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The Daily Star

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Dhaka Day by Day



Artists of Dhaka are not sitting idle but doing their bit donating 80 paintings for relief purposes
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Sport

South Korea defeated Bangladesh 6-0 in their second Asian Group D pre-Olympic qualifying soccer match on Monday at Seoul's Olympic Stadium
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NEWS BRIEFS

Steps against bank loan defaulters

BOGRA, May 20: State Minister for Finance, Mojibur Rahman asked the bank officials Monday to take necessary steps under the existing laws and rules against the major defaulters of bank loans for restoring financial discipline.

UAE keen to build calamity centre

Charity organisation of the United Arab Emirates has shown its eagerness in construction of multipurpose buildings, mosques, hospitals and schools in the coastal districts which would be used as shelter centres at times of calamity in future, reports BSS.

JU probe body formed

SAVAR, May 20: The Jahangirnagar University syndicate today constituted a three-member enquiry committee headed by Prof. Abdul Kasem Chowdhury to investigate the incidents relating to the clashes between the two student groups yesterday, reports BSS.

Muhuri dam burst

FENI, May 20: Sharply rising Muhuri river burst its bank this afternoon inundating three villages of Parshuram upazila and washing away about 50 feet of the Muhuri Dam near Fulgazi Bazar.

Flood situation in Sylhet, Sunamganj further deteriorates JTF expands operation to Sylhet

By Staff Correspondent

The US Joint Task Force, code-named 'Operation Sea Angel', expanded its activities to flood-hit Sylhet district providing humanitarian assistance to the affected people. A C-130 US Air Force aircraft carried the first consignment of relief supplies to the marooned people on Sunday.

Director of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation said the relief materials were donated by the people. The supply included fried rice, milk

powder, flour, biscuits and beaten rice. The relief goods will be distributed by the Bangladesh Army in the flood-hit areas of Sylhet.

The distribution of relief supplies by the Operation Sea Angel will be made in 95 unions of Sylhet engulfed by flood since May 1.

An official source expressed apprehension that the situation might worsen as the monsoon in Bangladesh begins in April.

More supplies have been provided by relief organisations. Red Cross, CARE and UNICEF, a USIS press release said.

Meanwhile, the flood situation in Sylhet and Sunamganj further worsened on Monday. Though the water started receding from the upper basin of the Kushiara and the Surma, fresh areas in Biswanath upazila in Sylhet and Jagannathpur in Sunamganj were inundated. The flood situation in Moulvibazar however remained unchanged.

The river Monu rose to 10 cm in the last 24 hours and was flowing 45 cm above the danger mark inundating more areas in Moulvibazar district. About seven lakh people have been affected by the flash flood in the district, which also damaged crops on 40,830 acres of land.

Our Sylhet correspondent S H Das reports:
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Task Force to stay upto mid-June, says Stackpole

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, May 20: The US Task Force will stay here upto middle of June to complete rehabilitation, its second phase of operational activity in the coastal areas battered by the April 29 cyclone and tidal surge, said the Task Force Commander Major General H C Stackpole.

Talking to The Daily Star at

Chittagong airbase this morning Maj-Gen Stackpole disclosed that the amphibious group of the Task Force would leave Bangladesh by May 29 but a section of the Task Force comprising about five hundred personnel would stay back upto middle of June. The US Task Force that has been carrying out relief work since the cyclone struck on April 29.

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MOU on US task force signed

Bangladesh and the United States on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), governing the status, movement and other related matters about the United States Task Force during its current disaster relief mission in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan and United States Ambassador in Bangladesh William B Milam signed the MOU on behalf of their respective government.

The Task Force personnel, who came to Bangladesh at the invitation of the government, would enjoy the status of the administrative and technical

See Page 10 Col. 2

Khaleda leaves for S Arabia on May 25

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will leave Dhaka on May 25 on a four-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait.

This will be her first official visit to foreign country as Prime Minister.

The visit was scheduled to take place earlier, but deferred due to the natural disaster.

During her two-day stay in Saudi Arabia the Prime Minister will perform 'umrah'. On her way back home she will visit Abu Dhabi and Kuwait.

Judgement on Ershad's arms case transfer delayed

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court Division Bench will take two more days to deliver judgement on the petition for transfer of Ershad's arms case from the Special Tribunal No 1 to any other court.

