

\$1,149m sought

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At the meeting, the development partners were apprised of the losses caused by Cyclone Aila that hit the country on May 25, and the measures that should be taken for mid-term and long-term solutions.

The cyclone killed 190 people, damaged over five lakh houses, around 1,400 km of embankments, crops on about 3.5 lakh acres of land, around 5,000 educational and other institutions, 8,800 km of roads and 157 bridges and culverts.

Of the \$1,149 million assistance sought yesterday, \$435 million is for cluster villages for landless people, \$381 million for reconstruction of houses, \$62 million for reconstruction of embankments, \$56 million for restoration of livelihood, \$200 million for building cyclone shelters, \$12 million for displaced people and \$3 million for restoration of water supply systems.

Razzaque said climate change is causing disasters with increasing intensity. Aila had a speed of 80 to 90 km per hour and whipped up a devastating tidal surge, he mentioned.

But the government faced the disaster with domestic resources, and did not seek global help at that time, he said. "It was actually our strategy."

The minister said, "We wanted to take development partners' help for permanent solutions. So, we now seek their help."

In reply to a question about response to the appeal, he said donors' representatives present at yesterday's meeting would now write to their governments or their headquarters.

"But some of them said the assistance they gave following the cyclone Sidr in 2007 was not best utilised. We told them there was a special type of government (caretaker government) at that time, but we are an elected government, and we will certainly best utilise any funds," Razzaque said.

Dipu Moni said Bangladesh is among the worst victims of climate change, and has a moral right to claim assistance to face disasters.

Replying to question, the foreign minister said the meeting did not discuss the issue of a compensation for climate change. "The developed world must cut carbon emission, and their fund to mitigate impact of climate change must be adequate."

Asked if the donors kept their aid commitments following Sidr, she said many of them surely kept.

Bangladesh wins

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Mahbub Mazumder said, "Our boys and girls are meritorious, they have worked hard and got the results. Samin and Nazia both are very happy after getting the medal but everyone of the team is a bit upset as another member Tarik Adnan missed a medal just for one point."

The result of prize distribution was approved yesterday at the final meeting of the jury board at the Jacob University Campus Centre in Bremen.

The participants who secured points between 14 and 23 were given bronze, those who got 24 to 31 won silver and those who secured 32 and above were given gold medals.

Samir got 17 and Nazia 14 to secure bronze medals for Bangladesh. Besides, Tarik Adnan got 13, Haque Muhammad Ishfaq 10, Pranar Rahman Khan, 9 and Kazi Hasan Zubair 4, while the total team point stands at 64.

Bangladesh made its IMO debut in Mexico in 2005. Since then teams from Bangladesh take part in the contest every year.

Ireland, India, the UK, Sri Lanka and Indonesia have congratulated the Bangladesh team for getting the medals for the first time.

President of Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury said, "The whole thing seems astonishing. Our goal was to achieve a medal by 2010. I

28 BNP houses

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At a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on housing ministry, the sub-committee said these 28 houses were sold to BNP-Jamaat MPs and ministers and their relatives at prices much lower than the market prices at the time.

Citing an example, it said a house was sold to Shahrin Islam Tuhin, nephew of the then prime minister Khaleda Zia, at Tk 4.37 crore whereas the market price of that house was at least Tk 30 crore.

ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, chief of the standing committee, said the massive irregularities in allotting houses caused losses of crores of government money.

Hills vanishing

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adjacent to the beach. The DC has assured them of stopping these activities, she said.

A worker preferring anonymity said they are working on a daily wage basis to fill the plots. Earth is being cut from the hills in the west side of the hotel motel zone, Kolatali, Larpara and Pahartali areas. No one obstructs them from bringing earth from the hill.

During a spot visit to the zone on Saturday morning, the correspondent saw some young men supervising the earth filling work. Engineer Nasirul Islam of Dhaka based developer Rupayan was supervising the whole work with the youths.

Nasirul said, "Dhaka's United Company owns the plot. We [Rupayan] have taken the land on lease for constructing a five star hotel. Before constructing the hotel, we are filling earth in the plot. I'm supervising the work as an engineer appointed by Rupayan."

Asked how they were filling the plot with earth of hill ignoring government ban, Nasirul said, "Chittagong-based contractor Alamgir Hossain is doing the work of earth filling. I don't know from where earth is being brought."

About obtaining clearance from the Directorate of Environment (DoE) for constructing the building, Nasirul said, "The company has started work by taking all nec-

essary permission. I'm simply supervising the work."

