

# Over 2 lakh marooned as 258 villages flooded in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over two lakh people are marooned in seven upazilas of Satkhira district as three days' rains and water from Chuna river triggered flood inundated vast areas.

The situation is deteriorating fast as water from the river is gushing through the breached Water Development Board (WDB) embankment in Shyamnagar.

At least 258 villages have been submerged and shrimps worth about Tk 100 crore in 1254 enclosures washed away and 5674 ponds flooded, sources in agriculture and fisheries departments said.

Most rivers in the district are in spate, threatening their embankments at many points, WDB sources said yesterday.

The worst affected area include Dhulihar, Fingri, Brammarajpur,

Labsa, Jhowdanga and Balli in Sadar upazila; Nagarghata, Sarulia, Kumira, Tentulia, Dhandia, Islamkati and Khalishkhali in Tala; Joynagar, Jalalabad, Jugikhali and Kushodanga in Kalaroa; Bardal, Pratnagar, Sreeula and Shovnali in Assassuni, Noapara in Debhata; Bishnupur, Champaphool and Rotonpur in Kaligonj; and Gabura, Atulia, Munshigonj, Ishwaripur and Kaikhali in Shyamnagar upazila.

Rain water and water from the rivers entered over 258 villages, displacing people. Over 200 families have taken shelter in educational institutions in Fingri union in Sadar upazila alone, said Abul Khair, a former Union Parishad chairman.

In most areas affected people took shelter at educational institutions, cyclone centres and on high lands, relief officials said.

But there is no relief from the government yet, they added. Several areas of Satkhira town are still under water. These include Kamalnagar, Raispur, Rasulpur, Mehediabagh and Palashpole where most of the houses were flooded. Satkhira police line and civil surgeon's offices were also flooded.

District administration sources said, according to their initial estimate, over 3000 kutcha houses have been damaged and newly planted Amon seedlings on 35000 hectares submerged.

Over 2000 marooned people laid a siege to the Water Development Board (WDB) office at Shyamnagar protesting the officials' alleged failure to protect the Chuna river embankment that breached on Wednesday at Pankhali.

Agitated people also brought out a procession, led by the five Union Parishad chairmen, and held a rally in front of the WDB office.

They also submitted a memorandum to Satkhira Deputy Commissioner through Shyamnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) to press their 8-point demand including removal of WDB sub-assistant in Shyamnagar for his alleged neglect to protect the embankment.



PHOTO: STAR

An inundated house at Shyamnagar upazila headquarters.

## NOMINATION FROM SUNAMGANJ-4 BNP whip Aspia to face his former APS, Jamaat

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

BNP Whip Fazlul Haque Aspia will face challenge from Jamaat-e-Islami and his former assistant private secretary in getting nomination from Sunamganj-4 constituency.

The young man--Sunamganj district BNP organising secretary Nader Ahmed--has declared his candidature from the area in the coming parliamentary elections against Aspia, his former boss.

He announced his decision to seek alliance nomination a press conference on September 10.

This has triggered a mixed reaction among party leaders and activists in Sunamganj-4 which includes the district headquarters also.

However, there are three other aspirants for party ticket from the constituency, party sources said. They include founder general secretary of Sunamganj district BNP Amirul Haque who announced his candidature at a press conference earlier.

Nader Ahmed had also sought alliance ticket from the constituency in the byelection held in July last year after the death of Awami League stalwart Abdus Samad Azad.

The alliance nominated Moulana



Fazlul Haque Aspia

Shahinur Pasha Chowdhury of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) led by Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini, who defeated independent candidate retired additional secretary MA Mannan with a small margin.

Mannan enjoyed support from Awami League though the main opposition boycotted the bypolls.

Party sources said Nader Ahmed, hailing from Birgaon village in South Sunamganj, is backed by district BNP president Nozir Hossain MP who leads the Whip's rival camp in the district.

They said Nader was with Aspia earlier when the Whip was president of district BNP. As the post went to

Nozir Hossain, he sided with Nozir. Aspia is facing another trouble from alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami as rivalry between the partners in the district intensified recently.

