

SECOND PHASE OF FLOODS  
'Strengthen govt-NGO coordination to rehabilitate victims'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second phase of floods has posed new challenges for the government and the development partners in their efforts to rehabilitate the flood-affected people, experts at a workshop said yesterday.

They also stressed the need to strengthen coordination among the government and non-government organisations in order to tackle the challenges.

Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC), Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) and Oxfam-GB organised the workshop on 'Flood recovery 2007: The way forward' at Brac Inn Centre in the city.

Food and Disaster Management Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said the government had distributed housing grants among the affected people after the first flood, but the fresh floods have again put these people at risk.

These people, being victims of

the floods for the second time, might have used the housing grants for other purposes instead of rebuilding their houses, he said.

Agriculture and Environment Adviser CS Karim said the fields turned green after the first floods, but crops were damaged again due to fresh floods.

The government has now taken steps to increase Boro yields to offset crops losses, he added.

He said the country needs 29 lakh tons of fertiliser, whereas the capacity of domestic production is only 14 or 15 lakh tons. Rest of the amount is to be imported, he said and called for efficient use of fertiliser.

CDMP Chief Technical Adviser Ian Rector said significant breaching of flood embankments and silting of river systems contributed to the extent of flooding. Water Development Board should critically analyse the reasons why so many embankments developed breaches, he said.

Effective management of flood in Bangladesh requires not only

national, but also regional solutions, he said and called for more effective early warning system through which people at community level can get the message of flood and take safe shelter.

Directorate of Relief and Rehabilitation Director General Sadaruddin Ahmed, Department of Agricultural Extension Director General Shamsul Alam, Bangladesh Krishi Bank General Manager Jafor M Sayeed, Oxfam-GB Programme Manager Farid Hasan Ahmed, UNDP Programme Manager Tarik-ul-Islam and BDPC Director Muhammad Saidur Rahman also spoke at the workshop presided by Food and Disaster Management Ministry Joint Secretary Mohsena Ferdous.

Two workshops earlier organised by BDPC at Gaibandha and Faridpur identified lack of coordination in relief distribution between the government and non-government agencies and shortage of relief materials and skilled volunteers as obstacles to rehabilitating flood victims.

Implement tripartite contract to remove workers' dissatisfaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different garment workers' associations yesterday demanded the government to take necessary measures for removing dissatisfaction of the garment workers in the light of tripartite contract.

They also demanded payment of arrear salary and bonus of the workers before the Eid festival.

Central leaders of Gonosanghati Andolon in a statement urged the government to implement the minimum wage in every garment factory.

Condemning the mentality of the owners to arrest the workers over trifling matter they said it would destroy garment industry.

President of Jago Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation Baharane Sultan said whenever the garment workers raise their voice to realise their legal demand, the owners try to bypass the issue terming it as foreign conspiracy.

"If they could not show any evidence in this regard, they should be punished," he added.

2 lakh affected with cancer every year Say experts

UNB, Dhaka

There are about 40 lakh cancer patients in the country and two lakh more are afflicted with the disease every year, Chairman of Oncology Club Prof Dr ABMF Karim said yesterday.

Dr Karim, also adviser and former president of Saarc Federation of Oncologists, was addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Federation of Anti-Cancer Activists of Bangladesh (FACAB), an umbrella organisation of 45 small organisations working on cancer awareness in Bangladesh, organised the press conference.

Prof Dr ABMF Karim said the number of cancer patients in Bangladesh would reach 20 million within the next 20 years if the current trend continues.

He said use of tobacco, taking 'jarda' with betel-leaf and lack of balanced diet and regular labour (especially for the rich community) are the main causes of cancer. "These causes are basically found in the developing countries."

The noted cancer specialist stressed the need for creating awareness among people and underscoring producing adequate number of specialists in the country to cope with the rising incidence of cancer.

"There are only 98 cancer experts in the country and most of them are radiation oncologists. Minimum 200 new cancer experts, including medical oncologists, oncology surgeons and radiation oncologists, are needed every year," he said.

Director of Bangladesh Cancer Hospital and Welfare Home Prof Dr MA Hai, senior journalist Ataus Samad and Col (retd) Modasser Hossain Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Prof Dr MA Hai suggested consulting doctors to diagnose possible cancer if they feel anything unusual in throat, coughing and voice change and also experience problem of digestion and change in food intake for more than two weeks.

