

HALF-HEARTED AID, HALF-BAKED PLAN FOR FIVE YEARS

# Sidr victims still cry for help

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Five years into the onslaught of super cyclone Sidr, most of the 54,006 families who lost their houses in eight upazilas under the district are yet to get suitable dwellings.

Only 23,639 families have got new houses from government and different donors agencies of home and abroad.

Unable to build new houses, the rest 30,367 families are living in shabby huts, said sources of Patuakhali District Relief and Rehabilitation Office.

According to district administration, 2.25 lakh people of 54,006 families in the district became shelterless due to the Sidr that ravaged the southern region on November 15 in 2007.

Minara Begum, 50, wife of Khorshed Gazi of Char Federation, a remote coastal island under Baufal upazila, said, "All my five children died in Sidr. My house was also totally damaged. But I did not get a new house from the government or any donor organisation."

"I with my five-member family have to live in a shabby hut beside the embankment on the Paira River as I could not build new a house after losing my shelter in Sidr," Rahman Ali of Mehendiabad village under Mirzaganj upazila told this correspondent during his visit to the area on Monday.

Many others have similar tales to tell.

When contacted, Shanti Ranjon Baidya, district relief and rehabilitation officer (DRRO) in Patuakhali, said, "Rehabilitation programme is going on with our limited resources. We arranged houses for the affected people according to the lists made by local union parishads. We are trying our best to ensure shelter for every victim."

The district administra-



PHOTO: STAR

Although Sidr-damaged embankment in Chakamoiya in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali was repaired last year, a large portion of the dyke collapsed during tidal surge this year.

tion also distributed Tk 40.50 crore and 2,262 bundles of CI sheets among Sidr victims to repair their damaged houses but the allotment was too little for the demand, said the DRRO.

Meanwhile, 300 kilometres of flood control embankment and 33 sluice gates that were damaged by the super cyclone Sidr in the district are yet to be

repaired.

As a result agriculture on over three lakh hectares of agri land is still under threat.

At least 816 km area out of 1209 km flood control embankment and 355 out of 412 sluice gates under Patuakhli and Kalapara circles were damaged as Sidr hit on November 15 in 2007 in the coastal region, WDB

sources said.

Md Dewar Hossain, executive engineer for WDB (Water Development Board) in Patuakhali Circle, said, "We failed to repair all the damaged embankments and sluice gates even five years after Sidr as the allocation for the purpose is insufficient."

Md Shafi Uddin, executive engineer for WDB of

Kalapara Circle, also cited fund crisis as the cause for inability to repair all the damaged embankments.

Md Awal, 50, a farmer of Mehendiabad village under Mirzaganj upazila, said, "I failed to cultivate crops as salty water enters from adjacent Payra River through damaged parts of the flood control embankment."

Nurul Islam, a farmer Balaikathi village under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, said, "We do not want relief. Rather we demand immediate step to repair the damaged embankments so that we can cultivate our land to produce paddy to live."

Four hundred and sixty-six people were killed, 8,500 wounded, 211 others went missing as Sidr hit the region five years ago.

The super cyclone destroyed 54,006 houses and partly damaged 1,34,687 others in Patuakhali district. As many as 1161 educational institutions and 847 km road were also damaged in the natural disaster.



PHOTO: STAR

Damaged by super cyclone Sidr on November 15, 2007, this wooden bridge on Adhani canal in Galachipa upazila of Patuakhali district is yet to be repaired.

## Panel introduction programme for BMA poll at MMC postponed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The programme to introduce panel for the election of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) unit here was postponed yesterday as a faction of Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad continued to oppose the panel.

Scheduled to be held at Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) auditorium, the function was expected to be attended by central leaders of the parishad.

A leader of the parishad told this correspondent that the rival members of the parishad were still pressing for fresh schedule with fresh candidates from their side.

"So we decided to postpone the programme, fearing further untoward incident", he said.

We are keeping close contact with the central leaders of the parishad to find a reasonable way out and hold the BMA unit election here, said the leader.

The doctors belonging to a faction of the

parishad on Wednesday ransacked the room of Prof PC Babla at Mymensingh Medical College (MMC). They attacked the room of Dr Babla, head of election commission to Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) election at MMC, allegedly after failing to get nominations.

Earlier, a group of disgruntled doctors, who did not get nomination, rejected the panel for the November 29 election and snatched nomination withdrawal forms from some candidates on November 11, the last day for withdrawal of candidature, sources said.

After the untoward incident, the election commission, headed by Prof PC Babla, postponed the election.

