



THE WRATH OF REMAL

Wind gusts batter Kuakata, top, yesterday morning after cyclone Remal made landfall in Patuakhali. Inset, people trying to get a tractor, used for bringing boats ashore, out of the Kuakata beach as huge waves crash on it. Top left, a tree falls on a house in Doulatkhan upazila of Bhola killing one person. Left middle, a tree on the central reservation of Green Road near Farmgate, Dhaka, falls on a pickup truck and an autorickshaw in high winds. Left bottom, locals desperately trying to mend an embankment so that villages do not get inundated by storm surges in Gabbunia village of Khulna's Koyra upazila.

PHOTO: TITU DAS, RASHED SHUMON, HABIBUR RAHMAN, AND MONIR UDDIN MANIK

Support us as we make strides

PM urges US businesses

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought the support of the US business community in Bangladesh's journey towards becoming a developed and "smart" country by 2041.



"I call on you to stay with us as partners in our journey to a developed, prosperous, and smart Bangladesh," she told a US-Bangladesh Business Council delegation at the Gono Bhaban.

"We aspire to become a 'Smart Nation' by 2041 ... We need your support in increasing our global competitiveness and expanding our export base," she said, adding that Bangladesh is expected to graduate from the LDC status in 2026.

"Now Bangladesh is globally acknowledged as a role model of socio-economic development."

Hasina mentioned that the US has been a major economic and development partner for Bangladesh for decades and both countries have intensive engagements in many areas, particularly trade and investment.

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PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

Army personnel upholding human rights across globe Says army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Army personnel are serving in many UN peacekeeping missions around the world upholding human rights, Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiqul Islam said yesterday.



He made the remarks while talking to reporters after addressing a function at Rajendrapur Cantonment in Gazipur.

"Not only the Bangladesh Army, our armed forces have also performed duties in many missions around the world - 43 missions. Over 6,000 peacekeepers are still on duty. Can you give any example of a mission

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Remal leaves trail of havoc in its wake

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It destroyed crops, vegetables, and fruits, and damaged fish farms, said officials concerned. They said Remal destroyed fish worth Tk 482 crore in three districts alone.

Khitish Golder, a UP member of Tildanga union of Khulna's Dacope upazila, said, "All houses in our village are under saline water as the storm surges breached the embankment along the Dhaki river. Five villages in the union were inundated. More than a hundred families are now on the embankment."

"The embankment breached at five places, flooding all fish enclosures," he told The Daily Star.

He said their attempts to plug the breaches failed when the water level rose further as Remal made landfall.

At least 37.58 lakh people in 19 coastal districts have been affected by the cyclone, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Mohibbur Rahman told a press briefing yesterday afternoon.

As many as 35,483 houses were destroyed and 1,14,992 houses were damaged in 107 upazilas, he said.

"People's daily life has been disrupted. There was waterlogging at places due to the rain continuing," he added.

He claimed that they were successful in dealing with the cyclone. Remal caused heavy rains

across the country. The dwellers of Chattogram experienced the highest, 235mm, rainfall as of 6:00pm yesterday. Parts of the city were waterlogged.

The Met office said Remal will continue to cause rain today as well. 13 DEAD

The cyclone claimed 13 lives in seven coastal districts over the two days. Eight died yesterday and the rest on Sunday.

In Patuakhali, two people were killed, said local government officials concerned. A 70-year-old man died after a tree fell on his tin-roofed house in Nolduani of Dumki upazila yesterday morning. Another died when an abandoned two-storey corrugated iron-sheet house collapsed on him in Bauphal upazila around noon yesterday.

In Bhola, three people were killed. Two people died after trees fell on them in Borhanuddin and Daulatkhan upazilas, said the disaster management ministry, adding that another person died in Lalmohon upazila after a house collapsed.

In Barishal, two people were killed. One died after a wall fell on him at a filling station in the city, while the other was killed when a tree fell on him in Bakerganj upazila, said the ministry's report.

In Chattogram, two people were killed. A man died after a wall

collapsed on him in the city, while a young man drowned in Kalabagicha canal in Chattogram city yesterday afternoon. Waterlogging in the city has made it very difficult to identify where the canals are.

In Cumilla, a fifth grader died inside his classroom when a portion of an adjacent under-construction building collapsed on the tin-roofed classroom around 11:30am in the city's Shakola area, said police.

In Khulna, a young man was killed on Sunday night after a tree fell on his house in Gariardanga of Batiaghata upazila, said police.

On Sunday, two people were killed in Satkhira and Patuakhali.

OUT OF POWER

Major parts of the southern districts were without power for more than 36 hours.

According to Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB), 2.70 crore people had no power between Sunday morning and 6:00pm yesterday.

The prolonged outage took out over 15,000 mobile phone towers (base transceiver stations), disrupting mobile and internet services.

Sources in the carriers said in some districts there was no power supplied to the towers since Sunday afternoon.