Oncology Club and FACAB will organise a workshop titled 'International Socio-Scientific Conference on Cancer (Clinical Oncology) for Saarc Region' on January 4-7, 2008 in the city.

The workshop is likely to emphasise on launching preventive programmes such as vaccination for cervical cancer on selective population groups, organisers said.

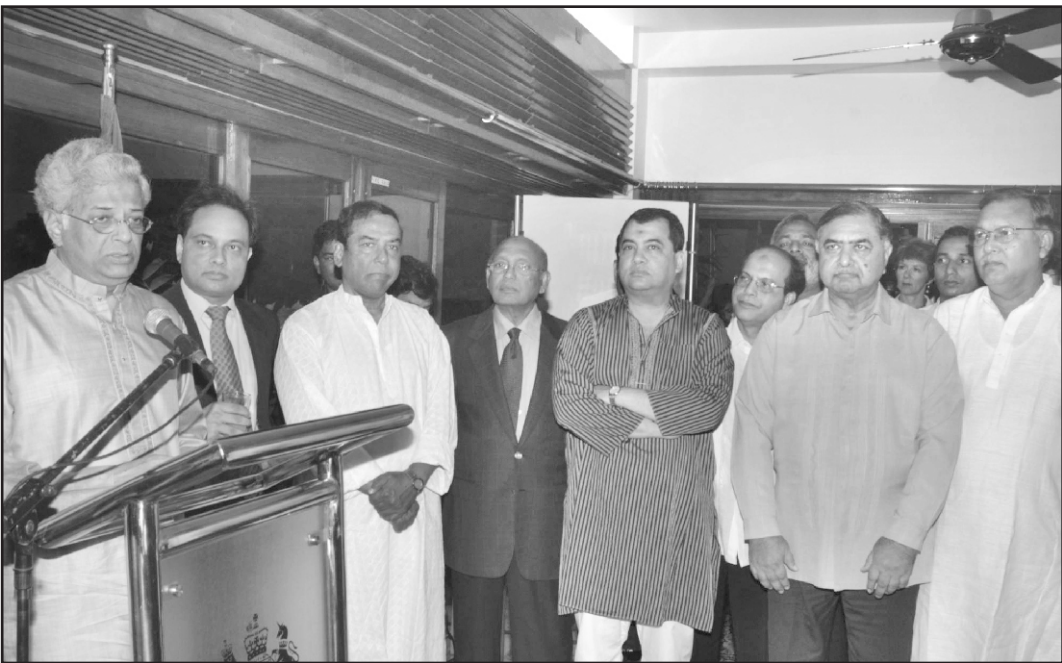


PHOTO: STAR

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda speaks at an Iftar party at the residence of British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in the city yesterday.

People should unite behind govt for timely polls Says British envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury yesterday said one of the biggest challenges facing Bangladesh is to prevent political events and uncertainty from distracting the Election Commission (EC) holding general elections by the end of 2008.

The people of Bangladesh need to unite behind the government to ensure that the EC continues its rapid speed in undertaking electoral reforms to hold the polls by 2008-end or a little earlier, he added.

"The road for Bangladesh is bumpy... But every time there is a bump, it should be taken as a call for everyone to ensure that the roadmap to elections is not disturbed," the British envoy told reporters at an Iftar party at his residence, celebrating the efforts of the development partners in support of the 'Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs (PERP)' project.

Britain contributed 10 million pounds to the 44 million pound UNDP-coordinated PERP project.

Speaking at the Iftar party, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said that although he would cautiously hope for elections by 2008-end few months ago, progress made by the EC in overcoming difficulties allows him to say "We will surely hold elections by the end of 2008, if not earlier."

Anwar Choudhury said the donor community is assured by CEC's declaration as they gain hope from the 'double-speed' progress of voter registration

projects in Rajshahi and Savar, the involvement of grassroots people and the use of advanced technology.

Political parties should also ensure that the elections are held in time by engaging in dialogue and working together, he said.

CEC Shamsul Huda said the EC is planning to upgrade the skills of its staffs, as the staffs they inherited are 'below average'. The training would be paid for by donor funds.

Politicians, election commissioners and NGO leaders attended the Iftar party.

