

Get ready to mitigate flood damage
PM asks ministers, top civil servants and armed forces personnel



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Warning that the flood situation may worsen, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked ministers, top civil servants, and armed forces personnel to take all-out preparations for mitigating damage caused by flood.

At a meeting of National Disaster Management Council at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday, Hasina instructed Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque to arrange higher ground for Aman seedbeds if the floods prolonged.

She added that Aush paddy on around 26,000 hectares was damaged by the floods and that they would have to be more careful about Aman paddy.

The agriculture minister informed the meeting that Aman seedbeds on 400 to 500 acres were damaged by the floods, said sources.

The PM said farmers who have lost summer vegetables to the floods would get government assistance during winter crops season.

Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said the prime minister issued directives on being prepared to tackle more floods in the days ahead as the weather was not favourable.

She asked the agriculture minister to go for floating rice varieties if the floods hit again, said the cabinet secretary.

"We were afraid that the floods could damage the food storages, which have

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With their home flooded, a family is loading a boat with household items in Dakat Mara Char of Bogura's Sariakandi upazila to move to a safe place. Flooding has marooned about 56,000 people in the upazila. The victims in the char are yet to receive any relief materials.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Russia stepping up attacks

Says Kyiv; EU's top diplomat calls Moscow's blockade of Ukrainian grain 'a war crime'

AGENCIES

Russian forces have stepped up their shelling in Ukraine's Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, Kyiv said yesterday, after President Volodymyr Zelensky warned to expect greater hostilities ahead of a historic EU decision on Ukraine's bid for candidate status.

Nearly four months after Russia launched a bloody invasion of his country, Zelensky said there had been "few such fateful decisions for Ukraine" as the one it expects from the European Union this week.

"Obviously, we expect Russia to intensify hostile activity this week ... We are preparing. We are ready," he said.

Leaders of the EU's 27 member states will discuss at a summit on Thursday and Friday whether to add Ukraine to the list of countries vying for membership.

EU foreign ministers gathering in Luxembourg kicked off the week urging Moscow to stop blocking the export of vitally needed grain from Ukraine, a top global supplier.

"One cannot imagine that millions of tonnes of wheat remain blocked in Ukraine while in the rest of the world people are suffering hunger. This is a real war crime," the bloc's top diplomat Josep

Borrell said.

In a video address to the African Union yesterday, Zelensky said Ukraine is engaged in "complex negotiations" to release its ports from Russia's blockade, warning that the global grain crisis would last as long as Russia's "colonial war".

On the ground, Russia appeared to be making some battlefield advances in the east.

In its daily update yesterday, Ukraine's

"One cannot imagine that millions of tonnes of wheat remain blocked in Ukraine while in the rest of the world people are suffering hunger."
-- EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell

presidency reported heavier Russian shelling in the Kharkiv region in the northeast.

In the Donetsk region, the intensity of the attacks "is growing along the entire frontline" it said, leaving at least one person dead and injuring seven people, including a child.

Fighting also continued in the key

industrial city of Severodonetsk in the east, with Ukraine saying it had lost control of the adjacent village of Mytvolkine, reports AFP.

Russia's defence ministry said it launched missile strikes during the past 24 hours, with one attack on a top-level Ukrainian military meeting near the city of Dnipro killing "more than 50 generals and officers".

It said it also targeted a building housing Western-provided weapons in Mykolaiv, destroying Ukrainian artillery and armoured vehicles.

The Ukraine war is fuelling not only a global food crisis but an energy crisis too.

Hit by punishing sanctions, Moscow has turned up the pressure on European economies by sharply reducing gas supplies, which has in turn sent energy prices soaring.

Germany on Sunday announced emergency measures including increased use of coal to ensure it meets its energy needs after a drop in the supply of Russian gas in recent days.

China's imports of oil from Russia meanwhile jumped by 55 percent year on year in May, customs data showed yesterday, as Beijing continued to refuse to condemn Moscow's war.

Father kills daughter, injuries 3 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A girl was hacked to death allegedly by her father while her grandmother, mother and sister were critically injured in the incident over a land dispute in Rangpur's Pirgachha on Sunday evening.

Later, the man, Rashidul Islam, tried to die by suicide, said police.

The dead is Rafiya Aktar, 11.

