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Star BUSINESS

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Cyclone Sidr causes Tk130cr livestock loss

Interest-free bank loans for farmers recommended

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Livestock, farms and feeds worth more than Tk 130 crore were destroyed in cyclone Sidr in November, according to the final estimate compiled by the Department of Livestock Services.

The damage is seen as devastating for individual farmers, but experts said the overall impact of livestock losses on the country's economy would be limited.

According to the final estimate, Sidr led to the death of 1,07,923 cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats and 25,73,019 poultry birds, along with the destruction of over six thousand livestock and poultry farms. The cyclone also caused losses of feeds for both livestock and poultry, the government agency said.

"We have recently submitted our findings on losses and have recommended measures to improve the situation in the Sidr affected areas," said Dr Santi Ranjan Das, director of Department of Livestock Services.

He said the department had recommended the government to help farmers get interest free bank loans, free feed and fodder seeds, and free vaccination and treatment of livestock.

The final report, which estimates that total losses stood at Tk 132.26 crore, is based on data collected during the period from November 16, the day after the cyclone hit, to December 30.

M Asaduzzaman, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies said that losses of livestock, especially cattle, would affect paddy farming in the region next season as cattle are used to pull ploughs.

"But overall there will be a little appreciable effect in the context of the national economy," he said.

According to an estimate by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the growth and contribution of livestock sector to national economy has been on the downturn since the fiscal year



PHOTO: AFP

A file photo shows a man sits on a dead cow as he collects cattle carcasses from a canal at Tafuli in Bagherhat district November 17, 2007, two days after cyclone Sidr. Livestock, farms and feeds worth more than Tk 130 crore were destroyed in the devastating cyclone, according to the final estimate compiled by the Department of Livestock Services. The damage is seen as devastating for individual farmers, but experts said the overall impact of livestock losses on the country's economy would be limited.

Centre for Policy Dialogue's Senior Research Fellow Uttam Dev however said losses in Sidr areas would have a negative impact on the overall livestock sector in Bangladesh.

A rehabilitation programme should be taken to minimise this long term negative effect, he said.

Uttam said farmers who had reared livestock by taking loans from micro-credit institutions

were now under great pressure, as they could not pay back their loans. "Unless the government and related organisations come forward to rehabilitate the livestock rearing farmers they will not be able to cope with the situation," he said.

Farmers who have lost their livestock should be provided with calves," he added.

Md A Saleque, general secretary of World Poultry Science

Association, Bangladesh and also head of BRAC's agro-business and salt industry, feared that there would be negative growth in the poultry sector due to the triple effects of last year's twin floods, Sidr and bird flu.

"There is also a possibility that a portion of people who were employed in the sector earlier may not regain their jobs," he said.

Sources: Department of Livestock Services, Dhaka

Livestock killed in 17 Sidr-hit districts

Name	Killed
Cow	37,391
Buffalo	7,211
Goat	59,804
Sheep	3517
Hen	22,19,328
Duck	3,53,691

Sources: Department of Livestock Services, Dhaka

Record \$6.56b remittance in '07

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladeshis working abroad, a key source of economic stability for the impoverished South Asian country, sent home a record 6.56 billion dollars in 2007, officials said Sunday.

The record remittances totalled 1.1 billion dollars more than the five million workers sent home in 2006, said the executive director of the

country's central bank, Yasin Ali. "It's a tremendous achievement and it is mainly due to a record number of people going abroad with jobs last year and increased inflows through formal banking channels," he said.

Another 230,000 people received work permits and immigration clearance and were now waiting to take jobs in the Gulf, Malaysia and Singapore, he added.

The record remittances also pushed up Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves to 5.5 billion dollars, the highest since the country gained independence in 1971.



PHOTO: STANCHART

Standard Chartered Bank has recently opened an off-shore Trade Support Centre at the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) to serve the trade financing requirements of the EPZ business community. Brig Gen Ashraf Abdullah Yussuf, executive chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza), inaugurated the Centre while Osman Morad, chief executive officer of the bank, was present among others.

