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The Daily Star

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Trail of devastation in coastal belt: Fate of over 8000 people of Nijhum Island and Char Nizam not known: Communications with St Martin's Island, Urir Char, Kutubdia remain snapped

Thousands feared killed

By Staff Correspondent

Thousands of people are either killed or missing in the devastating cyclone that hit the coastal belt of Bangladesh on Monday.

The fate of nearly 7000 people in Nijhum Deep of Noakhali and another 1100 in Char Nizam of Bhola could not be known even 48 hours after the storm accompanied by a tidal surge.

The Central Control Room at Dhaka could not contact St. Martin's island, Urir Char and Kutubdia till midnight of Tuesday. The death toll may be higher in all those places, sources said.

The storm, with a core of hurricane winds left a trail of devastation. Thousands of people in pockets of off-shore islands could not be reached by the rescue workers even 24 hours after the cyclone.

The storm raging upto 235 km per hour at times blew away the middle portion of concrete bridge over the Karnaphuli river.

Monday's cyclone was a reminder of the cyclone of 1970 in terms of destruction to property, but the toll of human lives was much less compared with the 1970's. About a million people perished in the 1970 cyclone. This time early warning and precautionary measures kept the death toll to minimum.

Battered areas of Feni, Noakhali, Sandwip and Urir Char went still under water. Most people of these places took shelter on rooftops.

Some bodies of cyclone victims were found floating around Urir Char where small houses are still under water.

Aircraft parked at the Chittagong Airport were also damaged by the wind and water. Waters have now receded from Chittagong city but Patenga area is still submerged.

The extent of damage to the Naval Academy seemed to be more than the Patenga airport.

Preliminary reports received from various areas said

extensive damage has been caused to the property and standing crops. Communications with the affected areas remain cut off. Microwave connections with Chittagong have been disrupted following the storm. Thousands of trees were uprooted and dwellings razed to the ground. No electric poles was found erect. Hand tubewells were blown away.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia flew over Sandwip, Hatiya, Urir Char, and Kutubdia islands on Tuesday to see for herself the

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Tk 5cr sanctioned High powered emergency relief body

A special meeting of the Council of Ministers was held on Tuesday evening at Bangabhaban with Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting reviewed the latest situation in the cyclone affected areas of the country and the measures taken so far to provide relief to the affected people.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia who had earlier visited the cyclone affected areas, gave an account of the devastation caused by the cyclone and of the relief measures already undertaken. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Minister for Education, and M Keramat Ali, Minister for Commerce, also spoke about their experience after visiting some affected areas. Lutfur Rahman Khan, State Minister for Relief, presented a report on the latest situation. The relief Secretary informed the meeting of the extent of damage known so far.

The council decided to form a high powered emergency relief body.

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GLIMPSE OF ELEMENTAL FURY: Aerial view of Patenga and adjoining areas after the killer winds had crossed but left behind waters whipped up from the Bay. — Photo Mohsin

Inside Today International



United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has said he will not accept another term as world's top diplomat. **Page 5**

Article

In the concluding article of his two-part series, on Aspects of Aid Conditionality, a former Finance Minister and a regular contributor to this paper, M Syed uzaman emphasises the need for higher domestic savings in Bangladesh. **Page 4**

Metropolitan

Lack of education is the main cause of inequality between men and women, papers presented at a conference on 'Education and Gender Equality' feel. **Page 3**

Photo feature on cyclone havoc

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Damage colossal and extensive

PM appeals for world help

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Tuesday appealed to the international community to come forward in aid of the distressed humanity and help the cyclone affected people, according to an official handout.

She said, "a severe cyclonic storm, accompanied by huge waves from the Bay of Bengal, hit a major portion of the coastal areas on Monday night. The velocity of the wind was the highest ever recorded in Bangladesh."

She said communications have been largely disrupted. It See Page 10 Col. 6

Notice

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on account of the historic May Day.

However, arrangements have been made to publish the paper tomorrow (Thursday) in view of the emergency arising out of the cyclone that hit the coastal belt on Monday night.

— Managing Editor



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is moved almost to tears seeing the death and destruction by the cyclone. — Star photo

Cross-examination of defence witnesses begins

Attorney General terms ex-Army chief worthless

By Staff Correspondent

Attorney General Aminul Haque exposed former Army chief Lt Gen (retd) Atiqur Rahman, a defence witness in Ershad's arms case, as a worthless person who had received under benefits from Ershad, the accused.

The Attorney General said that although Gen Atiqur Rahman had been declared permanently unfit by the Army Medical Board in 1979 he was rehabilitated in the army and held the highest post maligning the image of the armed forces.

