



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia talking to cyclone affected people at Burir Char in Noakhali district Saturday.

# Death toll 2 lakh

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nation as the passage was obstructed by the sunken vessels, floating trees, littered carcasses. The ship anchored at a place far off the island. Three BIWTC vessels left for Hatiya on Saturday. Two ships with relief goods went to Kutubdia and Sandwip on the same day.

LCT Kazal, another ship, was commissioned for keeping communication between Hatiya and Sandwip.

In Kutubdia, bodies of 15,000 people were recovered till Saturday noon and they were buried in mass graves.

Nearly five lakh people of 10 upazilas of Barisal district have been seriously affected by the devastating cyclone. Standing crops on 13,000 acres and about 1000 kucha houses were damaged completely and 5000 houses partially, according to an official source.

Besides, thousands of trees and electric poles were uprooted in the district causing a complete disruption of electricity. The supply of electricity however resumed on Friday.

Four passenger launches, MV Samad, MV Masud Khan, MV Etash, and MV Baishakhi sank in the river Kitta Khola during the cyclone. The motor vehicles were anchored and had no passengers.

Following is an account of damage: 60 houses totally, 153 partially and 25 educational institutions in paurasava area of the district; 105 houses totally, 1502 partially and 42 educational institutions in Barisal sadar upazila; 100 houses totally, 500 partially

and 42 educational institutions in Mehendiganj; 600 houses and 4 educational institutions totally; 11 partially in Muladi; 141 houses totally, 502 partially and 18 educational institutions in Hizia; 75 houses totally, 602 partially and 14 educational institutions in Banaripara; 170 houses and five educational institutions in Babuganj and 100 houses and two educational institutions in Gourmadi upazila.

Meanwhile, Mostafizur Rahman, MP, told newsmen at the parliament lobby that no government relief had so far reached the distressed people in Sandwip till Saturday. He said the people of the entire island need food and succour to survive the grim battle for life.

Mostafiz claimed the death toll in the devastating cyclone would cross one lakh in Sandwip alone. Of the 70,000 deaths reported so far, bodies of 17,000 persons were identified and 40,000 others missing.

He said the cross dam around the 300-square-mile island was totally destroyed. Nearly 50,000 people lived on and around the cross dam. An estimated 30,000 people were washed away when the dam gave in due to impact of the swirling tidal surge. Sandwip has a population of four lakh.

Damage to standing crops and infrastructures was colossal. Almost 100 per cent of the crops of the island were destroyed. Out of 106 primary

schools, 103 were razed to the ground. Twenty high schools out of 22 were blown away. Nearly 80 per cent mosques and madrasahs were damaged.

Mostafiz claimed that diarrhoeal diseases had broken out in the affected areas and on Saturday morning, three children died. Urgent medical supplies and drinking water should be despatched to the affected areas, he said.

Meanwhile, Sultanul Karim Choudhury, MP of Banskhali upazila told newsmen that deaths and destruction caused by the century's worst cyclone was colossal in the upazila. He said, nearly 64,000 people are feared dead in Banskhali upazila alone. The upazila has nine unions. Ninety five per cent of the crops have been damaged. Loss to salt beds is 80 per cent, tubewells 40 per cent and vegetables 80 per cent. Till now, 6000 of carcasses have been buried, according to upazila administration. Bodies are still hanging in the trees and are found in hilly areas and near the embankment.

Our correspondent reports from Bhola: The official death toll in the cyclone in the district was said to be 209, while, according to unofficial estimate, the figure was over 500.

About 150 fishing boats and trawlers carrying 1500 fishermen and crew are still missing.

Nuruddin Khan, Chairman of Daulat Khan upazila, informed that more bodies were recovered from Meghna on Saturday.

## Power supply to Cox's Bazar restored

COX'S BAZAR, May 4: Power supply to Cox's Bazar was restored this afternoon by activating the Dohazari-Cox's Bazar grid line, four days after the devastating cyclone hit the area, a Power Development Board press release said.

