



Concrete blocks washed away from the newly constructed Padma riverbank protection embankment at Tangon (left) and one of the caved-in points of the dam.

PADMA BANK PROTECTION IN RAJSHAHI Tk 17cr embankment collapses within month of construction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

About 100 meters of the Padma River Left Bank Protection Embankment at Tangon have been washed away within a month of its construction.

The massive embankment also caved in at six points following rains in last few days.

Collapse of the embankment within a month of its construction has appalled the local people. They entire embankment may collapse

when the monsoon starts in full swing and the mighty river swells, many of them said while talking to this correspondent yesterday.

The 4600-metre embankment was built at a cost of Tk 17 crore to protect Charghat and Bagha upazilas and Rajshahi town from erosion by the Padma. The work, divided into six groups was completed about a month back.

Many local people who witnessed the work during construction alleged that low quality construction materials were used in it.

Parts of Rajshahi city and the two upazilas will be vulnerable as strong current of the river will wash away the embankment if there is flood. This is worrying them, they said.

Water Development Board (WDB) is now repairing the damaged dam on urgent basis, spending additional money, although there was condition in the agreement with contractors for its one-year maintenance after construction, sources said.

They claimed that the earth work was faulty and it was not reinforced before placing concrete blocks. The zeotex mattress was faulty, causing the damage within one month of its construction, they claimed.

The chief engineer and the superintendent engineer of WDB visited the spots.

"WDB is repairing the dam at its own cost", Superintendent Engineer Abdul Mannan said.

Asked why the concerned contractor was not bearing the repair cost, he suggested the correspondent to talk to the executive engineer.

Executive Engineer Habib Ullah said, "I can not talk on the matter as influential persons were involved".

Zamat Khan, one of the WDB contractors who built the dam said, "It is an accident. Land can cave in due to torrential rain and I am repairing it fast".

Freedom fighter killed in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A freedom fighter and headmaster of a primary school was hacked to death during school hours yesterday on its premises.

The incident took place in Atairula upazila in Pabna district. Md Shajahan alias Shajahan Master, 55, headmaster of Goashelari Primary School, was called out of classroom at about 11 am and hacked, allegedly by outlaws belonging to Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), police and witnesses said.

Another teacher, Rabiul, who tried to save Shajahan but he was also hacked.

The two were taken to Pabna General Hospital. As Shajahan's condition deteriorated, he was being sent to Dhaka for treatment. He died on way. Rabiul is being treated at Pabna General Hospital.

Shajahan was reportedly an Awami League supporter. He was commander of Bhullearia union Muktiudha Sangshed.



Japanese students planting banyan and keora saplings in North Nuniachhra in Cox's Bazar shore area.

Protecting Cox's Bazar shores

Japanese students plant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Students from Japan have come forward to protect life and property in Cox's Bazar shore areas from natural calamities like tidal surge and tsunami.

Braving drizzles and ignoring knee-high mud, they planted banyan and keora saplings in North Nuniachhra area near the tourist town on Monday.

This is part of a plan by a Japanese organisation--OISCA International to plant about two lakh banyan and keora saplings on newly emerged 35 hectares of land

on the shoreline to create mangroves to conserve ecology and provide protection from natural calamities. This will also protect salt producing areas.

Chief of OISCA, Yasuaki Nagai-shi, inaugurated the programme by planting a banyan sapling at Bakkhalir Char.

The 16 Japanese students including four girls were joined by 50 students and teachers from a local BRAC school in the tree plantation.

In 2001, 520,000 saplings were planted on 20 hectares. Since 1992, a total of 4,470,000 saplings have

been planted on 425 hectares in the shoreline.

Forests in the shoreline can protect life during devastating natural calamities like the April 29 tidal surge in 1991 which washed away at least 70,000 people in Cox's Bazar.

But the newly created mangroves are being destroyed for shrimp cultivation. In last five years, at least 500 shrimp enclosures have been created on about 30,000 acres of shore land by cutting forests, according to environmentalists here.

Body formed for uplift of Mymensingh shoal areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A new forum has been launched here aiming at balanced development of seven underdeveloped shoal unions of the Sadar upazila.

The forum titled, "Shoal Areas Development Forum" (SDF) was formed at a meeting held at Muslim Institute auditorium here recently.

Ansar and VDP Development Bank director Anwar Uddin Sarker presided the meeting.

Speakers put up their seven-point demand at the meeting and expressed their determination for development of their areas.

Among others, Faizur Rahman Fakir, chairman of Char Nilaxshia union, Ataharul Islam Bulbul, chairman of Boror Char union, Principal Ziauddin Shaker, Principal Abdul Qudus, prof Zakir Hossain, Prof Abdur Rashid, Freedom Fighter Ebadul Haque Sarker, Advocate Hazrat Ali, Poet Ashraf Mir, Rafiqul Islam, Sirajul Islam, journalists Mosharraf Hossain, Sultan Uddin Khan, Faizur Rahman Siddique, Sheikh Modhiuddin Ahmed, Md Abul Kasem and Md Aminul Islam addressed the meeting.

