

Cyclone hits Tamil Nadu

MADRAS, Nov 29: Officials shut down schools and evacuated people from low-lying areas as a cyclone with a wind speed of 120 kph (75 mph) hit India's southern coast on Wednesday, reports AP.

First reports said the storm didn't cause much damage to human life or property as it weakened before crossing Cuddalore, a port town 150 kilometres (95 miles) south of Madras, the Tamil Nadu state capital, according to Sandeep Saxena, a top local administrator.

Heavy rains lashed parts of coastal Tamil Nadu state. Madras, the state capital, and two towns, Cuddalore and Pondicherry, in the path of the storm experienced overcast skies and strong winds.

The cyclone was earlier expected to hit the coast with a wind speed of over 150 kph (95 mph).

Hundreds of people living in mud and thatched huts in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu state and neighbouring districts of Pondicherry were evacuated to school buildings of higher ground.

"The machinery is fully geared to meet the cyclone. District officials have been monitoring the situation round the clock since Tuesday," A.P. Muthuswamy, Tamil Nadu state's top bureaucrat, told The Associated Press.

Schools and colleges have been closed in Pondicherry in anticipation of the cyclone.

In Madras, the city corporation began evacuating people from low-lying areas to nearly 150 schools which are considered safe, said J. Radhakrishnan, the corporation commissioner.

"We are also arranging 500,000 packets of food to be distributed to people who are likely to be affected," Radhakrishnan said.

All ships in the Madras and Cuddalore ports have been moved out of the harbour. Fishermen have been asked to return to the coast.

The Tamil Nadu coast was last hit by a severe cyclone more than two decades ago, meteorological officials said. In 1977, a cyclone had killed 100 people in Nagapattinam town.

Top opposition leader

From Page 12

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the talk for making an anatomy of corruption in different tiers of society and statecraft.

Executive director of TIB Manzoor Hasan presided over the meeting where Prof Muzafer Ahmed of Dhaka University presented a paper on "Governance, Structural Adjustment and the State of Corruption in Bangladesh."

"The studies should be more specific to identify the source of corruption ... the main source of corruption lies in the high levels of politics," Anwar told the function participated by academics experts, economists and members of the civil society.

The former bureaucrat-turned-politician said the studies and seminars would lose ground if the extent of corruption within the political circles can not be determined. "There will be no outcome of trying to make bureaucrats honest without ensuring honesty of the politicians."

"Nobody would be able to stop corruption so long as the high level of the state allows it. We have to wait for a revolution," said the TIB leader.

The TIB survey revealed that misuse of position and power was

perceived as corruption by the highest proportion of respondents (76.0 per cent), followed by negligence of duty (75.7 per cent), activity outside normal procedure (67.7 per cent) and taking money for personal gain while on duty (57.8 per cent).

Misuse of power and fund for personal gain (56.4 per cent) and misuse of fund (50.6 per cent) were also perceived as corruption.

Thana Police Service was pointed at for corruption by the highest number (97 per cent) of household (HH) respondents and the Judiciary by the second highest (89 per cent) number of HHs.

The other public offices in order of choice of the respondents were sub-registrar's office, Land Record office, Tahsil office and Scheduled Banks, etc.

Thana Police Service was also identified as the most corrupt public office by 58 per cent of the HHs, followed by the Judiciary chosen by 19 per cent of the HHs.

The respondents were almost unanimous (97 per cent) in their views that considering the functions and responsibilities assigned, the thana police station is either important or highly important public service organisation, which is ironically viewed as the most corrupt office.

Snatching: Magura JCD leader jailed for 10 years

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Nov 29: A court here today awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment to Ashrafulzaman Shamim, General Secretary of Magura district unit of JCD in a snatching case and fined Tk 50 thousand in default to suffer one year more RI.

Assistant District and Sessions Judge Md Zahiruddin also convicted four others in the same case and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment on different terms.

According to prosecution, the accused snatched money from the employees of a Chinese construction farm in 1994.

After examining all records and witnesses the judge pronounced the judgement.

Lawyers to seek Ershad's release on bond

Ershad's lawyers are planning to file a motion with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court today seeking his release on bond so that the fine could be paid on instalments.

Talking to UNB, advocate Khandoker Mahbub Hossain, counsel for Ershad, said he would also move a petition seeking review of the Supreme Court verdict against Ershad in the Janata Tower corruption case after the certified copy of the judgement is available.