The district Jamaat Amir Hatimur Rahman has decided to seek alliance nomination from the constituency, party leaders said. Jamaat announced his candidature at a rally held at Alfat Square in Sunamganj town on September 17. The party staged a big showdown by gathering activists and supporters from Sunamganj Sadar and Biswambharpur upazilas.

Asked about this some senior Jamaat leaders said the party took the decision to seek nomination for Hatimur Rahman as some recent incidents widened the gap between the alliance partners.

Aspia, known as a 'clean man' in the area, will also face strong rivalry from Jatiya Party's Montaj Iqbal, wife of late food minister Maj Iqbal Hossain, as JP's joining the alliance is almost clear.

## Implement CHT accord fully, demands PCJSS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Leaders of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and it student front Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) yesterday urged the BNP-led alliance government to fully implement the CHT peace agreement.

Ancestral lands and homesteads of indigenous people are being grabbed by settlers in Chittagong Hill Tracts because of non-implementation of the agreement, they said while addressing the 11th annual council of Rangamati nit of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), student wing of PCJSS. It was held at the Shilpakola Academy.

It was addressed by, among others, PCJSS central leaders Ushatan Talukder, Shaktiman Chakma, Thoai Aung Marma, Rangamati PCJSS secretary Bodhisatta Chakma, Rangamati PCP president Ashin Chakma and Hill Women Federation (HWF) chairperson Jonaki Chakma. Rangamati PCP president Juban Bikash Chakma chaired the council.

They criticized the government, during its five-year rule it did not take any step to implement the peace agreement that restored peace in the troubled hills.

In the coming election, PCJSS will support the party which will give a firm commitment to implement the peace accord and take steps to foster harmony among Bengalees and indigenous people in the hills, they said.

They also criticised Samo Odhikar Andolan (SOA), a platform of Bengalee settlers in the CHT, for what they called creating discord between peace loving Bengalees and tribesmen in the hills. The SOA is led by BNP lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan.

Some vested quarters are trying to disturb the present harmony between Bengalees and indigenous people in CHT to serve their interest, they said and called upon the people of all communities to guard against their evil motive.

## Six bombs recovered in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered six bombs from Meherpur Saturday night.

Rab sources said a team of the elite force raided the house of one Jaber Sheikh at Dharmachaki village and recovered the bombs hidden at a box in a locked room.

Rab could not arrest any one involved with the incident.

Explosives experts from Khulna yesterday defused the bombs in Meherpur, Rab said.

## DEMAND FOR EQUIVALENT DEGREES 40 hurt as madrasa students clash with cops, DC's staff

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 40 people including three police men and five journalists were injured in a clash involving police, madrasa students led by Shibir and government employees when students from different madrasas went to submit a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner yesterday.

According to administration sources and witnesses, students from different madrasas in the district gathered on the premises of Aswini Kumar Town Hall at about 11 am and proceeded towards the Deputy Commissioner's office to hand over a memorandum to press their demand for making Fazel and Kamel degrees equivalent to Masters and Graduation respectively by passing a bill in the current session of parliament.

As the processionists reached in front of DC office, employees resisted them in presence of a First Class Magistrate. During hot exchange of words, some students pelted stones at the office damaging some windowpanes and two cars.

Police intervention added fuel to the violence and chase and counter-chase continued for about half an hour.

Injured journalist Nasir Ahmed was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-

Bangla Medical College Hospital. Two others--Shamim Ahmed and Shahiduzzaman--were treated at a local clinic.

The three injured police men--Abdul Huq, Sultan and Shaheed were taken to the police hospital.

The injured collectorate employees included Sultan Ahmed, A Rob Hawlader, A Malek, Harun-or-Rashid, Zafar, A Satter, Berek and Alauddin.

Police could not identify the

injured madrasa students as they fled the scene fearing arrest.

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner Shawkot Nabi said a case will be lodged with Speedy Trial Tribunal (STT) and action would be taken against the students involved in incident.

Police arrested two students--Md. Yusuf Sikder of Kashemabad Madrasa and Md. Shahadat Hossain of Sagardi Islamia Kamel Madrasa from the spot.



PHOTO: STAR

A madrasa student being clubbed by police near the DC's office.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Essentials started arriving at Khatunganj wholesale market in Chittagong on the eve of the holy Ramadan for supply to different area of the country.