Later, a convening committee was formed to gear up their movement with Faizur Rahman Fakir as its convener.

People in the areas are being deprived of health, education, communication and other civic amenities for decades together.

Satkhira lawyers begin court boycott

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira Bar Association members yesterday began their five-day court boycott programme in protest against a government decision to shift the Third Additional Judge's Court to Bagerhat.

They also observed a two-hour token hunger strike and held a meeting in front of the judge's court. Bar Association president Advocate Tapan Kumar Chakraborty presided the meeting.

Speakers urged people of all walks of life to start a joint agitation to compel the government to cancel the decision.

They said the district earns annually over Tk 2,000 crore as foreign currency by exporting shrimps but it is unfortunate that the people of the district are being neglected for a long time. They vowed to resist the decision at any cost.

One lakh marooned in Moulvibazar

Flood situation unchanged in Sylhet: Road links snapped in 2 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The flood situation deteriorated in Moulvibazar yesterday where about one lakh people were marooned in 80 villages in Juri and Baralekha upazilas while it remained unchanged in Sylhet.

Body of a fisherman was recovered from Kahaluki Haor in Moulvibazar yesterday but it could not be known how he died. He was missing after he went for fishing in the Haor.

Road communication from Moulvibazar district town to Baralekha and Juri upazilas and from Sylhet to Gowainghat remained snapped as roads went underwater.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent adds: The Juri river embankment has been washed away at four points in Gualbari union in Juri upazila, flooding vast areas.

Ten primary and high schools in the upazila have been closed due to flood. Most of the growth centres of Juri upazila are now underwater.

Road communication from Moulvibazar to Baralekha and Juri upazilas are disrupted as Juri-Fultala, Juri-Latitila and Baralekha-Kulaura roads went under flood water.

People in submerged areas have left houses and taken shelter in higher places.

Scarcity of drinking water is prevailing in affected areas. Local people alleged that the administration has not opened any flood shelter or taken any initiative to distribute relief among the victims.

The worst affected areas are Belagaon, Sunapur, Nayagram, Gorergaon, Shahapur, Uttar

Jangirai, Shimultala, Yousufnagar, Gobindapur, Nishchintopur, Gouripur, Bhabanipur, Moiddabugtera, Poschikmalnagar, Khagteka, Chak, Krishnanagar, Basirpur, Kinagaon, Batuli, Baintala, Kashinagar, Kolabari, Faizi, Montrograon and Purbashirua villages.

Electricity supply to Juri upazila is disrupted since Sunday last as the Kulaura-Fenchuganj 33KV feeder line was damaged by lightning.

Body of Abdus Subhan, 30, son of Jubed Ali of Sujanager village in Baralekha was recovered yesterday morning from Hakaluki Haor.

Abdus Subhan was missing from last Monday, while he went Hakalukihaor for fishing.

Water levels of Monu and Dhalai rivers are increasing sharply. The rivers are flowing above their danger marks at Monu Railway Bridge and Bhanugachh bridge respectively.

The Monu flood control embankment has become risky at 14 points including Belertal, Sondraraj, Asroygram, Lalpur, Ranchap and Sadompur in Kulaura upazila, officials said.

It is threatened at Moulvibazar town as the pucca RCC wall is also vulnerable.

Our Staff Correspondent add from Sylhet: The flood situation in Sylhet remained unchanged as rains tapered off since yesterday morning.

Water levels in low-lying areas in Beaniabazar, Gowainghat, Jaintapur, Kanaighat, Companiganj, Jakiganj and Sylhet Sadar upazilas remained static while many areas of the city showed signs of slight improvement. All the

rivers in Sylhet and Moulvibazar are still flowing above their danger marks as waters from across the border continued to roll down. Road link between Gowainghat upazila and Sylhet district headquarters remained snapped for third day yesterday as the Sari-Gowainghat road remained under water.

Water Development Board (WDB) Superintending Engineer in Sylhet said yesterday that new breaches developed at Kushiara Dyke in Jakiganj upazila. Dykes and embankments in the region are at great risk as the weather is still foul, he said. WDB repairing cracks and breaches that developed in last three days, he said.

On the other hand, villagers have cut embankments at many places for fishing.

The Surma was flowing 32 cm above danger level in Sylhet city and 35 cm above the mark at Sunamganj district headquarters at 3 pm yesterday. It was flowing 147 cm above the danger mark at Kanaighat upazila head quarters.

The Kushiara was flowing 181 cm above the danger level at bordering Amolshid and 80 cm above the mark at Sheola point.

Breaches developed in about 1000 metres of the Kushiara Dyke at Ujirpur and Jaigirdarpara villages in Jakiganj Tuesday afternoon. Five houses were washed away by the Kushiara in Manikpur village in Jakiganj upazila.

Stone extraction from the seven quarries including the country's biggest one at Bholaganj in Companiganj remained suspended till yesterday.



Flood water flowing over the Juri-Latitila road in Juri upazila in Moulvibazar.

11 hurt in BCL factional clash in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Eleven people including two police constables were injured as two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) clashed in Gobindaganj yesterday.

The injured constables are Abdul Hannan and Momtazur Rahman.

A BCL faction led by Awami League (AL) leader and Gobindaganj Poursava chairman Principal Abul Kalam Azad brought out a procession in the upazila town and held a road side meeting in support of the hartal.

The clash erupted when another faction backed by Upazila Awami League president Tozammel Hossain Prodhon attacked the meeting with lethal weapons. At this stage, both the groups threw stones at each other.

Later, police brought the situation under control. A large contingent of police forces have been deployed in the area to quell any untoward incident.

Train derails in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Train communication between Kishoreganj and Mymensingh was disrupted as a goods train derailed near Sohagi Railway Station in Mymensingh yesterday morning.

The goods train was coming from Dewanganj Railway Station in Jamalpur and heading towards Chittagong station.

Rescue operation was going on till filing of the report yesterday evening. Kishoreganj station sources said.



Rival activists of Jubo League during a clash at a post-hartal rally at Court Point in Sylhet city yesterday.

20 hurt as Jubo League factions clash in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 20 activists were injured in a clash between rival factions of Awami Jubo League during a post-hartal rally in Sylhet city yesterday.

Of them, five were sent to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

During picketing for hartal yesterday morning, Jubo League activist Asad was beaten up in the city's Court Point area following heated exchange of words between activists of a rival faction led by the city unit president Syed Shamim and General Secretary Abdur Rahman Jamil.

Asad belongs to Jamil faction. In the afternoon, activists of both the factions joined the 14-party rally at the Court Point.

As the rally was about to end, rival activists chased each other with sticks and pelted brickbats. Awami League leader ANM Shafiq shortened his presidential speech at the rally while party leader and city Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran who attended the rally took shelter into a nearby mosque.

People in the area from Taltola to Zindabazar ran for shelter as the rival activists chased each other with sticks.

Police later brought the situation under control.

4 get life for murder in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Four persons were given life term yesterday for murdering a youth in 2003.

Abdul Kader Howlader, 45, Abdus Sattar Howlader, 40 Ibrahim, 35 and Salem Sarder, 32, all of Chonkhola village in Galachipa upazila in the district were convicted for beating 22-year-old Jahurul to death in a land dispute. The murder took place on May 9, 2003.

Salem Sarder is absconding. Five other accused were acquitted. Additional District and Sessions Judge ABM Sajedur Rahman delivered the verdict.

9 sued for protesting shady appointment at college

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Nine people including the founder of Shaheed Smriti College at Banshdah in Sadar upazila were sued following a row between a Jamaat lawmaker and the governing body members and teachers of the institution.

The accused are: Dr Shahidur Rahman, founder of the college, Dr Abul Bashar and college teachers Abdullah Al Mamun, Amjad Hossain, Baki Billah, Muhammad Habibul Islam and Azizul Islam and others.

Acting principal of the college, Obaidullah Gazanfar filed the case under Speedy Trial Act with Sadar Police Station Sunday night. It followed the acting principal's controversial appointment ignoring a decision of the college governing body.

The complainant, Obaidullah Gazanfar said the accused drove

him out of his office after assaulting him.

Earlier, Razia Khatun, a senior teacher was appointed acting principal of the college at a college governing body meeting held with Jamaat lawmaker Abdul Khaleque in the chair on May 12. Eleven out of 12 members okayed the appointment.

Later, Khaleque appointed Obaidullah Gazanfar acting principal of the college ignoring the governing body decision. It created a conflict between the Jamaat lawmaker and members of the college governing body.

Following the conflict, Obaidullah Gazanfar filed the case. Locals alleged that the lawmaker influenced police to record the case.

A public meeting was held at Banshdah bazar condemning the appointment on June 10. Banshdah Union Parishad (UP) chairman Shahiduzzaman Helal

was in the chair.

Speakers demanded immediate withdrawal of the case. They threatened a tougher agitation if the false case is not withdrawn immediately.

Terming the lawmaker's decision undemocratic and arbitrary, they said he had implicated the college governing body members in a false case through Obaidullah Gazanfar.

They brought allegations against the lawmaker and his relatives for earning lakhs of taka through corrupt practices.

Among others, college founder Dr Shahidur Rahman, SM Shawkat Hossain, Syed Firoz Kamal Shuvra, Firoz Ahmed, Shahjahan Ali and Azizul Haque addressed. On contact, the lawmaker denied all the allegations saying he has nothing to do regarding filing of the case.