The Division Bench, comprising Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury and Justice Habibur Rahman Khan, heard the case for the third day on Monday.

The defence lawyers filed a petition on behalf of the accused deposed President H M Ershad.

See Page 10 Col. 7

MPs likely to be made development coordinators

Star Report

The government is contemplating giving greater role to the members of the Parliament in development activities. The MPs are likely to be made development coordinators.

During the previous BNP rule MPs were made district coordinators with the rank aid

From Page 1 Col. 8

Mrs Quayle arrives today

Marilyn Tucker Quayle, the wife of US Vice-President Dan Quayle, arrives in Dhaka today to express solidarity with the Bangladesh people fighting the grim aftermath of a devastating cyclone, reports UNB.

During her three-day 'working visit', Mrs Quayle will discuss with government plans to mitigate the impact of recurring natural disasters in the country, officials said Monday.

See Page 10 Col. 2

3 Indian copters fly back home today

By Staff Correspondent

Three Mi-8 Indian helicopters are flying back home today at the conclusion of their relief and rescue mission in the cyclone-affected areas. The three helicopters joined the relief and rescue mission on May 3.

Later three more Mi-17 Indian helicopters joined the relief operations. The Mi-17 helicopters will fly back home on Friday.

India was the first country to send three helicopters to help Bangladesh in relief and rescue operation in the coastal belt immediately after the cyclone.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia consoling a tornado victim who burst into tears seeing her at Gournadi, left, part of the battered upazila, right.



— Star photo

63 killed in riots : Army called out in Meerut, Bulandshahr

Indian polls explode into violence

NEW DELHI, May 20: Religious and political schisms aggravated by a hard-fought election campaign exploded into violence across northern India Monday, the first day of voting in the general elections, report agencies.

At least 63 people were killed and hundreds injured in fighting between political rivals, officials and news reports said. In one town violence developed into a battle between Hindus and Muslims.

The Election Commission said ballot fraud was detected in about 500 of the 240,000

voting centers and ordered fresh polls in those areas.

An estimated 100 million people turned out to elect members to the Lok Sabha, the policy-making lower house of Parliament, the Election Commission said. Voting was held Monday for 204 of the 543 seats in the house. Polling will be held also on Thursday and Sunday.

The turnout was estimated at a little over 52 per cent.

At least 26 people were killed in the town of Meerut, 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of New Delhi, when

street battles erupted after a Muslim politician was assaulted and injured by a Hindu rival, police said.

An indefinite curfew was clamped on the town of 400,000 people in Uttar Pradesh and the army called out, authorities said. At least 29 people sustained stab injuries in frenzied fighting between Hindus and Muslims and scores of homes were burned, Press Trust of India reported.

A local journalist reached by telephone quoted hospital sources as saying that 15 of the

victims were dragged out of a bus by a mob and massacred.

He said 11 others were killed in pitched street battles and rampaging mobs torched nearly 30 shops and three dozen vehicles.

Curfew was clamped and the army called out also in the nearby town of Bulandshahr after widespread violence killed five people and injured scores, the news agency said.

In eastern Bihar state 11 people were killed and scores injured in election-related violence, PTI said. One person

See Page 10 Col. 7

39 villages worst-hit by tornado Khaleda orders gearing up relief work

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Monday visited the tornado-ravaged Gournadi upazila of Barisal district to see the extent of damage there, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister, who flew in a helicopter, visited different worst-hit unions of the upazila. She talked to the affected people and enquired about their needs and welfare.

Begum Zia visited the residence of Baharul, a 12-year-old school girl, who was killed in the tornado on Sunday at Tikshar village.

The Prime Minister consoled the members of the bereaved family of Baharul.

Begum Zia had got down from her car at several places as the affected people approached her car and escorted her to show the damage caused by the tornado. At Chandnish union a woman became so emotional to see the Prime Minister amidst them at the time of their distress that she embraced Begum Zia. The Prime Minister assured her of all possible cooperation

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Damage to infrastructures not estimated BIDS puts loss at Tk 2309 cr

By Shahiduzzaman Khan

The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) has computed the loss to foodgrains, fisheries, livestock, housing and industrial sectors in the cyclone affected areas at Tk. 2309 crore.

The BIDS estimate did not show the extent of damage to infrastructures such as school buildings, health clinics, flood protection embankments, ships and aircraft — which is colossal.

