

Turkey floods death toll at 77, dozens still missing

AFP, Bozkurt

Seventy-seven people died and at least 40 are still missing in Turkey after flash floods hit Black Sea regions last week, officials said on Monday.

The death toll has been climbing all weekend as rescue and recovery workers pick through debris left behind by the subsiding waters in the hardest-hit areas.

More than 30 villages still have no electricity and some areas have no running water, according to the disaster and emergencies service.

Emergency teams set up temporary cell phone receivers and transmitters to help with communications, it said.

Two youths

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While most of the gang members managed to escape, these two youths were found dead and were brought to DMCH by RAB personnel, the sources added.

Contacted, the officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station Abul Kalam Azad told UNB, “We have assigned a team to gather more information about the gunfight. Details about it will be revealed to the media soon.”

Seven more

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Police recovered a body of Rohingya on early Tuesday while in the morning Coast Guard personnel recovered six more bodies of Rohingyas near the Sandwip’s coastal parts during patrolling, said Coast Guard East Zone’s Zonal Commander Kazi Shah Alam.

So far 11 bodies were recovered following the boat capsizing incident and the bodies were sent to Bhasan Char for identification by relatives, the Coast Guard officials said.

In Chattogram, more than 100 Rohingyas, including women and children, have been detained after they fled Bhasan Char on boats and reached Mirsarai and Sandwip upazilas at different times, said a police source.

According to the police, the Rohingyas managed to flee the island with the help of local brokers despite lots of aids in Bhasan Char.

Bhasan Char housing facilities in Noakhali’s Hatiya has been built to relocate the Rohingyas from Cox’s Bazar.

Swiss declare

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2020”, according to the university’s Centre for Data Analytics, Visualisation and Simulation.

Researchers are waiting for the Guinness Book of Records to certify their feat, until then revealing only the final ten digits they calculated for pi: 7817924264.

The previous world-record pi calculation had achieved 50 trillion figures.

Pi represents the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter, with an infinite number of digits following the decimal point.

Researchers nevertheless continue to push calculations for the constant -- whose first 10 figures are 3.141592653 -- ever further using powerful computers.

The Swiss team said that the experience they built up calculating pi could be applied in other areas like “RNA analysis, simulations of fluid dynamics and textual analysis”.

Rohingyas

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Federal Criminal Appeal Court in Buenos Aires remotely from refugee camps in Bangladesh, according to activist group Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK.

“For decades, the Myanmar military has with impunity tried to wipe the Rohingyas out as a people,” said Tun Khin, president of the group, which petitioned the Argentine government to open the case.

“With Myanmar both unwilling and unable to investigate itself -- especially since the coup -- the international community must step in and support all justice efforts.”

Myanmar denies committing genocide, justifying the 2017 operations as a means of rooting out Rohingya militants.

The Myanmar public was largely unsympathetic to the Rohingyas’s plight, while activists and journalists reporting on the issues faced vitriolic abuse online.

After the military was accused of genocide, civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi travelled to The Hague to defend the generals at the UN’s top court.

Months later they deposed her in a coup.

The country has conceded some soldiers might have used “disproportionate” force in the 2017 crackdown, but insists they will be investigated and prosecuted by Myanmar’s criminal justice system.



Residents of a village close to the Jamuna river find over knee-deep water in their yard yesterday. People of Manikganj fear further flooding as the water level of the Jamuna was increasing rapidly.

PHOTO: STAR

Biman flights to India restart on Sunday

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Wishing anonymity, the official, however, said they were hoping to get the letter from India very soon.

On August 4, CAAB sent a proposal to India citing different conditions for resuming flights between the two countries.

The flights would be operated under an “air bubble” agreement.

Millions of people, including patients, businessmen, and students, used to visit India every year while many Indians used to visit Bangladesh on various purposes.

Bangladesh suspended all international flights to and from Bangladesh on April 14 after this wave of Covid hit the country hard.

After 16 days, international flights resumed from May 1, excluding 12 countries including India.

