

151 fishermen missing in the Bay of Bengal

They were fishing off the coasts of Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna

STAR REPORT

At least 151 fishermen have been missing in the Bay of Bengal in Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna districts.

In Dhal Char union of Bhola's Charfession upazila, over a hundred fishermen in 12 fishing trawlers have been missing for the last four days.

Harun Howlader, a member of the union, said the fishermen went to the Bay for fishing on Thursday.

"Most of the vessels have already returned. We still don't know the whereabouts of these 12," he said, adding that they had informed the coast guard about the missing fishermen.

In Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, at least 36 fishermen in two trawlers have been missing for the last six days.

Authorities are yet to locate the trawlers, reports our Patuakhali correspondent.

The trawlers -- FB Ferdous and FB Mayer Doa -- went to the sea on Tuesday. They had 18 fishermen each.

In Barguna, a fishing vessel, FB Tariqul, carrying a total of 15

fishermen have remained missing since November 5, said Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna Trawler Owners' Association.

The missing fishermen are from Barguna sadar and Bamna upazilas, he said.

Mostafa said that generally the fishing trawlers take about two weeks to return to shore.

"As the danger signal was hoisted in the coastal areas for cyclone Bulbul, all the trawlers, but one, which had gone to the Bay on November 5 have already returned," he said, adding that they could not send any rescue boat as the sea was rough.

Lt Biswajit Barua, station commander of Patharghata coast guard, said they had instructed all the patrolling ships in the Bay to conduct search operations for the missing trawlers.

After the signal was hoisted, the coast guard rescued over a hundred fishermen stuck in the estuaries of the Bishkhali and Baleshar rivers till 6:00pm yesterday, he said.



The authorities suspended loading and unloading of goods at Chattogram port ahead of the cyclone. Riverways across the country have also been closed to traffic. Below, a homeless man with disabilities is being pushed on a cart in the rain yesterday in the capital; a man with his leg in a cast at a cyclone shelter in Khulna's Dacope.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN/AMRAN HOSSAIN/DIPANKAR ROY



Disputed land

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people, most of them Muslims, were killed across the country.

Court battles over the ownership of the site followed.

Yesterday, the Supreme Court said, "the law must stand apart over politics, religion and beliefs".

The judgement weighed heavily on the Archaeological Survey of India report. Archaeological Survey of India's credentials are beyond doubt and its findings cannot be neglected, the chief justice said.

The Supreme Court observed that there is adequate material in the ASI report to conclude that the Babri Mosque was not constructed on vacant land and that there was a structure underlying the disputed structure, which is non-Islamic in nature.

Jubilant Hindus, who have long campaigned for a temple to be built on the mosque's ruins, cheered and set off fire crackers in Ayodhya after the court decision was announced.

Thousands of paramilitary force members and police were deployed in Ayodhya and other sensitive areas across India, but there were no immediate reports of unrest.

"Today's Supreme Court decision has given the nation the message that even the most difficult of all problems falls within the ambit of the constitution and within the boundaries of the judicial system," Modi said in a televised address yesterday evening, calling for "a new India" free of hatred.

He had earlier tweeted that the verdict should not be seen as "a win or loss for anybody."

The ruling comes months after his government stripped the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir region of its special status as a state, delivering on an election promise to its largely Hindu support base.

Neelanjan Sircar, an assistant professor at Ashoka University near New Delhi, said the verdict

would benefit the BJP, which won re-election in May, but a slowing economy would ultimately take centre stage for voters.

"These things don't work forever ... Ram Temple isn't going to put food on the table," Sircar said.

Hindus believe the site is the birthplace of Lord Ram, a physical incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, and say the site was holy for Hindus long before the Muslim Mughals, India's most prominent Islamic rulers, built the Babri mosque there in 1528.

A lawyer for the Sunni Muslim group involved in the case initially said it would likely file a review petition, which could have triggered another protracted legal battle, but its chairman Zafar Farooqui said later the verdict had been accepted "with humility."

Muslim organisations, including the spiritual head of Ajmer dargah, appealed for calm.

The Hindu group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh -- the parent organisation of Modi's party -- had already decided against any celebrations to avoid provoking sectarian violence.

Restrictions were placed on gatherings in some places and internet services were suspended. Elsewhere, police monitored social media to curb rumours.

Across the border in arch-rival Pakistan, the foreign ministry said the decision "shredded the veneer of so-called secularism" in India and showed minorities were no longer safe.

A spokesman for India's external affairs ministry responded by saying Pakistan had a "pathological compulsion" to involve itself in internal Indian matters.

In Ayodhya, the streets were largely deserted and security personnel patrolled the main road to Lucknow, the capital of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

It's based on law, not faith

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to Muslims to build a mosque.

