

# Taxpayer forking out £500k a month on empty hospital

BY EWAN QUAYLE

TAXPAYERS are losing more than £500,000 a month on an empty 646-bed hospital that construction stalled on.

The new Royal Liverpool site ate up £3million on everyday running between July and December last year.

Building began in 2014, to finish March 2017. But after delays it halted in February 2018 with the collapse of Carillion. The

project was funded under a Private Finance Initiative but that was scrapped and public cash will cover the last 10% of work, to be finished by Laing O'Rourke.

Dan Carden, Labour MP for Liverpool Walton, said: "To think money is being poured down the drain like this is an absolute travesty."

The hospital trust said "funding is in place" for the "costs associated with maintaining" the site.



WASTE Royal Liverpool site

## OUR DAILY PUB QUIZ

- 1 The female of which spider sometimes eats the male after mating?
- 2 Who plays Det Sgt Steve Arnott in BBC's Line of Duty?
- 3 A bicentennial celebrates how many years?
- 4 Whose murder has to be solved in the Cluedo board game?
- 5 In which sport are the Thomas Cup, Uber Cup and Sudirman Cup played?

ANSWERS: PAGE 38

# DAILY MIRROR



TERROR Flood water that killed Maruf as his family tried to flee

## EXCLUSIVE

BY TOM PARRY Special Correspondent in Bangladesh

For grieving mother Fatama Begum, the climate emergency that British MPs declared in the House of Commons last week is not a distant concept.

Climate change for her is terrifyingly real, a malevolent force that unleashed unprecedented storms which took her eight-year-old son Maruf Hossein's life.

While politicians in Westminster debate the urgency of cutting carbon emissions, families in southern Bangladesh are experiencing floods, rising seas and cyclones that get worse every year.

I meet Fatama in a village near the coastal city of Kuakata, an area beset by natural disasters. The city was lucky to escape the worst of the destruction as Cyclone Fani killed 17 people in Bangladesh last week.

Still traumatised by the drowning of her third child, Fatama, 33, cowers timidly in the semi-darkness of her family's wooden-stilt home. She whispers: "The flooding last year was the worst it has ever been. The water was so high that we were wading up to our knees through the house. We decided we would go to a neighbour's house on higher ground for shelter."

"Maruf was stood on a bank, and even there the water was nearly up to his waist. When I turned back around, he wasn't there. He must have slipped because the water was so fast-flowing."

"My husband and I were looking for him for half an hour, and then we saw his body floating in a corner. Even now, it is difficult to talk about Maruf's death. "I am only carrying on for my three other children." Distraught as she recounts the harrowing story, Fatama sends her eldest daughter Mariam, 13, and youngest son Musa, seven, to get the only photograph of Maruf they possess.

Fatama's family live some distance from an estuary that flows into the Bay of Bengal, in a place that was always safe from surging tides - until recently. Now, the weather is shifting in a



STRUGGLE Mahinur Begum fishing

“He slipped into the water. We looked for him and we found his body floating”

FATAMA BEGUM ON THE DEATH OF HER SON, MARUF AT AGE 8 DURING FLOODS LAST YEAR



DESPERATE Labourers use sandbags to build a sea wall



DEFENCELESS Water engulfs homes



HORRIFIC LOSS Maruf Hossein, eight, drowned

way that makes life harder for millions existing on the fringes. During our visit, temperatures neared 40C, an oppressive heatwave that locals said is unheard of for the time of year. Low-lying and densely populated, Bangladesh is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

A vast paddy field to the side of Fatama's house has been made infertile by the invasion of saline water. Further around the curve of the coastline, labourers build a new sea defence wall with sandbags. One, Junaid Howlader, 19, says nearly

# MEETS GLOBAL WARMING VICTIMS

# CLIMATE CHANGE:



DAILY FIGHT Shamsul Alam & his children

» Mum tells how son was drowned by surging tides

» Families forced to flee as sea and temperatures rise

# THE FRONT LINE

two miles of land has been swallowed up in the past five years. He adds: "The sea is coming in closer all the time."

Pointing to the peninsula on the other side of the estuary, he says: "My father has told me that 20 years ago you could walk for two hours in that direction. Now the sea is just a few metres away."

Like many I speak to, councillor Shamsul Alam, 60, says floods have reached progressively further each year since Cyclone Sidr claimed up to 10,000 lives in Bangladesh in 2007.

He explains: "We have got used to battling with nature. When it gets really bad during the monsoon, we

just go up in the trees. The embankment has been raised several times, but each time it gets knocked back down again. It's a real struggle to grow crops. We cannot make a living from farming any more."

Residents of whole villages in this region have simply uprooted and gone further inland. Shamsul says 150 families in his ward have moved.

Those suffering most are the disabled, who have no help from the state. Mahinur Begum, 40, provides for her disabled husband Khalek and son Rabiul, 12, by selling the fish she can catch in the river by their house.

They live on flat ground that is vulnerable to flooding. Saline water

carried in by storm surges has badly damaged freshwater fish stocks, and made drinkable water even scarcer.

Mahinur says: "I last had a proper catch two months ago."

She holds a net attached to a wooden pole, and immerses herself in the river. "Now, the water is too salty. Compared to 12 years ago, before the big cyclone, there is barely anything left in the river. There is more and more salt water."

A newly built concrete cyclone shelter provides solace for up to 5,000 people with flimsy homes, but

many more are needed. Neil Thorns, of London-based aid agency CAFOD, said: "The biggest injustice about climate change is that people in places such as Bangladesh are paying the greatest price, even though they have contributed the least to the fossil fuel emissions which are causing it."

"We in the UK need to play our part urgently."

A report published on Wednesday by an influential committee of MPs highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on the poorest countries. Labour's

Stephen Twigg, head of the International Development Select Committee, said: "We must look at how we can provide the best support to those nations that will face the most serious consequences of climate change yet have done little to cause it."

In Bengali, Bangladesh's main language, there is as yet no commonly known phrase for climate change. Its people, however, know what the man-made phenomenon actually means far better than most in Britain. To learn more about CAFOD's work, or to donate, go to: [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk).

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VOICE OF THE MIRROR: PAGE 8

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