When contacted over cell phone, contractor Alamgir Hossain said, "It's not me. Rupayan is filling earth using local people. I have got the work of constructing the boundary wall of the plot. We have not yet started the work. The boundary will be constructed after filling earth in the plot."

Cox's Bazar Zone Inspector of DoE Mizanur Rahman said the hill cutting could not be stopped. In last seven days, owners of 26 hotels were served show cause notices against earth filling and other irregularities. Cases have been filed against two hotels.

He said construction of structures without the clearance of DoE is banned at the ecologically endangered area of the beach. No firm named 'Rupayan' has been given clearance to construct building.

Md Saidul Islam, divisional forest officer of Cox's Bazar (South) Forest Department, said hill cutting could not be stopped despite several raids.

DC Md Gias Uddin Ahmed said, "Earth filling and construction of structures in the hotel motel zone has been stopped for the time being. If anybody fills earth in the plots there, legal action would be taken against them. We are investigating the matter of hill cutting and earth filling."

Jubo League

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white microbus stormed into Liton's own restaurant 'Fuljhuri Hotel and Restaurant' at around 8:30 pm and shot three shots at him and fled the scene by the vehicle, waiting for them.

Police said Liton was rushed to the hospital where on duty doctors declared him dead.

Talking to The Daily Star at Mohakhali residence of Liton, some of his friends told that he might have been killed following a dispute over the tender.

Sources said there was a feud among the contractors over the tender valued at Tk 4 crore against supply of food to the chest diseases hospital. Today is the last day of submitting the bid.

OC Kamal Uddin of Gulshan Police Station told The Daily Star, "The dispute over the tender might be one of the reasons behind the killing."

"We are yet to know any more about the motive behind the murder," he added.

The victim's sister Nasrin Zahan said, "My brother was involved in politics, contracting and hotel business. We could not ascertain the cause behind the murder."

HT Imam

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Imam also said the media is disproportionately focusing on some incidents of sensational murders, while avoiding talking about real improvement in the country's overall law and order situation. Besides, police also captured the people involved in those murders, he added.

The PMO yesterday directed the home ministry and the police department to work in coordination for curbing crime, especially murders and extortions.

The directive came after Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and the senior police officers apprised the prime minister's advisers of the country's crime situation in the morning.

"They came up with a detailed report on how the ministry and the police department are functioning, what are their problems, and what kinds of assistance they need to perform better," Imams said.

The shortages of manpower, logistical support, and housing in the police department will be solved immediately to help the law enforcers become more efficient, and better equipped for fighting crimes, he announced.

"The government will provide all kinds of support to the police department for maintenance of law and order," he added.

Asked about some media reports claiming that he has been given the charge of the home ministry in absence of Home Minister Sahara Khatun and State Minister for Home Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj, the adviser said, "I just wanted to know about the law and order situation and the problems of the police department."

He said, "The prime minister is now in charge of the home ministry. She is giving necessary instructions to run the important ministry."

Some sources in the PMO however said the meeting was convened due to 'deterioration of law and order'. "We are not happy with the country's crime scenario. We expected a gradual improvement, which did not happen somehow," a PMO official told The Daily Star.

Denying any lack of coordination in the activities of the home ministry, the home secretary however said he is in regular contact with the home minister, who is giving him necessary instructions.

Another fire

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Saturday night.

But the investigating officer Sub-Inspector Jafar Ahmed said though people alleged Shurovi's husband Sagar and his accomplices set the fire on Dadan's tinshed house, this was not mentioned in first information report.

"We are collecting gutted cloths and other materials for chemical tests," he said expressing suspicion that the fire originated from an electric short circuit.

Meantime, police is conducting a raid to find Sagar. Abdur Rahman, another relative of Dadan, said they are collecting money from relatives and locals to bear the medical expenses of the family as the cost has already gone beyond their capacity.

Dadan's daughter Liza Akter and nephew Rubel Sardar died on Saturday when a fire broke out in their tin shed house on Gas Pipe Road, in Palashnagar of Kadamtali area in the capital.

Fazlul Huq's son

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Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Dr Afzal along with his lawyers appeared before the court and sought bail in the case.

Moving the bail petition, lawyers told the court that their client had earlier appeared before the High Court (HC) seeking anticipatory bail. After the hearing, the HC granted bail to their client till submission of the probe report of the case.

The investigation officer had earlier submitted the charge sheet to the court against Dr Afzal finding the charges against him true. After the probe report was submitted, their client sought bail again.

On the other hand, the prosecution opposed the bail petition saying that the accused was granted ad-interim bail from the HC. But

the charges brought against the accused were primarily proved. So, the prosecution prayed that the bail petition be rejected and the accused be sent to jail.