General Atiqur Rahman, however, denied the observations of the Attorney General and testified as Defence Witness (DW) before the Special Tribunal trying deposed President Ershad.

An Administrative Officer of the Iraqi Embassy in Dhaka, Islam Moor Mohammad also attended the Tribunal yesterday as a DW.

The Defence also named

Major Wahed, officer in charge of the Army Museum and Col Saif, former PS to the President as DWs. The Tribunal will also summon them.

Another Defence Witness is Subedar Md Shahjahan who was the PA to the President. The three remaining witnesses will be summoned by the Tribunal.

The Judge yesterday rejected a plea from the Defence that the weapon, given by Ershad to Army Museum, be recalled. Judge Mohammad Habibullah said that there was no need to bring the weapon from the Museum.

He said that the bullets of a 3006 calibre weapon can be fitted in any gun of a similar calibre.

General Atiqur Rahman told the Tribunal that when he was the Army chief he formed a committee to set up an Army museum in 1987 with Major

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Army had no intention of taking over power: Atiq

By Staff Correspondent

Former army chief Lt General (retd) Atiqur Rahman said yesterday that the army was opposed to taking over state power.

He said that the army was being imparted education for military administration and not for civil administration at the Military Academy.

General Atiq was talking to journalists after appearing as a defence witness at the Special Tribunal trying deposed President Ershad.

Gen Atiq said that he had no intention to enter politics although he had been provoked by many to take over power when he was the Army chief.

Hasina's call to gear up rescue operation

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has expressed deep shock at the loss of life and property in the cyclone that lashed the coastal areas on Monday night.

In a statement after visiting the cyclone-hit areas of Bhola and Patuakhali she demanded rescue operation in the affected areas on an emergency basis. She urged the Government to send cash money, agricultural equipment, construction materials.

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SSC exams

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations of 1991 under Dhaka and Rajshahi Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Boards will begin on May 2, reports BSS.

The SSC examinations under Comilla and Jessore Boards, scheduled to begin on the same day have been suspended due to cyclonic storms and tidal surges that lashed the coastal belt of the country Monday night.

May Day today

By Staff Correspondent

May Day will be observed today with due solemnity in the country as elsewhere in the world. Different socio-political organisations have chalked out elaborate programme to mark the day.

Jamaat-e-Islami in a statement said workers of world are working towards establishing their rights, but their exploitation continues unabated. Working people can really be free from exploitation under an Islamic rule. The Jamaat called upon the working people

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BJP to erect electrified fence around Bangladesh

NEW DELHI, Apr 30: The Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) today said that if brought to power through next month's elections it would install an electrified fence along the border with Bangladesh, which it described as "less than friendly" to India, reports AFP.

The main contender for power at the centre the BJP also said it would create a one-kilometre wide security belt the length of the Indo-Pakistan border.

The Election Manifesto of the right-wing BJP or Indian

People's Party, released at a press conference here, called neighbouring Islamic Pakistan "Hostile" and said it and China continued to occupy land that is "lawfully ours."

It also called for creation of a militarily powerful, nuclear India.

Suggesting setting up a National Security Council to institutionalise forward defence planning, the manifesto said the party favoured giving the Armed Forces 'nuclear teeth' because international relations continued to be governed by 'the law of the jungle'.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, but insisted it was for peaceful purposes, and has in the past two years accused Pakistan, of trying to develop a bomb.

Party President Murli Manohar Joshi said the BJP would strive to make India an autonomous world power with a permanent seat on the United Nations' Security Council and the strongest navy in the Indian Ocean.

On the domestic front, the BJP promised to clean up Indian politics, explore the

possibility of a presidential form of government and re-structure relations between New Delhi and the states.

It promised security for the country's minorities including India's 100 million Muslims, and pledged to erect a Hindu temple on a controversial site in Ayodhya now reportedly occupied by a 16th-century Mosque which it said would be relocated.

The BJP has made the Ayodhya temple-Mosque dispute, over which hundreds of people have died in Hindu-Muslim clashes since 1986, its

main electoral platform, trading on the belief that the northern town is the birthplace of the Hindu god Rama.

Along with a host of populist economic measures including raising the level of taxable income, the party promised to amend a constitutional provision for the 'protection' of cows to cover bulls and bullocks, outlaw all trading in and slaughter of cows and give tax exemptions to dairy farmers and cowherds.

The BJP, which held 86 seats in the last Federal

Parliament (Lok Sabha) is contesting 450 of the 537 seats up for grabs next month, but analysts say electoral arithmetic is against the party in the country's south, north-east and east.

Meanwhile India finished preparations to set in motion the world's largest democratic exercise next month as poll watchdogs voiced fresh fears of violence in evenly matched constituencies.

"Our pre-election job is over," an Election Commission spokesman said today.