## Tk 555cr aid

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Saturday more commitments are awaited.

Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif, French Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, and United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator Hamed Essafi are arriving in Bangladesh today (Sunday).

The Foreign Secretary said the United Nations General Assembly has expressed profound sympathy for the people of Bangladesh, and has a draft resolution urging all to urgently and generously extend all possible help.

He said a little over 100,000 people were killed, about one million houses damaged in the April 29 cyclone according to preliminary assessments. It is difficult to accurately quantify the extent of damage because many areas are not accessible.

## Khaleda

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unscheduled landing on Burirchar where 10,000 people are feared to have died in the cyclone. The local administration told the Prime Minister the relief materials had reached the affected places of the island. The relief teams of Armed Forces, local administration, Red Crescent and other voluntary organisations are taking part in the affected areas. The affected people of Burirchar need cash money and house building materials immediately.

The local administration told the Prime Minister that the cross dam had broken in Jahajmara where four thousand people are feared to have been killed.

The affected people urged the Prime Minister to arrange for sea-trucks for transporting relief to Hatiya and Char Jabbar.

She was told that Taka five lakh in cash and other relief materials had been provided to Luxmpur under gratuity relief.

During her visit to the affected areas, Begum Zia talked to the people and enquired about their damage.

She was accompanied by State Minister for Textile Abdul Mannan and Jahanara Begum MP.



National Flag was kept at half-mast Saturday to mourn the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in the coastal areas caused by the catastrophic cyclone and tidal surge April 29.

## Days in agony

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open sky since his thatched house was washed away.

This correspondent visited the coastal area Wednesday and found the decomposed body of one Anwara (10) near Char Torab Ali embankment. Her father Fazul Haque and other members of the family could not be traced till then.

Local people informed that they had recovered 10 other bodies from the water near the embankment and all were buried. At least 25 people of that locality were missing.

Carcasses were found scattered around the area. Fifty per cent of the cattle-head of Char Torab Ali perished in the tidal surge.

Acute scarcity of drinking water is prevailing all over the char area. The char people were mainly dependent on hand tube-wells for drinking water, but those remained inoperative since the cyclone. Ponds are also filled with saline water.

Nur Hossain, a primary school teacher of Char Clark, said, "diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases may break out in epidemic form if supply of drinking water is not arranged soon."

The inhabitants of the char areas are mostly peasants who have lost all their standing crops.

Abdul Malek, a middle-aged farmer of Char Clark, said, "I have lost all the Rabi crops including Aus. These are now under water. I could save myself and my family from the storm, but now I don't know how to survive."

Same is the condition of thousands of peasants in the coastal areas.

The water will go down sooner or later, but it will leave salinity on the fields for which cultivation will not be possible at least for three months", said an elderly peasant of the area.

Relief from Noakhali district administration reached Char Clark area two days after the disaster. On Wednesday afternoon, a small relief team, carrying some biscuits, 'chira', molasses and match boxes reached Char Torab Ali, a part of Char Clark. The members of the relief team had to experience a difficult situation since the quantity was too little to meet the requirement. However, they could distribute smoothly with the help of the local volunteers.

Each of the affected people got one or two hundred grams of chira, a little molasses, four pieces of biscuits and a match box.

Mohammad Ismail (30) of Char Torab Ali said, "this is my first food after the storm."

The team also distributed some chira, molasses and biscuits among the hungry people at Churasta Bazar of Char Clark.

When the team was returning after distributing the relief materials, their jeep was stopped and surrounded at many places by the hungry people.

Enayetullah, a young man of the area said, none from the government or any non-government organisation visited the affected char areas before, though the char areas were approachable by road.

Breaches at different points on all the embankments in the coastal area were clearly visible — which will only increase sufferings of the people during tides.

The condition of Char Jabbar, Killar Char, Char Bhatirtek, Char Jubilee and other coastal areas was found almost similar to that of Char Clark and signs of devastation were visible all over the coastal belt of the district.

