

## Cry for baby food

FROM PAGE 1  
and in paddy fields and the forest.

According to a report of the Civil Surgeon's Office in Patuakhali, 521 children were diagnosed with pneumonia, 596 with skin diseases, and 184 with diarrhoea. But non-government sources claimed that the numbers are much higher.

Razia, a resident of Char Lata in Golachipa, survived the cyclone with her two-year old son Rubel. As the cyclone swept away everything she owned, she and her child has no warm clothes left to put on.

Razia could not manage clothes for her infant son till yesterday despite rice, lentil, onion, oil, saris, and lungis being distributed as relief in the area.

Razia's neighbour Jahanura's daughter has survived miraculously till yesterday. Since the cyclone Jahanura could not manage powdered milk for her six-year old daughter Koli, and it is almost impossible to manage cow's milk there under the circumstances. Had it been available Jahanura would still not be able to buy it since she has no cash in her hands.

"Several days ago the army chief distributed some packets of powdered milk in the area, and since then none came with any baby food. I don't know how I and my six-month old daughter are still alive," said Abul, a resident of the same char.

Situations in all Sidr affected villages are veritable carbon copies. During a visit to a relief centre in Matibhanga by this correspondent, 20 to 25 mothers were found standing in a queue for relief with their naked kids in their laps.

"Cold descends on our naked kids at night infecting them with different diseases," said Amena Begum, a resident of the area.

Although the communications adviser during a visit to Patuakhali on Thursday had assured the survivors of special measures for distributing relief for the affected children, the relief that was distributed there since then, is still a mere paltry compared to the need. The district administration distributed 100 packets of powdered milk till yesterday.

"We received 100 packets of powdered milk and 101 packets of biscuits as baby food relief, which we have distributed properly," said Abdul Malek, a district relief and

rehabilitation officer.

"As prices of baby food are much higher we can't do anything special for them," a relief officer said on condition of anonymity.

Rubina, a three-month old daughter of Jamal in Char Najib, died of pneumonia on November 22.

Different medical teams working in the area, cautioned parents to keep their children safe from cold, but the parents have no way of complying with the advice.

An 18-member medical team of the US Navy has been providing medical treatment since Monday while a Bangladesh Army medical team and a 30-member team from Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital have also been providing the same to the survivors there.

A mobile hospital funded by the Netherlands has also been providing medical treatment to the cyclone survivors while 98 medical teams from the Civil Surgeon's Office have been working in different areas.

## Robbers kill rtd agri official in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

Robber shot dead a retired agricultural officer and injured two others at Gabtali Puranpara on the outskirts of the district town early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Baset, 58, also a freedom fighter.

Police and locals said a gang of robbers entered the house of Baset's neighbour Aminul at about 4:00am by breaking open the door and started looting valuables.

When the family members tried to resist them, the bandits shot Aminul's sister-in-law Shahinor, 28, and severely beat up his brother-in-law Anwar, 42.

Hearing scream, Baset came out of his house and rushed to the spot. As he tried to enter Aminul's house, the robbers shot Baset in the head, killing him on the spot.

The body was sent to Sedar Hospital morgue for autopsy. The injured were taken to Dhaka in critical condition.

## 5 more bodies

FROM PAGE 16

"I have heard the news of recovering four bodies," said Naitana Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Sultan Ahmed.

When contacted, Deputy Director of the Red Crescent Society Shamsul Alam said they have not received any news regarding recovery of the bodies.

## Distribution

FROM PAGE 1

prepare the list. To meet the food needs of the people in the meantime we have allocated 2,000 metric tons of rice for the 12 districts. And another 2,000 metric tons will be allocated today for four of the worst-affected areas," he added.

"Whenever an affected area will complete preparing the list the government will start distribution there," Ayub observed.

In reply to a query, the secretary said that 5,000 people in each union of the five worst-hit districts will get the cards while the number will be 2,500 for the rest eight districts.

## Artefacts

FROM PAGE 1

protesting the move. In response to a writ petition, the High Court on September 17 issued a two-month stay on sending the artefacts out of the country. But later the stay order was vacated by the Supreme Court.

Following the developments in Dhaka, the show originally scheduled for October 23 had been deferred.

Meanwhile, students and cultural activists demonstrated against the shipment in front of the National Museum yesterday. They formed a human chain in Shahbagh area as the staff of Homebond, the company hired to carry the artworks dating back to 1200 years, were getting the boxes onto trucks.