CAAB later added and deducted names of countries from the list.

In its latest circular on July 5, CAAB made a fresh list of eight countries, including India, from where no passengers are allowed to enter Bangladesh.

When Covid-19 first broke

out in the country last year, air communication with India remained suspended for several months.

Flights between Bangladesh and India resumed on October 28 under the air bubble agreement.

All Indian Visa Application Centres in Bangladesh already resumed operations from Wednesday as the Covid-19 lockdown has been eased.

A Facebook post from the Indian High Commission in Dhaka on Tuesday said all applications except for tourist visas will be accepted.

In its letter to the director general

of civil aviation of India on August 4, CAAB proposed 21 air bubble flights a week for each of the countries.

The letter also said which categories of passengers could fly.

Regarding capacity restrictions on flights, CAAB said a maximum of 140 passengers can be carried by a single-aisle aircraft and 200 passengers by a twin-isle aircraft.

Apart from Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Novo Air, and US Bangla of Bangladesh and Air India, Indigo, SpiceJet, Vistara, and GoAir operate flights from Bangladesh.

Another e-commerce site in trouble

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the number of customers who were yet to receive products from it despite making payments until July 31.

The ministry also directed the e-commerce platform to provide it with information about the amount of money it took from the customers. Besides, it wanted to know about the amount of money it should pay to suppliers.

The development comes at a time when an increasing number of customers are complaining that they are not getting products even after paying e-commerce platforms in advance.

Of them, Evaly and some others face investigation by various state agencies.

On Monday night, a customer filed the case against eorange with Gulshan Police Station in the capital

over embezzling nearly Tk 1,100 crore, alleging the platform was not delivering products purchased since April 28 this year, said Aminul Islam, inspector (investigation) of the police station.

In the case statement, the complainant, Md Taherul Islam, said the products were supposed to be delivered within an agreed period, but it did not happen.

The case was filed against all owners of the platform, including Sonia Mehzabin, Masukur Rahman, Amanullah, Bithi Akhter and Kauser Ahmed.

The complainant said they were not getting assurance that they would get their money back.

“Confusions have been created over change in ownership [of the company],” said Taherul, who was accompanied by several other eorange

customers when the case was filed.

The Daily Star repeatedly tried but could not reach eorange owner Bithi Akhter and Chief Executive Kauser Ahmed for comments over phone and email.

Dozens of other customers also filed complaints against the platform with the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP).

On August 16, customers gathered at the Gulshan office of eorange and later went in front of the house of former Bangladesh national cricket team captain Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, who is a former brand ambassador of the platform.

Mashrafe assured the victims of support.

After the two former eorange owners surrendered before the Dhaka court yesterday seeking bail, Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan

Magistrate Md Abu Bakar Siddique sent them to jail.

Md Mamonor Rashid, a defence lawyer, said two petitions were filed with the court, seeking bail for the couple on the ground that they are not the current owners of eorange.

Talking to The Daily Star, Arifur Rahman, another customer of eorange, said he paid the platform Tk 9 lakh in advance for eight motorbikes. The market value of the motorbikes is about Tk 19 lakh.

“As per the rules of the company, the motorbikes were supposed to be delivered within 25 working days of placing the order. Four months have passed, but I haven’t got them,” said Arifur.

Asked, Bablu Kumar Saha, director general of the DNCRP, said they would act as per such complaints.

Patients deprived

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facility following false positive results of RT-PCR Covid tests conducted there on July 7.

The team found violations of four rules by Praava Health, according to the suspension order issued by the DGHS.

Those are -- failure to maintain separate areas for donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE), charging an extra Tk 150 for registration, absence of signature of a registered MBBS physician in test reports and listing the World Health Organization as a “partner” instead of a “corporate client”.

The suspension order, however, did not say anything about Praava’s services related to clinical quality or question its laboratory test results.

According to Praava website, its laboratory equipment is state-of-the-art and equivalent to that used by some of the best labs in the world. Its PCR equipment is manufactured by Roche and Thermofisher.