Expatriate citizen seeks security of her family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladesh-born American citizen in a press conference yesterday sought justice and urged the authorities to ensure her family's security.

Speaking at the National Press Club in the city yesterday, Laili Begum alleged that when she along with her daughter Lipi Akhter came to Bangladesh last year, ABM Asaduzzaman married Lipi in November. Since then he has been demanding huge dowry.

Yielding to Asaduzzaman's demand, she gave him \$8000 in cash the day after her daughter's marriage. They also gave her daughter and son in law 17 tolas gold ornaments.

After few days Laili's family came to know that Asaduzzaman's family provided false information before the marriage took place.

When Laili and her daughter went to USA for a few days, Asaduzzaman snapped all connections with them and few months later they resumed connections and started making demand for dowry

anew.

In such a stage when Laili's eldest daughter filed a case with Sabujbagh Police Station, Laili alleged that Asaduzzaman managed a major of Rab-3 and started threatening them with false cases and of crossfire.

Against this backdrop, she came back to Bangladesh and filed a case against Asaduzzaman under Women and Children Repression Act.

Laili also said that when she went to Rab-3 office, other Rab officials humiliated and threatened them so that they do not go for any legal action. Asaduzzaman also threatened her family members in Dhaka over phone, Laili added.

Laili added that her family is aggrieved and sought justice under law, but it is an irony that her family members are now feeling insecure every moment.

Laili read out a written statement at the press conference while her son Muhammad Jewel was also present.

EC rev for full-scale voter listing in Nov

FROM PAGE 1

plan for holding the next election stipulating that the voter list will be ready by October 2008 and the parliamentary poll will definitely be held by December of the same year.

At yesterday's meeting with the mobile phone operators, the EC sought their cooperation in raising awareness among prospective voters for encouraging them to visit the voter registration centres to be set up in their areas. The representatives of mobile phone operators assured the EC of the assistance sought. The promise of assistance includes creation and propagation of advertisements by the mobile phone service providers centring the subject of voter listing, sending of sms to their clients informing them about their respective registration centres, and encouraging them to visit the centres for getting registered as voters with their photographs taken there.

On Sunday the EC had a meeting with representatives of private satellite television channels and radio stations, seeking their cooperation. Moreover the electoral authority already engaged 34 NGOs at the field level for launching a campaign in support of the task.

"We will start the full-scale field level work of voter listing across the country in November and procurement of equipment will be completed in October," CEC Huda said.

The army has also been preparing to begin the full-scale field level work across the country as soon as they receive the equipment, sources said.

"Registering 8.5 crore to 9 crore voters is a gigantic task. Besides, the rate of literacy in the country is not high. So they [prospective voters] need to be told to go to registration centres to have their photographs taken for the voter list and the national identity cards," CEC Huda said.

In cooperation with the army, the EC already chalked out a plan for starting the field level work of voter listing in some areas next month, while the work is set to begin in all the districts sometime in November after the EC receives the required laptops and other accessories in October, sources said.

Currently the field level work is going on in 30 different places using 1,800 laptops received from differ-

ent donor agencies as donations. The work in those areas will be completed this month, enlisting 10 percent of the total prospective voters, which has been possible because the EC started the field level work in those areas in August, two months sooner than the stipulated time of beginning the work in October.

OPERATION NEW BEGINNING The central control room for preparing the voter list and national identity cards, situated at the army headquarters, said in a letter to the EC Secretariat on September 20 that the task of preparing the voter list is being carried out in different places under 'operation new beginning'.

The EC assured supply of some equipment by the first or second week of October. It also assured supply of the entire inventory of equipment to the army by October or November this year, the letter claimed. "The work of voter registration will begin in full-scale across the country after receiving the equipment," added the letter.

The army is planning to begin the field level work in Dhaka City Corporation on December 1, after receiving the equipment, said the letter adding that the job will be completed on January 31 next year using 2,000 laptops.

"Considering the area, the size of the population, and the nature of habitation, Dhaka City Corporation is a sensitive area, as it is the capital. Considering all the aspects, the success of voter registration in Dhaka City Corporation area will be a milestone," said the letter.

The army suggested the EC to hold a high level meeting with all government officials concerned to give the officers guidelines on preparing the voter list for Dhaka City Corporation area.

FIELD LEVEL PREPARATIONS Directed by the EC Secretariat, district election offices have been taking all sorts of preparations including forming separate panels for recruiting enumerators, supervisors, and computer operators.