Sector-wise breakup of the total loss, as the survey report says: foodgrains — Tk 330 crore, fisheries — Tk 106 crore, livestock — Tk 163 crore, housing — Tk 254 crore and industry — Tk 1456 crore.

The survey, compiled on the basis of available information from censuses and studies

carried out earlier, was conducted by BIDS Director General Dr. Mahub Hossain.

The survey says, the directly hit areas are the coastal islands from Monpara in Bhola district in the west to Sandwip in the north to Maheshkhali in the south. The mainland upazilas along the coast in greater Chittagong district from Sitakund to Cox's Bazar were also severely affected. The area comprised 11 upazilas of the affected districts.

According to 1981 population census, the survey says, the area contained 2.13m people in 350,000 households. Assuming a population growth of 2.5 per cent per year, these upazilas had a population of 2.8m before the cyclone, reports UNB.

See Page 10 Col. 1

Tk 122cr more for relief

By Staff Correspondent

Taka 122 crore more has been allocated to various ministries and agencies to take up relief and rehabilitation activities in the cyclone affected areas.

Briefing newsmen on Monday evening, Information Secretary Kazi Manzur-i-Mowla said this was in addition to Taka 190 crore allocated earlier for the purpose.

Mowla said out of the fresh allocations, Taka 110 crore had been earmarked for the repair and reconstruction of damaged houses. Of this amount, Taka 50 crore has been sanctioned for immediate release, he said.

The Information Secretary said money had been sanctioned for repair and reconstruction of hospitals and medical centres (Taka one crore), food godowns (Taka one crore), police stations and barrack (Taka 3 crore), roads

and high ways in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Sylhet (Taka 4 crore).

Mowla said the government has decided to waive agricultural loan upto Taka 8000 of farmers who are members of BRDB society in the cyclone, tornado and flood affected areas. He said 500 power tillers would be lifted from Machine Tools Factory to be given to the farmers of the cyclone affected areas.

Mowla said an amount of Taka 40 crore would be needed for the of salvation Chittagong Port where 146 ships and vessels of various sizes capsized during the cyclone. He said the government which sought foreign assistance for the salvage operation, had, whoever, started the task of its own. He said since reopening of the port, it handled 82 ships — 45 arrived and 37

See Page 10 Col. 3

Growth rate slows down to 3.5pc

Star Economic Report

The economic growth rate in 1990-91 will slow down to about 3.5 per cent from what was estimated at 4.2 per cent in March, according to the latest official assessment.

The assessment, still a preliminary one, has been made after the cyclone and tidal surge of April 29 and a series of natural calamities including floods and tornado in the current month.

The natural disasters have adversely hit agricultural production. The loss of standing IRRI-Boro crops will alone be over five lakh tons. Earlier estimate about IRRI-Boro output was 65 lakh tons for current year. There will also be a substantial loss of industrial production because of the natural calamities.

Besides, the growth performance in other sectors including services will be lower than what was assessed in March.

With growth performance of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) slowing down, the overall economic situation will remain depressed. Real GDP growth rate in 1990-91 exceeded five per cent representing the highest since 1980-81.

According to the World Bank's country economic memorandum (CEM) for the forthcoming Aid Consortium

meeting in Paris, the Bangladesh economy registered its real growth at an average of 2.7 per cent in 1987-88 and 1988-89. This was considerably less than the average of about five per cent achieved during the past decade 'leading to no significant improvement in real per capita income with population growing at about 2.4 per cent per annum'.

The Bank said the share of agriculture in GDP declined from 41.7 per cent in 1980-81 to 37.3 per cent in 1989-90 on account of the rapid expansion of the services sector, accounting for slightly over 40 per cent of GDP. The agricul-

tural sector, Bank noted, continued to account for about 27 per cent of the average growth of 4.6 per cent between 1980-81 and 1989-90. With its share at 10 per cent of total GDP, the manufacturing sector 'has the greatest potential for absorbing the rapidly expanding labour force', but the sector with the exception of garment and frozen food performed unevenly in the Eighties.

Inflationary pressures

The slowed-down growth of the economy because of the natural calamities in 1990-91 will coincide with high inflationary pressure. The latest of

See Page 10 Col. 1



Roof top is the only dry place at their home in flood-hit Sylhet.

— Star photo