including Shia and Sufi Muslims, Christians and Hindus. About 50 people have become victims of such targeted killings since February 2013. Last week, the government launched a crackdown against militants and criminals. So far, some 194 suspected militants have been nabbed among over 11,000 arrested. The fatwa comes against such a backdrop. But it was not easy for the panel to move ahead with the initiative and collect signatures. "Jamaat-Shibir men hindered our efforts in some places," said Sodrduddin Maknun, general secretary of Dhaka city unit of Bangladesh Jamiyatul Umma. He said copies of the fatwa would be given to the United Nations, the chief imam of Makkah Shareef, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Security experts have hailed the initiative as "good and positive" in the fight against terrorism in the name of Islam. Former police chief Nur Mohammad said it would play a positive role in combating militancy. This will create awareness among the people, he told this newspaper, adding that all Islamic institutions should come forward to this end as militancy could not be curbed through legal means only.

**10 QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS**

**Q: Are jihad and terrorism the same thing in Islam?**  
A: Jihad refers to internal and external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam while terrorism is illegal and forbidden in Islam.

**Q: Will path of violence ensure heaven or will it lead to hell?**  
A: As Islam forbids terrorism and creation of panic, it could never be the way to go to heaven. This will absolutely lead to hell. Those who have been involved in acts of terrorism for going to heaven should seek apology to the almighty and return to the path of Islam. Allah does not like those who create chaos and violence.

**Q: Will suicide of a criminal be termed death of a Shaheed?**  
A: Suicide and suicide killing are strictly forbidden in Islam. Even performing janaza of suicide victims has been forbidden in the religion.

**Q: Is mass killing legal in Islam?**  
A: Killing of innocent people indiscriminately is not legal in Islam which even forbids killing anyone on suspicion.

**Q: Does Islam support indiscriminate killings of children, women and old people?**  
A: Killing of children, women, and old and weak persons who do not take part in war is strictly prohibited in Islam. Even during the war it is not justified in the religion.

**Q: What kind of crime is it to kill people at the time of worshipping?**  
A: Killing worshipping people is a heinous and severe crime. Whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is eternal hell.

**Q: Is an attack on church, temple and pagoda righteous?**  
A: In the eye of Islam, attacks on church, temple and pagoda are forbidden and illegal. This is an offence of divine retribution.

**Q: Is it the duty of all to build social resistance against terrorists and insurgents?**  
A: Religiously, it is an important duty of all to build social resistance against any evil and bad acts. Muhammad (SM) himself told his followers that Allah will hugely punish those who do not obstruct acts of sin.

## Tanners to seek more time

FROM PAGE 1  
Of the 154, around 60 are big and medium factories and the rest are small ones, Sultan said, adding that the small factories would be affected badly and may even face closure if they have to pay the fine of Tk 50,000 each every day. According to the court order, the owners will have to deposit the money with the state exchequer from the date of receiving copies of the HC order until relocation of their factories to Savar. The HC directives came on Thursday following a petition by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Sultan said the tanners would need around Tk 4,500 crore to build the structures in Savar whereas they would get around Tk 100 crore from the government. "Forty to 50 factories are in the process of shifting to Savar and would be able to move there before the Eid-ul-Azha. But I doubt whether they would get the facilities of a Central Effluent Treatment Plant, a dumping yard and a Central Chrome Recovery

Plant," he added. Over the last one decade, the tanners had missed more than a dozen deadlines for shifting their factories to Savar. They are yet to complete construction of factory buildings there though the last deadline set by the government for relocation expired on March 31 this year. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) approved the lay-out plan of 152 industrial units in Savar. Of those, 148 units are under construction, according to officials of the BSCIC, the government agency responsible for implementing the project. On Thursday, President of Bangladesh Tanners Association Shaheen Ahmed told the BBC Bangla Service that they would need time till December this year to shift all the tanneries to Savar. The tanneries in Hazaribagh area release thousands of litres of untreated and toxic waste to the Buriganga River every day. Taking into account the health and environmental hazards caused by the

tanneries, the government in 2003 took up a project to relocate those to Savar. The project was first scheduled to be completed by December 2005. But the deadline was extended more than a dozen times at the request of the tanners. **2 killed**  
FROM PAGE 16  
yesterday. At one stage, they attacked each other with sharp weapons, injuring around 27 people. The injured were taken to Phulbaria Upazila Health Complex where Halim and Amsar of the same group died. Of the other wounded, 17 were shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). Two of them were in a critical condition, police said. On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to the MMCH morgue for autopsies. Police detained three people -- Rustom Ali, Mozaffar Ali Moza, and Abdul Matin -- for their alleged involvement in the killing.

