

MOUNT CARSTENSZ Musa, 2 others stuck in base camp for 5 days

RASHIDUL HASAN

Musa Ibrahim along with two Indian mountaineers has been stuck at the base camp of Mount Carstensz Pyramid in



Papua New Guinea for the last five days due to bad weather. His wife, Ummey Sharaban Tahura, says the three mountaineers had already run out of food and one of them was sick. A helicopter was supposed to rescue them yesterday but the mission was called off due to inclement weather. Sharaban told The Daily Star last night, citing a text message from the first Bangladeshi to conquer the Mount Everest.

On May 30, Musa left Dhaka for his new venture "Bangladesh-India Friendship" to scale up Carstensz Pyramid, the highest mountain in Australia and Oceania (4,884 metre). He and the two Indian mountaineers -- Satyarup Siddhanta and Nandita Chandra Shekhar -- began the expedition on June 1 and were expected to finish by June 18.

They conquered the mountain on June 13 and returned to the base camp the same day. Sharaban said. The next day, Musa, using a satellite phone, texted Sharaban and said they got stuck at the base camp due to bad weather and one of the two Indian mountaineers became sick.

He told her about yesterday's rescue mission that was called off in another text yesterday morning. The tour operator was supposed to send

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Injured Nepal Dey, 70, left, being carried by his son and relatives in Shapchhari area around 13km away form Rangamati town yesterday afternoon. About half a kilometre of damaged and destroyed Chittagong-Rangamati highway forces people to use the hills and valleys to get across. Nepal was being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Two men, right, carrying essential supplies from Chittagong at Shapchhari. Rangamati Truck Workers Union members, centre, marking a damaged road in the town.



PHOTO: HASAN JAHID TUSHER/ PRABIR DAS

Supplies, prices not normal yet

FROM PAGE 1

was Tk 60 before the landslides. It went up to Tk 200 a couple of days ago.

The prices of rice swelled to Tk 45-55 from Tk 40-50 and lentil to Tk 80-120 from Tk 70-80.

The prices of cooking oil, salt and onion increased by Tk 5 to 10.

Pranab Dey, a grocer, said, "My rice stocks ran out yesterday. I have other essentials for two to three days."

He claimed the cost of carrying goods through waterways contributed to the price hike as transportations through roads were yet to become smooth.

Mohammed Hamidul, a wholesaler at Banarupa, said they have brought goods via water routes. "I think there won't be any crisis of essentials now."

Mohammed Nasir, a buyer at the kitchen market, said, "I used to buy onions for Tk 25 to 30. But today they charged me Tk 40."

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Manzarul Mannan yesterday at a meeting with business leaders urged all to keep prices and supply of essentials normal.

Acting general secretary of Rangamati Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Md Moinul Kader, told The Daily Star after the meeting that there was adequate supply of everyday essentials in the district as road transportations resumed yesterday.

These correspondents visited the Rangamati-Chittagong highway and saw transportation of goods on a limited scale.

Goods were being brought to Shapchhari point of the highway by mini trucks from Chittagong. Around half a kilometre portion of the road there was badly damaged by landslides and not suitable for vehicles.

Some 20 day labourers were carrying goods through the affected stretch and then pickup vans or three-wheelers were taking those to Rangamati.

Army personnel already started to repair the point.

To transport passengers and goods through waterways, launch services began on Rangamati-Kaptai route on Friday.

But the goods handling at Kaptai

jetty point was being hampered as, according to business leaders, local labourers were not allowing labourers from Rangamati to work.

Meanwhile, fuel supply resumed yesterday evening, 48 hours after stocks ran out.

Padma, Meghna and Jamuna oil companies supplied sufficient amount of fuel through waterways, district administration's disaster control room spokesperson KM Ikhtiar Uddin Arafat told The Daily Star.

He said 29,000 litres of fuel reached Rangamati yesterday.

The spokesperson also said four market monitoring teams were working to check price hike. Mobile courts sentenced a trader to seven days in jail

and fined another Tk 1,000 for creating an artificial crisis and charging extra.

Some 12 medical teams have been deployed in 16 shelter centres where 2,100 people have been living in dismal conditions with limited access to medicine, food and water.

The death toll rose to 114 in Rangamati yesterday.

The district administration received information of the burial of a youth who reportedly died in Tuesday's landslides. The dead, Nur Nabi, 24, was not on the list of the administration until yesterday.

Besides, Sejan, a 14-month-old baby who was injured in the landslides, died at JK Memorial Hospital at Gohira in Chittagong yesterday afternoon.

US destroyer collide with cargo ship off Japan coast Seven crew missing

REUTERS, Tokyo

Search and rescue efforts went on after dark for seven US sailors missing after the US Navy destroyer USS Fitzgerald collided with a Philippine-flagged container ship more than three times its size off eastern Japan early yesterday.

The Fitzgerald, an Aegis guided missile destroyer, collided with the merchant vessel some 56 nautical miles southwest of Yokosuka, the Navy said.

Three aboard the destroyer had been medically evacuated to the US Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, including the ship's commanding officer, Cmdr Bryce Benson, who was reported to be in stable condition, the Navy said. The other two were being treated for lacerations and bruises, while other injured were being assessed aboard the ship, it said.

