

# Dhaka Day by Day

## More Than a Drop into the Ocean

By Rahat Fahmida

Winds of change are now blowing across the country. In this recent cyclone on the night of April 29, the material devastation has been awesome. But the greater tragedy is the human one, as sundered households try to come to grips with the agony of their losses, not only of their few treasured possessions, but their most near and dear ones. There is indeed a lot to cry about!

set up, by the students along with others. They call out through microphones whole day long, at times stressing the distressed conditions of the affected people, or stating what help they need most. It is touching to see their endless work — asking people for contribution, to collect those relief goods and finally to reach them to the affected people. As one third year student of Dhaka University said



Student collecting relief materials from the general public. — Star photo

It is noticeable that the general public in the Dhaka city are moved by this calamity. This cyclone occurred, causing widespread loss of lives, and property. The city dwellers are responding to their conscience with adequate guidance and awareness programmes. It is not just by the non-government organisations or Lion/Lioness or the Rotary, it is the concern and sense of duty of the young college and university students. Realising the uncertainties and the crippling effect due to this disaster they have selflessly extended their hand. And this is bound to create further awareness amongst the people. Once again this speaks of the role of students in our country. Whenever there has been a calamity, either political (like the democratic movement of last year to oust an autocratic government) or a natural disaster like the recent cyclone, it is these students who have played a lead role. Now, around the city, in some of the major street corners, we see relief collection centres

In his relief collection centre, "Whenever we are taking certain quantities of goods to the marooned people, it is like a drop into the ocean. But we will go on assisting even if it is in a small way."

Another student said distressfully, "I carried some relief materials which we collected in this centre, to a few affected areas. In these areas the living cannot talk, they don't have the strength and courage — the dead are doing the talking. It is as if they are reminding of the destruction and endless trauma. We feel it imperative to help them at this hour of distress."

The effort by these students is undoubtedly praiseworthy. They do not want to confine it to just relief collection, they say. If there was any way they could help to clear the debris, or assist in providing the needed care for the already sick people of those areas, they would put in their best efforts.

### Polls observer team leaves for Kathmandu today

A 5-member Election Observer Team leaves for Kathmandu to observe and monitor the national parliamentary polls in Nepal, reports UNB.

During their stay, the team comprising members of the Citizens Election Commission of Bangladesh will call on the Chief Election Commissioner and Foreign Minister of Nepal. The team is also expected to exchange views with other observer groups from different countries and also meet with the Secretary General of SAARC.

### AL leaders asked to set up relief coordination centres

CHITTAGONG, May 9: Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina has directed her party leaders to set up a regional relief coordination centre in Chittagong for supervision and coordination of party relief operation in the affected areas, reports BSS.

According to an AL press release here, central leader Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser has been made coordinator of the centre.

All front organisation of Awami League will conduct their relief work under the supervision of the regional centre.

Sheikh Hasina has also appealed to all sections of people to donate generously to the regional relief coordination centre.

Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari will be covered by the regional relief coordination centre, the press release said.

### PROGRAMME

#### Lions meet

A board meeting followed by the first regular monthly meeting for the month of May, 1991 will be held today (Friday) at 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. respectively at Sonargaon Hotel, says a press release.

#### Music Academies

A central organisation will be set-up for the welfare and development of all Music Academies (Vocal, Instrumental and Dance) of Bangladesh.

In this connection a meeting of the representatives of all concerned institutions will be held at 3. pm today (Friday) at the conference room of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

### Tk.44.67 cr outstanding phone bill

State Minister for Post and Tele-Communications Mohammad Shamsul Islam told the Jatiya Sangsad Thursday that outstanding Telephone bill payable to the government amounted to Taka 44,67,86,351 till June, 1990, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Kazi Shamsur Rahman (Jamaat-Sakhira), the State Minister said various measures were taken for realising the outstanding dues.

He said reminder was given to the consumers in the next month for payment if the bill for the concerned month remained unpaid. He said steps were taken for disconnection of Telephone after giving final notice if the consumers failed to pay the bills.

### Kamal to meet foreign newsmen

Dr. Kamal Hossain, Vice-Chairman, Bangladesh Bar Council and Presidium Member of Bangladesh Awami League, on conclusion of his recent visit to the cyclone affected areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, will meet foreign journalists May 12 at 5 p.m. at Hotel Sonargaon.

## Tagore's message helped overcome political crises'

Bangla Academy on Thursday held a discussion on the occasion of the 130th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore, reports BSS.

Presided over by Dr Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, the discussion was participated by Prof Md Faroque, Prof Ahmed Kabir and Khaleq Uzzaman Ilyas.

Dr. Sanjida Khatun in their paper entitled "Religion of Man" said Tagore was not confined to time and ages nor did he preach any special dogma of religion. This was reflected in his literary works again and again.

The celebration of the anniversary which was scheduled to be held on a nation level, has been postponed due to the recent cyclone and tidal surge.

