



Residents wade through deep floodwater to retrieve belongings from the Trent Court public housing apartments after the Neuse River went over its banks during Hurricane Florence in New Bern, United States, on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Florence makes landfall

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No storm-related deaths or serious injuries were reported in the hours immediately after Florence hit but authorities said more than 60 people, including many children and pets, had to be evacuated from a hotel in Jacksonville, North Carolina, after strong winds caused parts of the roof to collapse.

The center of the hurricane's eye came ashore at about 7:15 a.m. EDT (1115 GMT) near Wrightsville Beach close to Wilmington, North Carolina, with sustained winds of 90 miles per hour (150 kph), the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

By 1:50pm (1750 GMT) the winds had dropped to 75 mph (120 kph) and the center was moving west at a 6 mph (10 kph), the NHC said, and parts of North and South Carolina would get as much as 40 inches of rain (1 meter).

Cooper said Florence was set to cover almost all of North Carolina in several feet of water. As of yesterday morning, Atlantic Beach, a town on the state's Outer Banks barrier islands, already had received 30 inches (76 cm) of rain, the US Geological Service said. Twenty inches (50 cm) were reported by early yesterday afternoon in the town of Oriental.

The NWS predicted Florence could drop up to eight months' worth of rain in two or three days.

Authorities in New Bern said more than 100 people had to be saved from floods and that the downtown area was underwater. The town's public information officer, Colleen Roberts, told CNN 150 more people were awaiting rescue.

Helping with rescues there were members of the so-called Cajun Navy, a group of Louisiana-based volunteers who became famous during last year's Hurricane Harvey, locals said on Twitter.

"WE ARE COMING TO GET YOU," New Bern city officials said on Twitter. "You may need to move up to the second story, or to your attic, but WE ARE COMING TO GET YOU." Video reports from several towns in the Carolinas showed emergency personnel wading through rippling high-high floodwaters in residential neighborhoods.

"IT'S INSANE"

Florence also blew down trees, including one that went through the roof of Kevin DiLoreto's home in Wilmington. He said all roads leading to his neighborhood were blocked by fallen trees.

"It's insane," he said in a phone interview. "Everybody laughs at the fact that this storm got downgraded ... but I've never seen tree devastation this bad."

"Afterwards, I'm going to drink a bottle of whiskey and take a two-day nap, but right now I'm walking the neighborhood and making sure my neighbors are fine, because nobody can get in here."

More than 634,000 homes and businesses were without power in North and South Carolina early yesterday, utility officials said. Utility companies said millions were expected to lose power and restoration could take weeks.

Florence had been a Category 3 hurricane with 120 mph winds on Thursday but dropped to Category 1 before coming ashore. It is expected to move across parts of south-

eastern North Carolina and eastern South Carolina yesterday and today, then head north over the western Carolinas and central Appalachian Mountains early next week, the NHC said. Significant weakening is expected over the weekend.

About 10 million people could be affected by the storm and more than 1 million were ordered to evacuate the coasts of the Carolinas and Virginia. Some of those who stayed went to shelters while others stuck it out in their homes.

Maysie Baumgardner, 7, and her family sheltered at the Hotel Ballast in downtown Wilmington as Florence filled the streets with floodwaters.

"It looks heavy outside," she said. "I'm a little bit scared right now, but I have my iPad and I'm watching Netflix."

Amtrak canceled its passenger rail service south of Washington, DC, and there were nearly 600 cancellations of flights arriving or departing from major airports in the Carolinas.

Florence was one of two major storms yesterday. In the Philippines, evacuations were under way with Super Typhoon Mangkhut expected to hit today in an area impacting an estimated 5.2 million people.

Bangladesh 3 notches up

FROM PAGE 1

report "Human Development Indices and Indicators" released yesterday. Norway has been ranked first.

Human development data, analysis and reporting have been at the heart of that paradigm.

UNDP's Human Development Index has captured human progress, combining information on people's health, education and income in just one number.

Over the years, the HDI has served as a comparative tool of excellence, and as a reliable platform for vigorous public debates on national priorities.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said the Human Development Report will remain UNDP's premier vehicle to advance development thinking. "Our mission to capture the state of global human development and inform development policy across the globe has never been more crucial."

UNDP said still, the Sustainable Development Goals require new indicators for assessing the many faces of inequality, the impact of the global environmental crisis on people now and tomorrow, the importance of voice, and the ways in which communities rather than individuals are progressing.

