

FOCUS

Reviewing Cyclone Safety

by Linda Davis Kyle

A crucial three-facet 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 disarray 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 whirling 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-

Tom and Jerry



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 *Bejoy* 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 Choudhogram 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, Chittagong 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.

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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.

It's 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 thicket 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.



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.

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

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 co-ordinated 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.

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 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.

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, 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 offering 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.

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Metropolitan

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) 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.

Convenor of the committee Moazzam Hossain Bulu told a press conference at Jatiya Press Club that they had 'dissolved' the executive committee of the association.

Earlier, at a special general meeting of the association at its office on Friday, dissidents demanded that its president Md Salahuddin and general secretary A K M Mohsin resign within 24 hours.

The convening committee was formed after the expiry of this ultimatum, said Moazzam, founder secretary of the association.

Two other members of the convening committee, Mosharaf Hossain and A Z M Shahidullah, were present at the press conference.

Earlier, at a special general meeting of the association at its office on Friday, dissidents demanded that its president Md Salahuddin and general secretary A K M Mohsin resign within 24 hours.

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 state further said.

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