A panel for all 23 posts from the parishad was finalised at a meeting between central leaders of the parishad at the residence of Captain (retd) Mujibur Rahman Fakir, MP, in the capital on Saturday but the rival parishad members here rejected it, sources added.



PHOTO: STAR

Nothing could deter a determind Nadia Sultana from appearing in Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinations. Physically challenged by birth, she is a regular student of Modhupur High School in Feni. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

## 9 Shibir men held from Kushtia training camp

*Bombs, bomb-making materials, gun powder, jihadi books, leaflets seized*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Law enforcers unearthed a training camp, run by Jamaat-Shibir, in Mazampur area of the town yesterday and arrested nine Shibir activists along with bombs, bomb-making materials, gun powder, books on jihad, leaflets, posters, barbed wire and CDs from there.

The arrestees are Abdul Kuddus, 22, Sajid Hossain, 23, Sohag Hasan, 21, Robiul Islam, 25, Abdul Alim, 22, Ashiqur Rahman, 27, Ishaq Ali, 23, Ashrafur Islam, 28 and Saifullah, 30.

Acting on a tip-off, police and detectives led by Additional Police Superintendent joynul Abedin raided a three-storey building of advocate Sa'ad Ahmed at around 12:30pm and arrested the nine.

The law enforcers seized five bombs, bomb-making materials, eight detonators, 13 test tubes, 12 batteries, one kg gun powder, barbed wire, 70 books on jihad, 600 posters, 1300 leaflets and 15 CDs from the first floor of the



PHOTO: STAR

Bombs, bomb-making materials, books on jihad, leaflets, posters and test tubes, seized from a Jamaat-Shibir training camp at Mozampur in Kushtia town yesterday, are kept at Sadar Police Station.

building.

Advocate Sa'ad Ahmed, a collaborator of Pakistani occupation forces, was arrested in 1972. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and later released from jail under general amnesty declared by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The house was built in 1998 and since then Jamaat-Shibir men had been using its ground and first floors as

their training camp, Additional SP Joynul said.

Asharful Islam, one of the arrestees, told newsmen that the house was being used as meeting place and training centre of their party men.

Law enforcers were interrogating the arrestees at Sadar Police Station as of filing of this report at 4:00pm yesterday. They will produce the Shibir men in a court here today.

RAB, OTHER TEAMS REACH GHATAIL

## 67 of 96 poll centres 'risky'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The Election Commission (EC) has taken huge security measures to hold the Tangail-3 (Ghatail) by-election, slated for November 18, free and fair.

Over 500 members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) including 50 officials from different units of the elite force reached Ghatail and set up their camps at the Dak Bungalow and Ghatail GBG College in the upazila headquarters till yesterday, Rab sources said.