Pakistan to hit economic targets despite unrest: Minister

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan will still hit its economic targets this year despite a wave of unrest and turmoil following the assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto, the finance minister told AFP on Sunday.

Pakistan's central bank

on July 1. Elections are scheduled for February 18, having been pushed back six weeks after Bhutto's killing.

Pakistan's financial year begins

on July 1. Elections are scheduled for February 18, having been pushed back six weeks after Bhutto's killing.

"If there is any risk to the economy that is the political risk," Shah said. "If there is reconciliation and

consensus on promoting the economy among political parties, we can achieve all economic targets," he added.

An increase in global oil prices up to 100 dollars per barrel, which has jacked up costs in Pakistan, has not yet been passed on to users but the government will be unable to maintain the price indefinitely.

"We are giving a subsidy of 14 billion rupees (23 million dollars) on oil prices, but now we will have to gradually pass the cost to the consumers," Shah said.

SEC may allow Summit Power to issue rights share

UNB, Dhaka

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) might consider the request of Summit Power Ltd. to review the rights issue subject to submission of particulars of company directors.

SEC has informed the company in this regard, Dhaka Stock Exchange said yesterday.

Earlier, Summit Power had requested the capital market regulator to allow it to issue right shares after one of its directors, who was a loan defaulter, resigned from the company's board.

The SEC had expressed its inability to accord approval to the company's application for issuing four right shares against every five shares as per the decision of the EGM of the company held on September 29, 2007.

Fazlul Haque, the independent director of Summit Power, resigned after the regulatory authority expressed its inability due to his inherited loan from one of his family businesses.

India's Jet Airways launches Gulf operations

ANN / THE STATESMAN

Jet Airways has become the first Indian private carrier to operate in the Gulf sector on Saturday, launching four daily direct flights from India to Kuwait and Bahrain.

"People travelling in this sector can now expect better services with Jet Airways commencing its services," director general of civil aviation, Kanu Gohain said here inaugurating the Delhi-Kuwait-Delhi flight.

The other three flights launched on Saturday are the Kochi-Kuwait-Kochi, Kochi-Bahrain-Kochi and Mumbai-Bahrain-Mumbai.

"With the launch of these services, there will be 1,500 additional seats every week in the Gulf sector," Gohain said.

There are around five million expatriate Indians in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Speaking on the occasion, PK Sinha, Jet Airways vice-president for international relations and industry affairs, said: "This is a landmark event in the history of our airline. Our expansion in the Gulf sector will be rapid."

Stating that the Gulf has always been a promising sector in the airline industry, Sinha said: "We have noticed that most airlines operating through the Gulf sector are not primarily focusing on people travelling on this sector but on passengers going to the UK and Europe using the Gulf as a hub. We aim to fill this gap."

He added that the airline would provide passengers on its Gulf routes high standard services.

"We'll create and provide a standard in the Gulf sector as high as we provide in our flights to New York, London and Brussels."

There have been frequent allegations of shoddy service by national carrier Air India on the Gulf routes.

Reliance mulls power generation overseas

ANN / THE STATESMAN

Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group's Reliance Power plans to foray into foreign countries for power generation.

"I do not believe India alone will be our domain," Reliance Power chairman, Anil Ambani told reporters here on Saturday while announcing the company's initial public offer aimed at raising close to \$3 million, the country's largest IPO.

"We are hoping that the Singapore Government will soon allow private partnership in power generation. We also want to have presence in the West Asian countries. Unfortunately, I cannot reveal our exact plans for foreign forays now," Ambani said.

Relating to a question on the likelihood of tariff reduction in power, he said "electricity tariffs are likely to come down in the country once the power demand is fulfilled."

Japan beckons local medicine makers

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Bangladesh has a good chance of exporting generic drugs and non-prescribed medicines to Japan as companies in the world's second largest economy focus on producing new patent protected drugs.

"Japanese companies produce only five percent of generic products of its total annual output which creates vacuum for companies from other countries," Takanori Yurimoto, director of Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (JPMA), said at a meeting with Bangladesh's commercial councilor to Japan.

