

Reviewing Cyclone Safety

by Linda Davis Kyle

A crucial three-fold goal of the United Nations for the 1990s — named as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) has been to (1) lower the loss of lives around the world, (2) reduce the wreckage of property, and (3) minimize the socioeconomic disaster generated by such relentless acts of nature as tropical cyclones, floods, landslides, storm surges, and earthquakes.

Tropical Cyclones

Tropical cyclones reveal themselves as air masses swirling inwardly at speeds of as much as 120 to 320 kilometers per hour in connection with a low pressure center, and they bring along a stretch of violent and destructive weather cutting a path as wide as 480 to 640 km.

Their savage winds produce enormous waves on the ocean, destroy ships at sea, and cause widespread destruction to humans, animals, trees, and buildings on mainland seashores. Their high waves and heavy rains can cause tremendous floods and drown people and animals.

Cyclones — and the havoc they wreak — rank with earthquakes and floods among the most devastating of the natural disasters that are spawned suddenly, especially considering the recurrent and severe nature of cyclones and their encompassing size coupled with the assailable nature of the lands they assault.

Bangladesh: In 1970, the incredibly devastating cyclone that sliced across Bangladesh killed 300,000 people. The treacherous 1991 cyclone that tore across the coast of Bangladesh took 138,000 lives. Recently, when another cyclonic storm invaded, it took about 100 lives.

Worldwide Warning Sys-

tems: Internationally, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) co-mingles its World Weather Watch (WWW) and Tropical Cyclone Programmes with the national Meteorological Services and coordinates their cyclone warning and other associated programmes. They work to improve preparedness, monitoring and forecasting, providing early warnings, evolving government understanding and decision-making, and developing public awareness and action.

Cyclone Safety Reminders that Help to Save Lives

Preparing before the storm
* Be aware of weather conditions daily, and listen for National Weather Service reports when severe weather is imminent.

* Stay tuned for severe weather updates.

* Plan before a cyclone threatens.

* Be aware that if you live near the coast or in a flood zone within the warning area, there is a high probability that you will need to evacuate.

* Turn off electricity at the main breaker if flooding is likely.

During the storm
* Do not be tricked by the final quiet outside. The eye of the hurricane could be passing across. The eye wall that envelops the calm eye generally has the most treacherous winds and will hit soon. Wait until you are informed by an official radio weather service report that it is safe to leave your protective shelter.

Ending the storm
* After the storm, travel may be impossible for a while because of felled trees and other

debris strewn across roadways. Try to have supplies, water, and nonperishable food to last for a week or more after the storm. Also, try to have extra batteries for your radio, a flashlight, manual can opener, eating utensils, first aid kit, and toiletries.

Precautionary Measures Save Lives: As technology improves monitoring, forecasting, and early warning systems, and public awareness increases, more and more lives can be saved from violent acts of nature such as cyclones. Keeping these cyclone safety tips well in mind, and being able to take immediate informed action perhaps can help to save your life and the lives of your family and friends.

Lightning Safety

AROUND the earth, every day, lightning strikes about eight million times. It has been reported that yearly, lightning kills as many as 200 people and unknown numbers of animals, sets fire to 2,000 structures, and kindles 10,000 forest fires. Yet, because it usually strikes one person at a time, its news is not widespread.

Its swift soaring temperature expands the air and generates the sound of thunder. To determine the nearness of lightning in miles, divide by five the number of seconds that elapse between seeing a flash of lightning and hearing the rumble of thunder. Lightning unaccompanied by thunder usually is greater than 15 miles away.

Lightning Safety Tips that Help to Save Lives

1. When a thunderstorm threatens, take shelter inside a house or large building or inside an all-metal nonconvertible vehicle.

2. When sheltered, avoid us-

ing phones or being near metal appliances, water pipes, and sinks.

3. If unsheltered, avoid being in or near open water.

* Avoid being a target in an open field, on a beach, or on a mountaintop.

* Avoid standing near tall, isolated trees in open fields or near small buildings in open areas.

* Avoid being near wire clotheslines, fences, metal pipes, and ails.

* Avoid being on or near motorcycles, bicycles, or golf carts.

* Avoid being on or near metal farm equipment.

4. In a heavily wooded area, protect yourself in a low area under a thick of small trees.

5. In an open area, go to a ravine, but be cautious regarding flash flooding.

6. If on a level, isolated field and you feel your hair stand on end, lightning is imminent. Authorities suggest that you squat, and place your hands on your knees. Do not lie flat.

