News snaps

2 killed in Kishoreganj road accident

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 2: Two girls were killed and two other children injured seriously in an accident near Ghaital Nayapara in the town on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road on Thursday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the mishap occurred at noon when a rice laden tractor ran over the victims and skidded off the road after hitting a roadside wall in front of Habib Villa. Of the dead, Lipa, 10, of Ghaital Nayapara in Sadar thana died on the spot and Nargis, 9, of Kaliakatra village in Pakundia thana succumbed to her injuries at Zahurul Islam Medical College Hospital on Saturday night. The injured Billal, 4, and Ripa, 3, were also sent to the Zahurul Islam Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. The operator of the tractor fled the scene after the accident. A case was filed with the police.

Sanction for youth training centre

RANGAMATI, Aug 2: The government has sanctioned Tk 6.60 crore for establishing a youth training centre and renovate the Rangamati Stadium, reports UNB.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader disclosed this in the inaugural ceremony of Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Memorial Football tournament-98, at the Rangamati stadium on July 24. Of the amount, Tk 3 crore will be spent for establishing the youth training centre and the rest amount for the development work of Rangamati stadium. Earlier, the state minister visited the Rangapani area of the town where the youth training centre will be established. He also visited the Tribal Cultural Institute.

First UP complex opens

FARIDPUR, Aug 2: The country's first two-storeyed Union Parishad (UP) complex has been inaugurated at Gautti Union in Nagarkanda thana here, reports UNB.

Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Shajeda Chowdhury formally inaugurated the complex on Friday. The Local Government Engineering Department has constructed the complex at a cost of Tk 26 lakh that contains rooms for the chairman and members, a conference room, a visiting lodge and a room for the officials.

9 posts of Postal Deptt vacant

SHERPUR, Aug 2: A total of nine posts of the Postal Department of the district remained vacant for long causing disruption in postal service, reports UNB.

According to official sources, the posts of one post master and a treasurer in district's main post office, two towns supervisors and two post masters in Jhenaigati and Nalitabari thana post offices, one post master, operator and postman in Jhenaigati Bazar sub-post office have been lying vacant for a long time. Sources said one postal operator and one packer of Jhenaigati Post Office have been sent to another place on deputation hampering the service adversely. Moreover, the people of Sribordi thana are deprived of postal facilities as there is no sub-post office in the thana. Local people urged authorities to take immediate steps to redress the suffering of the common people.

Half yearly meeting of Barisal Press Club

BARISAL, Aug 2: The half yearly meeting of Barisal Press Club was held on the press club premises here on Friday with Kazi Nasiruddin Babul, president of the club, in the chair, reports BSS.

Munir Hossain, secretary of the club, read out the half yearly report in the meeting. Nasimul Alam, Shawkat Milton and [illegible] took part in the discussion on the re[illegible] ber of resolutions were adopted in the meeting [illegible] hancing the facilities of the club members as well as the press club itself.

Fisheries Week concludes

MEHERPUR, Aug 2: Fisheries Week '98 concluded here on Saturday, reports BSS.

District fisheries department arranged elaborate programmes to observe the week. A colourful procession carrying festoons and banners was brought out on the inaugural day from the thana parishad premises which paraded the main roads of the town. Deputy Commissioner, Meherpur M Shamsul Huq inaugurated the week as the chief guest. Seminars were held on this occasion. The Deputy Commissioner gave away prizes among some piscyculturists for their contribution in increasing fish production in the district.

Medicare camp held

TANGAIL, Aug 2: A day-long free medicare camp for the paralysed patients was held in local general hospital on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Tangail Local Action Group, an NGO in cooperation with District Health Department and Savar Rehabilitation Centre for Paralysed Patients organised the camp. Forty nine patients attended and treated by seven surgeons and specialists from home and abroad.

2 killed in separate incidents

SATKHIRA, Aug 2: Two persons were killed in separate incidents in the district on Sunday, police said, reports BSS.

Morzina Khatun, 25, wife of Saydur Rahman of village Maniknagar under Kalaroa thana was beaten to death by her neighbour Sahidul Islam. Morzina died on the spot. Another victim Jahangir, 20, of village Kazla was run over by a minibus at Parulia. He succumbed to his injuries at sadar hospital. Separate cases were filed with the respective police stations.

