No school in sight in isolated Char Kashem

While she had no access to formal education, Saleha Begum, a resident of Char Kashem and a mother of six, dreams of sending her children to school. But that dream is yet to be fulfilled since not a single school exists in the char.

With no options in sight, she has no idea what to do to ensure education for

Char Kashem is an isolated char of Rangabali, which in itself is an isolated upazila of Patuakhali.

Saleha's husband Alam Ghazi is a fisherman, and their family survives on whatever he is able to catch in a day. Living hand to mouth and with no education, it seemed like their fates were already written for them.

So, Saleha married off her three daughters, and her only son helps her husband catch fish.

All the families living in the area have

Although about 600 people live in Char Kashem, there's no primary school or any other educational institution for that matter. So, the children there remain illiterate.

Rezaul Howlader was only able to send one of his three sons to a primary school, that too in another nearby char. The other two have to help their father catch fish. The younger son, Deen Islam, is now studying in second grade.

Deen has to cross an entire five kilometres over a river to attend classes. That's why his father can't take him to school every day.

Amid the rainy season, Deen can't go to school for about six months, owing to turbulent waters. His father said if there were a school in Char Kashem, these troubles would go away and all children would get the opportunity to study.

"We got colourful tin houses through the government's Ashrayan project. Even though we have a roof over our heads, our future is grim as we can't educate our children," said Rezaul.

Contacted, Assistant Education Officer of Rangabali Sagir Hossain said a proposal was sent to the Directorate of Primary Education six months ago to set up a school in Char

"If the department approves, a school will be set up there," he said.



MISCHIEVOUS CHILDHOOD... Some children were trying to pluck amra (hog plums) from a tree in their locality using handmade slingshots. This photo was taken from Jhalakathi yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

The launch ride from hell

Hakim Sharif and his family after a long time. Hakim and his family had boarded MV Abhijan-10 to visit her in Barguna. But they never met.

Hakim, Pakhi Begum, and their 16-month-old child Nasrullah were killed in the launch fire. Their bodies were buried in a mass grave in Barguna Sadar upazila's Potkakhali area.

Hakim's three children --Hafsa Begum, 18, Sumaiya, 16, and Fazlur Rahman, 9 -became orphans that night. Ratan is now raising them, or rather is struggling to

"We are running on loans and donations from relatives and neighbours. Hafsa is in college, Sumaiya has passed SSC, and Fazlur Rahman is a third-grader. It's difficult to manage their educational expenses," said Ratan while breaking down municipality.

for financial assistance allocated for the victims' day. families. It will be handed Barguna DC Habibur.

SON STILL LOOKING FOR HIS FATHER

Visually-impaired Hafez Mirazul Islam and his father Idris Khan were returning to Barguna on that launch following the latter's treatment in Dhaka. They were accompanied by Mirazul's mother, his wife and his only daughter. Although all of them were rescued after they jumped off the vessel, his father Idris has not been found.

"I'm the only child of my parents. Even if I had found my father's body, I would've gotten some closure," he told this correspondent.

Ferdowsi, the Jannatul

Razia and her eightyear-old child Nusrat of Barguna Sadar's Parikhal area went missing following

I had found my mother's grave or even a bone of her the higher authorities. DNA of 14 people matched but my mother and sister were not among them," she

TRAUMA

"I rushed to the river after hearing the screams of the victims. When I reached the launch with a trawler, I to ashes right in front of my Kabir Sagar, councillor of ward-9 of Jhalakathi

"We have applied to riverside shared similar over the incident. the shipping ministry stories of how the night still haunts them till this

"Before reaching the FROM PAGE 5 over to them soon," said place, we didn't have any will be held idea how devastating the incident was. It was the most tragic incident I've ever covered in my entire career," said Al Amin Talukder, a journalist working for a private satellite television.

"I still shiver when I recall the night," he said.

daughter of one Razia incident of my service life. Sultana, is also waiting for the bodies of her mother and baby sister.

the tragic incident.

body, I would've brought it home and buried it. The

FIRST RESPONDERS'

Trawler driver Md Shohel Akan said, "After I came to know of the incident, I rushed to the spot amidst the thick fog, recovered many burning victims from Rangpur twice since the the river and took them to the shore.'