People in Barguna, Barishal, Patuakhali, Noakhali, Chattogram, and Khulna were affected, they said.

precipitation, as the cloud can retain more moisture in warm conditions.

"As the sea level is rising in Bangladesh, the height of storm surge will also continue to rise, which is another major worry for Bangladesh," said Saiful, a leading author of the IPCC report.

ACC presses

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the 30.25 katha land for Tk 110 crore, but the two deeds showed the property value to be Tk 15.25 crore.

Bacchu later transferred the land to his wife Shirin and sons Sheikh Rafa Hai and Sheikh Sabid Hye Anik. Sheikh Shahrar Panna, the owner of BM Computers and Crown Properties, and Amin Ahmed assisted the attempt to legitimise the transfer of the property, the complainant added.

The graft watchdog on Sunday approved the filing of the charge sheet under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act as per the recommendation of the ACC Assistant Director Huda and the investigation officer of the case, Mohammad Neyamul Ahsan Gazi.

Bacchu had been at the helm of the state-run BASIC Bank from October 4, 2009 to July 5, 2014.

45 killed in Israeli airstrike

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"All the children started screaming... The sound was terrifying; we felt like the metal was about to collapse on us, and shrapnel fell into the rooms."

Video footage obtained by Reuters showed a fire raging in the darkness and people screaming in panic. A group of young men tried to haul away sheets of corrugated iron and a hose from a single fire truck began to douse the flames.

More than half of the dead were women, children, and elderly people, health officials in Hamas-run Gaza said, adding that the death toll was likely to rise from people with severe burns.

Medics later said an Israeli airstrike on Monday on a house in Rafah had killed seven Palestinians, with several others wounded.

Israel's military said Sunday's strike, based on "precise intelligence", had eliminated Hamas' chief of staff for the second and larger Palestinian territory, the West Bank, plus another official behind deadly attacks on Israelis.

That followed the interception of eight rockets fired towards Israel from the Rafah area in Gaza's southern tip.

Israel has kept up its offensive despite a ruling by the top UN court on Friday ordering it to stop, saying the court's ruling grants it some scope for military action there. The court also reiterated calls for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages held in Gaza by Hamas.

The US urged Israel to take more care to protect civilians, but stopped short of calling for a halt to the Rafah incursion.

"Israel has a right to go after Hamas, and we understand this strike killed two senior Hamas terrorists who are responsible for attacks against Israeli civilians," a National Security Council spokesperson said. "But as we've been clear, Israel must take every precaution possible to protect civilians."

French President Emmanuel Macron said he was "outraged" over Israel's latest attacks. "These operations must stop. There are no safe areas in Rafah for Palestinian civilians," he said on X.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said the International Court of Justice ruling must be respected.

More and more

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Of the 1,419 candidates taking part in the third phase of the upazila polls, 67 percent of chairman, 69 percent of vice-chairman candidates and 32 percent of aspirants vying for vice-chairman posts reserved for women are involved in business.

Addressing the event, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said dominance of businesspeople in politics has become "serious". The big question is whether they are coming to politics through fair process or to make profits.

A total of 109 upazilas were set to go to polls tomorrow, but the Election Commission yesterday suspended elections to 19 upazilas due to cyclone Remal.

TIB report shows that 106 candidates have wealth worth at least Tk 1 crore. Of them, 90 are running for chairman, 11 vice-chairman, and five vice-chairman for reserved posts for women.

According to the TIB, the value of candidates' moveable assets determines whether they are a billionaire. Immovable assets, like real estate, are not taken into consideration.

Ferdousi Islam, chairman aspirant of Shibpur upazila in Narsingdi, tops the list of candidates in terms of the amount of moveable assets, Tk 174 crore, the TIB report said.

TIB said according to the law, an individual can acquire a maximum of 33 acres of land. At least six aspirants were found to have land beyond the limit.

Owning 280 acres, Dewan Ashis Rai Chowdhury, chairman contender of Sunamnagi's Dowerabazar upazila, is on top.

Compared to the 2019 upazila parishad elections, income of incumbent chairman Nurul Alam, who is also contesting Teknaf upazila polls in Cox Bazar, saw the highest growth of wealth, 10,422 percent increase, over the last five years.

Incomes of five more candidates rose by over 1,000 percent.

Immovable properties of Tangail's Delduar upazila chairman candidate Mahmudul Hasan increased by 9,850 percent since the 2019 elections.

Immovable properties of nine more aspirants went up by over 1,685 percent.

Apart from this, Shibpur upazila chairman aspirant Ferdousi Islam is the most indebted candidate, with a loan of Tk 185 crore.

Besides, 227 candidates of the third phase stand accused in various cases and 307 had been accused in cases in the past.

Regarding the unusual rise in incomes and assets, the TIB executive director said the increase in income and assets is usually expected. But if these go up abnormally, then it may raise questions.

He called on the Election Commission, National Board of Revenue, and Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate whether the declared incomes and properties of candidates are consistent with their legitimate incomes and to check potential tax evasion.