7 implicated in misappropriation case

KHULNA, Aug 2: Bagerhat district anti-corruption bureau filed 13 cases against seven persons including a former MP and a former zila parishad chairman for alleged misappropriation of about Taka five lakh, police sources said here, reports BSS.

The cases were filed with Bagerhat sadar thana on Monday last, former MP Wahidul Alam, former zila parishad chairman Abdul Hye Bachu, former accountant of Bagerhat zila parishad Inshaque Uddin, Principal of Rayend Adarsha Shishu Biddhaloy Principal Sadananda Haldar, secretary of a madrassa managing committee Ashraf Ali Bhuiya, former chairman of Bagerhat District Red Cresent Society Habibur Rahman and former chairman of a fake organisation have been implicated in the misappropriation case.

Sugarcane scientists' workshop held

ISHURDI, Aug 2: A three-day workshop of sugarcane scientists was organised by Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute (BSRI) at its local centre here last week, reports BSS.

Shamsur Rahman Sharif Dilu MP inaugurated the workshop at a function presided over by AHM Delwar Hossain, Director General of BSRI. Research Coordinator of the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BSCIR) Zahurul Islam, sugarcane experts Dr. Shafiqur Rahman and Dr ABM Mofizur Rahman, among others, spoke on the occasion. Fifty sugarcane experts from five centres of the BSRI participated in the workshop.

Discussion on pisciculture

MOULVIBAZAR, Aug 2: A discussion on pisciculture was held in the auditorium of Srimongal Thana Parishad last week to mark the 'Fish Week', reports BSS.

Organised by Srimongol and Kamalaganj Thana Fisheries Department, the discussion was presided over by Srimongol Thana Fisheries Officer S K Pal. Thana Food Officer, Srimongal, Abdul Awal, Thana Family Planning Officer Lutfunnahar Begum, Thana Project Implementation Officer Abdus Sobhan and journalist Ishaq Kajal, among others, discussed various aspects of the significance of observance of Fish Week.

Culprit handed over to police

GAZIPUR, Aug 2: Local people handed over a culprit to police while escaping after raping a minor girl at Kathalia village in Kaliakoir thana here on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Family and hospital sources said, the culprit Santosh was working as carpenter at the house of one Madhab Chandra. In an opportune moment he took the minor girl, 4, of Madhab and violated her. Hearing her shrill cry the neighbours rescued her and rushed to the hospital in a critical condition. Later local people caught the culprit and handed him over to the police.

Another message adds: A man allegedly committed suicide by hanging from a tree at Shalna village in Joydebpur thana on Wednesday. The dead was identified as Abdul Ali, 50. The cause of his alleged suicide could not ascertained immediately. The body was sent to the hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with the police.

Attack on Jamalpur College principal

JAMALPUR, Aug 2: A gang of terrorists stormed the residence of acting principal of Reaz Uddin Talukdar College here at dead of night on Tuesday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the terrorists entered into the compound of the residence of the acting principal Abdul Mannan and fired two gun shots through the window. But he escaped narrowly and took shelter in another room where the miscreants hurled cocktails. This time he also escaped unhurt.

Diarrhoea spreading fast in Chandpur areas

Seven lakh affected by Sherpur flood

From Ratan Chowdhury

SHERPUR, Aug 2: A total number of 2,11,137 people of the district were directly afflicted by flood in all five thanas of the district, Sherpur DC Md Naofel Mia disclosed .

But according to unofficial sources more than seven lakh people in 52 unions and two pourasavas in five thanas have been affected directly or indirectly by flood. The DC told The Daily Star, 44,072 families in five thanas have been affected by flood directly. As many as 30,460 families in Sherpur sadar, 9,044 families in Sreborbdi thana 2,443 in Nalitabari thana, 1,195 in Jhenaigati thana and 960 families in Nakla thana have been affected.

A total number of 7,193 houses have been destroyed either completely or partially, the DC added. He said about 74 educational institutions have been inundated, 36 kilometres road completely and 372 kilometres roads partially damaged. The 12- kilometre flood control embankment has been damaged completely and 42 kilometre area of the embankment damaged partially.

More than 8 people were killed due to flood. As many as 46 cattleheads were killed and over 3,000 have been attacked by waterborne diseases. A total number of 18 bridges and culverts damaged completely and 152 others damaged partially.

In the agriculture sector standing crops on 16773 acres of land were completely or partially damaged. But according to local people, there is a far difference between the official record and unofficial record.

