

# UN allocates \$2.4m to fight floods

UNB, Dhaka

In order to support Bangladesh's swift response and to assist those who have been affected by the flooding, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated US\$ 2.4 million to support the humanitarian response.

To date, more than 720,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed, and 172 shelters in the flood-affected areas are sheltering more than 46,000 people. Agricultural land and agricultural infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, roads and bridges have been damaged.

Following heavy monsoon rains, one-third of Bangladesh has been affected by the worst flooding in four decades, impacting eight million people across 32 of the country's 64 districts.

Those who have lost their homes, livelihoods and means of making a living are in need of immediate life-saving assistance.

The UN agencies and NGOs are assisting the government to respond to the needs of flood-affected people in the northern and central parts of the country.

The CERF fund will allow agencies to scale up their responses and reach 100,000 people who have been acutely affected by the flooding in the two most severely affected districts — Dinajpur and Jamalpur.

The fund will be used to provide water and sanitation facilities, food assistance, health support for pregnant women and newborn babies, and emergency shelter kits.

The UN Resident Coordinator for Bangladesh, Robert Watkins, said, "Bangladesh is used to flooding at this time of the year... but the volume of water that has fallen this year has been exceptionally heavy. Regularly this is a limit to people's resistance, and that has already been severely tested."

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Clockwise from left, A woman gets on a boat with the help of another after finishing her grocery. While a man heads out for work on a boat from his house. People wade through a submerged road. Thousands of residents of Shannarjan at Shiddhirganj in Narayanganj under the DND area have been experiencing waterlogging for the last two months. Due to a poor drainage system and clogged up canals, the DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Denra) area is chronically plagued by waterlogging. The photos were taken late last month.



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Marooned by waterlogging

HELEMI ALAM

Shahana Begum, a pregnant woman who was in her advanced stage, was wading through knee-deep water to go to a healthcare centre.

Though her doctor told her to be careful during any movement, it has been very difficult for her to follow the advice as the area where she lives has been under ankle-to-waste-deep water for two months.

Shahana has to use a boat to reach the main road from her house and wade through ankle-to-knee-deep water where boats cannot go.

"As it is nine months and I am now in an advanced stage, my doctor has advised me to go to the clinic regularly. But it has become really tough for me because of waterlogging," Shahana said recently as she was going to the clinic along with her younger sister Tania.

Sadiya Majumdar and Sumaiya,

two ninth grade students of Shamsul Haque Khan School, also have to wade through knee-deep water almost every day due to the waterlogging.

"Our mid-term examinations are going on and every day we have to attend the exam wading through dirty water. The situation turns worse when it rains," said Sadiya.

Not only these three, thousands of residents of Shannarjan at Shiddhirganj in Narayanganj have been experiencing this level of waterlogging for the last two months.

"Though several lakhs of people in DND area face the waterlogging every year, residents of Shannarjan, which is also under DND area, are facing this problem after 13 years."

"We last experienced waterlogging in 2004. After 13 years this time it has become almost permanent," said Ziaur Rahman, a resident of

Shannarjan.

He said Paglar Khal, a canal that used to carry rainwater to Shimral pumping station, has lost its capacity because of encroachment and dumping of waste.

He added although the authorities concerned lack the canal, they only work on its surface.

Like Shannarjan, five to eight lakh people of DND area including Doga, Rahim Market, Adamjee, Pagla and Fatullah have been facing waterlogging for more than two months.

Many residents of the area are suffering from various skin diseases because of the dirty water, said Nurunnabi, another resident of the area.

"My house is under thick-deep water. We have purchased one truck of sand and put sandbags in our lives to shelter," said Sharupa, who lives in Shannarjan and is also suffer-

ing from skin infection.

Meanwhile, there have been new earning opportunities as many people have started ferrying people on boats.

"I have bought a boat three days ago at Tk 3,300. Now I earn Tk 600 to Tk 700 every day," said Monir, a boatman.

Around 30 boats are plying the waterlogged roads instead of motorised and non-motorised vehicles, said Shafiqul, another part-time boatman.

Project Director of Development of Drainage System of DND Abdul Awal has recently said they have taken a four-year-long project involving Tk 558.2 crore to solve the problem of the area.

Army might undertake the project and an agreement might be signed in this

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## Rohingya refugees burden for country

Says Quader; visits ailing Kader Siddique along with Nasim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a mass exodus of Rohingyas into Bangladesh, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government was treating the refugees on humanitarian grounds.

Terming the refugees a burden for the country, he said the government was undertaking diplomatic efforts to stop the Rohingyas influx into Bangladesh.

"We are considering the Rohingyas crisis on humanitarian grounds," Quader told reporters after visiting ailing Kader Siddique, president of Bangladesh Krishak Samik Janata League, at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Kader Siddique was admitted to the hospital on September 3 due to dengue fever, diabetes and other complications.