The USS Fitzgerald sailed into port yesterday evening but search and rescue efforts by US and Japanese aircraft and surface vessels were continuing for the seven missing sailors, the Navy said. Their names are being withheld until the families have been notified, it added.

Benson took command of the Fitzgerald on May 13. He had previously commanded a minesweeper based in Sasebo in western Japan.

UNCLEAR WHAT HAPPENED

It was unclear how the collision happened. "Once an investigation is complete then any legal issues can be addressed," a spokesman for the US 7th Fleet said.

The US Navy said the collision

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Indo-Pak final

FROM PAGE 1

around the world watch the first major cricket final between the teams since the 2007 Twenty20 World Cup.

One of the most unpredictable sides in world sports, Pakistan were the lowest-ranked side going into the tournament and produced a shambolic performance in their heavy opening defeat by India.

As they have done many times before, however, Pakistan suddenly found form with wins over top-ranked South Africa and Sri Lanka before delivering an outstanding all-round display to stun previously unbeaten hosts England in the semi-finals.

Now, with left-arm paceman Mohammad Amir returning to the side after a back spasm that ruled him out of the England match, Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur believes there will be no repeat of their woeful pool showing against India when the latest edition of world cricket's most high-profile contest takes place in London.

"The India game was an aberration," Arthur told reporters at the Oval on Saturday. "What we've produced after that doesn't come as any surprise, because that's how we trained, and that's what we worked at. It was very disappointing to see that go wrong in the Indian game, but... We've closed the chapter on that."

"That was an aberration. We're now moving forward."

Amir's return bolsters an already impressive Pakistan pace attack featuring Hasan Ali, the tournament's leading wicket-taker.

And Arthur believes that if Pakistan can strike with the new ball, they will have the chance to test an India middle order who have hardly been required to bat during this Champions Trophy, with the likes of

openers Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan, as well as captain and star No. 3 Virat Kohli piling on the runs.

"Our strength has been the fact that we've been able to take wickets, and we've been able to take wickets consistently through the middle periods," explained Arthur.

"If we can get amongst them with the new ball, we can expose the middle order that hasn't batted much in this competition -- so that's pretty much our aim and focus."

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed said they had quickly forgotten the opening loss to India and simply focused on the next game in their bid to win the Champions Trophy for the first time.

"After the India match, we just motivated the guys," he said. "Don't worry about the India match. This is gone. If we play good cricket, definitely we will win this tournament."

Meanwhile, India suffered a shock loss to Sri Lanka in the group stage before overwhelming Bangladesh in the semis, and their captain Virat Kohli has been impressed by Pakistan's resurgence.

India, who beat Pakistan by five runs in the Twenty20 final 10 years ago, have been lifted by outstanding batting form of Kohli, Dhawan and Sharma.

"What we are going to try to do is repeat the similar sort of cricket that we have played so far, knowing the strengths and weaknesses they have," Kohli said. "I don't think we need to look too far away from what we are doing as a group, focus on our skills and our abilities and believe in ourselves on that particular day."

The Oval pitch should be more favourable for batsmen but India will not be complacent, especially with the match attracting a global audience of around 1 billion according to some estimates.



US has trade deficits with most Asian partners

DATALEADS, New Delhi

The US imports more from Asian countries than it exports to them and as per available data the US runs trade deficits with most Asian countries except Singapore.

While the US imports \$985 billion from Asia, the total value of its exports to the region is \$452 billion, as per the data from USA Census Bureau.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

'Best' bank put in a sticky stew

FROM PAGE 1

So when the government started a process to 'cleanse Jamaat's influence' from the bank in June 2016, the move did not cause much heartache to many. What was surprising was the way it was executed.

In quick sweep, the bank's chairman, vice-chairman and managing directors were forced to pack bags and leave. A former secretary, Arastoo Khan, was appointed as the head of its board. He was appointed on behalf of an obscure company, Armada Spinning Mills Ltd, from Chittagong.

Whatever may have been the credentials of the company, Khan is a well-known bureaucrat and so his appointment did not cause much stir. But the mystery remained about how and why Armada got Islami Bank in its sight, bought its shares and positioned its man at the top of the board.

The latest appointment of former Anti-corruption Commission member Shahabuddin Chuppu to the board,

however, has generated a lot of curiosity. Again, a little known firm, JMC Builders of Chittagong, bought shares and lobbied its man, Chuppu, to the board even though Chuppu claimed to have no connection with any builders company and having "no interest to know the details about it [JMC Builders]."

All these ongoing reorgs have raised new concerns about the future of the bank. A bank is a sensitive entity that survives on sound management and its depositors' trust. Such a 'takeover' of the bank by unknown companies and appointment of directors by those companies may make depositors jittery. A pertinent question here is whether the Bangladesh Bank should have scrutinized the new owners of the bank before authorising the changes. After all, a bank is not like any other institution.

It becomes a matter of acute concern when one recalls what happened to banks like BASIC and Oriental bank. Oriental is a dismal history and the

directors have drained the bank out. Basic Bank, one of the strongest state-owned banks in Bangladesh, also became victim of scams and everybody, including the regulators, sat on their hands until the job was complete.