Selim Jahan, director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office, said while there is ground for opti-

indices and statistics. It includes an analysis of the state of human development-snapshots of current conditions as well as long-term trends in human development indicators.

With a comprehensive statistical annex, the data gives an overview of the state of development across the world, looking at long-term trends in human development indicators across multiple dimensions and for every nation, the 2018 update highlights the considerable progress, but also the persistent deprivations and disparities.

Looking at 2018 results, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Ireland and Germany lead the HDI ranking of 189 countries and territories, while Niger, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Chad and Burundi have the lowest scores in the HDI's measurement of national achievements in health, education and income.

The overall trend globally is toward continued human development improvements, with many countries moving up through the human development categories: out of the 189 countries for which the HDI is calculated, 59 countries are today in the very high human development group and only 38 countries fall in the low HDI group. Just eight years ago in 2010, the figures were 46 and 49 countries respectively, the report says.

HDI RANKING 2017	
SRI LANKA	76
MALDIVES	101
INDIA	130
BHUTAN	134
BANGLADESH	136
NEPAL	149
PAKISTAN	150

mism that the gaps are narrowing, disparities in people's well-being are still unacceptably wide.

He said inequality in all its forms and dimensions, between and within countries, limits people's choices and opportunities, withholding progress.

Within South Asia, India's HDI value is above the average of 0.638 for the region, with Bangladesh and Pakistan, countries with similar population size, being ranked 136 and 150 respectively.

Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 statistical update was released to ensure consistency in reporting on key human development

Two kinds of heat for Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

underway from 3:30pm (5:30pm Bangladesh time) at the Dubai International Stadium.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's men will have to contend with extreme heat in a part of the world that rarely sees cricket in the high-heat months of August and September. On the other hand, they will be dealing with a familiar foe in Sri Lanka, against whom they have had many battles -- not to mention more than a little needle -- over the last two years.

In the sides' last meeting during the Nidahas Trophy in Colombo in March, Bangladesh won an ill-tempered T20I that featured captain Shakib Al Hasan calling players back when aggrieved at an umpiring decision and numerous players engaging in a war of words.

Six months later, both camps seem to be downplaying the budding rivalry and insist that the Nidahas Trophy incident is a thing of the past and will not have a bearing on today's match.

"When players represent their country the edge is there anyway -- there are no enemies," said Mashrafe when asked whether it is good to have a bit of needle before a match. "There are things that happen in the heat of the moment during the match, but those things don't last. It [rivalry] neither helps you to play better nor is it a reason to play badly."

"It's more important to implement our plans and start well -- if we can do well tomorrow it will give us confidence for the next match. The format is different this time as you have to get past two teams and play the three other teams in the next round, and there are matches hot on the heels of each other if you get to the second round, so it's important to start well."

Another familiar issue for Bangladesh is the phenomenon of the five seniors -- Mashrafe, Shakib, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad -- carrying the lion's share of the responsibility of the team doing well while the less experienced members, whom Mashrafe has recently been saying can no longer be called juniors, fail to pull their weight.

More than all other factors, it will likely be the performances of those outside the big five that will determine Bangladesh's fortunes today, and beyond. The premium will be on consistency as Bangladesh, the highest ranked side in their group, will ideally want to win both their matches against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka to be sure of progression to the next round where all four teams -- two qualifiers each from the two groups -- will be in a race to the final on September 28.

However, any advantage of being ranked above their groupmates is offset

by the alien nature of the conditions they are faced with.

Bangladesh last played in the uniquely tortuous heat of the UAE in 1995. In other words none of the players in this squad -- even those who participated here in the Pakistan Super League in February -- have the match feel of playing here in September.

Sri Lanka have played Pakistan here regularly, their last sojourn being a full tour in September-October 2017. Like Pakistan, the UAE is a second home for Afghanistan and they are well versed in the conditions here.

The toss will of course be a factor with the match beginning in the afternoon as the side fielding first will have the worst of the heat, which in turn will affect their batsmen for the chase.

The good news for Bangladesh seems to be that the recovery of the injured pair of Tamim and Shakib -- both managing finger injuries -- seems to be progressing unhindered and Bangladesh are likely to field a full-strength squad for the game.

"They have played with injuries in the past. They have taken the decision that they will play, so there is no use discussing these things the day before, and there is no excuse now," said Mashrafe.

'Absurd' to accuse Russia of lying about spy poisoning: Kremlin

AFP, Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday said it was "absurd" for Britain to dismiss as unconvincing an interview with two suspects in the poisoning of former double agent Sergei Skripal on British soil.

