

Metropolitan

Organisations' plea to aid cyclone victims

Relief operations frustrating

By Staff Correspondent

The central relief committee of Jamaat-e-Islami called upon the people and the NGOs to donate to its relief fund, opened for the cyclone-hit people.

An account was opened to receive the donation with the Motijheel Local Branch of Islami Bank, said a Press release.

The call was made for donation Friday at a meeting of the relief committee with the party's Acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan in the chair.

Abbas Ali Khan Friday left Dhaka for the cyclone affected areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. A medical team is accompanying him.

Besides, Nayeb-e-Ameers of the party Shamsur Rahman and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad are now conducting relief operation at different parts of Sathira, Khulna, Bagerhat and Pirojpur districts, the Press release said.

Secretary General of Jamaat-e-Islami Matkur Rahman Nizami issued a statement after his two-day visit to the cyclone-affected areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Noakhali.

Narrating the devastation of the cyclone, the Jamaat leader alleged that no arrangement was so far made to reach relief materials to the affected people. He also termed the government steps in this regard as frustrating adding he found no Government relief team during his visit to the said areas.

Nizami demanded supply of adequate relief goods including food stuff, medicine and garments for the affected people without further delay.

Communist Party

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) at its central secretariat members meeting Friday formed a relief team with the party General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik as its head.

Saifuddin Ahmed Manik left for Chittagong while Nurul Islam for Noakhali and Mujahidul Islam Selim for Bhola to conduct relief operation at the areas.

Earlier, Nuh Islam Lenin and Mojahar Hosain, MP, left for Chittagong for the same purpose.

In a statement issued Friday CBP urged its members and

the members of public to donate money equivalent to one meal charge to the relief fund raised by the party.

Inqilab Party

Bangladesh Inqilab Party President Gazi Rabiul Islam and General Secretary G N Huda in a statement to the Press urged the donor countries to help the country in the relief operation of the cyclone-hit areas.

The party would also try its best to carry out relief operation. They urged the general

people to come forward to the help of the cyclone victims.

Gonoshasthya

A medical and relief team of Gonoshasthya Kendra left Dhaka for Sandwip, Hatiya, Char Fashion, Manpura and Kutubdia with 10 tonnes food, essentials medicines oral salines, water purifying tablets, tubewells, shallow machines and other relief materials, a press release said.

Three medical teams of Gonoshasthya is working in the diarrhoea affected areas of

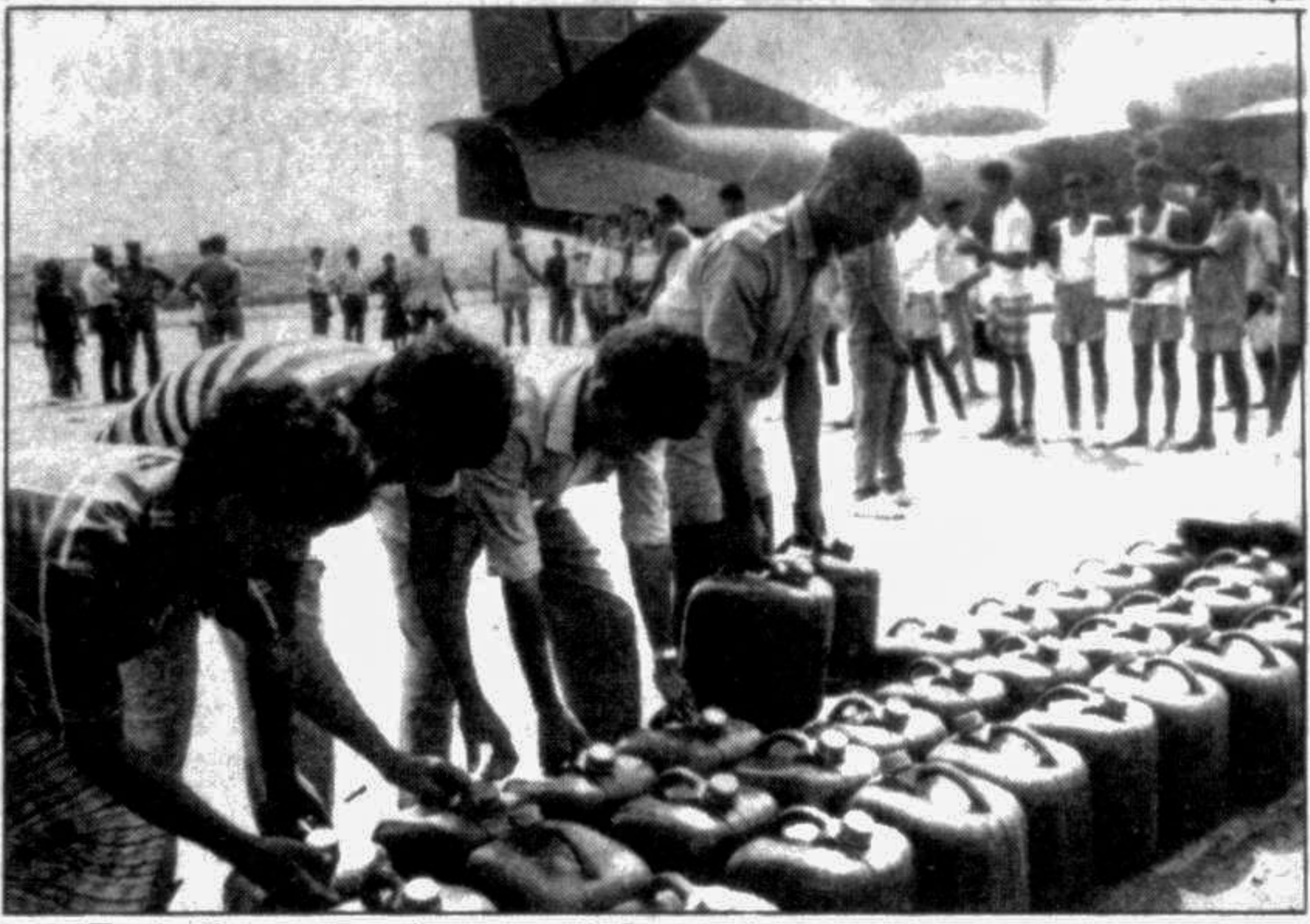
Patuakhali, Pirojpur, and Dashmina.