Many gathered there early in the morning hearing that the first batch of artefacts would be sent to Paris yesterday. They chanted slogans when the vehicles carrying those were leaving the National Museum premises in the afternoon.

Police picked up one demonstrator but later released him. Archaeology experts, artists and citizens have alleged that the deal signed between the two governments is flawed on many counts. It does not give exact number of the artefacts to be sent and their insurance cover, and lacks authentic counter signature and visual documentation, they claimed.

They fear some of those might not even be returned after the display.

However, the government and the French embassy in Dhaka have maintained all along that all issues of concern have been addressed properly and each of those age-old items will be flown back home safe and sound.

The Guimet Museum is a museum of Asian art. It boasts one of the largest collections of Asian art outside Asia.

## Aman output

FROM PAGE 1

The DAE officials in Bogra said production of high yielding varieties (HYV) decreased on an average of 0.27 tonnes per hectare this season. Last year production of HYV was 2.67 tonnes per hectare in Bogra compared to this year's 2.40 tonnes, according to a DAE field level survey.

The officials also said although the urea requirement in Bogra was 30,833 tonnes in the current aman season, the government allocated 28,255 tonnes.

A senior DAE officer in Pabna said aman production decreased by at least 0.25 tonnes per hectare there, compared to last year's production. He said the production was hampered severely due to the floods, heavy rainfall, and the fertilizer crisis.

Abdul Mazid of Bera upazila in Pabna said he got a yield of 0.74 tonnes cultivating BR-11 variety on 0.13 hectares of land, which was 0.08 tonnes less than last season's yield.

Noor-un-Nabi of Palashbari village under Kurigram Sadar upazila said he got a yield of 0.41 tonnes aman rice cultivating BR-11 variety on his 0.13 hectares of land this year, compared to the 0.70 tonnes yield of last year's.

## Pranab

FROM PAGE 1

assistance of Bangladesh with a sense of urgency," the high commission official said.

During his visit, Pranab will meet Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed and Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, according to a news release of the Indian high commission.

He will also visit some cyclone affected areas, including Sharanakhol of Bagerhat and Patharghata of Bangura today, and meet a cross-section of people to get a first hand idea about the ongoing relief efforts.

Sources said the Indian EAM is scheduled to reach Sharanakhol, one of the worst affected upazilas, at 3:00pm. He will then fly to Patharghata on a Bangladesh Air Force helicopter before returning to the capital.

On his return from the cyclone hit area, Pranab will talk to the media.

In keeping with India's close ties with and empathy for the people of Bangladesh, over the last few days India has been expeditiously delivering relief materials to Bangladesh consisting of medicines, tents, blankets, ready-to-eat meals, and portable water-purifiers through Indian air force transport aircraft IL-76, the news release added.

India is also sending essential food items as aid to Bangladesh including rice, wheat, and milk powder worth almost 100 crore rupees.

Mukherjee's visit will coincide with the last consignment of India's aid of medicines, tents, blankets, ready-to-eat meals and portable water-purifiers, scheduled to be delivered by the Indian air force in Dhaka this morning.

Pranab Mukherjee is scheduled to hand over the consignment to his Bangladesh counterpart Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at Zia International Airport at 9:30am.

Earlier, in a special dispensation, India also waived the ban on export of rice to Bangladesh, allowing it to import 50,000 metric tons of rice.

## Machinery import

FROM PAGE 1

FDI received--\$137 million--during the corresponding period last year.

Production of medium and large manufacturing industries saw slower growth in the last fiscal year.

According to central bank statistics, industrial production growth came down by 2.48 percentage point to 10.01 percent last fiscal year, which was 12.48 percent in fiscal 2005-06.

Planning ministry statistics show slower investment growth both in the public and private sectors.

During the first quarter of this fiscal year, only six percent or Tk 1,681 crore of the annual development programme (ADP) was utilised. The previous fiscal year saw 11 percent ADP implementation during the corresponding period.

Political turmoil from October last year and then the anti-corruption drive slowed down investment, said Dr Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Business organisations are uncertain whether to go for new investments or not. And government dillydallying over some big investment proposals contributed to the slow FDI growth, he added.