"Our preparation is now at the final stage. The panels will appoint enumerators, supervisors and computer operators after receiving directives from the commission," a district election officer said. "We are now ready to begin the field level

work at any time. Now we are waiting for the equipment and the directives from the centre," he added.

"We are maintaining communication with locally posted army officials to complete our preparations," a district election officer said.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of election officials under the divisions of Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, and Khulna said they are taking preparations to complete the field level work between July and August of next year, if they can begin the work according to the plan. They said they already formed the required committees at different levels ranging from districts to wards of union parishes to expedite the work once it begins.

AREAS WHICH ARE NEXT

According to the plan, the field level work of voter listing will begin in some other places next month. The areas are --- Lalmonirhat municipality and the district headquarters, Rangpur district headquarters and Gangachara upazila and all unions under them, Barisal City Corporation, Jessore district headquarters and all unions under it, Rupsha and Fultali upazilas of Khulna and all unions under them, Sylhet City Corporation, Tangail municipality and all unions under the district headquarters, Mukttagachha municipality of Mymensingh and the district headquarters with all its unions, Bogra district headquarters and all unions under it, Chapainawabganj municipality, Paba upazila of Rajshahi and all unions under it, and Gazipur municipality.

The field level work of voter listing in the municipalities of Khagrachhari, Bandarban, and Rangamati districts, in Chittagong City Corporation, and in Tongi municipality area will begin in November this year while the work is likely to begin in Dhaka City Corporation area in December.



PHOTO: STAR

JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu speaks at a meeting with Samyabadi Dal at Col Taher Auditorium in the city yesterday.

Mild earthquake shakes country

BSS, Dhaka

An earthquake jolted Bangladesh at around 4:30pm yesterday.

The intensity of the quake was mild, says a met office press release.

The distance of the epicentre was about 300 km southeast from Agargaon Seismic Observatory.

The magnitude of the earthquake was 5.6 in Richter scale.

Delay in implementing 6th wage board condemned

Leaders of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday condemned delay in implementing the 6th wage board.

The leaders at an executive committee meeting yesterday said though the government had solved problems of different quarters, including the owners of print media, it is quite indifferent to take necessary steps in providing due payments to the journalists, says a press release.

Though the price has been hiked several hundred times since the last 12 years, the journalists are forced to do with the same amount of salary. In spite of informing the issue to the higher authorities, it is yet to see any sign of solution, they added.

The meeting was presided over by DUJ President Altaf Mahmud while DUJ General Secretary Omar Faruque, former general secretary Shah Alamgir, Vice President Abul Kalam and Joint Secretary Shaban Mahmud also spoke at the meeting.

The speakers also condemned retrenching of journalists and employees of the daily Ittefaq. They also demanded an end to the irregularities and discrimination in Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) on the issue of discharging and re-recruitment of the employees.

Their demands also include payment of the arrears and bonus to the newsmen before 15th Ramadan and payment of the due salaries of The Independent newsmen.

The leaders also expressed grave concern over the issue of not implementing 40 percent dearness allowance at the daily Jugantor, Janakantha, Bhorer Kagoj, Manabjabin and Amader Somoy.

Excluding around 50 dailies from the media list without prior announcement would create further crisis in the newspaper industry, they added.

PIARO MURDER Ex-DCC commissioner, four others to die

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday sentenced five people, including a former ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation, to death for killing Dhanmondi Sporting Club President Khairul Anwar Piaru in 2004.

The convicts are Amzad Hossain Mian, former DCC ward commissioner, his brother Emran Hossain and their associates Saidul Islam alias Hannan, Fazlur Rahman alias Bullet Babul and Noor Alam.

Of them, Hannan and Babul are in jail custody while three others are absconding.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge Azizul Haque handed down the verdict at a packed courtroom.

The verdict said punishment to the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender.

During the trial the court recorded statements of 24 prosecution witnesses.

The criminals sprayed bullets on Piaru outside the club at around 10:00pm on February 29 in 2004. Two policemen were also shot during the shootout between the escaping assassins and police.

Piaru, who was also a senior vice-president of Bangladesh Football Federation, was shot in his head and shoulder as a gang of six, hiding in the shadow of the club building, ambushed him as he came out of the club with Ansar Commander Shamsul Alam to check a leak in a water tank. Shamsul Alam was also wounded.

