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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ENVOYS OBSERVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITY IN PATUAKHALI

DHAKA, MARCH 7 -- U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, along with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations Dr. James A. Schear, today observed the simulation of an important disaster preparedness activity in Patuakhali. Food & Disaster Management Secretary of Bangladesh government Dr. Aslam Alam was also present with them. The cyclone simulation -- a disaster preparedness drill organized by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its implementing partners—is intended to increase local awareness of disaster preparedness among coastal communities in Bangladesh. The simulations allow relevant institutions to test procedures and work together in a controlled environment to respond to potential natural calamities. Almost 10,000 local people observed the cyclone simulation in Patuakhali.

During the visit at one of U.S. Government multi-purpose cyclone shelters in the Kalapara Upazila in Patuakhali, the convoy met with the local Village Disaster Management Committee and members of the community and were briefed on the process involved in the preparation of Risk & Resources (R&R) maps and the use of generated information to efficiently reduce material and human loss during a disaster.

USAID works in partnership with the Bangladeshi Government to reduce food insecurity for poor rural populations by addressing access, availability, and utilization of food sources. With USAID assistance, disaster preparedness activities in this region are implemented by Save the Children with a five-year, \$50 million Multi-Year Assistance program called Nobo Jibon. The Nobo Jibon program works with 545,000 people in nine

upazilas in the Barisal division, and is expected to reach 86% of the total population in selected upazilas. Nobo Jibon also works to broaden host government's early disaster warning systems and improve response capabilities.

Since 1971, the U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$5.7 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh, with over half of this amount expended on food aid. USAID currently dedicates about \$180 million every year to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh; promote democratic institutions and practices; expand economic opportunities; improve health and education services; increase food security; and support Bangladeshi efforts to mitigate the impact of natural disasters.

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