The government has initiated formation of Truth Commission and Regulatory Reforms Commission to restore the business community's confidence. But despite the measures, the businessmen are still in uncertainty about political situation in future, observed Dr Bakht.

Voter registration process is going on well but which party is likely to go to power in the next election is not clear among the businessmen. This encourages them to follow 'wait and see' policy, he noted.

Moreover, the government has yet to take initiative for development of infrastructure, other than for ports, which is also discouraging investment, said the BIDS research director.

BB officials said the bank is closely monitoring the investment situation, and it is now improving.

## Optical fibre line

FROM PAGE 1

Bangla Phone's explanation is not satisfactory.

Both the deals -- one with the PGCB and the other with Bangla Phone -- were initiated late last year.

Meanwhile, concerned at the 22 cases of optical fibre line disconnection, many of which were cases of sabotage, the adviser for telecommunication ministry recently made a move to finalise the best deal.

The ministry in a mid-November summary prescribed the PGCB deal. Telecom Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam then inquired, "I believe there was an offer from one of the mobile phone companies for free use of their link on a mutual basis. Has that option been explored? If so, what problems are there in accepting that offer, if any?"

Following the adviser's inquiry, the ministry last week drafted yet another summary saying that the BTBT was discussing with Bangla Phone setting up the backup line on "standby (redundancy) swapping" terms. This would have been free. But during the discussion, the BTRC asked the BTBT not to pen a deal with this phone company. Bangla Phone on November 11 gave a reminder in writing, which was forwarded to the BTRC for its directive. And on November 15, the BTRC again explicitly asked the BTBT not to sign the deal.

The ministry once again noted that the PGCB was a government-controlled company, and favoured signing a deal with it.

The telecom adviser on November 25 again said, "Both the letters from BTRC state that there should be no contract with Bangla Phone without their consent/prior consultation with them. We should at this stage seek BTRC's categorical opinion and also indicate in our reference the financial implication."

Earlier on October 11, Bangla Phone in a letter to the ministry said the company submitted its proposal on December 4 last year and held discussions with the BTBT. As per the discussions, the company installed the optical fibre line between Dhaka-Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. On April 23 this year, it sent a letter to the ministry asking it to test the line and swapping arrangements. This followed other exercises till June 13 and since then the deal was awaiting clearance from the BTRC.

In contrast, the PGCB proposal suffered mainly from high cost options. The BTBT sat with the

PGCB over this backup line before it saw the Bangla Phone deal as the PGCB already had optical fibre network set in its high tension power transmission lines. But the PGCB pursued a "revenue sharing" proposal under which the BTBT will have to share its earnings from the submarine cable, and it backtracked from the idea.

Later, the PGCB proposal was revised and it is now seeking Tk 17.5 crore as charge for five years, Tk 85.58 lakh as one-time upfront fee, Tk 5.22 lakh as administrative cost and a refundable performance guarantee of Tk 1 crore. This cost totals at Tk 19.4 crore. But in addition, the BTBT will have to install linking devices in Daudkandi and cables at multiple points at a cost of Tk 3.42 crore.

In this regard, the BTBT is considering payment of this sum out of earnings from the submarine cable.

Besides these two proposals, the BTBT tried to obtain other offers from different cell phone companies. A committee headed by Mukhlesur Rahman, BTBT Director-1, Mohakhali, was formed in April. On May 13, the BTBT sought offers from Sheba Telecom, Warid Telecom, Grameenphone, TM International and Pacific Bangladesh Telecom. But none of these companies could make an offer with complete swapping solution.

This committee then viewed that only Bangla Phone made a proper swapping proposal, which will be free of cost. Presently, the BTBT is using 2,799 Mbps voice and 1,244 Mbps data bandwidth through the optical fibre and submarine cable lines. The submarine cable's capacity allocated for the BTBT is equivalent to more than 14 Gigabyte.

The optical fibre line is 433 km long and installed a few feet below road-side surfaces. Since the line was installed, the BTBT shut down the line eight times for maintenance work, and there were seven cases of accidental disruption of the line. The remaining seven rounds are being termed acts of sabotage.

Intelligence and law enforcement agencies, including Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), have been deployed two months ago to find out the culprits. But till now, no breakthrough has been achieved in this regard.

The BTBT invested \$35.1 million for the submarine cable and it will earn nearly Tk 200 crore (\$28 million) from it this year alone.