Quoting the neighbours, Pirgachha police said Rashidul of Monglakuthi village had a conflict with his wife over a piece of land. The couple often got locked in altercations over the issue. After returning home on Sunday evening, Rashed started quarrels with his wife, police said.

At one stage, Rashidul started stabbing his wife indiscriminately. As his two daughters tried to save her mother, Rashed also stabbed them and his mother.

Rafiya, his elder daughter, died on the spot. Locals sent the other injured to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. Rashidul was undergoing treatment there under police custody.

A case was filed.

Boy killed in landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 12-year-old boy was killed in a landslide triggered by heavy rain in Chattogram city's Sholoshahar early yesterday.

The victim, Raihan, was the son of Din Mohammad.

Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said the incident happened in Green View Residential area in the dead of night amid heavy rain.

"The boy was sleeping inside their shop and a huge chunk of earth fell on the shop leaving him dead on the spot," he added.

20 hurt as police, protesters clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least 20 people, including 12 police personnel, were injured in a clash yesterday when police tried to stop a blockade of Chitalmari Police Station by protesters.

Inspector SM Ashraful Alam of Bagerhat police Media Cell claimed that a female student made a Facebook post "hurting religious sentiment". Angered by this, a group of people brought out a procession demanding trial of the student. They headed towards the police station, he said.

He said the 18-year-old girl was detained on Sunday night.

During the clash, the protesters threw brick chunks. They also vandalised two police vans, four motorcycles and furniture of the police station. Police fired bullets to disperse the demonstrators, Ashraful said.

He said the girl denied giving such Facebook posts and that someone else hacked into her Facebook ID and did it.

At least 12 people were detained for their alleged involvement in the clash.

Loss, damage rise tenfold

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protection programmes to bail out the poor and vulnerable groups from such damage and loss, they said.

Zahid Hussain pointed out that flood is now causing more damage than in the past because the natural drainage system has been clogged due to unplanned road constructions.

Economic loss from disasters can go up if natural correction mechanism to mitigate the crisis is disrupted because of unplanned infrastructure development, he noted.

Zahid further said the areas vulnerable to different natural disasters have already been identified by the government. For example, it is well-known that Sylhet and Sunamganj are prone to floods in April-May.

Hesaid the government's social protection system has to be more responsive to the impact of disaster to mitigate the crisis of poor and vulnerable groups.

Released on Sunday, the report, "Bangladesh Disaster-related Statistics 2021: Climate Change and Natural Disaster Perspectives", is the second of its kind conducted by the BBS last year. The first one was carried out in 2016.

Its main objective was to develop a national database on disaster risk and impacts, including economic losses.

Over the last three decades, Bangladesh has been hit by more than 200

SECTOR-WISE DAMAGE AND LOSS IN %		
SECTOR	2015-2020	2009-2014
Land degradation (including reduced valuation)	52.56	26.72
Crops	28.90	36.20
Dwelling and other infrastructures	7.38	17.19
Livestock	3.98	4.76
Fishery	3.71	5.82
Homestead forestry	1.96	8.10
Poultry	1.51	1.21

DAMAGE AND LOSS BY TYPE OF DISASTER (TOP SIX)		
DISASTER	2015-2020 (IN %)	2009-2014 (IN %)
Flood	56.41	23.23
River/coastal erosion	14.99	19.76
Cyclone	14.25	15.41
Waterlogging	5.24	8.72
Hailstorm	2.73	6.23
Salinity	1.16	3.30

natural disasters, the latest report said.

The country's proximity to the Bay of Bengal, low-lying terrain and monsoon make it extremely vulnerable to natural disasters.

Flood, erosion, and cyclone together accounted for 85.6 percent of the total damage and loss in 2015-2020 compared to 58.4 percent in the previous period.

According to the report, of the 75,15,977 affected households, 54.69 percent had been hit by flooding, 34 percent by cyclone and 17.83 percent by hailstorm in 2015-2020.

Besides, natural disasters caused a loss of Tk 51,796.1 crore in crops, Tk 7,137.3 crore in livestock, Tk 2,697.6 crore in poultry

and Tk 6,646 crore in fish.

The total value of land lost to erosion was Tk 21,974.4 crore with Dhaka division being the most erosion-prone zone, followed by Rangpur and Barisal divisions.

Besides, total economic loss due to land degradation was estimated at Tk 72,209.9 crore in 2015-2020.