Another 10 teams are ready to go to cyclone affected areas with 40 tonnes food, drugs and relief materials.

Sanskriti Jote

Sanskriti Sanskriti Jote in an emergency meeting on Friday took a decision to send two relief teams to the disaster areas.

One team will leave Dhaka for Chittagong, Sandwip, Kutubdia and Manpura, and the other for Barisal, Bhola,



The Air Force personnel carrying relief materials to the cyclone battered areas.

Interest-free agri loans sought

ON BOARD M V LALI, May 3: Awami League Organising Secretary Tofael Ahmed, MP, has called upon the government to give interest-free agricultural loans to the farmers of the cyclone affected areas of the country, reports BSS.

Talking to newsmen last night on board MV Lali, Ahmed, who was returning

from cyclone-hit areas of Bhola, said unless adequate agri-loan without interest was extended to the farmers the country's peasantry would not be able to keep their backbones erect.

He demanded house building grants to those who have lost their dwelling houses in Monday's cyclonic storm. Referring to the prices of building materials via a vis the

economic condition of the masses, Ahmed said, even the higher middle-class and the middle-class people would not be able to re-build their houses if government grants were not given.

He also demanded cash-money for reconstruction of damaged educational institutions, mosques and other public buildings.

Meanwhile, Maj(Rtd) Hafizuddin, MP, who was also returning from his constituency in Bhola, narrated his experiences in the cyclone hit areas. Terming the available relief inadequate, Maj Hafiz demanded more relief and cash money for the affected people, he said, Lalmohan and Tajmuddin upazilas were badly affected by the cyclone.

One held for misappropriation of relief goods

From Syed Issa
BHOLA, May 2: An office assistant to the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Bhola district was today arrested on charge of misappropriation of relief materials.

The relief goods including old garments were sent today from here to Char Fashion upazila for the cyclone-hit people.

The DC ordered the arrest of Abdus Salam after the UNO of Char Fashion found discrepancy between the relief materials and the list. Later, the missing materials were recovered from Abdus Salam, sources said.

Patuakhali, and Barguna, by Sunday evening.

Maitree Sangha

Maitree Samaj Kalyan Sangha will send an emergency relief and medical team to the cyclone-hit areas to rehabilitate the affected people.

The Sangha has requested the people and organisations to donate money at the account of Maitree No.4974, Rupali Bank and send relief materials to the relief fund of Maitree at Faridabad High School (phone-242960).