The comments came a day after Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov denied any involvement in the poisoning of Skripal and his daughter in the English city of Salisbury in March, telling Russian state TV they had visited as tourists.

British security services had named the two men as main suspects in the case.

"Accusing Russia of lying after the declarations of two Russian citizens is... absurd," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"These are ordinary citizens. They have nothing to do with the Russian state," Peskov said.

He added that he had not watched the interview himself and that he did not know whether President Vladimir Putin had but that it was "hardly likely" he had seen it in full.

The Kremlin responded after Prime Minister Theresa May's spokesman said the interview contained "lies and blatant fabrications" and called it "an insult to the public's intelligence."

Peskov said that the Russian government's position on the case has not changed and "we consider unacceptable any associations between the Russian leadership and the Russian state and what happened in Salisbury."

He declined to confirm whether Russia would allow British police to question the suspects if such a request were made.

The men "have not broken any laws in Russia and we don't know officially that they have broken laws anywhere else in the world," the Kremlin spokesman said.

B Chowdhury

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They will also press for deployment of army with magistracy power one month ahead of the national polls and not using Electronic Voting Machine in the polls.

Their nine-point objective include decentralisation of power, bringing balance of power between the prime minister and the president, ensuring effective independence of judiciary, appointment of an ombudsman and amendment to article 70 of the constitution.

Contacted, Dr Kamal yesterday said, "We have agreed on some issues to forge a greater unity and we will make an announcement tomorrow [today]. We want the country to be run in light of the constitution and these things will be in our announcement."

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convener of Nagorik Oikya, said they agreed to work together and forge a greater unity.

Earlier, the BNP drafted a 15-point proposal for forging a greater unity. Party leaders said it would send the proposal to other political parties for their consideration.

Hasina, Modi

FROM PAGE 2

country.

On September 10, Modi and Hasina had launched two railway projects and a power supply link between the two countries.

Modi and Hasina have met three times this year so far, including on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu in August, in Santiniketan in May for inauguration of Bangladesh Bhavan and on the margins of the Commonwealth Summit in London in April.

Both Hasina and Modi had in their speeches on September 10 talked of restoring the pre-1965 connectivity.

In 2015, the two countries decided on the supply of an additional 500 MW power to Bangladesh and this is being done using the transmission link between West Bengal and Bangladesh. On completion of the project launched last week, 1.16 Gigawatts of power is being supplied from India to Bangladesh. Supplies from India meet about 10% of Bangladesh's power requirement.

The Akhaura-Agartala rail connectivity will provide another link between the two countries besides giving the north eastern states access to the nearby Chittagong port.

Living in fear, uncertainty

FROM PAGE 1

Tens of thousands of foreign workers in Malaysia have been living in fear and uncertainty since the government began a massive crackdown on undocumented foreign workers on July 1 following the end of a over two-year rehiring programme.

Under the programme, undocumented workers were given the opportunity to regularise their status by applying to the Malaysian government through three local private companies.

The crackdown intensified all over Malaysia on August 31, a day after the Malaysian government's amnesty programme for foreign workers ended.

The programme, which began in 2014, gave illegal foreign workers a chance to leave Malaysia given that they paid a fine of 400 Malaysian Ringgit (RM).

It also included a condition that those going home would be barred from entering Malaysia for five years -- a provision that discouraged many from using the amnesty. They instead chose to continue to work and try to become regularised complying with the procedures.

Of the estimated one million Bangladeshis working in Malaysia, around half are reportedly undocumented.

Though most of them have applied for regularising their work permits, nearly 80 percent of them are yet to get permits, according to migrants and activists.

It's because the three Malaysian private companies -- MyEG, Iman and Bukit Megah Sdn Bhd -- or their agents and subagents defrauded the workers, taking advantage of their vulnerability and lack of knowledge about the regularisation process, they said.

Each undocumented Bangladeshi worker paid the agents between RM 5,000 and 10,000 (Tk 1-2 lakh) for getting work permits. For some, the amount was higher.

A large number of irregular workers got registered with the three firms for regularisation immediately after the rehiring programme began in February 2016. But they are yet to get work permits.

Now they are in extreme fear as the new Malaysian government is carrying out drives against undocumented migrant workers with a pledge to reduce the Southeast Asian country's dependence on foreign workers.

The crackdown prompted scores of irregular Bangladeshi and Indonesian workers, who work at the site in Cyberjaya, to live in the woods to evade arrest.