Standing crops on over 28,000 thousand acres and 95 per cent seed-beds were damaged. Flood destroyed Transplanted Aman seedlings in different areas of 51 unions in the district. For more than 18 days flood waters remained in various part of the district. So far the government sanctioned 175 metric tons of rice, Taka 2 lakh in cash, 500 old clothes, 4,971 pieces of sarees and other essential supports. These were distributed through public representatives.

Meanwhile, flood situation in four thanas improved since the last week. But the situation in sadar thana is static. The sadar thana MP, Md Atiur Rahman Atique visited the flood affected areas..

While visiting the flood affected areas in sadar thana along with Md Eliusuddin, Chairmen of Charpukkhinary Union Parisad, The Daily Star correspondent found the flood victims took shelter on the flood control embankment. Over 300 victims were residing in their temporary sheds. They are mainly day labourers and landless peasants. The affected people told, most of the shelterless families have been experiencing worst sufferings in absence of proper shelter , food and clothings. Many families have been facing semi-starvation since they have no source of earning.

Meanwhile, prices of daily necessities including rice have registered a sharp rise in different places all over the district during the last 12 days, resulting in untold sufferings to common people.

Some Non-Governmental Organisations(NGOs) have been distributing relief goods among the flood victims. Md Suzatt Ali, Project Manager, Batchshela Gano Sangstha Kendra said, over 8,000 families were provided treatment and food by his organisation since last 10 days. Bangladesh Chhatra League(BCL), Sherpur district unit distributed 20 maunds of *chira*, 10 boxes of biscuits and necessary medicine among the flood victims.

Our Chandpur Correspondent Shirin Akhter reports: Flood situation in Chandpur district worsened with inundation of fresh areas.

The Meghna at Chandpur is still flowing above the danger mark. The entire town area has also been affected by flood. The affected areas are: Court Station Road, Guakhala Road, Truck Road and Chandpur-Comilla Road.

Seventy unions of the district have been affected by flood. According to the district control room, so far 15 people have been killed in Chandpur.

About five lakh people of the district have been affected. Crops on about one lakh hectares of land have been damaged. About one lakh houses have been partially damaged. Meanwhile, Chandpur Irrigation Project and Matlab Dhonagoda Project areas have been water-logged.

Aman crops and Aman seedlings on about 20,000 hectares of land at Chandpur Irrigation Project area have been submerged and damaged. Crops on about 10 hectares of land at Matlab Meghna-Dhanagoda Irrigation Project were also damaged due to water — logging.

Taka 80-crore Chandpur Irrigation Project is also threatened by the erosion of the river Meghna at Haimchar, Char Bhairali and Nilkamal points. The Chandpur-Irrigation Project embankment now stands on the bank of the river Meghna within 50 feet. Taka 100-crore Matlab Meghna-Dhonagoda Project has also been threatened at Gazipur and Nandalalpur area. Several cracks have been developed on the embankment of the Meghna-Dhonagoda project.

About 300 families have been rendered homeless by the erosion of the river Meghna at Haimchar thana. Many erosion victims have taken shelter on the embankment of Chandpur Irrigation Project.

Diarrhoea has been spreading fast in the flood affected areas. So far about 5,000 people are affected by diarrhoea. Everyday about 200 diarrhoea patients are admitted in Matlab ICDDRB Hospital. According to the Civil Surgeon's office sources, 20 medical teams are working in the flood affected areas.

The government sanctioned Taka two lakh in cash, 5,000 pieces of sarees, 125 metric tons of rice among the affected people, according to the district administration sources.

SYLHET: Some parts of the pontoon bridge at Sadipur on Dhaka-Sylhet highway had drifted away by gushing waters in the river Kushiyara on Tuesday midnight. It cut off direct road communication from Sylhet to Dhaka and rest of the country.
— Star photo by Iqbal Siddiquee

Massive Aman farming scheme in 10 dists

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Aug 2 : About 6 lakh 31 thousand 701 hectres of land have been targeted for Aman paddy farming programme in 10 southwestern districts of the country during the current Aman cultivating season, acocrding to Agriculture Extention Department (AED).

The districts are Magura, Jhenidah, Narail, Jessore, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur.