After hearing both sides, the judge rejected Dr Afzal's bail petition and ordered that he is sent to jail.

ACC Assistant Director Ibrahim filed the case against Dr Afzal on September 14 last year with Ramna Model Police Station on charge of concealing information and amassing wealth over Tk 1.40 crore beyond his known sources of income.

According to the case statement, Dr Afzal realized Tk 10.61 crore by taking bribes in return for transfer of the government employees with the help of his father when Justice Fazlul Huq was in the charge of land, forest and law affairs ministry.

Ball back to EC

FROM PAGE 1
Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said it would take a month to initiate the next steps regarding the issue and the EC would consult with legal experts.

"At present we are busy with drafting proposals for changes in the Representation of the People Order. The issue of Salauddin Quader's parliamentary membership is not important to us at this moment," Huda told reporters on the EC Secretariat premises.

Parliament Secretariat officials said the speaker's opinion on the issue was formulated in the light of article 66 of the constitution, section 178 of the Rules of Procedure of Jatiya Sangsad, and section 3 of the Members of Parliament (Determination of Dispute) Act 1980.

They said the EC itself is empowered to determine whether an MP is qualified for continuing as a lawmaker or not.

Now the commission will have to take the next step—issuing an official gazette vacating Salauddin's membership.

Convinced of its own probe findings, the EC decided that Salauddin is no more qualified for continuing as an MP. However, it refrained from cancelling his parliamentary membership and its secretariat sent a letter to the Parliament Secretariat on June 17, asking it to take necessary steps to cancel Salauddin's membership in consultation with the speaker.

"Salauddin Quader Chowdhury violated article 12 (3b) of the Representation of the People Order 1972. Besides, he violated his pledge to the commission by not submitting a copy of his educational qualification. Therefore, the commission thinks a person who gave false information is not qualified for continuing as a member of parliament," the EC letter said.

Interestingly, EC officials yesterday remained tight-

lipped about the Parliament Secretariat's letter and did not discuss the issue at its meeting in the morning.

Election commissioners Muhammed Sohul Hussain and Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakhawat Hossain expressed their ignorance about the letter.

When journalists got hold of the CEC, he admitted receiving the letter. Asked about the commission's next course of action on scrapping Salauddin's parliamentary membership, CEC Huda reacted sharply: "It is not any issue now. You are making an issue of the matter!"

When his attention was drawn to the BNP leader's offensive remarks about the commission, the CEC declined to make any comment.

In the affidavit for seeking candidacy in the ninth parliamentary election, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury mentioned that he has no educational qualification. When challenged, the BNP leader admitted having educational degrees and promised to submit a copy of the certificate of his highest educational qualification.

Upon his pledge the EC let him contest the polls on the excuse of "doctrine of political necessity" as it believed that cancelling Salauddin's candidacy might jeopardise the electoral process, said EC Secretariat officials.

However, Salauddin did not submit the copy of his educational certificate.

In April, the EC asked him to submit the document within two months, but he did not respond.

Later, the EC collected his particulars preserved at the Parliament Secretariat when he was an MP during previous parliaments and found many inconsistencies in the information. It then decided that he is not qualified for continuing as a lawmaker.

But the EC did not dare to cancel Salauddin's parliamentary membership fearing political consequences, said officials at the EC Secretariat.

I resigned May 31

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Then there was the decision to stop Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, former BNP state minister for power, leaving the country. It upset his superiors in the government, the sources added.

Besides, misunderstandings arose with Home Minister Sahara Khatun over decision-making on issues like reshuffle in the police.

Sohel told The Daily Star that he is sorry if anyone is hurt by his decisions or behaviour. "I want my government and the party to succeed in efforts to change the fate of the people."

He said he never had lust for power. Rather he always strove to work for people.

He said he worked seriously at his ministry till he called it a day and did not receive any salary or privileges after resignation.

Queried why he had attended office even after that, he said as a state minister he had some work to complete. Son of the country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad, Sohel Taj took oath as a member of the council of ministers on January 6.

AL insiders said Hasina wanted him to take leave of absence as she sought to avoid a controversy like the one during the rule of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Wrong ones

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studentship for such a long time."

In the December 29 national polls, Matin sought BNP ticket from the Naogaon-4 constituency.

A group of JCD leaders allege Matin was involved in the politics of Islami Chhatra Shibir when he was a student of Dhaka Alia Madrasa and was an accused in the murder of Alia Madrasa JCD leader Khokon.

