



Of illegal sand lifting and Dipu Moni's 15 letters

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

There were no signs of life on the Meghna river as our engine boat cut through the darkness on the night of October 5. It was around 12:30am. This part of Chandpur Sadar upazila had long gone to sleep, and yet the boatman warned against flashing any light or making any sound.

"It might invite danger," he said. The fear of drawing any attention was so palpable that the boatman shut the engine after about 20 minutes. The boat was now floating along the current silently. Soon, about 500 metres away, we spotted some faint lights flickering in a half circle in the middle of the mighty Meghna. A little further, and the lights



SELIM KHAN

became clearer, and some sharp sounds pierced the silence of the night. They were all coming from dredgers, now visible, extracting sands evading the eyes of the river police. Only two days earlier on October 3, the river police arrested nine people, and seized a bulk carrier and a dredger for illegal sand lifting in Meghna's Guchchagram area. Both the bulk carrier and the dredger belong to Selim Khan, chairman of Chandpur's Laxmipur Model Union, said Chandpur Deputy Commissioner Kamrul Hasan.

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700 Palestinians killed in 24hrs

Say Gaza authorities as Israel intensifies bombing campaign

REUTERS, Gaza

More than 700 Palestinians were killed in overnight Israeli air strikes, Gaza's health ministry said yesterday, the highest 24-hour death toll since Israel began a bombing campaign to crush Hamas members who stunned the country with a deadly October 7 attack.

Israel said it had killed dozens of Hamas fighters in the overnight strikes on the besieged enclave but said its war to destroy the Islamist group would take time.

As aid agencies warned that a humanitarian catastrophe was unfolding in Gaza, French President Emmanuel Macron flew to Israel to offer it support. He told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that France stood "shoulder to shoulder" with Israel in its war with Hamas while also saying it must not fight "without rules". The United Nations urged Israel to allow more aid into Gaza, saying the aid let in so far met a tiny fraction of the needs of the beleaguered population. Fuel, still blocked, was crucial.

"We are on our knees asking for that sustained, scaled up, protected humanitarian operation," said Dr Rick Brennan, WHO Regional Emergencies Director.

UN agencies say they have no assurances their aid workers will be safe to reach those in need. But there appeared to be little prospect of a ceasefire any time soon in the bloodiest episode in the Israeli-

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- Gaza death toll rises to 5,791
- Israeli military hits over 400 targets in 24 hours
- UN urges Israel to allow more aid into Gaza

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ANTI-GOVT DEMOS BNP mulling gap between programmes

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP is now thinking about keeping a gap between its October 28 grand rally and the next major demonstration programmes, which may include processions and laying siege to important establishments.

Party leaders said they are considering giving a break for a day or two between the rally and the non-stop programmes, demanding general election under a non-party neutral administration, with an aim to allow the leaders and activists to have some rest and also to send a message to the government that they would not occupy the streets.

The party, however, said that nothing has been finalised yet as there are still two days to go before the grand rally and that anything can happen within this time.

"Following initial discussions, we have decided to keep a single day's break after the grand rally. We may go for a non-stop movement from October 30. But everything depends on how the government reacts to our programmes," said a senior BNP leader wishing not to be named.

He said that police have already started arresting the opposition men and that they might also dilly dally in granting permission for the rally.

The BNP held its last massive rally

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Bangladesh outclassed despite Riyad ton

MAZHAR UDDIN from Mumbai

At one point in the World Cup pool game between Bangladesh and South Africa in Mumbai on Tuesday, many Tigers' fans back home must have wondered whether Shakib Al Hasan's troops would be able to surpass Quinton de Kock's individual score of 174 off 140 deliveries.

Bangladesh did manage to do that, thanks to a Mahmudullah Riyad century but the Tigers still lost the game by a massive margin of 149 runs as they were bundled out for 233 in 46.4 overs in chase of a mammoth 383-run target set by the Proteas.