Social Marketing

All the employees of Social Marketing Company has decided to donate their one day's salary to the Prime Minister's Fund.

Revolutionary Front

National Revolutionary Front on Friday urged governments to give advance salary of two months to those employees of government, autonomous and private industries and organisations who are affected by the devastating cyclone.

Puja Committee

PK Hawlader and Joyanta Sen Dipu, President and General Secretary respectively of Mahanagar Sarbanajin Puja Committee, Friday expressed their shock at the loss of life and property in the cyclonic storm and tidal surge.

Bekar Samaj

Bangladesh Bekar Samaj (BBS) on Friday formed a 15-member committee for sending relief to the cyclone hit areas.

Polli Foundation

Employees of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Friday decided to donate their one day's salary to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, raised for the cyclone-hit people, said a Press release.

Teachers' Assoc

BSS adds: The National Federation of Teachers' Association Friday decided to donate to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund one day's salary of its members serving as teachers from primary schools to colleges of the country.

Scouts

The national headquarters of Bangladesh Scouts has called upon all scouts to help the local administrations of the cyclone-hit-belt of southern Bangladesh in their rescue and relief operations.

Nagarik Committee

Bangladesh Nagarik Committee on Friday urged the government to include representatives of all political parties, non-government organisations and prominent persons enjoying confidence of the people in the National Relief Coordination Committee.

Trading Corporation

Rakibuddin Ahmed, Chairman of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, has donated a cheque for Taka one lakh to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, a TCB press release said in Dhaka Friday.

The amount was donated on behalf of all officers and employees of the TCB.

CARE

UNB says: CARE, and American NGO began emergency relief operations in the worst-affected areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Barisal districts soon after the worst-ever cyclone ravaged the coastal belt on Tuesday.

It has sent 16 medical teams to the port city Friday along with purification tablets, oral rehydration solution and essential drugs.

Dateline Chitiagong Sandwip's marooned people in desperate need of food

Hundreds of marooned people on Sandwip have been in desperate need of food and water as they pass dreadful moments in the midst of decomposing corpses and carcasses three days after the killer cyclone mauled the island, reports UNB.

Diarrhoea has already broken out in epidemic form on the island with about 2.40 lakh inhabitants, 40 per cent of whom are feared to have been washed away by Tuesday's hurricane and tidal surge.

A government official who flew to Sandwip this afternoon by a helicopter with relief materials said the relief were taken to the island for the first time today since the cyclone struck.

The relief goods carried by the helicopter did not include drinking water—the most wanted item by the survivors.

Giving his account of the disaster on Sandwip island, the official, who wanted not to be quoted, said that it was difficult to locate the island which was still submerged by saline water that came with the tidal surge.

Hardly any residential structure seemed traceable, the official said adding that the few buildings which withstood the fury of the cyclone were without roofs.

An islander aged about 70 told the official, "I have never seen such calamity in my life and cannot say how many were killed by Tuesday's cyclone."

Another report adds: Hundreds of decomposed bodies from the worst cyclone-hit Sandwip, Hatiya and Urr Char areas are drifting downstream river Feni, witnesses and officials said.

The human carcasses are accumulating in the embankments of Sonagaj and Companiganj upazilas, apprehending that Monday night's tempest might have taken a total toll running over a lakh.

A local fisherman said "while returning from fishing this evening, I saw about a hundred decomposed bodies of islanders still floating in the Feni River."

Sixty bodies were seen floating in the river Wednesday, Lalmohan Jaladas added.

Twentyone such human carcasses floating down the Feni River reached the cross-dam, Mahuri dam and Kuktijodha dam in Sonagaj upazila Thursday afternoon.

Seven decomposed bodies were picked up from the WAPDA dam Wednesday, local people said.

With the help of the district administration, the burial of 28 bodies have already been done.

An Eye-witness Account Hundreds of decomposed bodies litter offshore islands

From Saiful Huda

COX'S BAZAR, May 3: Hundreds of decomposed bodies litter the shores around Kutubdia and Moheshkhali, the two worst-hit islands, battered by Tuesday's killer hurricane that lashed the country's coastal belt with untold fury.

As the victims of the monstrous cyclone recuperate from the nightmare, two days after the disaster struck the south-eastern coasts and offshore islands, rescue and relief operations were yet to be put in place in full swing.

Local Administration sources at Cox's Bazar, however, said that the Navy was expected to launch an all-out search down the Bay of Bengal for possible survivors or victims of the catastrophe.