It uses only the reagents recommended and approved by the government for Covid-19 testing.

For external validation of testing, Praava participates in RIQAS (Randox International Quality Assessment Scheme), the world’s largest international external quality assessment scheme. It has been participating in RIQAS every month

since its inception -- to date, it has received a 99.9% average monthly accuracy score.

Praava’s Senior Laboratory Director Dr Zaheed Husain is a renowned molecular biologist and former faculty member of Harvard University, added Praava.

Section 11.3.b of the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982, says a clinic’s licence cannot be cancelled unless the owner of the clinic has been given an opportunity of showing causes against such cancellation.

Asked, Prof Ridwanur Rahman, a medicine and infectious disease specialist, said, “The suspension for such minor flaws was not logical. In terms of quality, Praava’s services were much better than that of many others. On the contrary, there are questions about the quality of services of many government and private healthcare organisations.

“Praava could have been given space for addressing the issues.”

The suspension of Praava’s services dealt a blow to the service seekers as many city dwellers turned to the facility for Covid-19 tests amid scarcity of testing facilities.

According to the DGHS, before the suspension of services, Praava had conducted 152,904 RT-PCR tests -- about three percent of the total Covid tests conducted so far in the country.

Besides, more than 230,000 patients received healthcare services from the facility which started its journey on August 25, 2017.

“I am a regular client of Praava health. Their service is good. The suspension has created problems for me,” one of the healthcare service seekers in the capital’s Dhanmondi area told this newspaper, wishing anonymity.

WHAT DID THE COMPLAINANT SAY?

Talking to this newspaper, the complainant, Dr Mahfuz Shafique, said Praava Health staffers collected samples of his wife and their two daughters from his house for Covid tests on July 7 afternoon.

“By around 11:00pm, we received the test results that came out to be positive for Covid-19,” he said, adding that he had requested the officials of Praava Health twice for retests as none of the family members had any symptoms.

“Instead, they sent us their service packages for Covid-19 positive patients.

“Being a doctor, I know false positive was not impossible,” said Shafique.

To be sure, he gave his sample to Green Life Hospital for Covid test that night. His test result came out to be negative.

Later, samples from all his family members and others, including

domestic help, were collected and tested at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) on July 8.

“The results of all the tests conducted at the IEDCR lab came out to be negative the following day,” he said.

Asked what prompted him to lodge the complaint, Shafique said, “Praava officials did not acknowledge that there might be something wrong. Due to their over-confidence and non-cooperation, we had to reschedule a flight abroad. For me, it was a loss, but I was able to endure it. For many, it is not endurable.”

FALSE POSITIVE

The RT-PCR test is considered as “gold standard” for detecting Covid-19.

But even though the test is highly specific, there is a chance of “false positive” results for someone not infected with the virus.

According to a pre-print study published in medrxiv.com, the false positive rates in rt-PCR tests is 0-16.7 percent.

“The most common causes for false positive results we observe are clerical error, testing the wrong sample, cross-contamination from someone else’s positive sample, or problems with the reagents used,” said Dr Arifa Akram, assistant professor of virology at the National Institute of Laboratory Medicine and Referral Centre in Dhaka.

Serious ‘insurgency movement’ in East Pakistan: Kissinger

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strategy for us to follow in this situation is to concentrate the world’s attention on averting famine as an umbrella under which hopefully enough might be done to deprive India of an excuse for intervention and to give Yahya a face-saving way of taking some of the political steps he may have to take if he has to rely on political measures rather than on military control to re-establish normal conditions.

“At this stage in our stance

toward China, a US effort to split off part of Pakistan in the name of self-determination would have implications for Taiwan and Tibet in Peking’s eyes. It is also important that they not feel that we are lining up with India and the USSR against them. That is why for the moment it is important that we stay one step behind the Soviets in India, although over the longer run, we have no interest in writing off 600 million Indians and Bengalis,” added Kissinger.