Matin also served in jail for six months in connection with the Khokon murder case during the 1991-1996 BNP rule, says a senior JCD leader.

Denying his link with Shibir, Matin claims various allegations were brought against him to tarnish his political image.

Apart from Matin, other key leaders of the JCD DU unit are also not students.

Allegations are rife that Joint Convener Ainul Haque Anik is involved in drugs peddling on the campus. He was also arrested once during the BNP rule on charge of hijacking, JCD sources say.

Studentship of Abdur Rahim Setu, another joint convener, was cancelled for poor academic performance.

Joint Convener Obaidul Haque Nasir is married and passed out from the university long ago. Another joint convener Abdul Wahab, who was the general secretary of Shahidullah Hall unit, was involved in ransacking the television room of the hall.

He allegedly used to collect toll from an unauthorised rickshaw garage set up in front of Shahidullah Hall, alleges a joint secretary of the dissolved JCD committee.

Higher credit

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percent for the corresponding period this year. In May this year the figure rose to 23.88 percent from 16.66 percent of December 08.

The MPS says there is no reason to worry about possible crowding out of private sector borrowing due to the increase in government sector credit, as there is a 'large liquidity overhang' in the market.

The central bank policy statement also says, "In situations like the present slack in private sector investment activities, expanded public sector borrowing for development activities is actually helpful, putting the liquidity overhang to good use in pacing up growth momentum."

Atiur Rahman also said, "If good investment proposals are available, money will not be a problem. If necessary, assistance will be provided from the foreign currency reserve."

Consultant to the BB governor, Allah Malik Kazemi, said the foreign currency reserve target for June next year has been fixed at 500 million dollars less than this year's June target, so the central bank may provide such support to private investors.

BB Deputy Governor Nazrul Huda said the central bank has always been trying to ensure access to credit for thrust sectors including small and medium enterprises. The central bank always pursues low interest rates for those sectors, he added.

Another central bank deputy governor, Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui, said this fiscal year the target for GDP growth has been set at 6 percent, with inflation projected at 6.5 percent by June 2010. The private sector credit growth target of 16.7 percent is reasonable compared to the GDP growth and inflation, he said.

The central bank will continually monitor domestic and external developments, and stand ready to respond appropriately to challenges, for macrofinancial stability, growth, and poverty reduction aspirations of the government and the population at large, says the MPS.

BNP council

FROM PAGE 1
BNP Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed yesterday handed over the letter, signed by party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, to Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda at his office at the EC Secretariat.

Talking to reporters Rizvi said the party on Thursday talked with the EC for extension of time. Following its assurance BNP submitted the letter to the EC, he said.

The CEC Thursday announced that the EC would ask the government to amend the RPO to extend time for political parties to hold their national councils and ratify the provisional changes to their constitutions.

Thirty-eight of the 39 registered political parties brought provisional changes to their constitutions to meet registration criteria before the December 29, 2008, parliamentary elections promising to ratify the changes within six months from the day the ninth parliament first sits.

With the new parliament having begun its journey on January 25, the deadline is July 25.

Abdul Kalam

FROM PAGE 16
The former Indian president visited Grameen Bank headquarters at Mirpur and met Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

During his visit to Grammen Bank Dr Kalam proposed joint water management and power generation for the countries of the region in the spirit of Saarc, says a press release.

Dr Kalam said he wanted to meet Prof Yunus to learn about the detailed working of Grammen Bank so that micro credit could be incorporated into the approach of his own initiatives in the villages of India through Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA).

Responding to Dr Kalam, Prof Yunus said Grameen Bank would be delighted to help in his effort to set up micro credit programme in India as it is already involved in Kerala.

Dr Kalam said he would like to promote the idea of a separate law for micro credit in India.

He said they should work together to revive the golden fibre jute through research and by means of technology.

The micro credit guru presented a brand new Hindi edition of his book titled 'Banker of the Poor' to the former Indian president.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hosted a dinner in honour of Dr Kalam at her official residence Jamuna.

JS team goes

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At the briefing, Razzaq strongly criticised Khaleda for "hiding" a survey report on Tipaimukh project prepared during the rule of BNP in 1993. SNC-Lavalin International, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants and four consultant firms of Bangladesh prepared the report and the World Bank funded the survey.

Razzaq said, "BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Saturday's meeting did not mention the findings of the survey that said occurrence of flood will decrease in the Barak, Surma and Kushiara rivers because of the Tipaimukh dam."

Quoting from the survey report, he said because of the dam the amount of floodwater will decrease by 20 percent and water level in the Surma and Kushiara will decrease by 1.60 metres during floods.