Immediate CPR is Important: Lightning victims who seem to have been killed sometimes can be revived by immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Learning to administer CPR can be of help to save lives. When a CPR course is offered in your area, it can be of great value to learn this important skill.

Precautionary Measures Save Lives: Even though lightning, a one-at-a-time killer, often stalks and kills, then escapes with little attention. Its danger is real, but knowing what to do before lightning strikes can help to save your life and the lives of your relatives and friends.

Linda Davis Kyle is a writer whose works have been published in Asia, Europe, and North America.

Information Services for Community Development

by Ekram Kabir

Information is the missing link between ignorance and enlightenment, between poverty and prosperity, between de-humanised state and empowerment.

DEVELOPMENT-related information and exchange have never been up to the standard in Bangladesh. Every organisation is in need of information on education, health and nutrition, environment, economic development, state of women, state of human rights and the like. There were hardly any organisation which prioritised information as a key issue and considered its dissemination among the development organisations as a prerequisite for meaningful development perhaps until Community Development Library (CDL) started its activities.

CDL is a national NGO working in collecting and disseminating information in a backdrop of near-imperfect flow of information. It was established in 1980 by a group of development activists sensing the of paucity of information and its significance in the context of social mobilisation and development. The need for information, documentation and delivery to relevant organisations, activists and to the civil society was duly felt by them as an essential resource.

CDL realised that the absence of proper dissemination of development information leads to wasteful duplication, inefficiency and high transaction costs. It also believes that information is the missing link between ignorance and enlightenment, between poverty and prosperity, between de-humanised state and empowerment.

Government monopoly in this arena has failed to keep pace with the growing need. The situation further aggravated with the emergence of increasing number of development organisations, especially at the grassroots with diversified programmes since the 80s.

CDL participatory village development projects aim at bringing about a change in the overall physical, social, economic and political environment. This approach mobilises village resources towards the poor and strengthens people's capabilities so that self-reliance and independence is achieved.

CDL gradually developed itself into a service organisation addressing a wide range of development issues through its central library and documentation centre in Dhaka and 30 Rural Information Resource Centres (RIRCs) outside the city including one Divisional Centre in Bogra and one in Khulna, research and publication, audio-visual service and through some other programmes. After having worked for 17 years, CDL is now planning for further consolidation and expansion.

The objectives of the organisation are: to provide in-depth material and information on areas of key concern, particularly on environment, education, health, women, children, human rights, peace and ethnic minorities; to provide audio-visual services and training to NGO workers and other beneficiaries; to develop a video resource centre on development issues; to raise mass awareness through publications, workshops, seminars, study circle and networking activities; to promote development initiatives of different grassroots



A rural centre of CDL

groups and organisations through advisory service, training and logistic support and introducing those initiatives to the larger audience through publication/videos; to highlight the positive aspects of development endeavours through documenting and disseminating case studies of successful projects; to lobby and campaign on issues which have direct and indirect impact on the lives of the people, especially those who are poor and underprivileged; to establish development information network among NGOs and other groups; to establish linkage and strengthen relationship with existing networks; to arrange seminars, discussion meetings, study circles, workshops, video shows, etc., on various socio-economic and environmental issues; and to bridge the communication gap that exists between the policy makers, development activists, programme implementors and the grassroots people.

The Centre provides various services such as: Current Awareness Service (selective compilation of documents and features), Selective Dissemination of Information Service, Reference Service, Consultancy Service on Library Management, informing users about the list of recent arrivals in the library, newspaper clippings, lending and referral service, bibliography service on demand and in retrospect, compilation of articles, documentation of delivery service, informing about list of forthcoming meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops and advisory services.

The CDL runs a network of Rural Information Resource Centres (RIRCs) in the country which includes two divisional libraries, 15 centres and 10 sub-centres in different parts of Bangladesh in order to meet the information needs of NGO workers and the community people in remote areas. It has 27 regional, district, and local Rural Information Resource Centres throughout the country.

The RIRCs arrange meetings among the NGOs working in a particular area, along with community members and others, in order to share experiences. Such meetings help them to get to know each other's experiences, activities, programme areas, beneficiaries, problems, and successes, which in turn helps to minimise duplication. They also facilitate the exchange of views and ideas among development workers.