In Companyganj upazila the worst affected areas are Char Elahi, Char Kalahari, Char Musapur, Char Kalmi, Daulat Gram, Bhatia and other places.

It was alleged by an inhabitant of Companyganj's affected area that none from the government visited the area over after three days of the disaster. According to an official report, 32 people were killed in Companyganj and the damage to houses was heavy.

In Lakshmipur district, the coastal areas of Ramganj upazila were severely affected. The district administration confirmed nine deaths while unofficial sources believe the death toll is much higher since a large number of fishermen is still missing. Five fishing boats carrying about 25 fishermen did not return from sea after the cyclone and it is apprehended that they are dead.

An official source has confirmed that the death toll in the coastal areas of Noakhali district has over 200 till now, which is likely to rise further.

When contacted, Mohammad Shahjahan, the MP elected from Noakhali sadar constituency, termed the devastation in the coastal areas as colossal and agreed that the relief materials provided for the affected people were inadequate. The MP, who has visited Char Clark and other coastal areas added that all-out efforts were being taken to save the affected people.

## AL wants

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An Awami League source, on the other hand, said the Prime Minister's offer in fact meant asking the Opposition to work under the relief committee formed by the BNP government. This was a clear rejection of the demand for forming an all-party committee, the source said.

The Awami League source also said, the Government did not extend any formal invitation for the proposed meeting. The source said they wanted to cooperate with the Government in all possible ways.

A BNP sources, however, complained that AL was trying to earn cheap popularity out of human misery by blaming the government.

## The Midnight File

### Hoxha gives up party posts

VIENNA (Austria), May 4: Albanian President Ramta Alia on Saturday relinquished all Communist Party posts, including the party leadership he inherited in 1985 from Stalinist Enver Hoxha. The state radio broadcast said the Central Committee of the Party of Labor, or renamed Communists, accepted Alia's decision to resign his party posts. Alia resigned as the party's First Secretary, as well as from the Politburo, the party's executive body, and the Central Committee, which makes major decisions between congresses, reports AP.

### Pakistan protests Indian shelling

ISLAMABAD, May 4: Pakistan said today it had strongly protested to UN military observers over what it called three days of unprovoked Indian shelling across the ceasefire line in disputed Kashmir. Five civilians were injured and a bank, a college and shops were damaged by artillery fire on Pakistan-ruled Azad (free) Kashmir's Neelam Valley from Thursday to today, Indian troops also fired on a civilian bus and jeeps in the area the Defence Ministry said in a statement, reports Reuter.

## Industrial loss

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Chakaria was washed away. The infrastructure of shrimp production in this area was completely ruined.

The Chittagong Steel Mills which has been running on a bank overdraft of Taka 800 million was severely damaged. The loss at this one industry would not be less than Taka 300 crore, said an administrative official.

Due to collapse of 70 per cent of boundary wall the security of the mills is at risk.

Sixty per cent of the tin shed roof of the mills has been blown away, while all machinery remained submerged under water that was whipped up during the tidal surge for nearly 24 hours. Due to water logging inside the mills the machinery had become silted. The underground motors of the mills are still under knee-deep water. The dewatering of the mills could not be done by the Fire Service yet.

Former MP of the area Liaquat Ali, who once used to work in the mills, said the administration could not take proper measures to build a water preventing barricade by closing the doors of each mill with sandbags.

The workers' colony was completely damaged due to the tidal surge. Diarrhoea has broken out in the colony in an epidemic form, said a security man.

The hardware parts and tools stores, the furnace mill, the galvanizing shop and other mills were all silted up. Work for cleaning up of the mills has not yet been started.

A huge quantity of refractory bricks imported from abroad recently by the mills has been completely damaged due to the saline waters. "Those will not be of any use anymore," said an official.

Production in the Eastern Refinery would not be possible without dewatering of the saline water from the plant. The refining mill of the country's only refinery has completely gone out of order due to the tidal surge.