According to an official source, the Celebration Committee comprising representatives from government and non-government bodies has de-

vised to observe the anniversary in June. A number of socio-cultural organisations have cancelled programmes in view of the natural calamity and their involvement in relief and rescue operation in the cyclone affected areas. National dailies have brought out supplements depicting

### IRAA award

The International Relations Alumni Association (IRAA), Dhaka University has decided to introduce the "IRAA Award" at the University from 1991. The decision was taken at the first Annual General Meeting of the Association held recently, says a DU press release.

It may be mentioned that the award, carrying a lump-sum amount of Tk. 1,000 only each and a certificate, would be given to the student of each class of the International Relations Department, University of Dhaka who tops the merit list each year.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS: 1 Weakens, 5 Gratitude, 8 Ship's complement, 12 Real estate map, 13 Period of time, 14 Danish island, 15 Arabian chieftain, 16 Swiss river, 17 Ascend, 18 Choir voices, 20 Make amends, 22 Born obscure, 24 Kitchen appliances, 27 Followed, 31 Mountain on Crete, 32 Song, 33 Desire with. DOWN: 37 Cynical, 40 sequitur, 41 New Deal agcy., 42 Fireplace part, 45 "Three's Company" star, 49 Toward shelter, 50 Adherent of: suffix, 52 Rabbit, 53 "The Hunter", 54 Disease, 55 Lamb's pen name, 56 Goals, 57 True air-speed: abbr., 58 Walk unsteadily. Answer to Previous Puzzle: CASTLE PREEN, PONIES AUSTIN, ETAN CONES BE, LO POPES WILD, SNEEZES WADES, ATES SIRE, SATAN BLENDER, HEEL FEELS GO, ERN BLAND PRO, LI BEARD ARES, LEVANT ENLIST, SENDS ROAMS. Inits: 7 March, 8 Ricochets, 9 Check, 10 Gestic, 11 Sorrows, 19 Female ruff, 21 "Cat on a Hot - Roof", 24 Inlet, 25 Paid notices, 26 Short sleep, 28 Rubber tree, 29 Dine, 30 Change color of, 34 Buries, 35 "vs. Wade" (TV movie), 36 Join the army, 37 Rich pastries, 38 Slender finial, 39 Dan of CBS, 42 - to order, 43 Danish measure, 44 Wart, 46 Story, 47 Great Lake, 48 Actual, 51 Ocean.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11. Grid for crossword puzzle.

# Revival of hopes in bogs of frustration

Star Special

At long last some of the islands, if not all, have been reached by surface communication one full week after the cataclysmic elemental strike on the eastern coastal zone. The first contacts would be of a tentative nature, a kind of groping and probing before a meaningful and effective relief bridge is set up on the hitherto unapproachable islands.

Reaching the beaches of some islands would not at the moment warrant cutting on or total cessation of helicopter missions. For most of the islands and their terrain would continue to be as forbidding as they were for the whole last week.

While the surface relief train is geared up — it will take some time to organise a continuous and steady relief flow by way of vessels of all kinds — helicopters can be very profitably used to reach the many unobtainable but supremely needing spots and to prime the islands for receiving the relief men and material in a manner maximising their benefit.

Venturing inland from the beaches of the newly reached islands and these waiting to be opened will remain problematic for some time. The situation in these islands is desperate and the reality matches nothing that we have in our two thousand years of collective memory. The best bet in these circumstances is the helicopter used judiciously and with imagination. The Air Force's An-32 transport planes, flying on average six sorties to the islands a day, mostly reaching dry food, have been tirelessly reaching the only supplies so far to those islands. The whole nation would give them a big hand in gratitude.

Their performance has encouraged many to revive hope in a milieu swamped completely by an impossible bog of frustration frequently amounting to disgust over the ineptitude and obvious inappreciation of the high quarters of high responsibility. And many feel happy to come forward with unsolicited but sincere suggestion based on dependable knowledge of the reality in the islands and our capacity to cope with that.

One suggestion is to develop dumps of water, food, fuel and drugs on mainland points opposite targets across the channels. Measures would

### RU Senate meet tomorrow

Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, May 9: 13th Senate session of Rajshahi University to be held May 11, at the university Senate building.

Vice Chancellor Professor Amanullah Ahmed will inaugurate the opening session at 9.30 am. Mofizuddin Ahmed, Treasurer of RU will place annual budget of the university during this session.

One Syndicate member from distinguish person and one finance committee member from among Senate members will also be elected in the session. Change in election procedure of Senate members from registered graduate will be discussed in the session.

### Obituary

Shamsur Rahman Mollah, judicial member-cum-president of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and a retired District Judge died in city Thursday. He was 62, reports BSS.

Mollah hailed from village Dandamondol under Nasir-nagar upazila of Brahmanbaria. He was associated with a number of socio-cultural organisations. He was Vice-President, Comilla Zila Samity, Advisor, Brahmanbaria Zila Samity.