Materials of RIRCs and other agencies are exchanged in a coordinated way. Rural people are thus familiarised with modern development trends and practices. These also offer facilities for entertainment, social interaction, continuing education, and support services, from marketing to providing skills and inputs.

The RIRCs offer library, clippings, and study-circle services on a similar basis to the services offered by the Central Library in Dhaka, and are used by an average of 100 people per day. Special emphasis has been given to audio-visual services. Videos are collected and produced on successful projects, like literacy campaigns, fish-farming, agro-forestry, and environmental issues, as well as on local issues and initiatives. Video has no literacy barrier, it is simple, reliable and effective, and can convey messages directly.

The results of the impact of the RIRCs came up as:

a) Reading materials on alternative development and participatory action research are available, and audio-visual materials from various sources.

b) NGOs and community members are equipped with the latest ideas in development.

c) Positive aspects of development initiatives are highlighted through collecting and disseminating information about successful projects.

d) Information needs of NGOs and community people are identified.

e) Reading habits have been encouraged, and the use of development information has in-

creased.

f) Networks have been developed among NGOs and other civil organisations working in rural areas.

g) Experiences are shared, so that duplication is minimised, and successes are replicated.

h) NGOs and community people learn about environment-friendly projects.

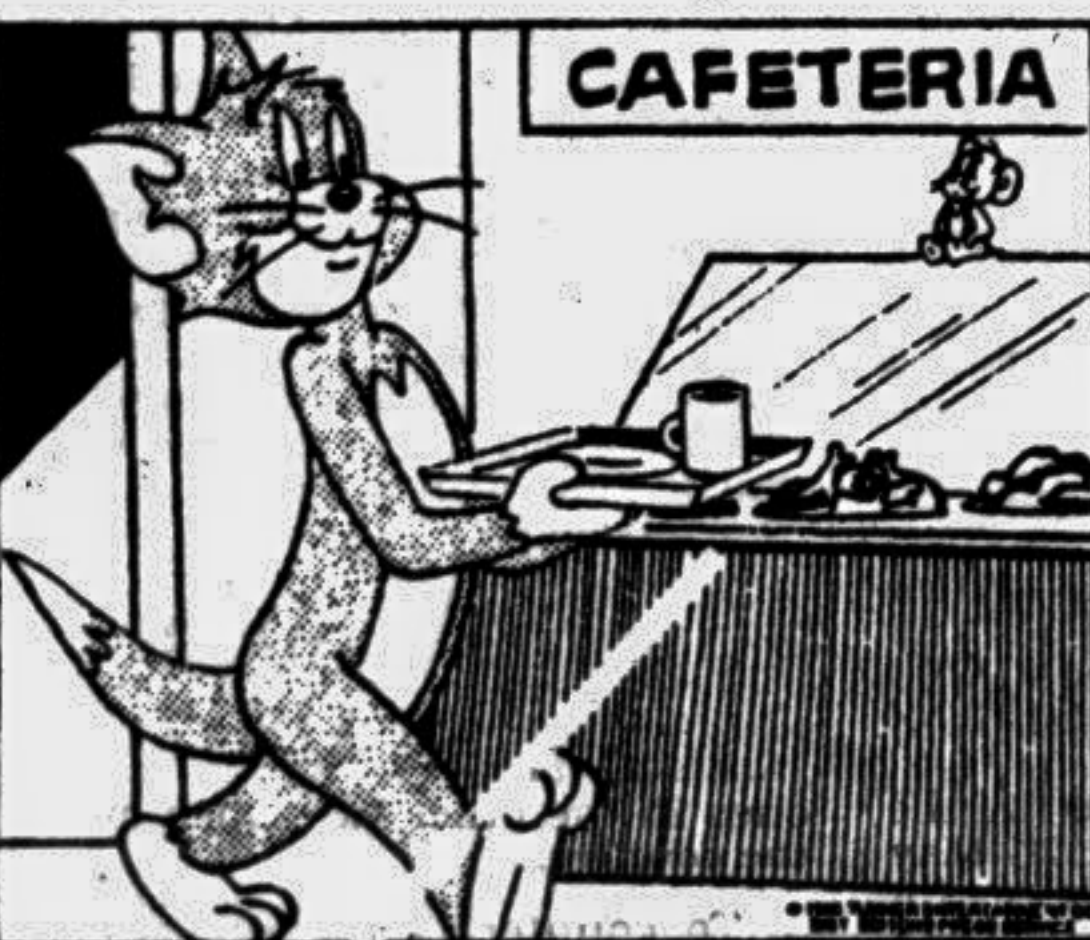
But there are constraints as well. Working in development information has some in-built problems. For example, access to basic information is very limited by weak democratic institutions and culture. This not only hinders the free flow of information, but also creates constraints for information workers.

