

India hands over 1,600 Sidr shelters

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

After four years of commitment, India finally handed over the first batch of Sidr Core Shelters built for the affected families in Sharonkhola, Bagerhat.

Over 5,000 people were killed and thousands of houses were damaged in the cyclone Sidr that hit southern Bangladesh November 15, 2007.

After the devastating cyclone, the then Indian external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee visited the affected areas and announced to rebuild houses in 10 villages worst hit.

Under the project, the government of India will construct a total of 2,800 Core Shelters in over 11 villages in Sharonkhola and Morelganj upazilas for Sidr stricken-families.

The project work started in October last year, and over 1,600 affected families in Sharonkhola have moved to the newly constructed shelters on July 9 this year.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Rajeev Mitter formally handed over the 1,600 shelters to the families.

The remaining 1,200 shelters are now under construction.



Transport owners and workers of Narayanganj stage a demonstration on Dhaka-Chittagong road yesterday protesting the 30-hour hartal enforced by 12 religion-based political parties on July 10-11.

PHOTO: STAR

Police sue 140 named in five cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police on Sunday night filed five separate cases with three police stations in the district accusing some 140 hartal activists named and many more unnamed for obstructing police from duty and attacking law enforcers during Sunday's hartal.

Abul Kalam Azad, sub-inspector of Fatullah Police Station, filed two cases against 40 persons named and many others unidentified for vandalism, looting, and attacks on police. Of the sued, 15 had been arrested.

Shahjahan Monir and Abul Kalam, sub-inspectors of Siddhirganj Police Station, lodged two separate cases accusing 67 people named and many more unnamed, including nine arrested. They were sued for obstructing police and vandalising transports on highways.

About 33 persons named, including six arrested, and many others unidentified were accused in a case, filed by Sub-inspector Shahjahan Mia of Sonargaon Police Station, for rioting during the 30-hour hartal called by 12 small Islamist parties.

MEET ON DISPUTED LAND
Dhaka, Delhi agree to solve problems

UNB, Sylhet

A high-level meeting between Bangladesh and India over disputed land along Sylhet-Moulvibazar borders was held at Sutarkandi border in Beanibazar upazila.

Beanibazar UNO Subrot Kumar said delegation members of the two countries assured each other in the meeting on Sunday of extending their support to resolve various problems along frontier areas.

Representatives from both sides visited the disputed land along Pallartol border in Borolekha upazila of Moulvibazar district on Saturday.

A meeting was scheduled to be held on the day between the two sides after visiting the disputed land but could not be held due to the unwillingness of the Indian side.

There was a dispute over land along Pallatol border and over 137 acres of land along Noagaon border which India has been claiming as their own since long.

Land survey at Noagaon border could not be conducted due to obstruction from the Indian side for the last several years.

Among others, M Iqbal, director of land record and survey department, deputy director Nilmoni Singh, Moulvibazar deputy commissioner Mostafizur Rahman, BGB-38 battalion operation officer Major Mostafa Ashkur Rahman, among others, were present from Bangladesh side.

BK Barua, assistant director of survey department of Assam State, MA Loskor, additional district magistrate of Karimganj and BSF-136 battalion commander NK Rai attended the meeting from Indian side.

TRANSIT, FREE TRADE AMONG SAARC STATES

Initiatives still at declaration level

Speaker Abdul Hamid tells Delhi meet

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Some initiatives of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) like regional free trade and transit remain at the level of declaration said Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Abdul Hamid at a conference.

He called for a deeper cut in tariff and non-tariff barriers to boost trade among South Asian countries.

Addressing the 5th Saarc Speakers Conference here on Saturday, Hamid called for implementation of the regional initiatives taken to combat climate change and its impact on the region.

Hamid said some of the initiatives taken by Saarc countries in the 2005 Summit in Dhaka hold the prospect of a more meaningful regional cooperation.

These are South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), Saarc Convention on Terrorism and cooperation on the issues of trade and transit and energy, he pointed out, acknowledging that some of the initiatives are still at the level of intention.