The High Court had sentenced Ershad to five years in prison and fined him Tk 5.5 crore. The Supreme Court held that he has already served a jail term for nearly 3 years and 8 months since the trial began in 1993 and many are released on payment of the fine.

Khandoker Mahbub said he would file the appeal on December 3 seeking to divulge contents of the tape that reportedly recorded conversation between Justice M Latifur Rahman and Ershad.

Justice Rahman, one of the

Torture

From Page 12

Al Press Officer Maya Catsans said the report is based on interviews with victims during a visit of an Al mission in May this year and information gathered by it over the years.

At the press conference, three people including a minor boy described the brutal torture on them by police in custody.

Asadul

From Page 12

Police raided Satkhira house of Asadul where arms and ammunition were concealed. They failed to recover arms and ammunition as they were shifted from there soon after his arrest. His house in Satkhira town has been kept under watch by Intelligence personnel, police said.

News

Pak errant envoy

From Page 1

"Wait and see," was the stock reply.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, never at a loss for words, was also over cautious while talking to a group of newsmen.

"We are waiting for a reply from them (Islamabad). There is a limit to our patience."

When told of mounting public pressure to take action against the diplomat for belittling the sacrifice of martyrs of the Independence War, Samad Azad said, "Do not concern me out. I am as much concerned as any other citizen."

His attention was also drawn to the reported comments by Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday "to move away from the tragic past". The foreign minister said, "The statement is not at all relevant to the present situation. We totally reject his (Pervez's) contention."

It was evident that Dhaka did not see any conciliatory gesture in the Pakistani ruler's comments a day after the Dhaka incident.

The alleged pirates were arrested from Skid Ghat on November 27 while they were trying to sell the wooden-bodied fishing trawler 'Allahar Daan'.

Dhaka shortly is keeping everyone guessing. Diplomatic circles in Dhaka, particularly from the neighbouring countries, are also closely watching the situation.

An observer noted, "Islamabad has now the choice and opportunity of reprimanding an errant diplomat in the interest of maintaining good bilateral relations and thereby showing respect to our martyrs. Or else, it will be responsible for triggering an unforeseen and unpleasant future, reminding our people of a tragic past. With the 'month of victory' beginning tomorrow, the people of Bangladesh are determined to win. Again."

He is waiting for a reply from them (Islamabad). There is a limit to our patience."

When told of mounting public pressure to take action against the diplomat for belittling the sacrifice of martyrs of the Independence War, Samad Azad said, "Do not concern me out. I am as much concerned as any other citizen."

His attention was also drawn to the reported comments by Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday "to move away from the tragic past". The foreign minister said, "The statement is not at all relevant to the present situation. We totally reject his (Pervez's) contention."

It was evident that Dhaka did not see any conciliatory gesture in the Pakistani ruler's comments a day after the Dhaka incident.

The alleged pirates were arrested from Skid Ghat on November 27 while they were trying to sell the wooden-bodied fishing trawler 'Allahar Daan'.

Whether good sense will prevail in the power corridors of Islamabad and some favourable reply will be communicated to

30,000 illegal drug stores in country, says Health Minister

Some 30 thousand drug-shops are being run in the country illegally without inspection, reports UNB.

Health Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim disclosed the figure while talking to newsmen on various aspects of adulteration in the health sector to at least 4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to combat diseases like tuberculosis and malaria in the region.

The three-day Regional Conference of Parliamentarians on TB and Malaria that concluded here yesterday.

The minister lamented that personnel of drug administration were assaulted by drug traders when they went for inspection in the Mitford area, a city hub of

infectious diseases.

The speakers said that health budgets of most of

the countries in the region are grossly inadequate

for effectively combating the diseases of the poor.

They also called for amending laws and policies of health and allied sectors to minimise any adverse effect on the health of the poor.

Fifty parliamentarians from ten countries took part in the regional conference which was jointly organised by the ministry of health and WHO.

They said that partnership must be forged among the departments of health education, social welfare, local government and NGOs for better coordination.

The CFA calls on the parliamentarians to lend their support to empower the poor so that they themselves can ensure health care systems are pro-poor and provide quality services to them.

It also called for massive social mobilisation and

'Raise health sector allocation to 4 pc of GDP'

3-day Regional Conference of Parliamentarians ends

By Staff Correspondent

Parliamentarians from the Southeast Asian countries have called for an increase in allocation to the health sector to at least 4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to combat diseases like tuberculosis and malaria in the region.