## Slum dwellers

FROM PAGE 1

assets, but somehow we are getting by. But the people hit by the cyclone have lost everything," said this compassionate young woman, referring to the damage caused by Sidr that ripped through the southern coast of the country on November 15 leaving over 3000 dead.

Thirty-year old widow Hazara only makes Tk 1200 a month working as a domestic aid in three houses. She starts work at dawn everyday and finishes late in the evening. Hazara said she donated 40 pieces of clothes including three saris and a bed sheet.

Hazara, a mother of four, said, "We are poor, but the cyclone-hit people are poorer now. They have nothing, no home, clothes or food to eat. We poor people can realise how painful it can be to be in a situation like that."

Khadeza, another 30-year old working as a domestic aid, said, "We as human beings must help the Sidr victims, because we may also become victims of similar disasters at any time."

Like these three women, Shamsunnahar, Hanufa Begum, Abdur Rashid, Abdur Razzak Mollah, Sheuif, Shafia, Abu Bakar Siddiqui and many others extended their compassionate hands towards the Sidr victims, lovingly donating their hard earned belongings.

Karail slum, an almost isolated place within the capital city because

## Acid victim

FROM PAGE 16

married Mukta four years ago and took a dowry of Tk 40,000.

"We had to sell our cultivable land to arrange the marriage of our only sister," he said, adding that Swapna made a further demand of Tk 50,000 after six months. "Our father is a fish trader and did not have the ability to arrange another Tk 50,000," Joydev said.

Mukta's father Dhiren Haldar filed a case with Shibabala Police Station on November 19.

Her parents complained that Swapna's family members, who have been absconding since the night of the incident, often come to the nearby market and threatening Mukta's father to withdraw the case. They said they informed the police about it but the police are rather "indifferent" to their problem.

Officer-in-Charge of Shibabala PS Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star over telephone that no accused could be arrested yet but that they are trying to catch them.

## JAILBREAK ATTEMPT

## 3 JMB men sent to Dhaka jail from Comilla

UNB, Comilla

Three out of five JMB activists, who made an attempt to escape from the district jail on Sunday night, were sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday morning for security reason.

Jail authorities said Nabil Rahman, son of JMB's executed chief Abdur Rahman, Shamim and Redwan were sent to Dhaka Central Jail by a microbus at 10:00am.

Five JMB activists--Nabil Rahman, Shamim, Redwan, Rongil and Minhaj--made an attempt to escape from the district jail. But local people and jail police chased and caught them shortly after the jailbreak.

The five activists of the banned Islamist outfit sustained injuries during the jailbreak attempt.

Of them, Nabil, Shamim and Redwan were first admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital and then sent to the district jail hospital, while Rongil and Minhaj were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

## TAX EVASION CASE

## Sylhet's Ariful Haque's trial starts Dec 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The trial of detained BNP leader Ariful Haque Chowdhury in a tax evasion case will begin on December 10.

Sylhet District and Sessions Judge Abdul Gafur yesterday fixed the date after charges were framed against Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful, a close aide of former finance minister M Saifur Rahman.

Earlier, charge framing in the case was deferred three times as the accused could not be produced before the court from Comilla Central Jail.

Abdur Rahman, additional assistant commissioner of taxes, filed the case against Ariful on November 6 for evading tax.

The plaintiff alleged that Ariful had evaded tax of Tk 37 lakh from fiscal years 2002-03 to 2005-06 by concealing wealth over Tk 1.56 crore.

Ariful, who is behind bars now, was also accused in two extortion cases.

## UN official due today

UNB, Dhaka

UN Assistant Secretary General Jane Holl Lute arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to see for herself the relief activities in some cyclone-hit areas.

During her stay in Bangladesh, Jane Holl will also meet Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed and Principal Staff Officer Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury.

She will give lecture at National Defence College and visit Rajendrapur Cantonment.

The UN assistant secretary general will leave Dhaka on December 3.

## Bali conference

FROM PAGE 1

disasters caused by global warming and place demand to set up an "International Adaptation Centre" in Bangladesh for conducting research on climate change.

He said the delegation would describe the people's sufferings and troubles wrought by natural disasters like cyclone, flood, and droughts due to climate change.

Karim said they would talk about how climate change has put the lives of thousands of people of the country's coastal belt at risk.

"We want to explain how natural disasters hamper the progress of a developing country like Bangladesh time and again," he said.