The current atmosphere of the banking system does not inspire much confidence. The Centre for Policy Dialogue in a report in May this year has said the banking sector has become a growing malignancy for the economy with non-performing loans, lack of governance and corruption. The ambition of high growth with such a weak banking system is oxymoronic.

More and more loans are going bad. In the last one year, default loans have gone up by Tk 11,000 crore. The status of bad loan realisation is abysmally low with only 5.5 percent recovery rate. This only means the good borrowers are being penalised.

When the banking system is in disarray, we can hardly afford another bank going the wrong way.

Strange expenditure

FROM PAGE 1

The home ministry had requested the foreign ministry for the money but the foreign ministry did not respond.

According to the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP), the money collected in fees for issuing passports and processing visas were deposited to foreign ministry accounts and the foreign missions spent the money for their own purposes.

Farid Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary of the Security Service Division under the home ministry, said, "We want transparency regarding public money and want to ensure accountability."

"We want government revenues to be deposited to the right place at the right time," he added.

Selina Banu, additional director general of the DIP, said they wrote repeatedly to the foreign ministry for a financial statement but it did not respond.

"We also wrote to the Bangladesh embassies and missions to give us statements of the revenue collected in

fees for issuing passports and processing visas by the 7th of every month. But only a few embassies gave us the statements," she said.

When asked where the money was, Selina said that in Kuala Lumpur she found that the embassy deposited the money to an account and spent it for its own purpose.

As per the "working paper", 65 Bangladeshi missions gave over 30.30 lakh hand-written passports.

The Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, alone distributed 5,36,055 passports and the consulate office in Jeddah gave 3,90,655. This earned the government about Tk 356 crore in revenue.

Beside, 29.89 lakh MRPs were given to expatriates by 68 foreign missions between 2013 and December 31, 2016, which earned the government about Tk 2,052 crore.

According to the document, the highest numbers of MRPs were distributed from Riyadh (4,18,362) and Jeddah office (1,65,802) in Saudi Arabia.

Apart from this, distribution of

1,65,802 MRPs was outsourced in Saudi Arabia which earned the government over Tk 483 crore.

The government set fees for MRP is \$100 (general) and \$200 (emergency) while for Bangladeshi students and workers, the fees are \$30 (general) and \$100 (emergency).

Golam Moshir, Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia, told The Daily Star that the money the mission gets from different sectors is used for running day-to-day activities of the embassy as per the directives of the foreign ministry. "We send the surplus money to Dhaka," he added.

Asked why the embassy does not send the visa and passport fees to the home ministry, Moshir said, "May be the foreign ministry does that."

Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs, said, "I am not aware of this. It is not supposed to be like this. Government money is always deposited in government account."

He said sometimes foreign missions delay in reporting the money they had received.

Govt goes for 'symbolic' awareness

FROM PAGE 1

of the capital.

The campaigners asked the city dwellers to keep their households and surroundings clean and remove stagnant water from containers which may have larva or pupae of Aedes mosquito that transmit the disease to humans.

The initiative comes after a recent government study found high presence of Aedes mosquitoes in the capital.

During June 1-5, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) conducted a survey in 53 areas of the city and found a very high presence of the mosquitoes in 47 areas.

The survey also found that some 52 percent of containers -- plastic barrels, buckets, clay pots, used or abandoned tyres and tubes, and water tanks -- have larva or pupae of the mosquito in them.

According to the DGHS control room, 378 dengue cases were reported between January 1 and June 15. During the same period, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) found about 400 cases of chikungunya.

The DGHS, which began recording

chikungunya cases since June 1, received reports of 228 cases till June 15 from different hospitals in the capital.

Yesterday's campaign was inaugurated by Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammed Nasim in Dhanmondi area.

"It's a symbolic campaign which is being organised to aware people [of chikungunya] and boost the ongoing mosquito-control drive by the city corporations," he said.

"Chikungunya can be cured by taking medicine, rest and drinking enough water. But if we take preventive measures, we won't have to suffer from the disease," he added.

DSCC Chief Health Officer Brig Gen Sheikh Salahuddin said the city corporation has recently employed 108 additional workers to boost the drive against mosquitoes.

DGHS Director General Prof Abul Kalam Azad said the campaign focused on Dhaka as all the cases of chikungunya have been reported in the city. "We also used loudspeakers to raise awareness among people about the disease in several upazilas."

During the campaign, the students

and teachers stood by roads holding placards that read "Let us keep our home and neighbourhood clean to prevent chikungunya."

Later, they cleaned some roadside garbage and containers, and went from house to house and talked to the residents, said a press release from the DGHS.

Some teams from Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) spread insecticides in some areas of the city to destroy Aedes larva.

Meanwhile, the ministry organised another such campaign in Manikganj city, where State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Zahid Maleque was present.

According to doctors, chikungunya causes fever and severe joint and muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may be prolonged to weeks.

While dengue can be at times fatal, chikungunya is not. However, for patients with old-age complications or diabetes, chikungunya may lead to fatalities.