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The Daily Star

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NEWS BRIEFS

Mrs Fanfani arrives today

Maria Pia, the wife of former Italian Prime Minister Fanfani, arrives in Dhaka today (Thursday) to express sympathy for the cyclone victims. Former President of Italian Senate, Maria Pia Fanfani, during her 5-days visit, is expected to call on Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

RU students' donation

RAJSHAHI, May 8: Twenty thousand students of Rajshahi University will donate Tk 10 each to a relief fund set up for the cyclone victims. Teachers and employees of the university also donated their one day's salary to Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Mansura sued

Former MP Begum Mansura Mohiuddin has been prosecuted by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption for drawing Tk 1,33,486 from the Treasury by cheating the government.

142 medical teams in Ctg

One hundred forty-two medical teams have been working round the clock in the cyclone-affected areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts to control the diarrhoea situation, an official handout said. The situation in Noakhali district is under full control, reports BSS.



Left: The protection embankment washed away by the devastating cyclone and tidal bore. Right: The damaged Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).



—Photo: Mohsan

Construction of embankment on priority basis needed

Unprotected CEPZ

From Moazzem Hossain

CHITTAGONG, May 8: The country's lone operational Export Processing Zone (EPZ), located at only 2.4 kilometres west of the port, faces difficult times ahead in attracting foreign investors.

The confidence of foreign investors is badly shaken by the total damage caused to the embankment that protects Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) from the high sea tide.

The cyclone and tidal bore of April 29 wrought extensive damage to plant and inventory of raw materials and finished goods at several units at CEPZ.

The preliminary estimates by Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority

(BEPZA) put the loss of CEPZ at Taka 180 crore. The amount includes losses for the units at CEPZ in terms of raw materials, finished goods and capital machinery, and also damages to infrastructural facilities of BEPZA like gas, electricity and other installations.

The operational loss for the units apart, the main worry of the investors at the Zone centres round on its exposure to the sea-side as the embankment has been totally washed away.

Geoffrey Paul, Director, Regency Garments Ltd, a cent per cent US company, told The Daily Star that the embankment alongside the coastline of CEPZ "is the first thing

needed to allow uninterrupted operations by the units located here". The high tide, he said, will otherwise make it difficult for the units to operate.

Regency Garments is the largest export-oriented unit in the apparel sector in the CEPZ. The six-million-dollar unit suffered extensive damage to its raw materials, finished stocks, electric motors, sewing machines and other plant installations because of the cyclone.

H. S. Song, Managing Director of 1.5 million US dollar U-Jin Electronics, a cent per cent Korea-based enterprise, echoed what Sri Lankan national Geoffrey Paul of Regency Garments said about

the embankment. "The embankment is the key to future operations of CEPZ. Song observed. U. Jin Electronics lost very delicate electronic raw materials worth three lakh US dollars because of the cyclone.

Olympic-Mi Bangladesh Limited, a cent per cent Japanese unit producing fishing reel, fishing rod, golf shaft, gold head, golf club and electrical tools, reported that its inventory and plant loss would be about five million US dollars. "The loss of raw materials and inventory alone will be about 1.3 million US dollars", said Abul Kalam Azad, assistant manager, export and import operation of the company. A strong embankment in two

phases — primary and secondary — should immediately be constructed to save the CEPZ, another senior official of the company said.

The Japanese investments in Olympic-Mi is about 28 million US dollars.

The BEPZA has meanwhile requested Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed who is Chairman of the Authority to issue directives to the concerned ministry to take up construction of the embankment from zero point at the estuary of the river Karnaphuli to the north up to Kumira point. Without construction of the embankment, it will be difficult to keep the operations at CEPZ going and

attract new investments, the sources said.

The distance between the zero point and Kumira is about 30 kilometres. The construction of the embankment will require over Taka 300 crore.

BEPZA sources said, the CEPZ has suffered a major jolt because of the cyclone at a very inopportune moment. There has been a very encouraging response from the foreign investors to the investment opportunities in CEPZ over the last one year in particular, they said. "Every month we have been receiving four or five delegations from abroad, showing keen interest in investments in the Zone", they said. See Page 10 Col. 1

Tornado death toll 40

By Staff Correspondent



A woman wailing over the bodies of her children and husband done to death by Tuesday's tornado in Gazipur. —Star photo

The death toll in Tuesday's tornado in Gazipur rose to 40 yesterday as Fire Service personnel, army jawans and local people removed debris in eight villages.

However, the figure of death toll given by the Deputy Commissioner's Control Room was at variance with the figure of Fire Service which is 18. The rescue operation was called off at 11 am.

The Upazila Nirbahi Officer's office gave names of 28 persons who died. They are: Kuddus (40), Shohana (child), Akmal Khan (60) and his wife Malekzan, Amena (child), Zahruddin (60), Hakimuddin (50), Khodeja (unknown), Ibrahim (unknown), Kadbanu (unknown), Khorsheed Alam (child), Hazera (child), Selma (child), Jaharjan (50), Shahadat Hossain (20), Shaharjan (unknown), Akbar Ali (unknown), Masud (child), Maleka Bibi (child), Anwar Hossain (child), Shahaj Uddin (child), Sathi (child), Ratsuddin (unknown), Osman Ali (unknown), Motzunnessa (50), Shaheda Akhtar (unknown), Abdus Salam (unknown) and a six-day old child.

Two ceramic industries Standard and Poly Ceramic, Haq-Shabda Laboratories, Green Metal Industries, Alauddin Rice Mills, and Jamuna Rice Mills were destroyed in the tornado which hit on Tuesday evening. About 19 villages were devastated in the tornado.