Bangladesh will also demand that the developed countries reduce green house gas emission according to the Kyoto Protocol, the adviser said.

Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir, Director General of Directorate of Environment Dr Khandakar Rashidul Haq, and Country Director of IUCN Dr Ainun Nishat, among others, were present.

The delegation will also depict the massive destructions wrought by cyclone 'Sidr' at the Sundarbans.

Dr Ainun Nishat said Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country. But cyclone 'Sidr' was caused by climate change.

"If we want to prove it and seek compensation for that, we have to conduct research," he added.

The Bangladesh delegation left for Bali yesterday.

## More foreign aid

FROM PAGE 16

organisations in UK donated over 1,21,000 pound sterling to Chief Adviser's Relief Fund.

Meanwhile, to ensure faster aid delivery, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has started sending emergency relief materials to Bangladesh by chartered planes for the cyclone-affected people.

An Air Canada cargo plane, carrying 42,600 blankets and 24,000 jerry cans for the cyclone victims, arrived at Zia International Airport on Wednesday night, said a press statement.

A consignment of fishing boats will arrive within a few days to help the fishermen start their livelihood anew, said British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury.

The United Kingdom has so far pledged \$14 million for the Sidr victims.

Anwar Choudhury yesterday handed over some 45,000 litres purified water, supplied by British business firm Duncan Brothers in aid of the cyclone victims, to Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Major General Sina Ibn Jamali at Tejgaon BAF helipad.

At the programme, the British envoy said it might take two to three months to restore normal life in the cyclone-hit areas. Managing Director of Duncan Brothers (Bangladesh) Imran Ahmed, among others, was present, according to UNB.

About rebuilding the Sundarbans, the envoy hoped that many donors would come forward to rebuild the biggest mangrove forest in the world.

Meanwhile, Abdur Sattar Edhi, a philanthropist and founder of Edhi International Foundation UK, personally donated a cheque for 100,000 pound sterling to Acting High Commissioner in London Ashraf Uddin on November 21, the news agency reported.

One day's pay and allowances of the officials of the Bangladesh High Commission amounting to Tk 1,50,093 have been remitted to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund.

Individuals and organisations contributed over 21,000 pound sterling for the cyclone-affected people, a release of Bangladesh High Commission in London said.

A press statement of Indian High

Commission in Dhaka said total assistance from India now stands at US\$36 million and more assistance from the country is underway.

ActionAid Bangladesh in a press release yesterday expressed concern over outbreak of diarrhoea in the cyclone-affected areas.

Besides the ongoing humanitarian assistance, ActionAid has started its community-based psycho-social care and support programme for thousands of survivors.

Meanwhile, popular singer Runa Laila will stage a concert in New York tomorrow (Sunday) to raise funds for the cyclone-affected people of Bangladesh, reports news agency ENA from New York.

## Int'l community

FROM PAGE 16

date does not reflect the need on the ground.

"Canada must step up to the plate and provide more assistance," he said adding that he would present a report to the House of Commons requesting immediate aid.

He said he has already urged his government to introduce a protocol to speed up the family class immigration in times of crisis in the home country.

Earlier in the day, Karygiannis met Food and Disaster Management Adviser Tapan Chowdhury and discussed the programme being undertaken for the cyclone victims.

Speaking at the press conference, Humanity First team leader Ibrahim M Noonan said they intend to work on a long-term basis for rehabilitation of the people in the coastal districts.

"Schools are destroyed and there is a lack of good doctors. We have plans to improve schools and set up medical centres," he told journalists.

The organisation is providing medical assistance for trauma, minor injuries and disease prevention, hot meals, food packages and drinking water to the affected people.

Humanity First Coordinator for Relief Operation in Bangladesh Abdool Rahman, Muhammad Abdul Hadi from Humanity First UK and Dr Abdul Haleem of Humanity First Canada were also present at the press conference.

## Sector commanders

FROM PAGE 16

Khandakar said they would launch a mass campaign to create awareness among people across the country to press home their demands.

He said they would be happy if the incumbent caretaker government tries the war criminals.

If it is not done by the present government, it has to be carried out by the government that comes to power afterwards, he added.

He said their legal advisory committee would finalise the matter of filing any case against the war criminals.

The forum will hold a grand rally for the Liberation War veterans in the capital by December 16. But the venue is yet to be finalised, he said.