Quader said a terrible situation was created in the bordering area over the Rohingyas issue, and it was not possible for the government to cope up with the influx.

He said the government was consulting international organisations including UN Human Rights Council to end the crisis.

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Newly appointed Indonesian Ambassador to Bangladesh Rina Prithiyamsari Soemarno pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the capital on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PNO

## Snake missing for 1.5yrs found at judge's bungalow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Rajshahi City Corporation authorities on Monday night recovered a rock python from the bungalow of a Rajshahi district judge in the city's Steermark area.

The snake went missing from the Rajshahi Central Zoo around one and a half years ago, said RCC Mayor Mosaddik Hossain Bulbul, present during the effort to find it.

A guard at the judge's bungalow noticed the snake at a crop field few days back. On Monday around 8:30pm, it was seen in front of the bungalow entrance. The guard then informed the city corporation officials. They later caught the snake around 9:30pm.

Dr Farhad Uddin, in-charge of the zoo, said the

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## Incorporate climate issue in health policies

Suggests WHO health expert Dr Thamarangsai; stresses political commitment to cope with its adverse effects

TUBIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, from Maldives

With Bangladesh being one of the most vulnerable countries to the adverse impacts of climate change, good preparedness and management can minimise its effects on public health, said a WHO health expert.

"That's like military preparation, even if you don't have a war-like situation. But you have to be prepared for it," said Dr Thamarangsai Thamarangsai, director of Noncommunicable Diseases and Environment Health of WHO South-East Asia Regional Office.

Stressing political commitment and effective leadership to cope up with the adverse effects of climate change on public health, he said climate change risk issues should be incorporated into the country's health policies and programmes.

He advocated climate resilient health system and more investment in the media.

Thamarangsai was speaking at a media orientation programme at a hotel in Male

yesterday, a day before the health ministers of 11 member countries of WHO Southeast Asia Region going to seat for a five-day meeting in the capital city of the Maldives to set health priorities and discuss the health agenda.

Bangladesh ranked sixth among the world's top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events in the last 20 years, according to the Global Climate Risk Index by think-tank Germanwatch published last year.

On an average, 679.05 people died in 185 climatic events in Bangladesh within the period of 1996 to 2013, the report said. As a result, the country lost 0.7324 percent of its GDP.

According to a 2015 UN report, unless considerable protective measures are taken, an average of 17.2 million people is projected to be affected by flooding due to sea level rise between 2070 and 2100.

It was also anticipated that 20.3 million

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## Bangladeshis rush to India thru Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Around 6,000

Bangladeshis are entering India every day through the Benapole international check post following the Eid-ul-Azha holiday.

Immigration and customs officials of both countries are struggling to deal with the rush. As a result, the long queues, sometimes forming as far as 2km, were going at the peak.

Bangladesh officials said 4,503 passengers crossed into India on September 2, while 6,162 on the next day, 7,281 on September 4, and 3,000 till yesterday noon. They are travelling to meet relatives.

Usually 1,800-2,500 people cross Benapole into India daily.

## MURDER OF COP, WIFE IN 2013 Trial of child domestic help dragging on

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A juvenile court in Dhaka is yet to complete the trial against Khadija Akhter Sumi, a domestic help of Oshsee Rahman, an accused in the case filed for the murders of a police inspector and his wife in August 2013.

But the trial against Oshsee, also accused for killing her parents, was completed both in the High Court earlier. Special Branch (SB) Inspector Mahfuzur Rahman and his wife Shapna Rahman were stabbed to death at their rented flat in Chameelbagh in the capital. Police recovered their bodies on August 16, 2013.

Sumi was charged with assisting Oshsee to remove the bodies of the couple. The prosecution was reluctant to produce the prosecution witnesses before the court even though 52 consecutive dates had

already been passed. Moreover, same witnesses before another court which disposed of the other part against Oshsee and two others in 2013.

The lawyer also said Sumi appeared before the court on every date from Rangamati.

Rejecting the defence plea, additional public prosecutor Abdus Sattar Daul said he had tried his best to produce the witnesses but they did not pay heed to the court summons. Sumi was arrested soon after the killing of the couple. Later, she gave confessional statements before a magistrate on August 24 where she said she saw the scene of killing of the couple by her daughter Oshsee. Later, she assisted Oshsee to remove the bodies.

After an investigation, the then inspector of the detective branch of police Abul Khayer Manubbar, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted two charge sheets — one against Oshsee and her two friends and the other against Sumi — on March 8 of 2014.

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A man fishes in the Buriganga in Bosila of Keraniganj yesterday. Though the residents of the area are blessed with this river, for a long time they could not enjoy fishing because the water was too polluted to sustain aquatic life. The locals said the river water got clear due to monsoon rain and relocation of tanneries from nearby Hazaribagh.