Another major constraint is the lack of skilled personnel. Efforts are now being made to overcome this by arranging appropriate training for staff at home and abroad. Efforts have been made to make some programmes cost-effective, by selling certain services. Some users have responded well, and one third of CDL's expenses are met from its own income. To increase its self-financing capacity, CDL's economic base needs to be expanded. This needs capital investments for income generation, for which funds are not yet available.

Development efforts from community workers are only auxiliary to the people's own initiative and wisdom. To serve the people, it is necessary to go to their door steps, to operate at levels where they live. This necessitates the setting up of a network of information centres across the country, whereby the development activists will be able to interact with the people, widen their vision, redesign their programmes and actions and thereby integrate themselves in the mainstream development process.

Notice
Under unavoidable circumstances 'LAW AND OUR RIGHTS' will be published tomorrow.

Tom and Jerry



By Hanna-Barbera

James Bond



DRAWN BY JOHN McLUSKY

Metropolitan

What's on today

Nat'l Science, Technology Week: The prize distribution and concluding ceremony of the 20th National Science and Technology Week will be held. Venue: Osmani Memorial auditorium. Time: 4:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Metropolitan Dhaka: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 5:30 pm.

Shishu Academy: The concluding ceremony of the 8-day long Shishu Ananda Mela, Science Fair and Agrani Bank Child Drama Competition will be held. A cultural programme will follow. Venue: Academy premises. Time: 4 pm. A drama by Kendriya Nabankur Mela will be staged at 6 pm.

Memorial meet: A memorial meet on litterateur and playwright Biplob Das will be held. Venue: Bangla Academy seminar room. Time: 3 pm.

Eid reunion: An Eid reunion and installation ceremony of the Choudhagram Thana Janakalyan Samity, Dhaka will be held. Venue: Dhaka Chamber auditorium, 65-66, Motijheel C/A (5th floor). Time: 6 pm.

Open discussion: An open discussion on 'NGO in Bangladesh: A preliminary evaluation' will be held. Venue: TSC seminar room (2nd floor), DU campus. Time: 4:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Dhaka Midtown: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club Ltd, Shahbagh. Time: 5 pm.

Weather

Rain, gusty wind likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Barisal, Chittagang divisions, at many places over Khulna, Dhaka Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi Division in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met Office forecast slight fall in day temperature across the country.

In its outlook for subsequent two days weathermen predicted little change and increase in rainfall activity in the following five days.

The country's monsoon has advanced upto north east Bay. The country's highest temperature 37.4 degree Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi and the lowest 20.4 degrees at Kutubdia. Meantime, Dhaka experienced the highest 29 mm rain in the last 36 hours till 6 pm yesterday. Comilla, had 21 mm shower. Tangail and Cox's Bazar 16 each, Rajshahi and Faridpur 15 each, Chuadanga 12 and Bogra 7 mm shower during the period. The Sun sets today at 6:45 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:10 am.

সমাজ উন্নয়ন সংস্থা ১৮তম প্রতিষ্ঠা বার্ষিকী



A function, in observance of the 18th founding anniversary of the child, woman technical training centre of the Dip Shikha School run by the Samaj Unnayan Sangstha, was held at its premises recently. Minister for Forest and Environment Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury was the chief guest. Dr Wahid Hasan, chief of education UNICEF was the special guest. The vice-president of the organisation Feroza Khatun presided.

DUJ meeting today

An extended meeting of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will be held today at 4 pm at the National Press Club, reports BSS.

All office-bearers and executive committee members of DUJ, unit chiefs, deputy unit chiefs and senior members of the community have been requested to attend the meeting. DUJ acting president Suva Rahman and general secretary Azizul Islam Bhuiyan also invited leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Press Samik Federation and Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Karmachari Federation to be present at the meeting.

The meeting will work out an action programme for a united and integrated countrywide greater movement for realisation of the recently announced Fifth Wage Board Awards in all newspapers and news agencies of the country.