AED sources said, nearly 31,764 hectares of land were targeted for Aman paddy farming in Magura district, while 1,08231 hectares in Satkhira district, 1,12438 hectares in Bagerhat district, 1,08107 hectares in Khulna, 13,236 hectares in Meherpur distric 27,932 hectares in Chaudanga district, 45,14 hectares in Kushtia district, 69,144 hectares in Jhenidah district.

1,000 tubewells in Kushtia need immediate repairing

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 2 : The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has failed to ensure supply of safe drinking water despite loss of many lives caused by diarrhoeal diseases in the district every year.

The department is responsible for installing, repairing and maintenance of tubewells in the rural areas.

But it is alleged, the officials hardly visit rural areas to inspect the operation of tubewells and take effective measures to stop rampant stealling of spare parts. As a result, the number of disordered tubewells in the areas are increasing causing untold sufferings to the people.

At present more than 1,000 tubewells remained out of order in the areas. Most of the rural people are forced to take water from ponds, rivers and canals. They become easy prey to various intestinal diseases including diarrhoea and dysentery.

The villagers urged the concerned authorities to look into into the matter and take immediate steps to ensure smooth supply of pure water in the rural areas, particularly the flood affected areas. Meawnhile, kutcha latrines have been posing a threat to public health in the district headquarters for quite a long time.

Human excreta are reportedly seen polluting the environment. Flies, mosquitoes and other isnects carry germs spreading various diseases among the town dwellers. Many kutcha latrines have been set up beside the roads, rivers and canals. When contacted, the district Public Health Engineering Department officials said they had adequate stocks of rings and slabs for setting up low cost sanitary latrines.

Ulipur Marium Eye Hospital rendering humanitarian services

RANGPUR, Aug 2: The Marium Eye Hospital of Ulipur under Kurigram district has been rendering humanitarian services towards the welfare of the poor eye patients of the northern region for a long time, reports BSS.

Established in 1994 at the initiative of Kashem Foundation, a private enterprise, the hospital is continuing its functions under the financial assistance of Sight Savers Organisation of Japan.

During the past five years, the hospital planted about 300 artificial lenses in the eyes of the patients, conducted major operations on over 8,000 eye-patients, minor operation on 1,845 patients and rendered treatment to about 1,16,000 eye patients.

Besides these, about 12,000 eye patients were provided with free spectacles, at least 2,16,000 eye patients were provided with primary suggestions on eye care, about 67,000 eye patients were given training to maintain eye health and about 51,000 students were acquainted with the suggestions on the use of Vitamin-A capsule.

The management of the hospital is now trying to introduce mobile eye hospital facilities which will be air-conditioned and equipped with sophisticated surgical instruments. There will be some beds for eye-patients with all available amenities. This will be first of its kind in the country, hospital sources told.

Tornado lashes 10 Netrakona thanas

From Our Correspondent

NETRAKONA,Aug 2:More than 400 families rendered homeless as a tornado lashed 10 thanas of the district recently.

According to report from the Deputy Commissioner(DC),the tornado lasted for five minutes and it was accompanied by rain.Many kutcha houses were blown away and standing crops on a vast tract of land were damaged.

The local member of parliament visited the affected area and urged the government to rush relief materials for the affected people on an urgent basis.

Khulna dev action body announces programme

KHULNA, Aug 2: Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee has announced a two-month programme demanding steps to protect the Mongla port and construct the proposed bridge over Rupsha, reports UNB.

The Committee announced the programmes at a convention held at the auditorium of Khulna District Lawyers' Association Thursday.

The programmes included a mass procession on September 14, march from Shaheed Hadis Park to Rupsha Ghat and Doulatpur to Fulbari Ghat on August 17 and August 30 respectively.

Speakers at the convention called for modernisation of the Mongla port, implementation of EPZ and construction of Rupsha bridge which they said would play a vital role in boosting revenue earning of the government.

45 injured in 2 Gopalganj road accidents

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Aug 2 :A total of 45 persons were injured in two separate road accidents on Gopalganj — Takerhat road recently.

At least 35 persons were injured, 10 of them serioulsy in a road accident at Malenga village on Gopalganj-Takerhat road recently.

Gopalganj police sources said, a Dhaka-Khulna bound passenger bus was going to Khulna from Dhaka. When the driver of the bus gave side to another passenger bus, the driver lost control of the bus and fell down in a roadside ditch.