Razzaq alleged that former secretary ANH Akhtar Hossain, who presented the information on Tipaimukh dam at the programme, does not have any knowledge on the issue.

"It can be assumed that all information and data presented at the programme were based on assumption and political motivation to confuse people," Razzaq said at the press briefing.

Asked if the Awami League is supporting construction of the Tipaimukh dam by citing information from the survey, Razzaq said, "We are not talking in favour of Tipaimukh dam, we are just saying BNP hid this information at their meeting."

He claimed that the 1978 government agreed at a JRC meeting to examine different aspects of the Tipaimukh dam project. In September 2003, the issue was discussed at the 35th meeting of the JRC when BNP leader Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed was the water resources minister.

Razzaq claimed that Hafiz at that time did not object to construction of the Tipaimukh

Laskar leaders

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closest links with the leaders of Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji), sources added.

The DB officials also suspect that Pakistan-based militant organisation Laskar-e-Taiyeba and ARCF provide them financial assistance to carry out its activities in Bangladesh and the money is supplied by hand.

Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam of DB-South told The Daily Star that the Laskar-e-Taiyeba leaders are working as madrasa teachers in different parts of the country.

He said Laskar-e-Taiyeba leaders have links to various militant organisations in the country but they are very much close to the Huji leaders.

He also said Obaidullah had close contacts with Huji leaders Abdur Rouf, Mufti Hannan, Moulana Tajuddin, Moulana Abdus Salam as all the militant leaders were also Afghan war veterans.

Monirul said Mufti Obaidullah would be grilled in the Taskforce Intelligence cell from today.

Assistant Commissioner Sanwar Hossain of DB told The Daily Star that during the preliminary interrogation, Obaidullah so far disclosed the names of 26 people, including six Huji leaders.

Of the six Huji leaders, two have been detained by the law enforcers, AC Sanwar said adding, "Obaidullah said that there are some similarities between Laskar-e-Taiyeba and Huji. But they do not work like Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh."

The eminent scientist is scheduled to visit Vigarunnisa Noon School and College this morning, and interact with the students and faculty members there.

Rokeya Akhtar, acting principal of the school, told The Daily Star the former Indian president is scheduled to arrive at the school at around 10:00am and would stay for one hour.

The distinguished guest along with President Zillur Rahman will attend the first convocation of the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre today at 12:30pm.

President and Chancellor of UITS Zillur Rahman will preside over the convocation and confer degrees on UITS graduates while the former Indian president will be the convocation speaker, says a press release. Dr Gowher Rizvi will attend the ceremony as special guest.

Dr Kalam is scheduled to visit Dhaka University in the afternoon. He will deliver a special lecture at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban on the campus at 4:00pm and exchange views with the students and faculty members.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique would chair the session. A crest of the university would be presented to Dr Kalam.

Industries

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About the time frame for the industries, he said it would be at least six months and added that ETPs will also be mandatory for setting up industries in future.

"The high extraction of ground water by production wells is creating serious water scarcity in the deep aquifer. Again the infiltration of industrial effluent to groundwater has adverse impacts on quality of potable water supplies poses a serious risk to public health," Barua said.

The minister said some integrated actions should be taken to ensure safe potable water. These actions include improvement of water supply, flood management, river navigability and drainage system and treatment and disposal of sewage and handling and disposal of solid wastes.

Underscoring the need for utilisation of surface water, Shipping Minister Afsarul Amin said it is not possible to meet the demand of water of the city dwellers depending on ground water for long.

He said the ministry has already taken steps to free the rivers from the encroachers and reducing pollution and his ministry will take more effective actions to save the Dhaka rivers.

"To save Dhaka we have to think how to utilise the rivers, canals and water bodies in and around the city," said Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen.

There is no other alternative to surface water sources to meet the city's present and future demands, said SM Mahbubur Rahman, head of water resources planning division of Institute of Water Modelling, at his keynote paper.

The peripheral rivers of Dhaka have sufficient water round the year to meet present and future demands of Dhaka city but unfortunately quality of river water is very poor, he said.

Mahbubur Rahman gave a set of recommendations in his keynote paper. These include installation of Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETPs) for the industries located at Tongi, Tarabo and Gazipur industrial areas while ETPs for medium and large industries and shifting small industries to industrial clusters providing with CETPs and shifting Hazaribagh tanneries to Hemayetpur and rehabilitation and extension of the existing sewerage networks.

Deputy Managing Director of Wasa Liakat Ali said the ground water level has been dropping two to three metres every year due to excess use.