An oil tanker of the Burmah Eastern Company was scuttled on Monday night, spilling oil throughout the Patenga area and posing a serious ecological threat.

The Cement Clinker Factory, the TSP, and the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory, the GEM plant, the Jamuna and Padma oil depots, Eastern Cables, the Dry Dock, etc., have been damaged due to the onrush of sea water. The Dry Dock still remains submerged.

In the Nasirabad, Kalurghat, Sitakundu and Barabkundu industrial areas, almost all the industries have been damaged to greater or lesser extent due to the cyclone.

Electricity supply, which was completely disrupted, will

## Relief steps

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a resume of the overall situation, requirement of relief including GR in cash and kind and house building grant. He informed the meeting about 15,000 tons of rice and wheat will be required for the affected people in Chittagong region.

## Li, Akihito

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conveyed his grief to the government and the people of Bangladesh.

Weizsacker, Kohl

From Bonn, The President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsacker, sent a message of condolence to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, a German Embassy press release said Saturday.

Chancellor Kohl also on Friday sent a message to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia expressing his deep dismay at the devastation and great loss of human life and property by the April 29 cyclone.

## Nawaz Sharif

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Khaleda Zia will receive him at the Zia International Airport.

During a seven-hour stay, the Pakistani leader and his eight member entourage will visit affected areas to see for themselves the devastation and extent of damage to property wrought by the worst-ever cyclone coupled with tidal surge in the country's coastal areas and offshore islands.

Meanwhile Bhutanese Minister for Social Services Dr T Tobgyel arrives today morning to see for himself the devastation caused by last week's severe cyclone and express sympathy for the victims.

## Ershad's unlicensed arms

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ex-president, Major General Manzur Rashid Khan and former chief of protocol Brigadier M. G. Rabhani as court's witnesses for what the Attorney General termed, "to serve the ends of the justice."

The tribunal was adjourned at noon to resume on May 7.

Yesterday, Defence witness Shah Mohammad Shahjahan Sheikh was first examined by Defence lawyer Sirajul Haque and later cross-examined by the Attorney General Aminul Haque.

Judge: Where are you working now?

Mohammad Shahjahan (MS): At the Chittagong Military Academy.

Defence lawyer (DL): What was your duty?

MS: I used to work as personal assistant to the Supreme Commander. I worked in that capacity from January 25, 1990 to December 12, 1990.

DL: What kind of duties did you perform?

MS: I used to deal with the personal file, particularly pay and allowances, TA/DA, claims, service records, private car, private arms licenses and other documents of personal nature of the Supreme Commander.

DL: Do you know how many personal guns Ershad had with him?

MS: I had licenses for eight guns, of which one belonged to one A M G Morshed.

DL: Who did you give the licenses of personal guns to?

MS: I gave those licenses to H M Ershad between December 7 to December 12, 1990.

DL: Would you know the papers of that personal file, if you see them? (showing a paper) Who signed the paper?

MS: H M Ershad. This is an application for a license for a double-barrel gun.

DL: What is written in column 11?

MS: There is a mention about prior license. License No 41/275 Dhaka Magistracy dt. 6.8.81.

DL: (Showing another paper) Who signed this letter?

MS: Lt Col. Sharifuddin, who has since been promoted to Brigadier. He forwarded the letter to the D C Dhaka for issuing a gun license.

DL: What is written in column 'C'?

MS: It says that the rifle is of 30-06 bore. And its number is 464071. The previous license was issued from Mymensingh and the number was 294.

DL: Do you know anything about the 30-06 rifle?

MS: Once Ershad told me that he had given the rifle to the Army Museum. I have also seen the receipt of the rifle in the personal file.

DL: Did you have any office room at Sena Bhavan?

MS: Yes.

DL: Did you ever see the drawing room?

MS: Yes.

DL: What did you see in the drawing room?

MS: I have seen a big sized television set which I had never seen before. I have also seen some books and also some arms displayed in a showcase.

