

1.5 lakh families in Bhola outside cyclone shelter coverage

Many offshore islands have no shelter

RAFIQUL ISLAM, Barisal

Several lakh people living in the coastal areas of Bhola district are highly vulnerable to cyclones and tidal surges as the shelters constructed the purpose are too inadequate to accommodate the large number of people during natural disasters.

Around 1.5 lakh families living in chars (island) of high-risk coastal areas in seven upazilas under Bhola district are outside cyclone shelter coverage, said sources at Cyclone Preparedness Programme office in Barisal.

After super cyclone 'Sidr' wreaked havoc in the southern region of the country in November 2007, the government took an initiative to build 20 cyclone shelter-cum schools in seven upazilas of Bhola district but it is too inadequate to meet the requirement.

According to the report of a survey conducted by district Red Crescent Society, there are no shelter centres in Ramdasapur, Ramdevpur, Gameshpur, Char Sitaram, Baraipur, Char Pangachhia, Char Chakimara, Char Shyampur, Char Hossain, Gazir Char under Sadar upazila.

Same is the situation in Madanpur Char, Togbi, Medua, Neyamatpur, Bhavanipur, Hajipur under Daulatkhan upazila, Char Patila, Char Rizvi, Char Shamsuddin under Borhanuddin upazila, Char Nasrin, Char Mozammel, Char Tozammel, Char Luxmi under Tamijuddin upazila, Char Hasina, Char Alam, Char Ashraf, Char Sikender under Char Fashion upazila, Kalatolir Char and Dalchar under Monpura upazila.

Other char areas without cyclone shelters include Dhal Char, Char Kukri Mukri, Char Motahar, Char

Sakuchia and Char Zahiruddin.

On an average, about 5,000 families live in each of the chars.

There are shelter centres at Char Zahiruddin under Tajumuddin upazila, Char Nizam under Monpura upazila, Char Kukurmari, Dalchar and Char Patila under Char Fashion upazila but their accommodation capacity is much less than the population.

Char Nizam has one cyclone shelter for six thousand people and Nijhum Dwip has four cyclone shelters for 20 thousand people.

For 1,04,000 inhabitants of Manpura upazila of island district Bhola, there are only 28 cyclone shelters and two matir kella (multi-storied mud houses) to accommodate only 22,400 people.

In Char Fashion upazila of the same district, only 15 cyclone shelters and 18 mud houses are available for

its 4,15,520 residents.

According to Cyclone Preparedness Programme office, a typical cyclone shelter can accommodate around 800 people but as many as 3,000 people huddle in a centre when faced with the menace.

In absence of adequate cyclone shelters, the people in the coastal areas including Bhola district pass their days amid panic when there is warning for natural disasters like cyclone and tidal surge.

The situation is even worse in remote islands off the coast.

Construction of a large number of shelter centres is needed to save the large number of people from the menace.

Md Ershad Ali, an official at district Relief and Rehabilitation Office, said the department had not got any sanction for construction of more cyclone shelters in the coastal island areas.



PHOTO: STAR

An earthen seal inscribed with obscure writings, left, and an earthen pot found during the recent archaeological excavation at Parharpur in Naogaon district.

Earthen seal with ancient inscription found

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, back from Paharpur, Naogaon

Archaeologists recently found a broken clay seal with illegible ancient inscriptions during excavation at "Paharpur Buddhist Monastery" site in Naogaon district.

They also dug out other artefacts including unknown earthen pots from the world heritage site. The Department of Archeology carried out the month-long excavation at the site that ended on April 16.

Naheed Sultana, a member of the excavation team, said most of the artefacts have been found during excavation from 50cm to 3.50m under the existing ground level on the north, east and west sides of the temple.

A huge number of broken and intact unknown earthen pots have been found under 2.5m from the existing ground level

along with other cultural accumulation including ash, charcoal and several cultural materials, Naheed said.

She said two lines of illegible ancient inscriptions are most probably Proto-Bengali style. A thick sand liar has been found during excavation, she added.

Last year, the archaeologists found ancient brick-built structures of Gupta Dynasty under the basement of the main temple on the northeastern side, said Md Mahabub-ul-Alam, a member of the team.

"Recently found artefacts, especially earthen pots, show that there was a habitation in the site before Gupta Dynasty", he said.

Two lines of inscriptions in the two parts were found just below the Buddhist image. "Once it was a big size clay seal", said Mahabub.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKHI/STAR

From left: A worker at Ghutabachha cyclone shelter in Patharghata under Barguna district asking locals to move for safety following yesterday's cyclone forecast, members of a family head for a shelter, and a family lives at a house built on platform as coastal Madanpurchar in Daulatkhan upazila under Bhola district lacks cyclone shelter.

23 more BDR jawans held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Rab yesterday arrested 23 more BDR jawans at Rifles Training Centre and School (RTCS) at Satkania in connection with the Pilkhana mutiny.

Later, the arrestees were taken to Rab-7 Headquarters in Chittagong city.

Movement for ensuring war criminals' trial to continue

Pledge on Jhathibhanga massacre day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Freedom fighters and different political and social organisations in Thakurgaon district yesterday observed

'Jhathibhanga mass killing day' with a renewed pledge to continue movement for ensuring trial of war criminals.