As a result 35 persons were injured, 10 of them seriously who were addmitted to Gopalganj Sadar Hospital in a critical condition. They are Habibur Rahman, 13, Zamiruddin, 40, Naibi 22, Amena Begum, 51, Golzar Ahmed, 40, Fatik Chandra Biswas, 55, Kabir 17, Nimai Chandra Barai, 38, Mohibul Islam, 30, and Jabbar Mia, 60.

A case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection. Police seized the bus. The driver, helpar and supervisor managed to escape.

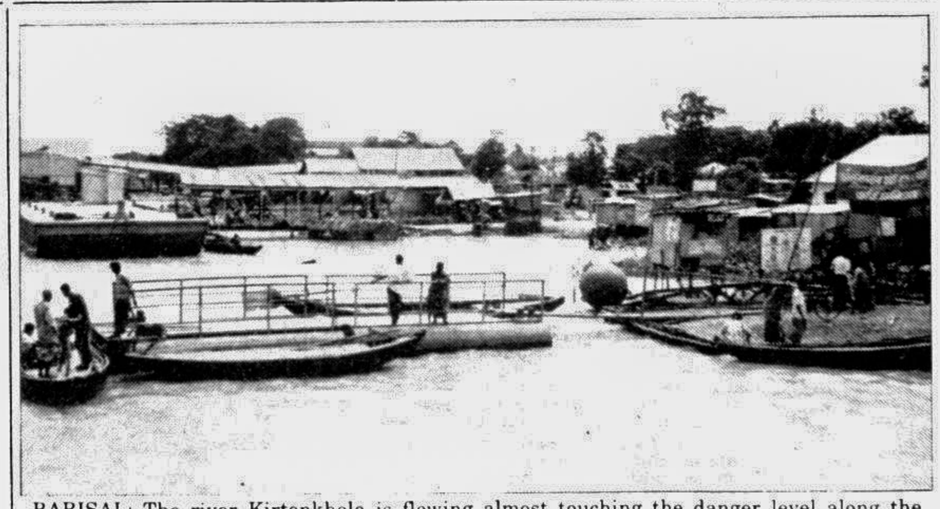
Another 10 persons were injured in another road accident near Kuadanga bus stand on Gopalganj-Takerhat road recently.

A micro-bus was going to Khulna from Dhaka. When the microbus was crossing Kuadanga bus stand crossing, the driver lost the control of the micro-bus and fell down into roadside ditch. As a result 10 persons were injured, five of them seriously. They were admitted into Gopalganj Sadar Hospital in a critical condition. The admitted persons are Liton, 7, Saidul Haque, 30, Mojeebur Rahman, 14, Shaheen, 18, and Shahina Khanam, 24.

A case has been registered with Gopalganj PS in this connection. Police seized the micro-bus. The driver escaped safely.s

Shaheed Tajuddin's role lauded

GAZIPUR, Aug 2: Awami League presidium member Syeda Zohra Tajuddin said here that Shaheed Tajuddin had sacrificed his life for implementation of the ideals of Bangabandhu, reports BSS.



BARISAL: The river Kirtonkhola is flowing almost touching the danger level along the divisional town. Onrush of flood water has created such situation. — Star photo

Natural calamities part of life for people in S-region

From Aroop Talukdar

BARISAL, Aug 2: Nearly five crore people of the southern region including the vast coastal areas of the country became victims of cyclone, hurricane and tidal surge for hundreds of years.

For this reason Bangladesh is known as the land of cyclone, tidal bore and natural calamities.

Disastrous tidal surge, cyclonic storm, tornado and hurricane claimed lives of millions of people leaving a widespread trail of devastation in the southern region, particularly the coast line along the Bay of Bengal for so many years. According to different sources, the cyclonic storm including the tidal surge of 1584 battered the coastal belt in the southern region which claimed lives of 70 per cent people of the area. More than two lakh people were killed by the disaster. Almost the same incidents occurred in 1737 and 1762.

Tremor was also followed by the natural calamity. As a result the entire coast line was turned into a barren land. The next disasters hit the southern areas of the country in 1769, 1770, 1784 and 1787. The havocs were less disastrous than the previous ones, records revealed. A cyclone along with tidal bore hit the southern areas of the country on June 6, 1822 which was very tremendous. It lasted for one week. More than one lakh people were killed and wealth including crops worth Taka 15 lakh were destroyed in the incident.

The next calamities were recorded in 1825, 1831, 1855 and 1864.