Md Safikul Islam, station officer of Jhalakathi fire station, said, "It was most challenging

There were no riverside fire stations; our rescue operations were disrupted frequently due to the thick

Md Belal Uddin, assistant director of Barishal fire service station, said a "I pass my days waiting proposal for establishing members from all the areas, to see their dead bodies. If a river fire station in Jhalakathi has been sent to NO CHARGE SHEET YET

Manir Hossain, relative of a victim, filed a case with Jhalakathi police station over the incident, accusing eight men, including four owners of the launch. The case is currently under trial at Dhaka's marine court.

Contacted, investigation officer of the case Md Nazrul Islam said as saw a little girl being burnt they are yet to receive all the DNA reports of the eyes," said Md Humayun deceased, they cannot submit a charge sheet before the court.

Two other cases were filed Others living by the in Dhaka and Jhalakathi

90pc voters

centres on December 27 through EVM. Around 3,500 sets of EVM are ready for holding the election.

Baten said the two-day mock voting will end today. The number of voters of Rangpur City Corporation is around 4.26 lakh.

Badiul Meanwhile. Alam Majumdar, secretary of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik, who visited schedule of the election was declared, said it's not possible to hold a free and fair election through EVM.

Besides, Kazi Habibul Awal, the chief election commissioner, Rasheda Sultana, election commissioner, who visited Rangpur on December 13 and December 22, respectively, said there is no scope of vote-rigging through EVM; voting will be free and fair through the process.

EIIN: 108572

Ready for a grand gathering PM herself," he said.

arranged in case of any emergency.

Asked about expectation from the council, he said the PM has been leading the party for 42 years and she knows the most about the party including the villages.

She will take the final decision on relevant issues by considering all the aspects, added Nanak.

Nanak also said the PM will give instructions about the upcoming national polls and the vision of 'Smart Bangladesh".

Wishing anonymity, a Jubo League leader, who was a former top leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, told The Daily Star that none of the councillors and delegates will have any say about the second top leadership post.

"All will be done by the

circumstances,

seats

Biman operated

certain

must be left

unoccupied to balance the

State Minister for Civil

load for technical reasons.

Aviation M Mahbub Ali

earlier said anyone found

to be involved in ticket

manipulation will face

According to aviation

legal consequences.

appointed Biman MD airlines operating flights

and CEO, in many from Dhaka currently

During yesterday's visit

to Suhrawardy Udyan, this correspondent found hundreds of placards, containing greetings from leaders, displayed around the venue. While entering the site from the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, several photos of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh

Wazed Putul were found displayed. The AL council venue remembered the four national leaders -- wartime president Syed acting Islam, minister Tajuddin Ahmed and cabinet ministers

Rehana, son Sajib Wazed

Joy and daughter Saima

Qamruzzaman. The main stage were adorned with photos of AL's four top founding

expert Kazi Wahidul Alam,

have an average of 10 to 15

percent unfilled seats as

demanding. As a result, the

plane seats are less likely to

be empty. However, under

this condition, 23 percent of

seats remaining empty is a

matter of concern, he said.

"standard" (acceptable).

M Mansur Ali and AHM

Hamid Khan Bhashani, Shamsul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish. The 22nd national

council will be held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as its longestserving president. The party has had eight chiefs and nine secretaries since its founding on June 23,

Hasina has served the party for the highest time -nine consecutive terms for wants to give a message to There may be mistakes on the last four decades since the country's people that my part while performing her election to the position AL is standing by them and my duties. Big parties have on February 16, 1981.

venue

Emdad Hoque The routes that Biman operates on are the most FROM PAGE 3

and he was buried at the graveyard of Chawkbazar Shahi Jame Masjid.

Born in Urdu Road area of Old Dhaka, Emdad was diagnosed with renal disease several years ago, after which he was forced to take a break in his career.

In his career spanning more than two decades, the designer represented Bangladeshi fashion around the world, and had also served as founder of Studio Emdad and director of Banglar Mela.

and children. We need to

see the states in the region

help save lives and not let

waters, UNHCR has received

unverified information of

leaders -- Maulana Abdul incorporated government's development activities, including the metro rail, Padma Bridge,

> Bangabandhu satellite, Karnaphuli tunnel, and nuclear power plants. The lake inside the venue was cleaned and some boats (electoral symbol of AL) were floating with slogans written on them.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said the party will continue to do so in failures too, along with the future, by holding the their successes."

the national council.

He also said Awami League is the only political party in the country that practices democracy within the party.

