

## Cry for baby food

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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, sari, 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 Sidi affected villages are veritable carbon copies. During a visit to a relief centre in Matibanga 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 Ameena 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 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

## Sidi victim killed in stampede during relief distribution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Sidi victim, Siddique Rahman, 35, was killed in a stampede triggered by scramble during relief distribution at Char Baleswar village under Zia Nagar upazila of Pirojpur district yesterday.

Locals said Siddique died on the spot as hundreds of cyclone-hit people scrambled for receiving relief goods in front of a local madrasa at around 3:00pm.

Local journalists quoted Siddique's mother and wife as saying that they received Tk 1000 and 10 Kg rice as relief since Sidi destroyed their house and other properties.

The body was sent to Zia Nagar Police Station.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and the officer-in-charge of Zia Nagar Police Station were not available for comment.

## Road accident

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The five staffs were going to the residence of the factory owner at Dhamondi in the capital.

The critically injured microbus driver was admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Police seized the bus, but its driver and helper managed to flee.

POLICE ACTION

Some 20 people were injured as police last night batoned people strolling around the Shaheed Minar in Narayanganj town.

Angry locals later laid a tie to the police for an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Abu Bakar of Narayanganj Police Station for allegedly leading the police action. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rescued the ASI after about half an hour of sieging.

Locals also demanded punishment to the police personnel responsible for the incident.

Sources said a police team led by the ASI swooped on the people on Shaheed Minar premises at 9:00pm for "unknown reasons".

The police action angered locals when women and children got injured.

## Dr Kamal

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Nazrul Islam and Justice KM Sobhan were present at the inaugural.

"We formulated our constitution with a view to making the nation free from corruption and discrimination. But unfortunately, we could not yet establish our nation that way," he said.

Prof Nazrul Islam said a "university anti-corruption commission" is required to remove corruption and irregularities from the public and private universities.

## Aman output

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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 this year, compared to the 0.70 tonnes yield of last year's.

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  
a sense 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 Sharmakhola of Bagerhat and Pathargata of Barguna 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 Sharmakhola, one of the worst affected upazilas, at 3:00pm. He will then fly to Pathargata 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 Bangladeshi counterpart Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury 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.

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.

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.

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

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

## 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 BTTB 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 BTTB not to pen a deal with this phone company.

A committee headed by Mukhlesur Rahman, BTTB Director-1, Mohakhali, was formed in April. On May 13, the BTTB sought offers from Sheba Telecom, Warid Telecom, Grameenphone, TM International and Pacific Bangladesh Telecom. But in addition, the BTTB 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 BTTB is considering payment of this sum out of earnings from the submarine cable.

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This committee then viewed that only Bangla Phone made a proposal for swapping, which will be free of cost.

Presently, the BTTB 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 BTTB is equivalent to more than 14 Gigabits.

The optical fibre line is 433 km long and installed a few feet below road-side surfaces.

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 BTTB. 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 swap it.

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

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.

## Slum dwellers

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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 Sidi that ripped through the southern coast of the country on November 15 leaving over 3000 dead.

However, these down trodden people of this city have shone through the dust and grime in their lives, with the generosity of their hearts.

M Sekander Ali, president of the mosque committee of the slum, handed over the truckload of clothes to Brac authorities. "We shall be happy if these clothes can bring some joy to at least some people in the cyclone-hit areas," he said.

Brac, which runs some education, health and micro-credit programmes in the slum, has appreciated their donation.

Khadeza, another 30-year-old working as a domestic aide in three houses. She starts work at dawn everyday and finishes late in the evening. Hazeria said she donated 40 pieces of clothes including three saris and a bedsheet.

Hazeria, 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."

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Like these three women, Shamsunnahar, Hanifa Begum, Abdur Rashid, Abdur Razzak Molla, Sheuli, Shafiq, Abu Bakar Siddique and many others extended their compassionate hands towards the Sidi victims, lovingly donating their hard earned belongings.

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

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 Reform's Commission to restore the business community's confidence. But despite the measures, the businesses are still in uncertainty about political situation in future, observed Dr Bakhshi.

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

Officials at the Archaeology Department said there has been a proposal submitted long ago for acquiring the land around the temple to protect it. But there has been no initiative to renovate the heritage site for want of adequate funds.

The officials, however, still believe that it is possible to restore the glory of the temple if the funds are allocated.

The delegation will also depict the massive destructions wrought by cyclone 'Sidi' at the temple.

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

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