Kutubdia, one of the largest offshore islands with a population of nearly 1,20,000 was described by officials as the worst-hit by the hurricane and its accompanying tidal surge which soared up to 20 feet.

Mohammad Ishaque, the local MP, said that Kutubdia and its adjoining Moheshkhali island, were still under saline water which showed no signs of receding even after two days. He feared that up to 25,000 people might have been perished from his constituency alone.

This correspondent visiting Kutubdia and Moheshkhali, which still remained virtually cut off from the mainland since the calamity, met with thousands of people who sur-

vived the nightmare but were now on the verge of death from starvation.

"If you want us to survive now, please rush us something to eat.... We have had nothing since Monday evening. Give us something to eat," said Syed Ahmed, 70, retired school teacher.

The septuagenarian with gray whiskers broke down in tears while telling his tale of the "doomsday" (Keyamat).

"First came the winds and it grew stronger and stronger. As the night advanced, came the all-devouring tidal surge."

The 20-foot surge swept away Ahmed's home and his entire family whose fate he knew not. He was washed two kilometers away from his home and found himself tucked amid a heap of sands on another islet across a channel.

This correspondent accompanied by photographers from Associated Press and Aslaweek, arranged a speedboat from the district administration and braved the rough waters of the Bay in a frantic bid to reach Kutubdia.

"We approached the island after a grueling three-hour journey.... But we could not land. All that we could do was to scuttle around in the water and see the signs of ravages wrought by the disaster."

Corpses and carcasses were still being washed ashore after nearly three days of the disaster. Kutubdia and its adjoining

small islets still remained inundated. On Wednesday, a helicopter carrying Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia could not find a place to land. At Mognhama in Chokoria upazila, the UNB Correspondent met a group of nearly 100 survivors, mostly from nearby Kutubdia upazila, who were swept ashore by the tidal surge on Tuesday.

Among the survivors was Umme Habiba, clutching her 10 day-old baby boy. The 30-year-old mother, clad only in petticoat and blouse, said she and her son were brought to the shore by the surge from Borkup in Kutubdia, about three kilometres away.

SM Jeshmuddin, the Red Crescent team leader of Mognhama union, told the Correspondent that 60 per cent of 50,000 population in his area were washed away by the tidal surge.

Only a few were lucky to survive besides the 3,500 people who took refuge crammed in the union's lone three-storeyed cyclone shelter.

Survivors were passing their days in the open without food and water, still experiencing occasional rains and gusty wind. No relief has yet reached them, he said.

Jalaluddin Ahmed, Chairman of Dhuran Union Parishad in Moheshkhali upazila, said the people of his area buried some 7,000 bodies swept ashore in last two days.

No contact with Bhola chars

CHAR KACHHAPIA (Bhola), May 3: The fate of 20,000 inhabitants of various isolated char areas of Bhola district is still uncertain as no contact could yet been made with those areas since Tuesday's cyclonic storm and tidal surge, reports BSS.

The areas still remaining snapped include Dalahar, Char Patila, Char Kukurimukri, Char Nizam and some other tiny newly emerged chars (lands) of the islandic district.

The mechanised boats known as trawlers and ferry service through country boats are the usual means of communications with these char areas. But both systems remained snapped since the cyclone lashed over the coastal belts with the rivers remaining still turbulent and the weather rough.

A desperate attempt by BSS roving correspondent Azizul Islam Bhuyian together with a press team from the capital to reach Dalchar, Char Patila and Char Kukurimukri on Thursday morning had to be abandoned at the mid-river when the tide turned rough and wild.

Principal Nazrul Islam, MP elected from Char Fashion and Manpura upazila told newsmen that a trawler with some nominal relief materials was sent Wednesday for Char Patila. "But we are yet waiting for its safe return," he said.

THE STAR SERVICE table with columns for HOSPITALS, AIRLINES, POLICE, RAILWAY, BUS SERVICE, HOTELS, and OTHER PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICES.

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Sylhet - 3100, Bangladesh 0821-3584, 0821 - 4306 Employment Notice. The University of Shahjalal Science and Technology invites applications from Bangladeshi citizens for filling up of the following permanent posts:

Subscription Rate for The Daily Star (For Bangladesh only). YEARLY : Taka - 1000.00 (Including Postage) HALF YEARLY : Taka - 525.00 QUARTERLY : Taka - 265.00 Please Contact: Circulation Manager The Daily Star 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000 G.P.O. Box No. 3257