

REHABILITATION OF AILA-HIT PEOPLE

Minister blames high tide for failure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday termed the sea level rise as a reason for the failure to fix some embankments damaged by the cyclone Aila in the southwest coast last year.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a workshop on disaster management for journalists at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

"We failed to ensure return of some people to their houses as some particular embankments could not be repaired due to high tide" Razzaque said at the workshop organised by DRU in association with Disaster Management Bureau (DMB).

According to a rough estimate, over one lakh people in four worst hit upazilas-Dakop and Koira of Khulna and Shaymnagar and Ashashuni of Satkhira--are still living in the makeshift tents on the embankments.

The houses of the victims are regularly

flooded by river tides.

The tide was never so high as it was during February and March this year, the minister said, adding: "This means there is already a rise of sea level".

The minister made the remark amid widespread allegations that Water Development Board (WDB) was very late to start repairing the embankments.

Though Aila hit the southwest coast on May 25 last year, WDB gave work orders to fix the embankments to the contractors on February 2 this year.

To construct the dams during the dry season between October and January was the most sought after demand of the people in the region.

WDB Superintendent Engineer in Khulna Giasuddin Ahmed earlier told The Daily Star that they were late in inviting tenders as the government waited in vain for foreign funds.

However, finally WDB undertook the repairs with the help of the government's own fund.

The minister said climate change is a big treat to the country's food security.

"We could earlier produce 1.8 million tonnes of wheat but now the production decreased to 1 million only," Razzaque said, adding that temperature is increasing day by day in Bangladesh.

The funds, be it domestic or foreign, must be used for direct benefit of the victims of climate change instead of holding seminars and so-called awareness building activities by the NGOs, he said.

Seventy five per cent of a Tk 700 crore Climate Change Trust Fund will be used for building infrastructure while the rest for creating awareness, Razzaque said.

He asked the journalists to increase their professionalism on these issues. The government will also facilitate it, he stressed.

DMB Director General Ahsan Zakir, DRU vice-president Aazmul Haq Helal and General Secretary Pathik Saha, among others, spoke.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia hands over a crest to Musa Ibrahim, the first Bangladeshi Everest conqueror, at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.



Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Carel de Rooy calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Unicef assures PM of support

UNB, Dhaka

United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has assured of continuing its support and assistance to the government in its endeavor to attain the socio-economic development goals.

Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Carel de Rooy gave the assurance when he paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office, said the PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Eulogising Hasina's visionary leadership in accelerating rural development, the Unicef representative described the government's development programmes as "excellent."

Carel de Rooy expressed his strong hope that the government under the active leadership of Hasina will be able to ensure safe and improved living standards for children and mothers across the country.

In this regard, Hasina said her government is strongly committed to reducing child and maternal mortality to a great extent.

The Unicef representative appreciated the government's programmes for creat-

ing a social safety net.

"Unicef will continue to cooperate with your government to attain the objective of social safety net," he assured the PM.

Thanking the Unicef for its cooperation, Hasina said since assuming the office, the present government is working round the clock to change the fate of the people.

"We are giving our maximum efforts to bring full peace and prosperity to our people's lives," she said.

On literacy and education, she said Bangladesh was supposed to completely remove illiteracy from the country by 2006.

"Our previous government had increased the literacy rate to 65 percent from 45 percent. But the next government did not continue the progress in the education sector," she said.

Hasina said the government has again chalked out elaborate programmes to build an educated and thoughtful nation.

She said for the first time, the government has distributed free textbooks up to secondary level and the students have been given the books in time.

On social safety net, Hasina said her

government has arranged allowances for elderly women and men.

Besides, Employment Bank is working to facilitate the youths with loans to generate employment opportunities for the youths, she said.

Refreshing her commitment for further strengthening the country's democracy, she said Bangladesh could not achieve the desired development as democracy here was not allowed to run uninterruptedly in the past.

"However, people have elected us and given the charge of working for them. Now we are working hard to fulfill people's expectations," she said.

Hasina said she wants to build Bangladesh as the most peaceful and prosperous nation in the South Asian region.

The Unicef representative deeply condoled the death of 119 people in the devastating fire at Nimtoli in old Dhaka.

In this regard, Hasina said her government is bearing all medical expenses of the injured and the victim families will be given financial and other assistances by the government.