DL: Did you ask Ershad about the arms which were kept on display in the drawing room?

MS: Yes. He told me that those were gifts from abroad. He also told me that I had nothing to bother about all those items. He asked me look after his personal things.

DL: From where was the catering of Sena Bhavan done?

MS: All the catering used to come from Banga Bhavan.

DL: Did you ever take those foods?

MS: Sometimes I used to have a cup of tea.

DL: Now you don't do the duty of Ershad.

MS: I had never done any one's personal job. I used to serve the institution. Then the Defence witness was put for cross-examination by the prosecution. Attorney General Aminul Haque cross-examined him.

Attorney General: How do you think Ershad is looking? (Pointing to Ershad, who is sitting in the dock). Do you have any sympathy for Ershad?

MS: I have sympathy for all mankind.

AG: Be specific — do you have any sympathy for Ershad? Do you want that Ershad should be released with prestige and honour?

MS: That will be decided by the honourable court.

AG: Is there anything in writing about the issuance of a license for the said arm? Is there any mention of any license which was issued later on?

MS: There is no mention of any license issued from Mymensingh.

Judge: Did you ever see any 30-06 rifle at the Sena Bhavan or the license of that weapon?

MS: I have never seen that arms nor any license for it during my tenure as PA.

Judge: Did the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka tell you anything on the basis of the form submitted for licensing?

MS: I can't tell.

AG: It is seen that the date of application mentioned in the form has been Ershad.

MS: (Looking to the form) Yes, it was overwritten.

AG: Was the letter mentioned in the Movement Register?

MS: I don't know.

AG: Have you seen the office copy of the letter in your file?

MS: I can't remember.

AG: Was it acknowledged by the Deputy Commissioner?

MS: I don't know.

AG: Who was the secretary of the president?

MS: Col Sharif.

AG: Where were you on December 5, 1990?

MS: I was in the office of the Supreme Commander.

AG: don't give false evidence. There is a law that says a false witness can be punished with seven years RI. Recently you made a statement in an Army Court of Enquiry about a case along with Lt Col Mohid Ali and Col Rashid.

MS: Yes. (After a pause) Let me think where I was on December 5. (After a while he said) I went to the office of the Supreme Commander in the morning. Then I went to the Sena Bhavan.

AG: You worked in the garden of the Sena Bhavan from 9.30 to 11.30 am because you were in charge of looking after the garden.

MS: Yes.

AG: Did you see that H M Ershad and Lt Col Saiful Haque came together to Sena Bhavan?

MS: Yes.

AG: You helped them to take out a locker.

MS: (No clear response)

AG: (Showing a picture) They sat in a meeting; the locker was kept under lock at the President's Secretariat.

MS: I don't know what was taken out from the locker.

AG: (Showing a badge) Do you know the badge? Who wears it?

MS: I don't know.

AG: You don't know that this is a badge of the Supreme Commander.

MS: I don't know.

AG: Now you wouldn't know many things.

MS: I just helped in removing the locker.

AG: Where did you work before joining as PA to the President?

MS: I used to work in the Bureau of Anti-Corruption on deputation as an inspector.

AG: How long have you served there?

MS: About four to five months.

AG: Do you know that Ershad owned a chunk of land at Savar?

MS: I don't know.

AG: Do you know that there was about Taka 10 crore in the locker?

The court is likely to cross-examine the former Chief of Protocol and the Military Secretary on May 7.

## Shahabuddin

From Page 1 Col. 2

presiding over a meeting at Chittagong Airport after overflying the coastal belt of Noakhali, Urr Char, Hatiya and Sandwip Saturday.

The Acting President also visited the affected areas of Chittagong Port and Export Processing Zone (EPZ). He also flew over the worst-hit islands of Kutubdia, Moheshkhali and Cox's Bazar.

While the presidential helicopter was overflying Kutubdia, a relief plane was dropping emergency relief materials covered in plastic packets.