Reaching the three-figure mark off 104 deliveries in the 45th over, Riyad leaped and celebrated as he became the cricketer with the most centuries in World Cups for Bangladesh.

With five down for just 58 in the 15th over, Bangladesh had lost the game long ago and was staring at the prospect of suffering their biggest-margin defeat in the mega event. However, fighting a lone battle, Riyad scored a run-a-ball 111 - his fourth ton overall and third century in the mega event after notching two successive tons in the 2015 edition. Only Shakib (2) has more centuries in the World Cup for Bangladesh.

It was the Tigers' fourth successive defeat in the ongoing World Cup as the dream of reaching a first-ever semifinal now seems to be all but over with Bangladesh dropping all the way down to the bottom on the 10-team table.

Chasing the huge target, the Bangladesh top order fell like a house of cards. How the Bangladesh batters struggled against the Proteas' bowling attack is reflected by the fact that the next best score to Riyad's ton was opener Liton Das' 22 off 44 deliveries.

In bowling, Bangladesh made a decent start as they picked up two early wickets to reduce South Africa to 36 for two inside eight overs. However, since then the bowlers lost way as the Proteas unleashed their

brute force to pile up their third 350-plus total this World Cup.

De Kock and skipper Aiden Markram added 131 runs for the third wicket before the latter was dismissed after scoring 60 off 69 deliveries.

De Kock was then joined by an in-form Heinrich Klaasen as the duo ratcheted up the scoring rate at the latter stage of the game. De Kock smashed the highest-ever score at the venue while Klaasen departed in the final over only after a 49-ball 90 as South Africa amassed 382 for five.



Hapless Tigers running out of hope

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

The word 'humiliation' feels insufficient in describing the ordeal Bangladesh suffered at the hands of South Africa yesterday at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

The Bangladesh team got outclassed, outplayed



and outperformed by the Proteas in every aspect of the game and suffered a crushing defeat.

Surprisingly, the Tigers had actually started the match quite well, as they had managed to tie up a ferocious South African top order to 44-2 in the first powerplay.

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Hamoon claims three lives

Likely to cross southeastern region today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cyclone Hamoon is causing heavy rain and strong winds in some coastal districts, including Cox's Bazar, and is likely to cross the southeastern region today.

Hamoon claimed three lives in Cox's Bazar last night.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Vibhishan Kanti Das of the district said two people died in Pahartali and Maheshkhali upazilas.

Abdul Khalek was killed when the wind and rain caused a wall to fall on him in Pahartali and Haradhan died in a landslide in Maheshkhali.

Locals said Azgar Ali was killed when a tree fell on him in Chakaria.

The ADC said a team from the

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Egg imports held up for paperwork

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The import of eggs has been held up because of the delay in getting the negative avian influenza certification from a competent authority.

Since last month, the government has permitted 15 companies to import 15 crore eggs to cool down the skyrocketing prices.

According to the import policy order of Bangladesh, eggs must be imported from an avian influenza-free country and the importers must collect the negative certification from the competent authorities, said Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh yesterday.

So far, only one or two of the companies could open the letters of credit and the remaining companies are yet to collect the negative avian influenza certification.

Moreover, if they cannot make any profit from importing eggs from avian influenza-free countries, they might not import at all.

If the collection of negative avian influenza certification is the only challenge to importing eggs, the commerce ministry may ask the fisheries and livestock ministry to relax the condition temporarily for the sake of bringing down the egg price, Ghosh added.

It took Tiger Trading, one of the companies that got the import permit, 18 days to obtain the necessary paperwork from the Office of Chief Controller of Imports and Exports as egg is not a traditional import item, said its proprietor Md. Saifur Rahman.

It took him more than a week to obtain the negative avian influenza certification from a competent authority in India through

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South Africa opener Quinton de Kock celebrates his century against Bangladesh - his third in five matches - during their World Cup fixture at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