Frame law to bar non-journo from becoming editor: BFUJ

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and its 10 affiliated unions yesterday demanded formulation of law to bar appointment of any person having less than 15 years of experience in journalism as an editor of a daily or the chief of any media.

In a joint statement, leaders of the unions also demanded that the government announce a national press and media policy to ensure freedom of the mass media and stop abuse of the press freedom.

The leaders said many owners, who are not professional journalists, are becoming editors of newspapers and many of them using the media and professional journalists, and abusing the editorial institution for political gains or business interests.

The present crisis of the daily Amar Desh proves the logic behind the demand of the journalists, they said.

The leaders also expressed concern that Mahmudur Rahman, though not a professional journalist, became the acting editor and used the Amar Desh and its journalists in his political and personal interest, violating the ethics of journalism and mass media.

Referring to the livelihood of Amar Desh journalists, they urged the prime minister to consider the issue sympathetically and take steps accordingly.

Signatories to the statement are BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General Altaf Mahmud, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Abu Zafar Surjya, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) President Shahidul Alam and General Secretary Nazim Uddin Shyamol, Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) President Sheikh Abu Hasan and General Secretary Mozammel Haq Hawlader, Jessore Union of Journalists (JUJ) President Aminur Rahman Mamun and General Secretary HR Tuhin, Bogra Union of Journalists (BUJ) President Pradip Bhattacharya Shankar and General Secretary Mahmudul Alam Nayan, Rajshahi Union of Journalists (RUJ) President Akbarul Hasan Millat and General Secretary Shibli Noman, Dinajpur Union of Journalist (DJU) President Wahidul Alam and General Secretary Emdadul Haq, Mymensingh Union of Journalists (MUJ) President Kazi Yasin and General Secretary Ataul Karim Khokon, Narayanganj Union of Journalists (NUJ) President Hasanuzzaman Shamim and General Secretary Sharif Uddin Sabuj and Cox's Bazar Union of Journalists (CBUJ) President Abu Taher and General Secretary Abdul Quddus Rana.

Khulna varsity reopens June 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Classes of Khulna University will resume on June 13 following an unscheduled closure for over two months.

The authorities had closed the university on April 6 following a clash between the students and the police on the campus.

The decision to reopen the university was taken at a meeting of its syndicate on Monday, with Vice Chancellor Dr Md Saifuddin Shah in the chair.

The halls of the university will open on June 12, said a press release of the university.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dr. Gulenur Begum, daughter of Bashir Uddin Ahmed and mother of Colonel Saidul Kabir, passed away at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city on Sunday at the age of 79, says a press release.

She was admitted to the CMH after being injured in a road accident on April 16. She was laid to rest at the Army Graveyard at Banani in the city.

She served as medical officer in different hospitals of Bangladesh Railway and went on retirement as ADMO of Kamalapur Railway Hospital in 1994.

She left behind her two daughters, one son and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Syeda Ayesha Chy

DU CORRESPONDENT



Syeda Ayesha Chowdhury, wife of late President Justice AFM Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, passed away early morning yesterday at the age of 80, says a press release.

She was buried at Azampur Old Graveyard in the city after namaz-e-janaza at Baridhara Butabash Road Mosque after Zohr prayers.

Her quikhwani will be held at the residence of her son-in-law Mahfujul Islam at 12 Dutabash Road, Baridhara Model Town after Asr prayers on Friday.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the quikhwani.

Eakutunnessa Chy

METRO DESK

Eakutunnessa Chowdhury, wife of late Sarwar Jahan Chowdhury, deputy magistrate of Masimpur, Dhalia, Feni, died at on June 7 due to old-age complications at the age of 92, says a press release.

Her son Col (ret'd) Shams J Chowdhury has requested all their relations and well-wishers to attend a doa mahfil to be held on June 11 after Asr prayers at their village home.

TILTED BEGUNBARI BUILDING

Owner gets a week to demolish building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha yesterday tore down the walls of three floors of a tilted building at Begunbari and gave the owner a week's time to bring the whole illegal building down.

A Rajuk team, comprised of an authorised officer, building inspector and 30 labourers, led by executive magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla demolished the walls on fourth and second floors on the second day of their demolition work.

The team did not demolish the walls on third floor. There were goods and furniture there.

Building owner Siraj Miah started demolition on Sunday afternoon following a Rajuk notice on June 4, the day the building tilted. On June 5, the team joined the demolition work initiated by the owner and demolished the fifth floor and the under-construction sixth floor.