## Govt borrows Tk 644 cr from banks in 8 years

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 4,523 industrial units were set up in the country during the last eight years with the loans sanctioned by various nationalised commercial banks and lending institutions, Md. Saifur Rahman, Minister of Finance and Planning, informed the Jatiya Sangsad in reply to a question on Thursday. He said that out of the total, 3,528 units were set up with loans sanctioned by the nationalised commercial banks while 995 others were set up with loans from various lending institutions. Punitive actions are being taken according to the existing regulations of the financial in-

stitutions against those companies which have failed to set up the industrial units for which loans were sanctioned. In reply to a separate question, the Minister said that the government borrowed a total of Taka 643.8 crore from the banking sector, including the Bangladesh Bank in 1989-90. He said that during this period the government borrowed Taka 692.3 crore from Bangladesh Bank, while during the same period Taka 48.5 crore loan was repayed to the scheduled banks, including the nationalised commercial banks, by the government. Thus, total borrowings of the

government from the banking sector stood at Taka 643.5 crore in 1989-90. Replying to another question, the Minister said a total of Taka 1,135.95 crore has been allocated by the government for upazila development since the fiscal year 1983-84. A maximum of Taka 200 crore was allocated in the fiscal budgets of 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1987-88. However, the allocation for upazila development dropped below Taka 100 crore in the following fiscal year budgets. Only Taka 60 crore was sanctioned for upazila development for the fiscal year 1990-91.

### Delegate power to army for relief operation: Rafiq

Former Presidential Adviser Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam, Btr Uttam, in Thursday asked the government to delegate power to the army to conduct relief operation in the cyclone-hit areas, reports UNB.

He told a press conference at the National Press Club Thursday afternoon the affected people didn't have confidence in the local administration so far as relief work was concerned.

Rafiq, who had visited the cyclone affected Chittagong district, told newsmen it was not possible for the government alone to tackle the post-cyclone situation.

Extending support to the proposal of opposition parties for instituting a national relief committee, he said "saving the survivors is more important than politics".

He urged the international community to provide adequate assistance to Bangladesh in aid of over 10 million survivors of century's worst natural calamity.

### Relief Cell working round the clock

## Parachutes can be used as shelters for survivors

The Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Thursday visited the relief cell at Zia International Airport, Disaster Management Centre at BAF Base Bashar, Tejgaon old airport and President's relief godown now placed at Prime Minister's disposal to see for himself the relief operation management at those places.

During the visit, the Acting President inspected the up-

keep of relief goods flown in from abroad and relief cell at the Zia Airport. He saw the records of relief materials coming from different countries for the cyclone and tidal surge affected people.

Justice Shahabuddin expressed satisfaction at the work of the relief cell at Zia Airport which has been functioning round the clock to maintain details of relief cargo.

The Acting President went to BAF Base Bashar and saw the loading of relief goods in an airforce cargo carrier. He was told that relief goods were being air dropped in places where there was no stagnated water and dropped by parachutes in areas still under water. Justice Shahabuddin was informed that the parachutes used for dropping relief goods could be used by the affected people for making temporary shelters. Chief of Air Staff Air-Vice Marshal Mumtazuddin Ahmed explained to the Acting President the relief operation being conducted by BAF. Justice Shahabuddin also inspected the loading of relief goods in helicopters at the Tejgaon old airport. He talked to the pilots of an Indian helicopter preparing for a sortie to the affected areas with relief materials. On his way back Justice Shahabuddin visited the President's relief godown placed under the Prime Minister and saw for himself the stock position. Cabinet Secretary Siddiqur Rahman and the PSO to the Supreme Commander, Brig. M S A Bhuyian, who is also in charge of the relief coordination cell, accompanied the Acting President.

## China to provide emergency aid

Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng has said his country has decided to provide emergency aid to Bangladesh to help alleviate the sufferings of the cyclone affected people, reports BSS.

In a message to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the Chinese Prime Minister once again expressed deep sympathy for the huge losses Bangladesh suffered from the catastrophic cyclone.

Li expressed his believe people of Bangladesh under the leadership of Begum Zia and her government would work together to fight the disaster, overcome the present difficulties and rebuild their homeland.

The Chinese Prime Minister said a profound friendship exists between the peoples of China and Bangladesh. The Sino-Bangladesh friendship has continued to grow under the meticulous care of our two governments and peoples, he observed.

"The Chinese government and people and I myself greatly cherish the friendly relations and cooperation between our two countries" he said. Li expressed the hope that bilateral relations between the two countries would be further consolidated and strengthened

on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence. He said over the past years high-level exchanges of visits between China and Bangladesh have greatly promoted the growth of bilateral relations. Li expressed his thanks to Begum Zia for inviting him to visit Bangladesh and said he had accepted the invitation. He said he would, however, not be able to make the trip in near future owing to his full schedule this year.

He invited Begum Zia to visit China this year and hoped that her forthcoming visit would instill fresh vitality "to our friendly relations".

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