On this day in 1971, thousands of people from Jagannathpur, Gorea, Shukanpokhori, and Balia unions under Sadar upazila left their homes to go to India to save their lives from the Pakistani occupation army and their local collaborators, Razakars.

As they gathered at Jhathibhanga village in Sadar upazila, Pakistani soldiers, informed by Razakars and Al Badrs, rushed to the spot and killed about 3,500 people including women and children and buried them at a mass grave there.

After a silent procession and placing floral wreaths at the monument built in memory of the martyrs at Jhathibhanagar, the participants took oath to continue their movement for ensuring trial of war criminals including the perpetrators of Jathibhanga massacre.

College teacher Julfiqar Ali Bhutto, the main initiator for observance of the day, led the oath.

Later a discussion was held on the monument premises with Azizur Rashid in the chair.

"On the day, Pakistani

occupation army and their local collaborators beheaded many people in the area. All my family members were killed before my eyes. They also hacked me on the neck and back. As I laid down, the criminals left me for dead," Sapandranath, 65, of Jhathibhanga village, who luckily survived the horrific massacre, said at the discussion.

"After 38 years of independence, this is first time that we are observing the day formally at Jhathibhanga village. As the criminals who led the massacre remained as influential people in the area, no one dared to take initiative for observing the day here," he said.

Among others, district Awami League Organising Secretary advocate Fazlu, freedom fighter Abdul Karim and union Awami League leader Abul Hossain addressed the meeting.

On the same day in 1971, Razakars and Al Badrs killed about 100 people in Pirganj municipality, Kosharaniganj, Khongaon and Sindhurai unions of Pirganj upazila when they were on the way to India.

Golam Mostafa, principal of Pirganj College, and Dr Sujat Ali, president of Pirganj upazila Awami League, were among the martyrs.

One killed in Gazipur clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A youth was killed another seriously injured in a clash over rickshaw van fare at Hayat Khair Chal village under Sreepur upazila yesterday.

The dead is Abdul Hannan, a rickshaw van puller, and the injured is Asadullah, a passer-by.

The clash ensued yesterday as a sequel to an altercation between Hannan and Mozammel Haque over van fare on Thursday.

Hannan was talking with his cousin Jasimuddin near his house in the morning. All on a sudden, Hashem, Abu Taher, Barek, Abu Taleb, Mojammeel, Helal and Akter jointly attacked Hannan with deadly weapons. He sustained serious injuries and died on the spot. At this stage, Asadullah came forward but he too sustained injuries and later was admitted to Bangladesh Heart Institute.

JMB man remanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An activist of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB), who was arrested on Monday from his house at village Kushkhali in Sadar upazila, was placed on a five-day remand on Thursday.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Samsul Arefin passed the order after hearing. Acting on a tip-off, members of the Detective Branch (DB) police arrested Alauddin alias Ala Hujur, 38, son of Md Disharat Ali of village Kushkhali in Sadar upazila, at his house at Kushkhali.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The government has allocated Tk 2.65 crore for six out of seven state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt for purchase of raw jute.

Aleem Jute Mills at Atra in Khulna city has been left out of this allocation of fund for reason yet to be known, said Gazi Masum, convenor of Jute Mills Development Action Committee (JMDAC).

He said the fund is very small even to meet the need for a week to purchase raw jute.

CBA President Khalilur Rahman said Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills has got Tk 75 lakh for the purpose. The unit needs Tk 12 lakh everyday to purchase raw jute to keep its production normal, he added.

According to a source at BJMC zonal office, the managements of six state-owned jute mills received their shares of allocation of fund on Thursday.

Accordingly, Crescent Jute Mills has got Tk 50 lakh, Platinum Jute Mills Tk 75 lakh, Star Jute Mills Tk 50 lakh, Eastern Jute Mills Tk 25 lakh, Jessore Jute Industry Tk 40 lakh and Carpeting

Jute Mills Tk 25 lakh.

Workers of Aleem Jute Mills yesterday staged a demonstration protesting non-allocation of fund for the unit to purchase raw jute.

They also put up a barricade on the Khulna-Jessore highway disrupting traffic for an hour from 10:00am.

Meanwhile, the 17-day agitation programme launched by the workers of the state-owned jute mills to press home their 17-point demand ended yesterday with a threat to paralyse the jute mills if 16 other demands are not met by April 30.

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Two murdered in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Two people were murdered in separate incidents in Palashbari and Gobindagnaj upazilas yesterday.

Kawser Ali, 23, a local trader, came under attack by a gang of miscreants while he was travelling along with his friend Mithu Mia towards Palashbari from Ghoraghat by a motorcycle.

Police said when the two reached Hossainpur, the gang stopped them and stabbed Kawser. He died

instantly.

As locals came to their rescue, the criminals fled away. Later, police arrested Mithu on suspicion.

In Gobindagnaj upazila, Badsha Mia, 70, was killed by a gang of assailants at village Kutrapara.

The gang swooped on Badsha while he was working at his boro field near his house. They slit his throat and left the scene.

Later, police recovered the body and sent it to Gaibandha Hospital for autopsy.

No one was arrested as of 6:00pm yesterday.

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