

Cry for baby food at flood shelters

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

A severe crisis of baby food plagues the flood-hit people of Bhatara union on the outskirts of the capital, near posh Baridhara diplomatic enclave.

"We're getting something at least to eat, but there's nothing to feed my 9-month-old sister," fumes 8-year-old flood-affected Rahima who took refuge in the flood shelter inside the fire brigade building in Notun Bazar.

Holding the skin-and-bones sister Rashida in her lap, Rahima says she hasn't been able for more than two weeks to get her sister milk. "Where do I get milk? All I can give her is rice powder mixed with water."

She says their mother deserted their father and the four sisters and brothers three months ago for reasons they don't know of. The father, a day labourer, has

been without work since the floodwater roiled in the Bhatara union.

"Rashida has a fever and oral infection and is suffering from diarrhoea. We've got oral saline for her but no treatment," says the father, Manik Mia.

The flood-hit, displaced people at the shelter have received rice, flattened rice, puffed rice, biscuit and khichuri in relief, but no baby food has reached them.

Babul Sheikh, in charge of the shelter centre and a leader of ruling BNP's local chapter, acknowledges that they have received no baby food.

At the Solmayeed High School camp, Kalpana said her 2-year-old Antara has diarrhoea for the last 12 days, but she could only administer her oral saline.

Other shelter centres and submerged low-lying areas in the union are also reeling under a severe crunch of

baby food, where dusted and puffed rice, suji and biscuits are mixed with water to feed the children and as a result, they are suffering from diarrhoea and indigestion.

The 14 flood shelters in the union house 14,000 people and some 4,000 of them are children. Many have settled on the shacks suspended above the water on stilts after failing to get space at the centres. The flood-hit people of the union have so far received 29 metric tons of rice from the government and many alleged that they did not receive any sort of relief.

Although medical teams at private initiatives are working in the area, hundreds are still not getting medical aid to their requirement.

On way to Comillapara slum by boat, Asma Begum carrying her baby sloshed

through the floodwaters to approach The Daily Star correspondent for a 'slip'. "Sir, give me a slip," she said as she mistook the writing pad of the correspondent for relief slips.

Asma said the chairman of the union gave her three kilograms of rice for the family of five on July 29 and since then they have got no relief. Some local people took down the names of hers and many others for giving relief but none of them has received anything, she added.

Chairman of Bhatara Union Mozammel Haq told The Daily Star he distributed whatever relief they got among the flood victims, adding that the relief was inadequate.

"The main problem here is that there is no baby food and medical facilities are insufficient," Mozammel said.



A woman swims through floodwaters with a food pack in hand yesterday after a Dhaka University committee rushed relief to villagers in Chapra in Savar yesterday.



A newborn sleeps through the spell of floods in her mother's arms at the Wazuddin High School flood centre in Kamrangirchar yesterday. The deluge marooned or displaced millions of people across the country.

Violence rips through Iraq

Bomb kills 5 cops, 4 GIs; oil pipeline blasted, 4 NGO workers stabbed to death

AP/AFP, Baghdad

Insurgent bombers killed three Iraqi national guardsmen, a police chief and a patrolman yesterday in the militants' unrelenting attacks against the country's security forces that saw saboteurs blasted an oil pipeline which erupted in flames in the north of the country yesterday, halting limited exports via Turkey.

Also, two US soldiers were killed and two others wounded by a roadside bomb late Monday in Iraq's capital, while two American Marines died of wounds received in fighting in Anbar Province west of Baghdad, the military said. One of the Marines died during the Monday engagement; the second died Tuesday from his wounds in that fighting.

Meanwhile, four Iraqis working for a French aid group in the southern city of Samawa were stabbed to death while travelling by car to Najaf further north, their employer and families said yesterday.

The Paris-based Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) confirmed by telephone that four of its workers were

killed in Iraq but declined to provide further details.

The national guardsmen were killed when a car bomb hit their post north of Baqouba. Four guardsmen were wounded, the US military said.

A truck bomb Wednesday targeted a police recruiting center in Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, where hundreds of job applicants were gathered. It killed 70 people.

"The continued targeting of Iraqi security force personnel... undermines the security of all Iraqis and will only quicken the resolve of Iraqi security forces to provide a safe and secure environment," said Maj. Neal O'Brien, a US Army spokesman.

In yesterday's first bomb attack, Associated Press Television News pictures from western Baghdad's al-Washash district showed a destroyed white Iraqi police pickup truck, its doors smashed and blood splattered across the driver's seat.

Police, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified one of the dead Iraqi officers as Col. Mouyad Mohammed Bashar, who was chief of al-Mamoun police station.

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Russell takes oath as youngest MP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zahid Ahsan Russell, elected from Gazipur-2 constituency, took oath as the youngest lawmaker of the eighth parliament at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar administered the oath at his chamber. Earlier, the Election Commission (EC) published the gazette notification of the election result and dispatched it to Parliament Secretariat.

Russell, 26, has defeated BNP-Jamaat-led four party alliance candidate and former minister MA

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BASHANTEK PROJECT JS body asks people not to buy flats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked all concerned not to subscribe application forms floated by the NSPDL for allotment of flats at the government initiated Bashantek rehabilitation programme for floating and low-income group people.

The NSPDL (North South Property Development Limited), the project implementation company, has started selling forms through

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NBR intelligence cell detects tax dodgers

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

The Central Intelligence Cell (CIC), the newly formed wing of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) empowered to investigate and seize files of dubious income taxpayers, has detected scores of tax evasion cases depriving millions of taka out of the state coffers.

