

## Bangladesh seeks \$1.15 bln to rehabilitate cyclone Aila victims

DHAKA, July 19 (Xinhua) -- Bangladesh began on Sunday to seek 1.15 billion U.S. dollars from the international community for rehabilitation of the people affected by the cyclone Aila in May this year.

Bangladesh's Food and Disaster Minister Abdur Razzak made the call at a meeting with representatives of foreign missions and international donor agencies here on Sunday.

"We need the fund to rehabilitate the cyclone victims," he told reporters here after the meeting.

The cyclone Aila that formed in the Bay of Bengal battered Bangladesh's southwestern coast on May 25, leaving at least 190 people dead and over three million affected in about a dozen of districts in the coastal areas.

Razzak told reporters after the meeting that with the fund the government will repair the damaged embankments, construct cluster houses for the homeless people and build cyclone shelter centers.

According to official assessment, over 500,000 houses and some 7,000 km of road and over 1,000 embankments in the country's coastal areas were damaged either completely or partially in the cyclone.

"Donors have assured us of their supports for the Aila victims," he told reporters, adding, "We held this meeting as part of our efforts to rehabilitate millions of Aila victims so that they can lead a normal life."

Razzak had earlier said the country's economic losses due to cyclone Aila is estimated primarily at 18.85 billion taka (about 269.28 million U.S. dollars).

Cyclone Aila was the biggest natural calamity in the South Asian delta country after the powerful cyclone Sidr hit the country's southwestern coastal belt on Nov. 15, 2007, leaving more than 4,000 people dead or missing.

The Bangladeshi government early in June sought assistance from development partners and NGOs to support its efforts in post-cyclone rehabilitation of the affected people.