Embankment of the Kirtonkhola river along Barisal town developed huge cracks in the tidal surge of 1869. The tidal surge and cyclone of October 31 in 1876 in the 19th Century caused a heavy damage in the southern region including the port city of Chittagong. The havoc happened in full moon with high tide. As a result the casualty and damage were very high. Several thousand people, livestock, cattleheads were swept away with 12 to 15 feet high tide.

In 1897 a hurricane hit Chittagong region that killed 14,000 people. Later on 18 ,000 more people died of various diseases which broke out in an epidemic form. After this, no record was viturally available. Nearly 50 cyclones lashed over this areas till 1940 which left nearly 50,000 people killed.

In 1941 a tornado lashed Bhola, the biggest delta island of the country which killed nearly 100 people. The cyclonic storm in 1954 in the Barisal region damaged property worth Taka 10 lakh taka and killed more than 200 people. The cyclone rendered nearly 1,000 people homeless.

Two other such calamities swept over the greater Barisal region in 1957 and 1958. But the damage was less than the previous years'. In 1960, a 22-hour long cyclonic storm and tidal bore hit Barisal, Bhola and the vast coastal belt of Barguna which claimed lives of at least 5,000 people. The Sundarbans was also battered very badly. Nearly 9,000 people were killed in the tornado and tidal surge of May 9, 1961 along the coast line of Bhola and Chittagong.

In May, 1963 a devastating cyclone hit Noakhali and Chittagong and the offshore islands which left at least 15,000 people dead including many poultry birds and cattlheads which were swept away in 10 to 15ft. high tidal bore. On May 11 and 12 in 1965 a cyclonic storm with a wind speed of more than 100 miles per hour (MPH) hit the off shore islands of Bhola and Patuakhali. More than 10,000 people were killed. The 15 to 20 ft. tidal surge washed away the coastal areas on November 1 in 1966.

On April 4, 1969 a tornado with maximum wind speed of nearly 400 kilometres per hour hit Demra in Dhaka. The tornado killed 1,000 people. The most horrifying and unforgettable cyclonic storm and tidal surge with 15 to 20 ft. high waves battered the southern region and the coastal belt particularly Bhola on November 12 in 1970. It left a widespread trail of death and destruction.

More thana five lakh people were killed, according to official records but the figure is double, according to unofficial sources. Wealth of several corers of taka were damaged and lost during this natural havoc. Several thousands poultry birds and cattleheads were also lost. Due to this natural calamity the first and last general elections were postponed.

The tornado of 'Urirchar' happened on May 25 and 26 in 1985 which claimed lives of at least 10,000 people. It rendered several thousand families home and shelterless. A total of 906 square miles area of six districts were battered severely during that tornado of November 9 in 1986. Nearly 100 people were killed in another cyclonic storm that lashed over Patharghata in Barguna district.

On April 26 , 1989 more than 600 people were killed in Manikanj in a cyclonic storm. Nearly one lakh people were killed and missing in Chittagong region in a cyclone and tidal surge on 29 April, 1991.

The tidal bore was nearly 20 feet. high. Crops of three thousand square miles area were damaged. 133 people were killed in a cyclone in Cox's Bazar in 1992. Nearly 200 people were killed, according to official sources, in the cyclone of May 19 last year. It has been revealed, due to lowtide during the cyclone and precautionary measures taken earlier from the government, Red crescent and other non-governmental organisations the death figures did not increase. But weather experts opined, due to shortage of necessary cyclone shelters deaths were higher.

After the Urirchar natural havoc 1,5000 cyclone shelters were constructed, but those were not enough to combat the situation. But even after these cyclonic centres the government as well as different non-governmental organisations are puzzled to think how many more cyclone shelters are needed to save lives of scores of people living in the southern region including the vast coastal belt along the Bay of Bengal. This question arose after the natural havoc that happened on September 27 last year when many of the deaths were recorded 'due to absence of nearby cyclone shelters'. The cyclonic storm of September 26 in 1997 also left a trail of destruction particularly in seven thana areas of Bhola district including Laxmipur, Hatiya, Noakhali, Patuakhali and some nearby districts.

According to experts and informed sources, continued cyclonic storms over the coastal districts caused huge damage to crops, houses and embankments along the riverside. The cyclonic storms also caused missing of fishing boats ,trawlers and fishermen on board. More than 100 fishermen died at different places of the cyclone battered coastal districts.