

## Aila Strikes, 8 Die, 72 Missing

Tuesday, 26 May 2009

Cyclone 'Aila', packing winds up to 100 kph, flung itself to the exposed Khulna coast on Monday, leaving at least eight dead, and 72 missing.

The government said five people have died so far in the cyclone in Bhola and Potuakhali districts. Of them, three died in Char Fashion in Bhola and one each in Baufal and Galachipa in Patuakhali district, disaster management minister Abdur Razzaq said at a press briefing in Dhaka.

Cyclone 'Aila', packing winds up to 100 kph, flung itself to the exposed Khulna coast on Monday, leaving at least eight dead, and 72 missing.

The government said five people have died so far in the cyclone in Bhola and Potuakhali districts. Of them, three died in Char Fashion in Bhola and one each in Baufal and Galachipa in Patuakhali district, disaster management minister Abdur Razzaq said at a press briefing in Dhaka.

However, bdnews24.com correspondents in Noakhali and Barisal report that two more died in the districts.

A woman, Nazma, 30, was swept aside as low-lying areas of Nijhum Island went six to seven feet under water due to high tide in Noakhali.

At least 72 people are missing in trawler capsizes and flooding in Bhola district.

Of them, 20 went missing after three trawlers had sunk in the river Meghna in Monpur in Bhola and at least 52 people remained unaccounted for from the floods, Bhola Sadar Upazila UNO Mostafa Kamal said.

Bhola Awami League leader Zahirul Islam Nakib said two children aged between 10 and 12 years are missing at Sadar Upazila's Majhir Char.

Heavy rains triggered by the cyclone raised river levels and burst mud embankments, flooding homes.

It is the second storm in the Bay of Bengal in less than one month. Several people were killed and hundreds of thatched houses destroyed in Cox's Bazar on April 17.

Operations at the Chittagong and Mongla ports and movement of ferries at Chandpur, Barisal, Mawa and Paturia were suspended. River communications in the coastal districts were also snapped.

However, the secretary to the Chittagong Port Authority, Syed Farhad Uddin, told bdnews24.com that the normal operation of the port resumed late afternoon.

Khulna district relief officer Sheikh Alimuzzaman said a number of villages in Batiaghata, Dakop, Paikgachha, Kaira and Dumuria Upazilas were flooded as the dam gave in at 36 places.

In Satkhira, over 60 villages were flooded, Tabibar Rahman of district control cell said. A number of villages in Patuakhali and Bagerhat were also flooded, officials said.

Bakerganj Upzila Nirbahi Officer Mehedi Masuduzzaman said a child named Rabbi died from falling in the yard while playing as wind-fed surge rose to four-five feet high.

He said over 150 villages were damaged in two villages under Mehendiganj Upazila in Barisal.

Red Crescent Society's Bhola region official Bashir Ahmed said Char Fashion Upazila's Dhalchar, Char Kukrimukri, Char Patila, Char Hasina, Char Nizam and Char Kashpia were under 8-10 feet water.

### Relief and rescue

Razzaq, the disaster management minister, said prime minister Sheikh Hasina directed the MPs to visit the affected areas.

As many as 42,000 volunteers along with army, navy and coast guard members are conducting rescue and relief operations in the affected areas under local arrangements.

Razzaq said damage and casualties were not severe as the wind speed caused by the cyclone was less.

However, the height of the surges was much higher than before, 12 to 13 feet at places, forcing many people to seek shelter on rooftops. At places dams gave in due to the surge, flooding the areas inside the dams.

The government granted 1000 metric tonnes of rice and Tk 12 lakh as relief for the affected people, the minister said adding there were already sufficient stocks of relief in the affected districts.

The storm battered and flooded villages, forced thousands of people from their homes, uprooted trees and knocked out power and telephone poles, officials said.

#### Cyclone's position

"Aila" moved northwards inland, the centre of the storm crossed West Bengal-Khulna coast near Sagar Island of India and lay centred at Kolkata and adjoining area of India.

But the remaining part of the storm was still crossing, said a special weather bulletin of the Meteorological Department at 8:30pm.

It is likely to move in a northerly direction further inland. Sea will remain very rough.

Mongla port has been advised to keep hoisted danger signal seven.

The coastal districts of Bhola, Barisal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur, Jhalokathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore and their offshore islands and chars will be under danger alert seven.

Chittagong and Cox's Bazar ports have been advised to keep hoisted danger signal six.

The coastal districts of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur, Comilla, Chandpur and their offshore islands and chars will be under danger signal six.

Under the influence of the storm, the coastal districts of Khulna, Bagerhat, Borguna, Satkhira, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Pirozpur, Jhalokathi, Laxmipur, Noakhali, Feni, Chandpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, and their offshore islands and chars are likely to experience heavy or very heavy rain accompanied by squally wind speed up to 90 kph with the passage of the storm.

The low-lying areas of the coastal districts of Khulna, Bagerhat, Borguna, Satkhira, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Pirozpur, Jhalokathi, Laxmipur, Noakhali, Feni, Chandpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, and their offshore islands and chars are likely to be inundated by wind-driven surge of height six to eight feet above normal astronomical tide.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to remain in shelter until further notice.

Source: bdnews24.com