

Shelters too poor to give shelter to cyclone victims

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Most of the 550 houses built for the victims of cyclones Sidr and Aila in the district have become uninhabitable due to faulty design.

It happened as the authorities, in a hurry to rehabilitate the homeless victims, handed over the

one-room shelters without doors, windows and the walls.

Most of the poor families never had the financial ability to install the missing components of the houses built with Tk 6.60 crore from the Climate Trust Fund under the disaster management ministry in 2010-

2011.

Sources at the disaster management office here said that each of the 15 feet by 10 feet shelter with a concrete roof on four pillars was built at a cost of Tk 1.20 lakh. They said the beneficiaries are so poor that these houses have become burdens for them.

Zayeda Begum, 35, wife of Sultan Mia of Mehendiabad village under Mirzagonj upazila said she received the so-called house but could never use it.

"We tried to live under the roof but failed because it lacks the very basic things of an abode. So, we are still living in a rickety shack on

the flood control dam with my family of five," Zayeda said.

"My husband is a day labourer while my elder son Zahidul, 15, is working to help the others continue with their studies, we cannot afford to build the four walls and install windows and doors of the structure," she added.

Minara Begum, 25, wife of Sarwar Hossain Mridha, from the same area said that Cyclone Sidr took 'everything' they had. Still they could not live under such structure.

Contacted, Abdus Salam Mridha, chairman for Dewlisubidkhalil union under Mirzagonj said nobody consulted with the people before building the houses and so costly project has become a total failure.

"The very design of the houses was wrong," said Mridha. "How could you approve a housing project for the extreme poor without ensuring basic components of the structure", he posed.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Anwar Hossain said that the shelters were given to the poor people as they had lost their houses in the cyclones. The design was specified by the ministry and they executed it accordingly.

"I admit that most of the beneficiaries have no ability to build walls and other components to make them fit for living," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Inmates of Brahmanbaria District Jail attend a class, demonstrating their ability to read and write in the presence of Deputy Inspector General Md Fazlur Rahman on July 28 as the authorities arranged literacy and vocational training programmes for the prisoners.

Opening their eyes to the world of learning

SHEIKH MD. SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

Over 800 inmates of the district jail who were illiterate only a few weeks ago, can now put their signature instead of thumbprint, thanks to the initiative of the authorities.

A large number of them can also read and write while many are being imparted with vocational training.

Aiming to achieve 100 percent success, an adult literacy programme was taken up in the jail in May this year.

Jail office sources said, 818 inmates including 78 convicted and 740 under trial prisoners were made literate in five months from May.

An under trial prisoner, Mubarak Mia, 50, said, "My wife got surprised to see my signature on the bail bond

as I was illiterate before entering the jail".

Jail superintendent Md. Zaker Hossain found a large number of inmates illiterate during a survey on March 13 this year.

Following the survey report, district magistrate Md. Abdul Mannan inaugurated five adult literacy centres in the jail.

Of the centres, three were set up at the male ward, one at the female ward and the fifth for youths aged between 19 and 20, said the jail superintendent.

"Our objective is to make the prisoners literate before their release", he added.

Seeing the success of the programme, several high-ups visited the centres.

On July 28, Md. Fazlur Rahman, deputy inspector general (prison), visited the jail and conducted a class

to test the performance of the prisoners.

The social welfare department recently handed over two sewing machines to the jail authorities as a training aid.

During his visit on July 29, the district magistrate asked the jail superintendent to provide advanced learners books from the jail library to the learners so that they could practice and develop the moral value.

"The inmates are now educating themselves not only by reading and writing but also morally," he told this correspondent.

They are also being imparted with vocational training on repairing electrical and electronic goods and tailoring which would help them to lead normal life after their jail terms, said the magistrate.



PHOTO: STAR

With only pillars and the roof, most of 550 such structures constructed with finance from Climate Trust Fund in Patuakhali district, remain virtually useless as the beneficiaries -- the victims of super cyclones Sidr and Aila in 2007 and 2009, are too poor to complete them into dwellings. The photo was taken from Mehendiabad village in Mirzagonj upazila of Patuakhali district.

Housewife killed, another tortured for dowry

A CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry in village Jamjami under Alamdanga upazila on Wednesday afternoon.

The deceased was identified Shaju Khatun, 35, daughter of Motiar Mursalin of village Asannogor in the upazila.

Victim's family members and police said, Shaju Khatun was married off to Montu Rahman, son of Shamsuddin Fakir of village Jamjami 16 years back.

Recently Montu demanded Tk 50,000 as dowry from Shaju's father.