YAHYA WANTS TO MEET INDIRA

Pakistan President Yahya Khan said he was prepared to meet India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi “to discuss mutual problems in an attempt to defuse the tension”.

In an interview at Rawalpindi with the editor of the East African Standard Kenneth Bolton, he said he welcomed the UN secretary general’s proposal to station UN observers along the Indian and East Bengal border. The interview was published today.

ANOTHER DIPLOMAT SWITCHES LOYALTY

The acting Pakistani trade commissioner in Hong Kong Mohiuddin Ahmed defected to the Bangladesh government. He accused the Pakistan government of ruthless genocide in East Pakistan.

“We cannot remain a silent spectator while thousands of our countrymen are fighting against oppression,” he said in press release published today.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

UK regulator approves Moderna jab for children aged 12-17

AFP, London

Britain’s medicines watchdog yesterday said it had approved the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine for children aged 12 to 17, after previously giving the green light to Pfizer.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said in a statement that the jab was “safe and effective in this age group”.

But it added it would now be up to government advisory body the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to recommend whether to start giving the jab.

Be proactive

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The ambassador assured to remain engaged on the issue and continue Indonesia’s support for a durable solution to the crisis.

The minister thanked Indonesia for the humanitarian support extended to the Rohingyas and sought political support from it on the repatriation issue.

Terming Indonesia an important partner of Bangladesh in the South East Asian region, the minister suggested that the multi-faceted relations could be expanded if more people-to-people contacts take place and barriers in trade and investment are removed.

He sought Indonesia’s support towards Bangladesh’s bid to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of the Asean.

Momen said as a natural bridge between South and South East Asia, Bangladesh is a genuine candidate to become a Dialogue Partner of the Asean.

The Indonesian ambassador agreed that Bangladesh has attained miraculous economic progress.

She was highly appreciative of the government of Sheikh Hasina for the recent medical supplies to Indonesia in latter’s battle against Covid-19.

She said the brotherly people of Indonesia would always remember with gratefulness this nice gesture of Bangladesh.

The foreign minister noted that Bangladesh’s pharmaceutical products meet 97 percent of local demands and are exported to 144 countries.

He requested Indonesia to ease the registration process for Bangladeshi pharmaceutical products in Indonesia.

Momen noted that world-class life-saving drugs are available in Bangladesh at a much cheaper price than in many advanced countries.

He congratulated the Indonesian envoy on her successful completion of assignment in Dhaka and thanked her for various initiatives to take the bilateral relations to a newer height.

On Monday, the envoy also met State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam.

During both the meetings, she thanked the Bangladesh government for the nice support extended to her during her tour of duty.

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Teesta swells

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Kalmati, Gobordhan, Char Nohali and Char Parulia areas.

Water from the river has inundated the roads in the villages and damaged paddy and vegetable fields. Due to flooded kitchens, many are having to eat only dry foods and suffer from scarcity of drinking water.

Mafiar Rahman, 65, a farmer in Char Gobordhan area of Aditmari, told The Daily Star that there has been no cooking in his household since Monday while his cattle and goats are being forced to remain standing in water.

Sultan Ahmed, 56, a farmer in Char Dawabari, Hatibandha, said his paddy field will be seriously damaged if the water stays for another day.

PHQ wants taller

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by the public service commission, it is not always possible to recruit physically fit, sharp, brave and competent officers as police cadres,” read the proposal.

An officer at PHQ said there are some officers who were recruited despite having some serious diseases, and several years after joining, they became physically unfit and almost unable to carry out duties.

“So, police authorities now want to recruit officers through special BCS and carry out medical tests at the Central Police Hospital, which has all the facilities,” he said, wishing anonymity.

About why they don’t want to recruit married people as ASP, “An ASP after recruitment has to undergo one-year long intensive training when they need full attention and concentration, but those who are married and have children cannot fully concentrate.”

Dhananjoy Kumar Das, deputy secretary (Police-1) of the Public Security Division in the home ministry, said they have received the proposal and are working on it.

He said the ultimate decision will be taken by the Public Service Commission.