Piaru captained the Brothers Union in 1975 as a national footballer and was also secretary of the Metropolitan Clubs' Samity.

Intelligence sources said Amzad and other convicts killed Piaru for his stand against illegal activities inside the club.

# WEATHER TODAY

## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions and at many places over Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also likely at places over the country, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 33.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.0 degree Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 5:48am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius	Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.8	24.6	72	75
Chittagong	28.2	23.8	84	81
Rajshahi	26.5	24.1	98	99
Khulna	28.0	24.5	100	98
Barisal	29.0	24.7	97	92
Sylhet	33.6	26.2	85	69
Cox's Bazar	29.0	24.0	92	87

Nasa aims to put man on Mars by 2037

AFP, Hyderabad

Nasa aims to put a man on Mars by 2037, the administrator of the US space agency indicated here yesterday.

This year marks the half-century of the space age ushered in by the October 1957 launch of the Sputnik-1 by the then Soviet Union, Nasa administrator Michael Griffin noted.

In 2057, the centenary of the space era, "we should be celebrating 20 years of man on Mars," Griffin told an international astronautics congress in this southern Indian city where he outlined Nasa's future goals.

The international space station being built in orbit and targeted for completion by 2010 would provide a "toehold in space" from where humanity can travel first to the moon and then to Mars, Griffin said.

GP comes to aid of six acid survivors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameenphone (GP), a leading mobile phone operator, has provided employment to six acid survivors with a view to making them self-reliant.

The acid survivors, who have been supported by the Acid Survivors' Foundation (ASF), will also be provided with adequate training to help them develop necessary skills to take on their new responsibilities in the company, said Grameenphone officials at a press meet at a city hotel yesterday.

The six acid survivors are Fazilatun Nesa, Mansura Khatun, Rezaul Karim, Lulu Mansura, Serajul Huq and Afroza Akhtar.

Speaking as the chief guest, Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson said that although many developments have been made in the country, women continue to be subject of discrimination and violence such as acid attack due to unequal social, political and legal status.

The acid victims should get encouragement not only from the family but also from all levels in society, she said.

Bangladesh has one of the highest numbers of incidents related to acid violence and acid burns. These incidents constitute nine percent of total burn injuries and about 47 percent of victims of acid violence are women while men and children account for 26 and 27 percent respectively.

As part of the corporate social responsibilities, Grameenphone has extended its support to the ASF in the rehabilitation of acid victims by providing employment opportunities, said Grameenphone Managing Director Eric Aas.

He also said it is important to rehabilitate these acid survivors and provide them with vocational training and job opportunities so that they may become economically independent and able to contribute to the national economy.

Lulu Mansura urged the corporate houses to come forward to help them live a healthy and normal life.

Arne Haug, first secretary of the Norwegian Embassy, Shawkat Mahmood, president of the National Press Club, Kafil HS Mueyed, director of News Business Division of Grameenphone, and Niharika Montaz, acting executive director of ASF, were also present at the programme.

Three vessels detained in Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

At least three lighterage vessels were detained by the magistrate court of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) in separate drives yesterday.

Legal measures were taken against the vessels on charges of violating CPA Act and overloading at port canal area, says a CPA press release.

Magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury led the drives in cooperation with the port security personnel at the estuary of Karnaphuli River.

Obituary

Begum Zafar Banu, daughter of the late Khwaja Nazimuddin, passed away in Karachi on Friday at the age of 82, says a press release.

She left behind her son, daughter, two brothers and a host of relatives and friends to mourn her death.

Death anniversary



Today is the 6th death anniversary of Samar Das, an eminent lyricist and musician, says a press release.

He was also the chief music director of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.

He was awarded 'Swadhinata Padak' by the government for his outstanding contribution in music.

On the occasion, wreaths will be placed at his grave at Wari in the city and religious programmes will be held at his residence in the evening.

Nurunnahar Samad Azad



Today is the 10th death anniversary of Nurunnahar Samad Azad, a social worker and wife of former foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad, says a press release.

On the occasion, a Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at the residence of his son at House No 61, Road No 12/A at Dhanmondi in the city after Asr prayers today.

His family has requested all to be present at the programme to pray for salvation of the departed soul.