

Over 21,000 litres diesel spilled in the Kirtankhola

2 committees formed, the spillage 'won't hurt' hilsa movement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Friday's collision between an oil tanker and a cargo vessel on the Kirtankhola spilled over 21,000 litres of diesel but officials claim that the spillage would not seriously harm the environment.

Arefin Badal, assistant director at the Department of Environment, Barisal division, said the spillage would not be creating any serious environmental problem.

District Fisheries Officer Bimol Kumar Das said he did not think the accident would have any impact on the movement of hilsa in the river.

Din Mohammad Fakrul Ahasan, a manager of Jamuna Oil Company's Barisal Depot, said the oil tanker had 3,12,106 litres of petrol and 9,85,237 diesel.

He said 21,240 litres of diesel was spilled.

Ahasunul Habib, manager of oil tanker MT Fazor, said he filed a general diary with Barisal Kotwali Police sta-

tion and if they did not get any damages, they would file a case against the owners of the cargo ship.

Habib said the remaining fuel in the tanker was pumped into the Jamuna Oil Depot there.

Meanwhile, Barisal district administration formed a five-member enquiry committee to probe the collision incident.

Deputy Commissioner Gazi Md Saifuzzaman said they visited the affected area and formed the committee led by ADC Ahasan Habib.

The committee has been asked to submit a report within seven days.

Siraj Majhi, a local fisherman, said people tried to clean up the river shore as best they could.

Jamshedur Rahaman, master of the oil tanker, said they were hit by the cargo ship which was coming from the opposite direction.

Some oil spilled in the river from the 1.2 lakh litre chamber that cracked, he said, claiming they managed to transfer most of the oil to another empty chamber.



Oil tanker MT Fazor and cargo ship Maa Babar Doa-2, right, anchored at Char Kawa in Barisal yesterday. Officials say some 21,240 litres of diesel got spilled into the Kirtankhola river after the two vessels collided on Friday. Inset, oil on water hyacinths on the other side of the river.

PHOTO: STAR

SUST suspends 4 BCL men for harassing girl, attacking journos

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Four students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology were suspended for a semester yesterday after they were found guilty of harassing a young girl and attacking journalists on the university campus.

All the four students are activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League's Sust unit.

Mahmudul Hasan Rudra of Social Work department and Sajjad Hossain Riyad of Statistics department were suspended for stalking and Rahat Siddiqui of Anthropology department and Sumon Sarkar Jony of Political Studies department were suspended for an attack on journalists.

Rahat and Jony were also fined one thousand taka each while the university authorities handed out warnings to Sanjibon Chakrabarty Partho, president of the university's BCL unit for not handling the matter seriously.

Jahir Uddin, proctor of Sust, told The Daily Star that the decision was taken at a syndicate meeting on Saturday afternoon considering the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

He is India's worry too

FROM PAGE 1

Sohel told the interrogators that he left India months after the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leadership removed him from the post of West Bengal JMB ameer and replaced him with Sajid, another Bangladesh-born militant, in 2014.

After his return to Bangladesh in December 2014, he got involved with pro-IS militants and played an important role in recruiting youths to the new brand of terror group, "Neo JMB" as police call it.

Md Moniruzzaman, assistant inspector general (confidential) at the police headquarters, told The Daily Star that a three-member team from a special taskforce of Kolkata police arrived in Dhaka yesterday and held a meeting with local officials.

They discussed how the top militant spread a militant network in both countries and carried out his activities in West Bengal and Assam during his stay in India.

The two sides shared information regarding operations of Bangladeshi militants in the two Indian states.

"During the meeting with the team, we also raised some issues, including arms and explosives smuggling from India into Bangladesh," he said, adding the Indian officials assured Bangladesh side that they would look into the smuggling issue.

The Kolkata police team would stay in Bangladesh for the next couple of days.

Besides, a team of National Investigation Agency of India is supposed to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow to learn about Sohel's arrest, Moniruzzaman added.

INTERROGATION

"Sohel Mahfuz admitted meeting the Gulshan attackers, but he remained silent when asked if he took part in the attack," said a police officer of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of DMP.

Another CTTC official said Sohel divulged some pieces of information about his militant activities in both the countries but avoided answering many crucial questions.

Both the officials quizzed the arrestee on several occasions.

According to the interrogators, Sohel left his Kushtia village to join militancy in 2003 and later was nurtured under top militants like JMB's operational commander Siddiqui Islam aka Bangla Bhai and explosive expert "Boma" Mizan.