Mustafizur said disasters caused more damage and loss to the poor and vulnerable groups because they were increasingly involved in agriculture and other nature-related income opportunities.

"It is necessary to ensure environment-friendly and inclusive development ..."

He further said that if activities that harm the nature and environment cannot be stopped, this will lead to more disasters and cause higher economic losses, affecting the poor and vulnerable disproportionately.

Bangladesh is considered to be among the top five countries economically vulnerable to the impacts of global climate change. The government needs to strengthen its efforts to get more funds to mitigate the challenges, he added.

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only 10-15 families out of around 500 have food stock for the next two-three months. "The previous flood during Baishakh took away Boro harvest from the fields. This flood has taken rice from granaries in our homes, leaving nothing to eat."

Abdul Manaf of Rangchi village in Sunamganj's Madhyananagar upazila, said, "The local MP once came and gave us cooked food.

That's all we have received in the last three days."

Meanwhile, the flood situation in Habiganj is getting worse as the Khowai river has suddenly started flowing above the danger level since early yesterday.

Lutfur Miah of Swajan village in the district's Lakhai upazila said, "It's been days since our village has been flooded and we have lost the last of our rice reserves. We don't know

how we will survive the flood."

Besides the government, hundreds of people and organisations have joined relief efforts.

Biman Talukdar, a voluntary relief worker, said, "We have been feeding hundreds of people in the shelters in Sylhet city and its suburbs. It is shocking to see that the people stranded in the city's shelters are yet to receive relief materials. It's hard

to imagine how people are surviving in the remote villages."

Nazmul Islam, an organiser of Do Something Foundation, distributed relief in Gowainghat upazila yesterday.

"We tried to go to the farthest areas where no one reached before. But how would we know which village has not gotten any relief materials? The distribution would be smooth if there was central

along the banks of the Teesta remains at a warning level. However, flood situation in the areas along the Jamuna river worsened significantly, and now, almost all monitoring stations show water levels at the danger mark or one metre above it," he said.

Mostofa said Sherpur, Mymensingh, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur and Manikganj are likely to hit by floods in the coming days.

coordination with the administration."

Debjit Singha, the additional divisional commissioner of Sylhet, said, "We have adequate relief materials to aid all flood-affected people. But the challenge is to get it to the people in remote areas."

"Road communication is snapped, mobile network collapsed and boats are scarce. With the help of all government organs, we are trying to get to everyone."

Worse likely yet to come

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state [of India] is unlikely to see heavy rains. Flood situation in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona may remain unchanged during the period," it mentioned.

The report warned that the southeastern part of the country may experience very heavy rains in the next 24 hours.

"Water levels of all major rivers in Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and Bandarban may rise rapidly during the period," the report said.

The port city and several districts of Chattogram Division witnessed heavy rains yesterday.

Officials and experts said there is a strong probability that the country's central region may see flooding after floodwater from the northern region starts gushing down through the Jamuna.

Talking to The Daily

Hungry for two days

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There is only a provision for rebuke in the existing press council rules.

In the proposed act, there is a new provision that gives power to the council to order a news outlet to publish a certain item.

"Besides, the press council would, on its own

Tk 10 lakh struck out, fine stays

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"They [the ministry] proposed the fine amounts, but the cabinet did not agree to those," said the cabinet secretary, adding that the fine would be at the discretion of the council.

"Only primary approval has been given since it is a subject of discussion. It will be placed before the cabinet again for the final approval," he said.

Asked whether the press

council was being given unbridled power, Anwarul replied that it could not be said until the draft was finalised.

accord, take into cognition any offence related to the publication of news, articles or cartoons by a newspaper or news agency that goes against the council's code of conduct or that compromises security, independence, and sovereignty of the country," he said.

When his attention was drawn to the fact that cartoons were subjective, he said, "If you publish an obnoxious cartoon against

the state in print or digital media, won't it be an offence?"

Last week, Justice Nizamul Huq Nasim, chairman of the Bangladesh Press Council, at a programme drew the attention of journalists to the draft amendment to the press council act.

During a meeting with journalist leaders that week, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said the proposal to amend

the act was made five years ago and that it was under process.

First Covid

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On January 28 this year, Bangladesh registered its previous highest positivity rate of 33.37 percent.

The country logged its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and daily fatalities of 264 on August 10 that year.