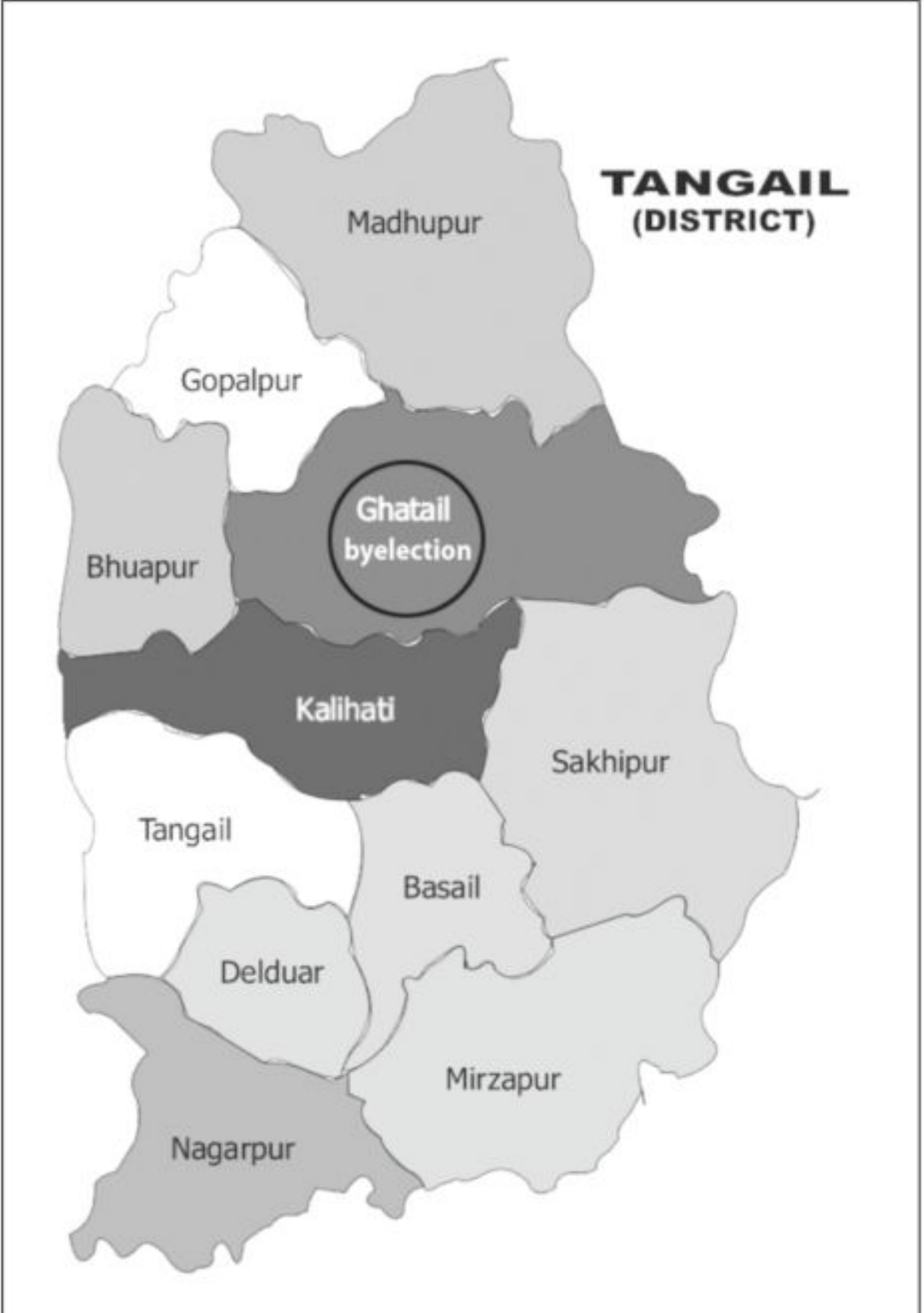
The Rab men including 32 patrol teams and 150 personnel from its intelligence and media wings will perform their duties in the by-election as per direction of the EC, they added.

Besides, a large number of law enforcers of Border Guard Bangladesh, police and Detective Branch, including plainclothesmen, will work to maintain law and order in the election, EC sources said.

The EC has identified as risky 67 out of a total 96 polling centres in the constituency and special security measures have been taken for these centres, said Sharifa Khatun, election officer in Ghatail upazila.

"Forty magistrates including four judicial magistrates, four mobile courts, and vigilance and observation teams comprising officials of the upazila administration are performing duty in the constituency.

"Several check posts have been set up at different strategic points in the con-



stituency to resist movement of outsiders.

"Two electoral inquiry committees led by a joint district judge and a senior assistant judge are also performing duty in the by-election for maintenance of RPO and election code of conduct," she said.

Three candidates in the by election are Amanur Rahman Khan Rana, a 'rebel' Awami League leader taking part in the election as an independent candidate (symbol -- pineapple), and Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) nominated candidate Syed Abu Yousuf Abdullah Tuhin (symbol --

plough) have already sought deployment of army in the by-election to prevent 'possible rigging' while ruling Awami League nominated candidate Shahidul Islam Lebu (symbol -- boat) expressed his 'no objection' to the matter.

Khurshid Anwar, returning officer for the by-election, also election officer in Mymensingh region, said, "Situation in Tangail-3 constituency ahead of the by-election is still peaceful. The Election Commission officials are taking all kinds of measures to ensure safety of the voters and hold the election free and fair."

## BDR,BSF meet over disputed land on Panchagarh border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A flag meeting between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was held yesterday on Berubari Shingpara border under Sadar upazila in Panchagarh over ownership of a disputed land in Khudipara village.

In the last three days, a tense situation was prevailing over the ownership of the land adjacent to Haribhasha border under Panchagarh Sadar upazila.

At the meeting, the BGB officials strongly placed their claim saying that 36 acres of the village were within Bangladesh territory for decades while the BSF officials termed it an adversely possessed land.

After discussion, the both sides agreed to

keep the land in its previous state until a solution to the issue was found by the high-ups of BGB and BSF.

Commanding Officer of Panchagarh 18, BGB Battalion Lieutenant Colonel Zakir Hossain led the 7-member Bangladeshi team while Commandant of 48, BSF Battalion Mr. Bijoy Sing led the 7-member Indian side.

During the meeting, the two sides also agreed to maintain peace on the border, show highest restraint at special circumstances and resolve border related problems through discussion.

They also agreed to take up programmes to develop awareness among the bordering people so that they obey border rules.