He first went to West Bengal in 2006 but returned after a few days. An Indian national named Ibrahim was heading a small unit of JMB there back then.

Over the next two years, Sohel worked to strengthen JMB in Chapainawabganj, Dinajpur and Natore through recruiting members.

Following a decision of the then JMB chief Saidur Rahman, now in jail, Sohel went to India towards the end of 2008. The next year, he replaced Ibrahim and took the helm of West Bengal JMB. He recruited over a hundred youths whom he trained at Shimulia Madrasa in Burdwan.

Being an explosives expert, Sohel trained many militants on how to prepare bombs, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which JMB operatives later used in various attacks and blasts.

About his involvement in "Neo JMB", he told police that after he came back in late 2014, he met some JMB operatives who were attracted to the ideology of Islamic State.

Months before his return, the global terrorist group announced the establishment of a "caliphate" straddling Iraq and Syria, urging other groups to pledge allegiance, and declared Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi "the caliph" and "leader for Muslims everywhere".

"They [the JMB operatives] asked me to join their group and I agreed," Sohel was quoted as saying by an interrogator.

He began working under the new platform and encouraged 20-25 other JMB operatives to join the group. He got 50 radicals as his followers from Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi.

According to police, Sohel was one

of the planners of the country's deadliest terror incident that left 20 hostages, mostly foreigners, killed at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan's diplomatic zone on July 1 last year.

Regarding his terror network in West Bengal, he told police that he left India in 2014 but he continued to maintain communications with some JMB men there.

"Since Sohel has been involved in militancy for many years, we are getting vital information from him about JMB and Neo JMB and militant activities in both India and Bangladesh," said Ahmedul Islam, additional commissioner of CTTC.

Clinton

FROM PAGE 16

He's literally hiding between two Bushes, prompting one Twitter user to joke that Clinton should write a book called "My Life Between the Bushes."

And if the pun wasn't enough on its own, the picture is also historically accurate because Clinton's terms as President came in between the father-son Bushes, as folks were quick to point out on Twitter.

Did the former president pose for the photo just for the pun? It could be. Or maybe he just felt overlooked as he gazed up at the ginormous statues of the two former leaders of the free world looming over him.

AL MP defends 'extrajudicial killings'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League lawmaker MA Latif yesterday in public defended "extrajudicial killings" by law enforcement agencies, including the Rapid Action Battalion, and praised the activities of the elite force saying it had earned a lot of trust among people.

He was addressing an anti-narcotics programme organised by Rab-7 at its headquarters in Chittagong.

A total of 35.70 lakh pieces of Yaba, 200kg marijuana and 7,181 bottles of Phensedyl were destroyed at the event, also attended by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed.

Slamming those who criticise Rab for "crossfire", Latif said whenever law enforcers hunt down criminals, some intellectuals in television talk-shows start criticising them.

"No human is being killed without trial. Those who are being killed are animals in the guise of human beings. There are a lot of cases filed against them. Some are accused in 10, 15 or 20 cases. But they usually get released using loopholes of law. Since the government has no other way of containing these notorious criminals, the law

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

16 more children from Sitakunda taken to hospital

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

Sixteen more children in Sitakunda's Tripura Para became sick and were admitted to hospital yesterday, but doctors say the 68 other local children, hospitalised earlier with similar symptoms, were recovering.

Last week, nine children from the remote hilly area in Chittagong died apparently of the same disease, which has not been identified yet.

However, doctors at Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where 50 of the patients were being treated, said the symptoms suggest the victims were suffering from measles.

They also might have bacterial secondary infection and electrolyte (sodium, chloride, magnesium, potassium and calcium) imbalance in their bodies.

"Most of the children came here with fever and rash all over their bodies. Some of them were also

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Some of the 16 children of Sitakunda's Tripura Para who became sick and were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

2 JU students

FROM PAGE 16

students allegedly for vandalising the vice-chancellor's residence on May 27.

Sarder Zahid, a master's student of the English department, began the strike at about 2:00pm at the Central Shaheed Minar inside the campus. Two hours later, Puja Biswash, a master's student of international relations, joined him.

Earlier on May 26, marketing student Nazmul Hasan Rana, 24, and microbiology student Arafat, 24, were killed, as a bus rammed a human haulier carrying them on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar's C&B bus stand area.

Afterwards, angry students blocked the highway demanding speed breakers at the spot. But police fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells to disperse them. At least 10 people, including

students, a JU official and two journalists, were injured at the time.

The protesters then besieged the VC's house to know why such an action had been carried out. During the demonstration, 42 JU students were held and shown arrested in a vandalism case filed by Registrar Abu Bakr Siddique. The next day, all of them were released on bail.