The Babri Masjid at the disputed area in Ayodhya was destroyed by Hindu activists on December 6, 1992, sparking riots across India that left at least 2,000 people dead.

The bench, headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, has sought to put an end to the dispute that has often torn the secular and social fabric of the nation.

The judgement, which is a culmination of a long judicial process that began in 1950, took into account the archaeological evidence from the site, presented by the Archaeological Survey of India, which said that a pre-existing structure that was not Islamic underlines the disputed structure, the Indian official said.

"The Indian government is committed to ensuring the tradition of goodwill and harmony among all communities as well as our deep respect for safeguarding all places of worship," the diplomat said.

The unanimous judgement by the five-member bench is not setting any precedent and will not lead to similar claims in other parts of India. It will not in any way infringe on the rights of India's minority citizens, he said.

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991 of India prohibits any change in the religious and denominational character of a place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947.

"The Act solely excludes the existing disputed property in Ayodhya because it was already sub

justice at that time.

"Hence, there is no possibility of this judgement relating to the land in Ayodhya becoming a legal precedent under the provisions of this Act. As such, the judgement cannot be used to seek or claim or reclaim other places of worship, which may have been disputed."

The 2.77-acre land will now be handed over to the Trust, to be formed by the central government in three months, to build the temple. The alternate 5-acre land will be allotted to the Sunni Waqf Board for the construction of a mosque.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen hoped the Indian Supreme Court verdict won't cause any tension in Bangladesh and wished for peace to prevail in India as well, reports BSS.

"We won't be tensed regarding this," he told journalists after inaugurating the South Asian Karate Championship in the capital.

"We will expect that peace will prevail in India as well."

The minister said the heritage of interfaith harmony in Bangladesh would help keep peace in Bangladesh where "all of us -- Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists -- are living in harmony."

"We will study the verdict [of Indian SC], but we will not be in tension," he said.

The foreign minister said that he would request home ministry to be vigilant so that no one can create any tense situation in the country capitalising on the verdict.

Weakened Bulbul crosses coast

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people to move to the centres throughout the day.

Many, however, did not go, fearing that their valuables, livestock and other belongings would be stolen.

Tarok Biswas, who lives in Pankhali village of Khulna's Dacope upazila, said, "I can't leave my home. All our cattle would be stolen. My family will go, I will stay."

Meanwhile, more than 30,000 people were stuck in different char areas of Patuakhali, Barguna and Bagerhat, said district administration sources.

Over 1,000 tourists, including students of Rajshahi University's journalism department, were stranded on St Martin's Island.

While talking to reporters, Ayesha Khatun, deputy director of the Dhaka Met office, said the cyclone would trigger tidal surges 5 to 7 feet higher than the usual ones, inundating low lying areas in the coastal region.

Asked about the severity of the cyclone, she said it could be stronger than Cyclone Aila and weaker than Super Cyclone Sidr.

The highest wind speed of Sidr that hit Bangladesh coast in November 2007 was recorded in Patuakhali at 223kmph.

Earlier yesterday, the maritime ports of Mongla and Payra were

advised to keep hoisted Great Danger Signal Number 10. It meant the port could experience a storm of great intensity with wind speed of 89km per hour or more.

The signal was meant for coastal areas of Bhola, Barguna, Patuakhali, Barishal, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Chattogram, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur and Chandpur, and their offshore islands and chars.

The Chattogram port was advised to keep hoisted Great Danger Signal Number 9.

Great Danger Signal Number 9 was also meant for coastal districts of Chattogram, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Chandpur and their offshore islands and chars.

The maritime port of Cox's Bazar was advised to keep hoisted local warning signal number four.

All the fishing boats were asked to remain moored until further advice.

GOVERNMENT PREPARATIONS

Disaster Management Senior Secretary Md Shah Kamal said army troops and members of the coastguard were called out to supplement the cyclone preparedness initiatives, alongside Red Crescent volunteers and members of government agencies, including police.

The evacuation drive was underway in 14 districts -- Bhola, Barguna,

Patuakhali, Barishal, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Chattogram, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur and Chandpur, and their offshore islands and chars.

"In most vulnerable areas, including chars, we are trying to help people move out along with their valuables and cattle," he said.

Kamal said the evacuees were being provided with dry food while "we have enough stock of relief materials for them," while nearly 1,600 medical teams were kept ready to treat the cyclone victims.

The ISPR said the navy prepared two war ships equipped with medical facilities and relief materials to launch rescue drives.

State Minister Md Enamur Rahman said army troops were ready as part of the government preparedness for the cyclone.

"We have adequate stock of food ... the local administration, army troops and volunteers are ready to face the cyclone impact," he said.

FLIGHT SERVICE, WATER TRANSPORT SUSPENDED

All flights to and from Cox's Bazar, Chattogram, Barisal and Jashore were cancelled owing to the inclement weather.