## Hospital

FROM PAGE 16  
"The robot itself is a meter 20 high, so it is not like Arnold Schwarzenegger with a leather jacket and an 'I will be back' robot," said Zora Bots' co-chief executive, Fabrice Goffin. "It is a quite nice robot and the reactions are positive for the moment." During the first week, Pepper was mainly used on the hospital's maternity department. Bieke Vandeputte, the mother of a newborn baby, was amazed. "It is another way of making contact and maybe it is reassuring that it is a robot for some people," she said. "The baby was really sure. He did not mind putting his hands on it. It did not frighten him so I think it will be important. Especially for children." Pepper is not the first robot used at the AZ Damiaan hospital, but it is the first to communicate with patients and to have the ability to guide them. Before the arrival of Pepper, the staff had already worked with a predecessor, Zora, for about a year. Zora is smaller and slower than Pepper and used mainly in physical therapy classes. At a price of 30,000 euros, Pepper is expensive. So far, only Japanese customers have bought one to use at home.

## 194 'militants' held in 7 days

FROM PAGE 1  
On Wednesday, Hindu college teacher Ripon Chakrabarty was hacked inside his home in Madaripur. Referring to media reports, ex-IGP Nur Mohammad yesterday said only a small number of the persons arrested in the special drive are criminals. "Police should do groundwork and investigation before launching a special drive. You can't just arrest whoever you want. But unfortunately this is happening as we have failed to ensure accountability of police," Nur Mohammad told this newspaper. "When you are arresting someone on suspicion you should say why you are suspecting the person. Who takes the responsibility when thousands of people are arrested without specific charges and suffer?" One good thing about such crackdowns is that the perpetrators

remain on the run and their activities come to a halt, Nur Mohammad said. As a result, he added, law and order improves. He further said lack of training, expertise and professionalism are also to blame for the failure of the drive against militancy. Terming the recent targeted killings a new trend, he hoped police would put all their strength to stop the attacks. Since the beginning of the drive on June 10 till Wednesday, 11,684 people, including 166 suspected militants, were arrested, according to a statement of police headquarters. The police headquarters on Wednesday also said that "another special drive" to arrest wanted accused and arms and narcotics traders and users began on June 6 and ended on June 13. Police never had informed the media about this "another special drive" before. There are reports of some errant

cops being indulged in "arrest trade" in the name of the special crackdown. Some have allegedly released arrestees taking money from families. **'SUCCESSFUL'**  
About the anti-militancy drive, home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said it was meant to stop targeted killings. "The drive is one of the means to stop targeted killing. We have arrested wanted accused, suspects and some identified militants," the home boss told reporters at his residence in the capital. He added, the process to arrest them began long ago and "We have been successful." Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said they had launched a drive against wanted accused, arms and drug dealers and all other criminals ahead of Eid like every year. "Then in the wake of some incidents involving militants in

Chittagong, Natore and Jhenidah, we launched another crackdown targeting homegrown militants," he told BBC Bangla Service yesterday. Replying to a query, the IGP said the arrestees include those who were directly involved in different banned militant organisations. The number of arrested militants in the weeklong drive is big, he added. He thinks the homegrown militants are not that much organised. "I don't think they will be able to carry out any massive attacks." "We have not found the organisations or who are leading the groups," he said, adding that it's no big challenge. The IGP also said not even 20 percent of the total militants arrested so far are from madrasas. They want to establish caliphate but some of the arrestees do not have a minimum knowledge about it, he added.

Prof Zia Rahman, chairman of criminology department at Dhaka University, said this good initiative must continue with specific focus, commitments and seriousness. A social movement against militancy can be built if the spirit is instilled in people's mind alongside the scholars, he added. Monirul Islam, chief of Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crimes unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said it would help the police force's anti-militancy publicity campaign and create awareness among the masses against the evil acts of terrorism and the distorted narratives of the holy Quran and Hadith. Police will provide help in publicising the fatwas across the country, he added. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said these fatwas would definitely work in preventing militancy. "Alems [scholars] have finally understood and joined together to work against terrorism. This is praiseworthy as this can counter the militants' misinterpretation of the peaceful religion that Islam is," he told The Daily Star.