"I have joined the strike, since the university authority is yet to withdraw the case. I feel severe mental pressure and cannot continue leading a normal life," Puja said.

"We have vowed to continue our programme on the campus until the case is withdrawn," Zahid said.

Contacted, Pro-VC Prof Amir Hussain said he had heard about the matter. "Now, I am staying outside the campus. We will see the matter."

Fresh acid attack hits

FROM PAGE 16

"These are hideous offences and must have been very frightening for all of the victims."

Clark said rumours circulating that the victims were all food delivery riders were incorrect, saying that although they were all riding mopeds they were from a "variety of backgrounds".

"Of late we have seen more attacks using corrosive substances in London," he added, amid mounting calls from politicians and the public for the government to regulate the sales of acid to prevent such attacks.

Concern is mounting over a spike of acid attacks in the UK, which were previously dominantly associated with "honour"-based attacks by men aiming to disgrace

female victims predominantly in South Asia.

But acid has been used in the UK for crimes including robbery, sexual offences and assaults motivated by personal disputes.

There were more than 300 crimes using "corrosive substances" in London alone during the 2016/17 financial year.

These include at least 208 incidents of violence against the person - one that was fatal - and 118 robberies.

In April this year, clubbers in east London were caught up in a mass attack that injured at least 20 people, then last month cousins Resham Khan and Jameel Mukhtar were left with life-changing injuries after having liquid thrown on them through a car window.

Trade future hinges

FROM PAGE 1

limited to a number of products.

Bangladesh has to go for bilateral FTAs for trade benefits once it becomes a middle-income country, the CPD research director said.

Without FTAs, Bangladesh will lose competitive advantages to other countries, such as India, Pakistan and Vietnam having FTAs with a number of countries.

Businesses welcome the proposed FTA with Sri Lanka, but they say the agreement has to cover all major areas of cooperation, such as trade in goods, services and investments ensuring mutual benefits.

To explain this, Shafiul Islam Mohiuddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said Sri Lanka is in an advantageous position in value added apparel industry, shipping lines and deep-sea port, financial services, ICT and skilled technical people in different sectors. On the other hand, Bangladesh enjoys advantages in the apparel sector, skilled workforce in the garment sector, agricultural products, processed foods and migrant workers.

Bangladesh would be immensely benefited if the FTA is signed with Sri Lanka, as a portion of its exports and imports of goods are done through the Colombo port.

"We can take this advantage of shipping line if the FTA is signed," Mohiuddin said, adding that Bangladesh could also be benefited from Sri Lanka's globally-ranked financial institutions and ICT services.

The FBCCI chief also advocates for such trade agreements with other countries, as the economy is growing and getting more connected with the global economy.

Earlier, Bangladesh tried to negotiate FTAs with India, Malaysia and Turkey but failed.

Once the country is graduated to a middle-income nation, the bilateral FTAs and regional trade blocs like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) will ensure

duty benefits.

Abul Kasem Khan, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) echoed the views of Mohiuddin regarding the FTA with Sri Lanka.

"Apart from goods and services, we want reciprocal investment under the FTA."

For an instance, Sri Lanka is in strong position in the hospitality industry, tea business and logistics services. Sri Lankan investors can invest in those sectors in Bangladesh.

Every year, billions of US dollars are flying out of the country through illegal channels and are invested in another country.

"If the Bangladesh government allows investment of such money through legal channels in Sri Lanka, both the countries would be benefited a lot," Abul Kasem said. Bangladeshi investors can also set up factories and export to other countries from Sri Lanka if the FTA is signed.

Before the signing of the FTA, both the countries will conduct feasibility studies to analyse the positive and negative lists of goods and services and their value addition capacity, said Md Shafiqul Islam, additional secretary to the commerce ministry.

Sri Lanka, as a developing country, has put 925 products in the negative list under the South Asia Free Trade Area deal.

"So, we don't enjoy duty benefits from Sri Lanka in [trading in] major goods. We have to study to analyse the benefits," Shafiqul said.

In the fiscal 2016-17, Bangladesh exported goods worth \$42.25 million, up from \$30.45million a year ago, according to the Export Promotion Bureau.

Bangladesh mainly exports woven garments, knitwear, home textile, agro products, frozen food, leather and leather products, footwear, raw jute, jute goods and bicycle.

In the fiscal 2015-16, Bangladesh imported goods worth \$45.0million while imports in the previous fiscal year amounted to \$44.10 million, according to the data of the FBCCI.