Flight operations would remain suspended at Chattogram and Cox's

Bazar airports from 4:00pm yesterday to 6:00am today, said sources there.

Due to heavy currents and gusty wind, the authorities suspended ferry operations on the Paturia-Daulatdia route on the Padma, said Zillur Rahman, acting deputy general manager of BIWTC (Paturia Ghat).

Around 20 buses and 50 goods-laden trucks remained stranded at the ghat last night, he said.

Also, ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma river remained suspended. The authorities of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) suspended operations of water transport from capital to Southern districts yesterday afternoon.

JSC-JDC EXAMS

The Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations scheduled for Monday were postponed due to the cyclone.

An education ministry release said the JSC exam would take place on November 13 and JDC on November 16.

Earlier in the evening, Cyclone Bulbul hit India, leaving two dead. Indian media reported that one person was killed by an uprooted tree in Kolkata and another by a wall that collapsed under the force of the winds in Odisha state, authorities said.

No cyclone shelter in 8 coastal islands

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would evacuate people by speedboats and trawlers from the island.

Acting Rangabali Upazila Project Implementation Officer Tapon Kumar Ghose said there was no educational institution in these chars, adding that if the government approved one, then they would take steps to build a school-cum-cyclone shelter.

Upazila Primary Education Officer (acting) Md Sagir Hossain said they had sent a proposal to the higher authorities to set up schools in those chars, but they did not get any response.

Meanwhile, some 1,000 tourists

would remain stranded in Saint Martin's Island for the second consecutive day due to inclement weather.

No funds for univs if provocation is on

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The premier mentioned that the government provides salaries and allowances of the public university teachers and tuition fees of the students.

"How much does a student [of a public university] spend on his education a month? It is hardly Tk 150. Is it possible to get higher education paying this petty amount of money?"

Hasina asked the students to go to private universities to see how much they spend for just one semester. "The government spends Tk 2-2.5 lakh for each university student... the amount is higher for engineering and medical students. All the money comes from the government."

She said discipline must prevail in public universities, students must get their appropriate lessons, and they must build their lives in a better way.

"We seriously want it. But we see some people saying that we don't understand what the public universities are. As if it is only they who understand it and they ensure indiscipline."

Hasina said this section of people was destroying academic activities and wasting working hours by engaging the students in strikes for days.

"All the money will go from the government, all the development activities will be carried out by the government and this section of people



Fazlul Huq



Azam Khasru

will feel very good accepting that. And the government will not be able to take any step... this is not acceptable at all."

About raising allegations against anyone, the PM said as per law it is the accuser's duty to prove the allegations, and if the accuser fails to do so, steps can be taken against him.

Turning to steps taken by the government for the development in different sectors, she said the government has changed the fate of the people by implementing massive programmes for the welfare of garment workers, labourers of industries and farmers.

Hasina said her government has so far raised workers' wages by 380 percent, increasing the amount to minimum Tk 8,300, and it is rare in the world.

She called upon all, including the leaders and workers of Sramik League, to work unitedly for establishing Bangladesh as the most developed and

prosperous country in South Asia.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian, AL Labour and Manpower Affairs Secretary Habibur Rahman Siraj and ILO Country Director Tuomo Poutiainen, among others, addressed the function, chaired by Sramik League President Sukkur Mahmud.

AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader was present.

Earlier, the premier inaugurated the council of Sramik League through hoisting the national flag. She also witnessed a colourful cultural programme.

NEW LEADERS PICKED

Fazlul Huq Montu, Azam Khasru and Molla Abul Kalam Azad were made Sramik League president, general secretary, and executive president respectively yesterday.

AL General Secretary Quader announced their names in the afternoon.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had founded Sramik League in 1969 aiming to protect the rights of workers.

The last council of the organisation was held on July 17, 2012, when Sukkur Mahmud and Sirajul Islam were made president and general secretary respectively.

Tigers

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India captain Sharma did not like the favourites tag bestowed on his young side.

"We don't believe in being favorites at all. We just have to go out there and be at our best. That is how you win games, not by having a tag of being favorites. You have to be good on that particular day. Bangladesh were good on the first day of the series and they won the game, we were good in the second game of the series and we won," he said during a press conference yesterday.

"We have to be better than the opposition on that particular day. That's what we believe in, and that will be our talk as well."

Having missed out on a chance to win the second ODI after a good start with the bat, the Tigers will be hoping to come out on top this time around with the match today a second opportunity to clinch their first-ever series victory against India.

Miladunnabi

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madrasas have drawn up elaborate programmes on the occasion. The programmes include milad mahfil, discussion and Quran Khawani

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages greeting the country's people and Muslims across the world on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi.