

The distinguished representatives of our development partners,
The representatives of the print and electronic media
Dear colleagues,

Assalamualaikum and Good morning

I would like to welcome you all in the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management at a time when we are passing a very critical time for the cause of humanity, particularly the people of the cyclone affected areas. Today I would like to give you a brief picture of devastation due to the cyclone SIDR in the coastal belt of Bangladesh.

As many as 20 districts were affected by the cyclone including coastal areas of the South-West on Thursday night. It killed about 1814 lives and inflicting injuries to many others. According to district administration sources the figure of casualties was reported as per following:

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Number of deaths
1.	Bagerhut:	610
2.	Barguna:	362
3.	Patuakhali:	315
4.	Pirojpur:	254
5.	Barisal:	83
6.	Jhalokathi:	34
7.	Bhola:	23
8.	Madaripur:	30
9.	Gopalganj:	29
10.	Shariatpur:	15
11.	Khulna:	14
12.	Faridpur	11
13.	Satkhira	13
14.	Chadpur	04
15.	Munshigonj	04
16.	Dhaka	04

The death toll in the cyclone might increase more information is coming from the badly hit coastal areas. Thousands of houses were demolished. Standing agriculture crops have been destroyed while a large number of trees have been uprooted. SIDR had caused big damage to the beauty and biodiversity of the Sundarbans, a place of World Natural Heritage. Road communications in the affected areas has been disrupted as ferry boats and pontoons had either been damaged or displaced due to the strong wind. Telecommunications with the cyclone ravaged districts were disrupted.

The Government took precautionary disaster preparedness programmes well ahead of the hit of the cyclone. The cyclone preparedness committee, the Inter-ministerial Committee on Disaster Management and National Council on Disaster Management hold meetings within a short notice and gave necessary instructions to the concerned government and other agencies for taking necessary steps as per the Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD). A total of 2,168 cyclone shelters were opened and at least 1.5 million people were evacuated from the more vulnerable areas of the coastal districts within a very short time. More than 42000 volunteers were engaged to motivate and help to take refuge.

The Government of Bangladesh quickly responded to the situation and took the following post-cyclone measures.

- The members of the Defence Forces were deployed to start rescue operation and immediate relief activities.
- The helicopters of the Air Forces began ferrying relief supplies to off-shore islands for the last two days.
- The 5-gun boats of the Bangladesh Navy have been engaged in relief operations.
- About Tk.1 hundred million was allocated as gratuitous relief and house building grants in 11 affected districts from the Chief Advisor's Relief and Welfare Funds.
- More than 4000 metric tons of rice, 5000 pieces of tents, 17,000 pieces of blanket and Tk.30 million as gratuitous relief grants have been allocated from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.
- Further Tk.350 million is being allocated as house building grants from special fund.
- 13,000 bundles of CI sheets are ready for immediate distribution to the affected areas.

We have identified the following 12 district as more affected than the others: Bagerhat, Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur, Barisal, Jhalkhathi, Bhola, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Khulna, Satkhira.

Similarly the following upazilas have been identified as worst affected areas:

1. Bagerhat District: Sarankhola, Morelgonj
2. Patuakhali District: Kalapara, Galachipa, Mirgagonj
3. Barguna District: Amtali, Patharghata
4. Pirojpur District: Bhandaria, Mathbaria
5. Jhalkhati District: Kathalia

Some more upazila may be added to the list if necessity claims.

Preliminary indications suggest that the most pressing needs of the cyclone affected people are food, safe drinking water, shelter, clothing, blankets and baby foods. The Government of Bangladesh will welcome any assistance to be offered by our development partners and friendly countries to help the cyclone victims. It will also be appreciated if any organization/country would extend their assistance for implementing rehabilitation programme.

Our specific essential priorities are the following:

1. Food grain for Gratuitous relief, VGF, Food for works program, Test relief program (200,000 Mt.)
2. Dry Food
3. Cloths
4. House building grants
5. Tents
6. Blankets

Our present need

1. Burials of dead body being done by joint forces & local administration
2. Resource Operation being done by joint forces & local administration
3. Restoration of communication specially roads & telecommunication
4. Relief item: Food & baby food, pure drinking water

Medium terms need:

1. Shelter :Tent for temporary shelter & house building
2. Cloths : particularly blankets & other cloths
3. Food programs: VGF, TR, FFW

Long terms programs:

Rehabilitation programs: Roads, bridges, culverts, embankments, cyclone shelter, electricity, agriculture etc.