In one case, a person was found to have splurged Tk 29 lakh by charging his credit card although he showed the annual income to be Tk 94,000 in the

income tax returns. And in another case, one put his yearly income at Tk 1.26 lakh but he spent more than Tk 11 lakh through credit card.

The CIC, formed at the suggestion of the donors, ran an investigation on the clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents and found that they conceal half their income in commission, according to officials at the NBR.

It realised more than Tk 2 crore alone from the C&F agents in Chittagong last year, according to the

officials. A new information base has been set up to detect large taxpayers that have slipped out of the tax net for follow-up enforcement.

"We've succeeded in detecting many cases of tax evasion so far and I believe we'll make more headway this year," NBR Chairman Khairuzaman Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the CIC will try to collect information from different sources

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US ups terror alert on old intelligence info

BBC ONLINE

The US administration admits that new warnings of attacks on American cities were based on information gathered by al-Qaeda up to four years ago.

Security was tightened around US financial institutions earlier this week after raids in Pakistan recovered documents reportedly naming them.

Homeland security adviser Frances Townsend said some of the information

recovered was collected in 2000/2001.

But she added: "It appears that some of it may have been updated as recently as January of this year."

And she denied that the alert was prompted by political considerations in the run-up to November's presidential poll.

Some have suggested that the timing of the latest US government warning is designed to knock presidential challenger John Kerry off the front

pages after his nomination as the Democratic Party's candidate last week.

"It had nothing to do with the Democratic National Convention," Townsend insisted.

Her comments followed reports in leading American newspapers that US officials were unsure if Osama bin Laden's network was still conducting surveillance on the sites

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Injured Bangladeshi child in US dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-year old Bangladeshi child died Monday in Texas, USA from injuries suffered two days earlier in an explosion at an apartment complex on Texas A&M University campus, family members and US media reports said.

The explosion also badly burnt the pregnant mother and visiting grandparents of the child, Lamia Chowdhury. Her father, Saquib Ejaz Chowdhury, an A&M international doctoral student, was not home when the fire broke out on Saturday night.

The child's mother, Lufthansa Rahman Kanta, an A&M graduate student, and paternal grandparents

Ejaz Rasul Chowdhury and Rabeya Chowdhury were critically burnt in the blast. They were admitted to John Sealy Hospital in Galveston with 70 to 80 percent burns.

Ejaz Chowdhury, retired director of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, hails from East Bhadreshwar village under Golapganj upazila of Sylhet.

According to a Texas-based media outlet, hearing an explosion at around 9:20pm Saturday neighbours called emergency workers to the married students' housing complex off University Drive.

Firemen found Chowdhury's

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Nasa launches Mercury mission

AP, Cape Canaveral, Florida

A spacecraft named Messenger rocketed away yesterday on a 5 billion-mile journey to Mercury, the closest planet to the sun and a stranger to camera close-ups for the past three decades.

Nasa launched Messenger in the pre-dawn moonlight on the round-about ramble through the inner solar system. The 6 1/2-year trip should have started a day earlier, but clouds from Tropical Storm Alex postponed liftoff.

"A voyage of mythological proportions," a flight controller announced as soon as Messenger shed its final rocket stage.

Applause erupted in launch control. "That looked wonderful," said launch director Chuck Dovale. "We bid Messenger farewell."

Scientists have been yearning to study Mercury up-close ever since Mariner 10 zoomed by three times in the mid-1970s.

If all goes well, come 2011, Messenger will be the first spacecraft to orbit Mercury.

The spacecraft cannot fly straight to Mercury; it does not carry nearly enough fuel. So it will fly once past Earth, twice past Venus and three times past Mercury for gravity assists -- and make 15 loops around the sun -- before slowing enough to

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This Nasa photo shows the top of the Boeing Delta II rocket with its MESSENGER spacecraft on top breaking through smoke as it lifts off at 2:15:56am EDT yesterday from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida.

Saddam tells grandson to be a man

AGENCIES, Baghdad

Deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein sent a letter to his grandson in Jordan telling him to be strong and care for his family, according to Al-Arabiya television Monday.

The letter, delivered by the International Committee of the Red Cross, was addressed to Ali Hussein al-Majeed and was the second received by his family since the strongman was detained last year.

"He asked me to take care of my family and to keep the family's reputation anywhere and at any time," al-Majeed told Al-Arabiya.

"He recommends that I be a man, like my father and uncle, a man who can be trusted, and also to be the man of the family."

Saddam ordered al-Majeed's father, Hussein Kamel, and al-Majeed's uncle Saddam Kamel,

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US oil strikes new record above \$44

REUTERS, London

US oil prices hit new record levels above \$44 a barrel Tuesday after the head of the OPEC producers' cartel said there was little the group could do to cool red-hot markets.

US light crude rose 42 cents to \$44.24 a barrel, marking the highest level since crude futures were launched on the New York Mercantile Exchange in 1983. It later fell to trade around \$44.05.

London's Brent crude peaked at \$40.45 a barrel, its highest since the run-up to the first Gulf War.

Oil prices have surged by more than one-third since the end of 2003 on

worries that accelerating global demand has left supplies tightly stretched with little leeway for disruption.

OPEC President Purnomo Yusgiantoro said Tuesday the cartel had no spare oil to hand to dampen prices.

"The oil price is very high, it's crazy. There is no additional supply," Purnomo told reporters in Jakarta.

"Minister Naimi has said Saudi Arabia can increase production but they cannot do it immediately," he said, referring to Ali al-Naimi, oil minister for Saudi Arabia, the world's number one exporter.

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Prayer Timing		
August 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-47	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation