

# The birth and death of an island in the Bay of Bengal

## Comments by Nils-Axel Mörner

In 1970, the Bay of Bengal was struck by the very powerful Bhola Cyclone. This was a truly disastrous event with a casualty in the order of 500,000 people. This event also caused severe coastal damage. Vast sediment quantities were set in suspension and turbidite flows. At the boarder between India and Bangladesh, these sediment transported down the river accumulated in a mud and sand bar that grew into an island. This newly created island came to be called South Talpatti or New Moore Island.

There is nothing strange is this islands come and go by local reasons triggered by sudden events and longer-term dynamic forces.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, it was suddenly announced that the island had disappeared. Many persons, including scientists (for example Sugata Hazra, professor in oceanography at Jadavpur University in Calcutta), took it as an expression of a rapidly rising sea level.

The fact, however, is that it has nothing to do with any global sea level rise, rather local dynamic factors operating in this part of the Bay of Bengal.

So, the Island of South Talpatti (New Moor Island) was born in 1970 and killed in 2010; a short life -time of only 40 years.

The ultimate cause of its birth was the cyclone damage. The cause of it death is likely to be local dynamic causes operating in this part of the huge delta, and it surely not an effect of a rapid global sea level rise.



Over the last 40 years we record a virtually fully stable eustatic sea level, even in the Sundarban delta of Bangladesh. The disappearance of the island is by no means a sign of the opposite.