He said at present the combined international trade of Saarc stands at about US \$ 350 billion while intra-regional trade within Saarc is around US \$ 7 billion, which accounts for five percent of its

global trade.

SAFTA could be a powerful tool through which positive changes can be brought to the region, he added.

"It would however require deeper cuts in tariff rates, removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and wider product coverage through reduction in sensitive list (of goods).

"Simplification of customs rules and banking procedures, mutual recognition arrangements and promoting cross-border investment are also needed," Hamid said.

He said climate change was one of the foremost issues to achieve sustainable development in Saarc countries. The Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change and preceding Expert Group Meeting in Dhaka came out with a Saarc Action Plan for Climate Change and the Dhaka Declaration outlined a number of areas and activities.

The member-countries can implement these activities nationally and regionally to combat the adverse impact of climate change, he said.

Hamid is leading an eight-member delegation at the three-day speakers' conference which was inaugurated by the Indian prime minister on Saturday.

Five killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Five people were killed and 16 others injured in road accidents in Bogra, Narsingdi, Gopalganj, and Mymensingh yesterday.

Staff correspondent from Bogra reports: Two girls of class I died on the spot after being run over by a bus on Bogra-Noagaon road in Arulia under the sadar upazila yesterday.

Deceased are Rifa Khatun, 8, daughter of Israel of the sadar upazila's Ambaria village and Yesmin, 8, daughter of Insan Ali of the same village. The two were students at Arulia Pilot Model Academy.

Our Narsingdi correspondent says: Two persons were killed and seven other injured as a Dhaka-bound truck collided head-on with a leguna (a passenger carrier) on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway in Narsingdi sadar upazila yesterday.

One of the deceased is Nasima Begum, 40, while the unidentified is a man aged about 30.

Two of the injured were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and the remaining ones to Narsingdi sadar hospital.

UNB from Mymensingh reports: A road construction worker was killed and five others injured as a truck rammed into their makeshift shed beside Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road at Kanarampur in Nandail upazila early yesterday.

Deceased is Kamal, 40. The victim died en route while the injured were being taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Our Gopalganj correspondent adds: Four people were injured seriously as an iron bridge collapsed with a stone-laden truck on Gopalganj-Kotalipara road in Dattadanga under the sadar upazila yesterday.

The injured were taken to Gopalganj sadar hospital. Witness said the bridge collapsed while the truck was crossing over it. Traffic communication on the road was snapped and will remain suspended till construction of an alternative route.

SAFETY WARNING:

PHILIPS FOLDABLE HAIRDRYERS

As a precaution, Philips is voluntarily recalling and replacing two Foldable Hairdryer models produced between February 2006 and April 2011.

In very rare cases, the hairdryer can overheat when left plugged into the electrical connection. This poses a potential fire hazard, even when the appliance is switched off.

The affected appliances have the following Product Type Numbers: HP4931 and HP4940.

Please check the hairdryer's Product Type Number (e.g. HP4931), which can be found on either the underside of the main body of the appliance or on the handle. All of the affected models have a foldable handle. No other Philips hairdryers are affected.



If the Product Type Number of your appliance is listed above, please visit www.philips.com/replace or call 882 9993/01712665463 (Local), with your hairdryer in hand to find out how you can get a replacement.

This precautionary recall underlines Philips' commitment to the highest standards of quality and reliability. We thank you for your co-operation and apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Sultana Afroz elected FAO body member

UNB, Dhaka

Sultana Afroz of Bangladesh was elected a member of Programme Committee of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the next two years.

The election to the eleven-member committee was held recently at the 142nd council session of FAO in Rome. The committee plays a vital role in formulation, monitoring and evaluation of FAO-assisted programmes, says a press release.

Sultana is the Economic Counselor of Bangladesh Embassy in Italy and the alternate permanent representative of Bangladesh to the three Rome-based UN agencies -- FAO, WFP and IFAD. She was elected a member of the committee in 2009 as well.

Moreover, Bangladesh was elected as a member of the FAO Council for the next three years during the bi-annual conference of FAO held recently in Rome. The other countries elected in the council from the Asian Group include China, Japan, Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

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