Rajuk authorised officer

Shafiqul Islam said, "The owner has given us an undertaking regarding demolition of the building on his own. We will monitor the demolition."

"If the owner himself does not demolish in the time, we will restart our demolition work," he added.

Meanwhile, more than 100 illegal structures were demolished at Kuratoli in Khilgaon in the capital yesterday.

Magistrate Rokon said the Rajuk drive would continue knocking down illegal structures and also portions of the buildings constructed deviating from the approved designs.

The team on Thursday and Sunday will demolish a five-storey building at Nakhalpara that tilted on June 5. On Saturday and Monday they will demolish a four-storey madrasa at Begunbari.

Illegal parts of buildings in Sabujbagh, Malibagh and Shanti Nagar will be demolished on June 10 and 13.

5 Amar Desh journo asked to surrender before trial court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday directed five journalists of the recently closed daily Amar Desh to surrender before the trial court within eight weeks in a criminal case.

Tejgaon police on June 2 filed the case against them on charge of creating obstacle to discharging duties on June 1 when they entered the Amar Desh office to arrest its acting editor Mahmudur Rahman.

The bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice JBM Hasan also asked the trial court to consider their bail when they surrender in the case.

It also asked the government not to harass them in connection with this case during this eight-week period.

The accused are Amar Desh Deputy Editor Sayed Abdal Ahmad, Special Correspondent Zahed Chowdhury, Assistant Editor Shanjib Chowdhury and Staff Reporter Alauddin Arif and Saif Islam Bilal.

The defendants appeared before the HC bench seeking anticipatory bail in this case.

Barrister Abdur Razzaq appeared for the defendants.

WRIT PETITION

Meanwhile, HC bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Sheikh Hasan Arif adjourned till 2:00pm today the hearing on a writ petition challenging the legality of the government decision cancelling the declaration of publications of the daily Amar Desh.

Anwar-un-Nabi, acting chairman of the daily Amar Desh, filed the writ on June 7 seeking a stay on the government decision that cancelled the declaration of the publication of the daily.

Barrister Abdur Razzaq appeared for the petitioner.

Road safety law on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday said the government will formulate a new law for the pedestrians to prevent road accidents across the country.

"The passers-by do not follow any rule when they walk. They often cross the roads with high risk but do not use footbridge or underpass. That is why we will try to formulate law for the pedestrians," she said.

The minister was speaking at a training programme for police officers on "Accident

Event Recoding and Reporting" organised by the Accident Research Institute (ARI) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) at the university.

The government will arrange adequate training for police forces to develop their skills to keep record and report properly.

A total of 205 police officers will participate in the training session.

"We will also take necessary measures to implement the existing laws to prevent road accident," Sahara

added.

She urged cooperation of all to ensure road safety across the country.

Addressing the seminar, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad recommended imposing stiff penalty for road accident and building awareness among the people to prevent it.

Prof M Habibur Rahman, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Buet presided over the meeting while Buet VC Dr. A.M.M. Saifullah, ARI Director Dr. Shamsul Hoque, among others, spoke.



Bangladesh Gram Police Karmachari Union forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding pay hike and introduction food rationing for them.

Joypurhat SP forced into retirement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Superintendent of Police of Joypurhat AKM Masudul Alam has been forced into retirement on charges of corruption and irregularities in recruitment of police personnel.

The SP was sent into retirement four or five days ago, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star last night.

Sources said the decision of forced retirement came from the home ministry on June 5.

Two days before his retirement, the SP was closed to the police headquarters.

BCL men misbehave with DU hall provost

DU CORRESPONDENT

Separate show-cause notices were served on seven members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League for vandalism and misbehaving with the acting provost of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall at the Dhaka University.

Acting provost Dr. Baitullah Kadri issued the notices to Shaheen Ahmed, BCL president of the hall, and six activists of the student organisation.

Dr. Kadri said the BCL leader misbehaved with him over forcing an employee to leave the hall on Monday night.

The hall sources said the provost and the BCL leader engaged into an altercation over sending a student, who fell sick suddenly at the hall, to a hospital on that night. Shaheen also asked an employee to leave the hall as the authorities failed to bring an ambulance.

In a sequel of the incident, Shaheen's followers damaged the nameplate of the provost attached to a wall of his office and confined him for around 10 minutes to his room at about 1:00pm yesterday, Dr. Kadri told The Daily Star.