As the day dawned yesterday, people started searching for their dear and near ones under the rubbles. The rescue operation was hampered at night due to bad weather and

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JS session resumes today

Star Report

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to come under pressure from the Opposition in parliament when the House resumes its session today, to involve all political parties in relief operations. Opposition sources told The Daily Star that the ruling party would have to bear the responsibility of the gigantic task of relief operation and rehabilitation if the Opposition

MPs demand all-party relief body

Thirteen MPs belonging to six political parties and an Independent one at a press conference Tuesday unanimously demanded formation of a all-party parliamentary body for smooth conduct of relief and rehabilitation for the cyclone-battered people.

The MPs who visited the

Tagore's birth anniversary today

The 130th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore will be observed today (Thursday).

On the eve of the day, Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in a message said, in all the critical juncture and political crisis of the nation it was the message of the poet which provided us

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Donors want shifting of airbase from Patenga

41 Airforce planes damaged in cyclone

By Mojuddin Naser

Forty-one aircraft including 35 F6s, donated by Pakistan, and four Soviet-made helicopters were damaged at the BAF base in Chittagong during the April 29 cyclone. The Air Chief Air Vice Marshal Mumtazuddin Ahmed talking to this correspondent said that the aircraft were taken to Chittagong for overhauling and were not serviceable, while the helicopters (MI-17s), bought from the Soviet Union were not yet formally handed over to the Bangladesh Air Force.

The cyclone caused extensive damage to the air base and naval base at Patenga in Chittagong. When this correspondent tried to visit the Air Force base on May 3, he was restrained by the members of the law-enforcing agencies.

The Air Chief when contacted yesterday said that there was some misinformation on the damages to the airbase, and so, to avoid any sort of exaggeration, the area was closed to general visits.

The Air Chief however claimed that all the aircraft and the helicopters were still repairable. He said that as the aircraft were not serviceable and airworthy, they did not take the

risk of removing them from Patenga.

Some of the aircraft, which were airworthy had been removed earlier, he claimed. He said that those aircraft had been taken there for repairs, but due to the nonavailability of spares the repairs were delayed.

He said that they had written to Pakistan to supply spares for the repairs of the aircraft received from Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has

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Telelinks with outside world to be restored in two weeks

Star Report

A temporary arrangement is underway to make the Betunia Satellite Earth Station operative. Authorities hope to complete the job within two weeks, while the reconstruction of the microwave tower in Chittagong will require months.

Betunia station, about 10 kilometres from Chittagong

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Allout efforts for rehabilitation: Khaleda

CHITTAGONG, May 8: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia passed a busy day Wednesday visiting more than half a dozen cyclone and tidal surge hit areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts and distributing relief materials there, reports BSS.

She arrived here Tuesday to see for herself relief operations in the affected areas.

During her whirlwind tour of the affected areas by helicopter she flew over Kutubdia, Moheshkhali, Chakaria, Sundup and Cox's Bazar and landed at several places to see relief operations being carried on there. She also distributed relief goods including sari, lungi and children's food among the affected people of

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Gen Kongsompong brings Thai relief

General Sunthorn Kongsompong, Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, arrived in Dhaka Wednesday afternoon to express his country's solidarity with cyclone-distressed people of Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Immediately after his arrival, he handed over at Zia International Airport 20 tonnes of Thai rice to Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman as part of Thailand's relief to the cyclone affected people.

Thailand, responding to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's appeal for international assistance, extended cash donation of Baht two million (about Taka 27,84,130), medicines worth Baht five million (Taka 5,69,60,326) and five thousand metric tons of rice worth Taka

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US to make meaningful contribution, says Solarz

WASHINGTON, May 8: US Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, Chairman, House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs said Tuesday the United States would once again make "meaningful contribution", sooner than later, to mitigate sufferings of the cyclone affected people of Bangladesh in the same manner it came to the assistance of the people after the 1988 floods, reports BSS.

The people of Bangladesh are very much "in our thoughts", said the Congressman at a briefing of the Sub-Committee on Capital Hill on cyclone disaster in Bangladesh he said, in the next few days they would see how best they could maximise the American contribution for the

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\$ 197.454m overseas aid pledge

The country has so far received aid commitment of 197.454 million US dollars from 36 donor countries and agencies, the Information Secretary said, Wednesday, report Agencies.

Briefing newsmen at Hotel

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Set up makeshift hospitals

Star Report

Setting up of temporary field hospitals in remote areas of the coastal belt, hit by the cyclone and the tidal bore, is now urgently needed to save the survivors from an impending epidemic of diarrhoeal diseases.

Relief and rescue workers apprehend that the total absence of pure drinking water will help spread the diseases much faster than is expected. Life saving drugs are also unavailable in the affected parts of the offshore islands.

Health officials told The Daily Star that the immediate requirement of drugs, oral saline and water purifying tablets was very high.

Water now available in almost all the affected places in contaminated. Decomposed human bodies and carcasses fill the shallow pools of water in fields, ditches and ponds. Survivors are taking this polluted water in the absence of any alternative. Hand tubewells were swept away by the storm and with those hand pumps

gone, the only safest means of water vanished. Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf went to the cyclone ravaged areas on Wednesday to make an on-the-spot assessment of the total health situation. He is expected to stay there for two days.

Meanwhile, The Daily Star staffers who extensively toured many of the ravaged areas reported that the entire health system has virtually collapsed. An organised effort with ade-

quate manpower and materials can only save the situation, many survivors said.

So far as distribution of relief materials is concerned, a coordinated pattern is still non-existent.

The scanty supply of relief goods on the haphazard distribution of those have done little help to the millions of survivors. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) engaged in relief operations in some parts

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