"I don't know of any other party holding regular councils in line with its constitution," he said at a press conference at AL's Bangabandhu central office.

Responding question, Quader said, "I am not a perfect leader.

Youth held on rape charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested a vouth on charge of raping a 12-year-old girl in Langadu upazila of Rangamati.

Nazmul Hossain Rana, 20, was arrested in Kakparia area of Gulshakhali union on Thursday afternoon after the girl's father filed a case in this regard, said Mohammad Iqbal, officer-in-charge of Langadu Police Station, vesterday. Quoting locals, the OC said on Wednesday the

accused abducted the girl and raped her in a mango orchard. She was later rescued by her family and locals.

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reputed educational institution & administrative experi-

b) Degree from any foreign university will be considered

c) Good command on English language (both written and

least three first class and 15 years experience in any

ence in any national / international organisation.

A road marred FROM PAGE 5

He shifted the blame towards locals, claiming that they dispose of household wastes into the pond, polluting the

environment there. Golam Mohammad, chief engineer of the municipality, said the temporary garbage station has been set up by renting land of Roads and Highways Department. He claimed that on "rare" occasions, when the garbage does

spill onto the highway, the

municipal staff clean it immediately.

"A project worth Tk 8 crore has been undertaken year to build a last permanent dumping station on 4.50 acres of land in Khilpara area," he said. "We're expecting to start the project within three months."

Md Hasan Zakir, chief executive officer of the municipality, said the current situation will improve once the project is completed.

How AL's council

simple manner as part of austerity measures, but a huge number of leaders and activists will join it.

AL organising secretary and stage and decoration sub-committee member secretary Mirza Azam said the stage of the council is being made in the shape of a boat along with Padma Bridge. It will be 80 feet long and 44 feet wide. The height of the main stage will be 7 feet.

be arranged for cultural event. Chairs will be set at the stage in four rows. The party president and general secretary will sit in the front row followed by advisory council members, senior leaders and presidium members in the second one and other central leaders

A separate stage will

will seat in the rest of the two layers.

Besides, LED monitors will be set up at the council venue.

As part of maintaining austerity due to the global economic crisis, the council is being arranged in a simple manner. So, invitations were not extended to foreign guests. But central 14-party, Jatiya Party, BNP and all other registered political parties will be invited.

Previous councils were held in two days, but this time, the council go on for one day to minimise costs.

The 21st council of the party was held on December 20-21. The budget of the last council was Tk 3.43 crore. The national committee of the party has approved Tk 3.13 crore for this 22nd council.

near Indonesia and then a priority. subsequently off the coast of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India.

Save Rohingyas adrift at sea

people die," said Indrika The boat's current requesting Ratwatte, UNHCR's Asiamore back eastwards, in allow for disembarkations. Since first reports of the the Andaman Sea north of boat being sighted in Thai

> UNHCR has repeatedly region to make saving lives Ratwatte.

The agency had alerted the Indian marine rescue centre earlier this week, immediate location is reportedly once action to save lives and

"It is devastating to Aceh, reads the statement. learn that many people have already lost their lives, asked all countries in the including children," added

the vessel being spotted Negligence leaves 300-year-old

FROM PAGE 3

Pacific director.

worshipper, said they arrange Shib puja (worship of God Shiva) every Monday. Some 150 to 200 devotes gather there on the occasion. He said the largest festival there is the "Chaitra Sangkranti", celebrated to mark the last day of the Bangla year. Hundreds of devotees join the programme.

Another worshipper Anjoly Rani Dey, 55, said the heritage site is not being maintained at all. Devotees have to suffer a lot due to shortage of drinking water, toilet facilities and accommodation.

temples will go extinct," said Anjoly.

"Besides, security is Khan another major issue. In of the Department of artefacts were kept at the currently except those at the central temple, have been stolen," she added.

historians, the aesthetic to the site," she added.

beauty of the 300-year "The most alarming old archaeological site thing is that the temples are is gradually fading away decaying day by day as the due to lack of renovation authorities concerned are and maintenance. They not taking any measures said this site could be an to renovate them. If such a attractive tourist spot if the situation continues, all the government takes proper initiatives in this regard. Contacted,

Mita, director the past, ancient and rare Archaeology, said they artefacts were kept at the currently don't have temples. Most of them, sufficient funds to start renovating the site. "But we are mulling

appointing a caretaker and According to local constructing an entrance

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