As Shaju failed to bring the amount from her parents, her husband Motiar and his family members started to torture Shaju for dowry.

On the fateful day, Montu locked in an altercation with Shaju in the afternoon over the issue and at one stage strangled his wife. Later he poured poison into her mouth to prove it as a case of suicide.

In Bogra, a schoolteacher was severely tortured allegedly by her husband for dowry at Hakirmor in Sultanganjpara of the district town on October 13.

Shahnaz Parvin, 28, daughter of late Akbar Ali of Achuarpara village of Nondigram upazila, was staying with her husband Md Rafiqul Islam, son of Sayed Ali of Jangram village of Shibganj upazila, in the town.

Parvin is an assistant teacher at Buroil Government Primary School.

Victim's brother Samiul Alam said, after marriage, Rafiqul and his family members used to Parvin for Tk five lakh.

On the fateful day, Parvin was beaten up mercilessly by her husband and in-laws following an altercation over the issue.

Kids study amid fear while officials continue to ponder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Academic activities of Chanderteki Registered Primary School in Trishal upazila of the district are being hampered as plaster continues to fall off the roof of one of the three-room school building.

Established in 1973, the school was renovated by the Local Government Engineering Department in

2001.

Md Zakir Hossain, headmaster of the school, said when he was unlocking the door of the room at around 8:00am on October 3, a big chunk of plaster fell on the ground. Students escaped a fatal accident as they were not inside the classroom at that time, he added.

"I submitted an application to the Trishal upazila

education officer the following day, requesting immediate repair of the roof for smooth running of the academic activities of the school, but no step has been taken yet," the headmaster further said.

Md Lal Miah, president of the school managing committee, said, "It is very difficult to accommodate 280 students--from pre-primary class to class five--in two shifts in only two classrooms,". He urged the authorities concerned to repair the dilapidated classroom of the school as soon as possible.

Contacted, Trishal Upazila Primary Education Officer Md Mahbubur Rahman said he has already informed the higher authorities of the matter.

"Staff of the upazila engineering department will soon visit the spot and submit a report," the education officer said, adding that they will seek funds for repair of the classroom as per report of the engineering department.

Villagers clash: OC among 20 injured

UNB, Bagerhat

At least 20 people, including a police official, were injured in sporadic clashes between the residents of two villages in Mollahat upazila yesterday.

Police said, about 3000 people took part in the clashes in the border area of the two villages over a trifling matter.

Assistant police superintendent Mahfuzul Alam Russel told the news agency that Faruk, a resident of Kulia village, on Wednesday went to cut grasses at a field at nearby Darial village.

He mistakenly cut a net at a field owned by Gaus, which sparked off tension among the residents of the two villages.

In a sequel to the incident, the rival villagers later locked in the sporadic clashes, which lasted one and a half hours from 9am.

Police aided by elder villagers, quelled the situation. Officer in-charge of Mollahat PS Abu Sayeed Khairul Anam was injured as he went to bring the situation under control.



PHOTO: STAR

Chanderteki Registered Primary School in Trishal upazila of Mymensingh district has turned too risky for conducting classes as chunks of plaster frequently fall off the ceiling of the building that has remained without necessary repair for years.

Finally they get the VGF rice ahead of Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Finally, 1953 people of Lokhmikunda union in Ishwardi upazila of the district have got VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) rice under special allotment.

The special allotment before Eid-ul-Azha, returned empty handed. Members of the union submitted a fresh list to the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) yesterday morning and distributed rice among the poor and vulnerable people under supervision of the upazila administration.

UP Chairman Anisur Rahman Mollah had earlier set October 21 for distributing the rice but he could not do it because of a directive from the upazila administration.

Follow-up

tion.

Poor and vulnerable people, who gathered at the union parishad complex on the day for VGF rice under special allotment before Eid-ul-Azha, returned empty handed.

Ishwardi Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Naznin Hossain stopped distribution of rice, alleging that the UP chairman failed to prepare a list acceptable to the members of the union.

The UNO issued the directive after UP member Sofura Khatun alleged that the chairman dropped the names suggested by the

members in the final list.

He asked the chairman to prepare a fresh list taking opinion of all members.

Following a report published in The Daily Star on Wednesday headlined 'VGF rice for 2000 uncertain', the upazila administration asked the UP chairman and members to prepare a fresh list of poor and vulnerable people and submit it the UNO by Thursday morning.

As per the directive, the UP chairman and members reached a consensus on the issue, prepared a list of 1953 people and gave 10 kgs of rice to each of them, said Md Abdulkuddus, secretary of Lokhmikunda Union Parishad.



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