The three-day Regional Conference of Parliamentarians on TB and Malaria that ended in the city yesterday, adopted a 'Call for Action (CFA)' to safeguard the poor from

infectious diseases.

The speakers said that health budgets of most of

the countries in the region are grossly inadequate

for effectively combating the diseases of the poor.

They also called for amending laws and policies of

health and allied sectors to minimise any adverse

effect on the health of the poor.

At the closing ceremony, Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria said that limited resources are available for the health sector. So, it needs to be utilised in a more efficient manner. Parliamentarians could identify their potential resources and use these for the benefit of the people, he added.

He called upon the parliamentarians to ensure that the respective government takes the necessary actions through the mechanism of national commissions of health or parliamentary committees.

The conference, held at Hotel Sonargaon, was the sixth in the series which enabled closer interaction between parliamentarians, WHO and health minis-

Karwan Bazar

From Page 1

paying regular taxes to the DCC but it has miserably failed to provide them with any civic amenities.

There is no electricity, no road, water or gas for us and whatever is left has been taken over by illegal occupants. We have written to the Mayor for help so many times but nothing has happened," he said.

Other plot owners, who have fallen victims to the prevailing anarchy in the area, said that the scenario started changing as soon as the then President General Hussain Mohammad Ershad ordered the Rajuk chairman to hand over Karwan Bazar to DCC in 1982.

A top Rajuk engineer said that the DCC has violated the Dhaka Master Plan and built markets one after another without seeking approval from Rajuk. He said that as per the Master Plan there are parks and enough car parking space in Kawran Bazar; but the DCC and its officials have gobbled it up to make quick money.

"The moment DCC took over

BNP agitation

From Page 12

but the hardliners are still insisting the party leadership to intensify movement by taking the path of violence. "We are worried about some recent developments within the party," one leader said.

Senior party leaders said the activities of two close aides to party Chairperson Khaleda Zia are seriously damaging the image of the party and its chief. They felt that the two aides who amassed huge wealth by using the image of the party chief should be removed immediately.

The opposition lawmakers might also resign from parliament in December or January to mount pressure on the government to step down. The government is unlikely to go for by-elections after January, some BNPL leaders said.

They said majority of BNP leaders and activists want to proceed in a well-planned way and launch a movement with the participation of the commonman

but the hardliners are still insisting the party leadership to intensify movement by taking the path of violence. "We are worried about some recent developments within the party," one leader said.

Senior party leaders said the activities of two close aides to party Chairperson Khaleda Zia are seriously damaging the image of the party and its chief. They felt that the two aides who amassed huge wealth by using the image of the party chief should be removed immediately.

The opposition lawmakers might also resign from parliament in December or January to mount pressure on the government to step down. The government is unlikely to go for by-elections after January, some BNPL leaders said.

Following press reports the health ministry postponed the decision to replace Brigadier Munir. On October 2, the ministry in a letter said that Dr Syed Babar Hossain, a controversial figure who retired recently, would be made DMCH director and would take charge when Brig Munir went back to army.

NCTB

From Page 1

Beximco Group, which have allegedly failed to print textbooks of primary and secondary level within the stipulated time, sources said.

The three concerns of Beximco Group have so far printed a little over 40 lakh books although they

were supposed to complete printing all 8.12 crore textbooks by November 30, sources said.

The Board is also likely to fine the companies for their failure, another source in the board added.

The delay in printing means students of class one to ten would not get new books by the beginning of the year.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry has expressed concern over the delay in printing of textbooks, a source in the Ministry said. Earlier, the ministry had asked the Board to take legal action against the three companies for the failure.

The Beximco concerns, which reportedly have no experience in printing books, were awarded the job on October 26 ignoring experienced companies, industry sources said.

The printers did not even draw the security paper for printing the textbooks, which has been made mandatory in printing textbooks to prevent piracy and ensure standard printing.

SEMP

From Page 1

with proper supervision by the MOEF.

The meeting was attended by Forest and Environment Minister Begum Sajeda Choudhury, Habibur Rahman Mollah, Wahiduzzaman Badsha, Anjuman Ara and MOEF Secretary Mamunur Rashid.

Meanwhile, the External Resources Division (ERD) of the Finance Ministry has convened a meeting on December 3 to discuss the issue. Representatives from the MOEF and UNDP will also attend the meeting.

Meanwhile, Karmajibi Nari, an

PM's Euro tour agenda

From Page 12

facilities