"It is better to die than to get caught by the immigration police or jailed," said 35-year-old Shafiqur Rahman, another irregular Bangladeshi worker from Sirajganj.

He said many of the undocumented workers have been living in the woods, about one kilometre from the construction site. They built shacks with iron and wooden frames, and plastic sheets.

"We often spot snakes in the woods. The place is full of mosquitoes," said Shafiqur, as he led this correspondent to the forest area where they now live to evade arrest.

"We cannot really sleep here... This is not a life one wants to lead. My life is ruined here," he said.

This correspondent spoke to about two dozen irregular workers in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor Bahru. All of them said they were living in constant fear.

One of them is 27-year-old Saiful Islam from Lakshmipur, who had spent Tk 3.8 lakh to go to Malaysia in 2015 with a "professional category" visa.

According to the job contract, his monthly salary was RM 3,000. However, once he arrived in Malaysia, his employer, an electric company in Kuala Lumpur, said he would get only

RM 1,000.

He had no option but to change job and eventually got undocumented.

Early last year, he got registered with MyEG through a Bangladeshi agent. Since then, he has paid the agent more than RM 12,000 but is yet to get a work permit. The agent keeps showing various excuses for non-issuance of the document.

"I was detained by the Malaysian immigration police and was kept in a camp for nine days. I had to pay around Tk 50,000 to the officials there for getting released.

"I haven't sent any money to my ailing parents for the last one year... I still have loans to repay," said Saiful, who works at a restaurant in Cyberjaya.

"I am worried about the future that lies ahead of me."

MALAYSIAN MINISTER AVOIDS ANSWERS

Malaysia's Human Resources Minister M Kulasegaran avoided giving any answer when this correspondent asked him why thousands of Bangladeshi workers were not issued work permits though they paid huge sums to the three Malaysian firms for regularisation.

"I have no answer for you. It is the responsibility of someone else," he said in response.

The minister was speaking to reporters after an event at The Everly Hotel in Putrajaya on Thursday.

SpaceX

FROM PAGE 16

entrepreneur and Tesla electric car CEO Elon Musk, has touted plans to send tourists around the Moon.

In February, 2017, SpaceX announced it would send the world's first two space tourists around the Moon in late 2018.

That plan called for them to ride on a Dragon crew vehicle, similar to the cargo ships that SpaceX routinely sends loaded with supplies to the International Space Station.

They would have blasted off aboard a Falcon Heavy rocket.

However, the company has remained mum about those plans in recent months.

The names and identities of those two tourists -- and how much they intended to pay -- were never revealed.

SpaceX declined an AFP request for more details, but said further information would follow Monday at an event lasting from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

Humans have not set foot on the Moon since the final Apollo mission in 1972, capping an era of US national pride.

American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first men to explore the lunar surface in 1969, a moment seen and heard around the world when Armstrong declared "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Only 24 people in history have ever been to the Moon.

US President Donald Trump has championed plans to put boots on the Moon again, as Nasa works on building a lunar gateway that would serve as a launching point for missions heading even further into deep space, such as asteroids or Mars.

SpaceX is a key commercial partner to Nasa, and is working on a crew ship that will make its first flight to the orbiting International Space Station next year, restoring access to space from US soil for the first time since 2011, when the space shuttle program was retired after 30 years.

Boeing is also hard at work on its crew vehicle, with pioneering flights planned for 2019 as well.

SpaceX currently has a \$1.6 billion contract with Nasa to supply the astronauts living at the ISS, via regular cargo trips on its Dragon spaceships, launched aboard a Falcon 9 rocket.



বাংলাদেশ কেমিক্যাল ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ কর্পোরেশন

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation
BCIC Bhaban, 30-31, Dilkusha CA, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Phone: 9551869, PABX 9559281-82, 85, 9562140-41,
Fax: 880-2-9564120, 95656554,
Email: cfobcic@hotmail.com, web: www.bcic.gov.bd

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e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Tender document last selling/ downloading Date and time	Tender security submission last date and time	Tender opening date and time
01	221384	1. Biometric & RFID Attendance System 2. Attendance/HRM Software 3. Networking System for Biometric Time Attendance 4. Door access control 5. UPS related service.	26-Sep-2018 16:00	27-Sep-2018 11:00	27-Sep-2018 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

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Md. Shahidul Islam
General Manager, Purchase
E-mail: pur.gm@bcic.gov.bd
Tel: 880-2-9567091

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