Mannan meets ILO DG

Minister of State for Labour and Manpower M A Mannan, now leading the Bangladesh delegation to the 85th session of International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva on Thursday met the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director General Michel Hansenne, a press release said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting the minister reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to uphold labour standards and improving the condition of the working people in collaboration with the ILO. Michel acknowledged the positive initiatives taken by Bangladesh including the MOU (memorandum of understanding) signed by the BGMEA (Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association) with ILO and UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) as well as the ratification of various ILO conventions.

3-member convening body of BPJA announced

A group of photo journalists, who brought charges of anti-organisational activities against the present leadership of the Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA) in a statement yesterday strongly deplored what they said irrelevant remarks and allegations brought against the BPJA by some expelled members along with non-members at a news conference.

They accused them of conspiring to undermine the image of BPJA with ulterior motive and personal interest while referring to a press conference yesterday by 'those who lost their membership due to defalcation of organisation's funds and failed to pay back loans as per provisions of the organisation'.

They said on June 6 at a special general meeting of the association 43 out of 69 members expressed their confidence in the current executive committee. But these persons in their own personal interest are conspiring to undermine the image of the association held the press conference as part of a conspiracy. We condemn such undemocratic and anti-organisational activities,' the statement further said.

Cultural team leaves for Istanbul

A 15-member cultural delegation led by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader leaves city today for Istanbul to attend a week-long culture and art festival of D-8 countries beginning from June 10, reports BSS.

Other member countries attending the festival are Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria and Turkey.

BPJA condemns remarks by 'expelled' member

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammad Salahuddin and A K M Mohsin, President and General Secretary respectively of Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA) in a statement yesterday strongly deplored what they said irrelevant remarks and allegations brought against the BPJA by some expelled members along with non-members at a news conference.

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Nurul Islam holds meeting with Iranian minister

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Mohammad Nurul Islam, now visiting Iran, had a meeting with Syed Mostafa Mir Salim, the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

The Iranian minister who visited Bangladesh in November 1995 as a special guest at the Asian Art Biennial, apprised the Bangladesh minister about various activities of Iran.

HERE and THERE

BSS Employees Union

Installation ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Employees Union was held at the BSS office recently, reports BSS.

Managing Director and Chief Editor of BSS Hussainuzaman Chowdhury was the chief guest on the occasion.

Press Samik Federation president Mosharraf Hossain and senior Vice-President of Press Samik Federation and convenor of the coordination committee Fazley Imam were the special guests.

Newly elected president of the union M. Afazuddin was in the chair. Election commissioner M Shamsuddin conducted the oath of the newly elected office-bearers. Newly elected general secretary Kamal Uddin also spoke.

Wazed Ali, Hafiz Ahmed, Latif Sakker, Miazuddin Ahmed, Abdus Sattar and Amir Hossain spoke on the occasion. Badruzzaman conducted the meeting.

Anti-Drugs Fed of NGOs

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday called for bringing back the drug addicts into normal life and involving them in nation building activities, reports BSS.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on 'prevention of drug-abuse' organised by Bangladesh Anti-Drugs Federation of NGOs in the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city Friday.

The minister urged the conscious and educated section of the society to play a pioneering role in preventing the abuse of drugs as well as alleviating poverty and solving social problems.

Feni Samity

Shipping Minister A S M Abdur Rab Friday said proper and balanced use of resources is a must for planned growth of the country, reports BSS.

The minister said 'We have to ensure maximum labour and productivity of our people for changing their lot at the crucial juncture of the 21st century.'

Rab was addressing a reception and scholarship giving ceremony organised by the Feni Samity at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers (IEB) in the city.

The reception was also addressed by Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, president of Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) Prof Mustafa Chowdhury, former secretary Mofjur Rahman and Kazi Fazlur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Dr Razia Sultana.

The minister stressed the need for consensus in solving national problems and said 'we need consensus to solve problems like power shortage, corruption, poverty reduction and terrorism in the campus etc'.

Rishhis Shilpi Goshthi

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said yesterday that the present democratic government was pledge-bound to uphold the cultural heritage and values of the country, reports BSS.

Speaking as the chief guest at a function organised in observance of the 20th founding anniversary of Rishhis Shilpi Goshthi in BCIC (Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation) Auditorium in the city the minister said that the government had raised the budget of Cultural Ministry to Taka 36 crore from Taka 12 crore for the flourishing of cultural activities.