A drug becomes generic when its patent rights expire. Generic drugs are cheap since manufacturers do not have to bear investment

costs of developers. New drugs are developed under patent protection.

A foreign applicant needs to submit necessary data to qualify for Japanese market to Japanese Government Agency, Yurimoto said, adding that the agency examines the data relating to factory outline, equipment, manufacturing practices, personnel, post marketing safety and clinical trial.

JPMA, a volunteer organisation, helps developing countries establish efficient drug administrations apart from developing distribution and quality control systems through training and funds.

The Bangladesh commercial councilor to Japan, Abul Mansur Md Faizullah, met Yurimoto to find ways to promote Bangladeshi

medicines to Japan.

Yurimoto also said Bangladeshi drug manufacturers need to comply with all the government policy directives in addition to the requirements made by private entities like hospital authorities and doctors' association.

Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI) President SM Shafuzzaman said Bangladeshi companies have the ability to comply with all standards requirement in any country.

Shafuzzaman said Bangladeshi companies are interested to make inroad into Japanese pharmaceutical market.

Bangladesh exported pharmaceutical products worth US\$28.15 million to around 65 countries in 2006-07 fiscal year.

Stocks slump as investors wait for Jamuna, Meghna shares

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Dhaka and Chittagong stocks slumped yesterday, as investors are now waiting to buy shares in state-run Jamuna Oil and Meghna Petroleum, which will make their debut on January 9 and 14 respectively.

The DSE General Index dropped by 50.16 points, or 1.68 percent, ending the day at 2929.32 points, while the DSE All Share Price Index dipped by 40.02 points, or 1.59 percent, finishing at 2468.1 points.

Of the issues traded on the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), 14 advanced and 91 declined with five unchanged. A total of 1,175,494 shares and bonds worth Tk 16.15 crore changed hands.

"The investors were in a selling mood during the last couple of trading days, as they are saving money to invest on Jamuna and Meghna securities," said a broker.

There is a huge demand for new shares, especially the government ones, in the market, he said.

The stock market witnessed

such a downturn when another two state-owned power companies, Dhaka Electric Supply Company and Power Grid Company of Bangladesh, made their debut on the stock exchanges in 2006, marketinsiders said.

Jamuna will release 13.50 lakh shares worth Tk 13.50 crore, while Meghna will release 12 lakh shares worth Tk 12 crore. The face value of each share has been fixed at Tk 10.

The shares to be offloaded through direct listing rules with Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges amount to 30 percent of the two companies' paid-up capital.

The initiative is a part of the government's broader goal to corporatise state-owned entities in an effort to increase their efficiency.



Chairman, vice chairman of Continental Ins

The first-ever state run mobile phone operator witnessed a dull subscription since its commercial debut in March 2005.

According to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), Teletalk has been able to reach only a 0.76million subscription base up to November, 2007, whereas its close rival Wardi Telecom International reached out 1.95million customers, although it entered the market in 2007. A Teletalk high official said, "Definitely it is embarrassing for us to have only 2percent market share."

The fund for the Teletalk expansion programme will be mobilised through floating IPO in the capital market.

The public holding company has already established its network foothold in 336 upazilas of 61 districts with an expenditure of Tk800 crore.

At present he is the chairman and managing director of ICC Ltd and Ideal Home Builders Ltd.

Tech body to study feasibility of Teletalk expansion project

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Board of Directors of Teletalk yesterday formed a technical committee to evaluate its much awaited Tk550crore network expansion project.

The seven-member body, headed by Professor Satya Prasad Majumder of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the Buet (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology), will recommend for necessary technical procurement for expansion after a feasibility study.

Majumder told The Daily Star last night, "The committee will also examine how such procurement will be completed to expand the state-run cell phone operator's network."

The Teletalk Board approved this project in November eyeing to reach out to 18 lakh more subscribers by the end of 2008.

Sl No.	Tender Enquiry No. and date	Commodity	Date of opening of bid	Price of bid documents (non-refundable)	Tender security (refundable)

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