# ERSHAD'S 'SNEAKY' MOVE TO JOIN ALLIANCE Worrying time for Jamaat, BNP in greater Rangpur

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

With the possibility of Eshad's joining the four-party alliance becoming stronger, leaders of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami are worried as Jatiya Party is firm not to share any of the 22 seats with any other party in greater Rangpur.

BNP and Jamaat leaders are demanding at least five seats in Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts to contest in the coming election, front ranking leaders said.

BNP candidates who ran second in 2001 election are determined to try their luck this time, they said.

In 2001 election, Asadul Habib Dulu won in Lalmonirhat-3 constituency (Lalmonirhat sadar Upazila) with 63259 votes defeating JP President member and Ershad's younger brother GM Quader, who got 29454 votes.

Except Dulu, none of the alliance candidates could win in 12 other constituencies in the three districts. Six of them however were in second position.

Quader is now unhappy with Ershad for leaning towards the BNP-Jamaat alliance. He has declared that he would fight from Lalmonirhat-3 from 'another political platform' if his

brother finally joins the alliance.

Dulu has also expressed his willingness to contest from the constituency.

"BNP chairperson Khaleida Zia at a public meeting at Lalmonirhat on August 5 declared me alliance candidate in the coming election", he told this correspondent.

In Lalmonirhat-1 (Hatibandha-Patgram), Jamaat leader Abu Hena Mohammed Ershad became second with 48907 votes. He was defeated by Awami League's Motahar Hossain.

Front ranking Jamaat leaders said they are determined not to give the seat to any alliance partner. The decision was taken at a Rokon meeting of the district unit and the decision was conveyed to the party central leaders, they said.

Kurigram BNP secretary Saifur Rahman Rana lost to JP's Mostafizur Rahman in Kurigram-1 (Nageshwari and Bhrungamari upazilas) with only 2916 votes in last election.

Rana wants to contest from Kurigram-1 and Kurigram-2 in the coming election.

Rana told The Daily Star that he is firm to fight in Kurigram-1. If his party wants him in Kurigram-2, (Kurigram Sadar, Fulbari and Razarhat upazilas), he will contest in both the constituencies.

Asked if his party decides to leave Kurigram-1 for JP, he said it is

too early to comment.

He however said BNP should not think of any candidate except him in Kurigram-1 as he enhanced the party's image in the district, particularly in Kurigram-1 by doing development works in last five years.

In Rangpur-1 (Gangachhara upazila), Jamaat leader Shah Mohammad Ruhul Islam ran second to JP central joint secretary Moshirur Rahman Ranga.

Both Ranga and Ruhul are now determined to contest from the constituency in the coming election.

"Ershad must not leave the seat as JP candidate won it in the last three elections", Ranga told this correspondent. He however said he would abide by the party chief's advice.

In last three elections, JP leaders from outside the district were nominated from Rangpur-1.

But this time, local leaders of the party told Ershad that they would not allow any 'outsider, even Ranga' to contest from the parliamentary seat.

JP leader and Gangachhara Sadar Union Parishad chairman Anwarul Islam said Ershad should nominate candidate from among local leaders. "Otherwise, the party will have to pay heavily".

Moreover, he said, people of Gangachhara are not happy with

Ranga as he did not do any significant development work there, Anwar said.

JP leader Shamsul Alam, chairman of Mornea Union Parishad, said, "If Ershad nominates Ranga from Gangachhara, a number of local party leaders will contest in the election here as independent candidates", he said.

When contacted, Ranga said, he will get nomination to contest from for Rangpur-1 in the coming election. He also claimed that he did a lot of development works in Gangachhara.

Rangpur BNP president Rahim Uddin Bharosa is also campaigning in Rangpur-4 (Pirgachha, Kounia upazilas) constituency, saying he will get the alliance ticket. His younger brother Rangpur JP president Karim Uddin Bharosa also expressed his desire to contest from the constituency.

In last election, the younger brother defeated the elder brother with 9806 votes.

But Rahim Uddin Bharosa believes that BNP created a positive image among the people of Pirgachha and Kounia and he would win the next election from Rangpur-4 in coming polls.

Karim Uddin Bharosa is firm to be in the race this time. "If JP leaves the seat to BNP, it will be suicidal for the party", he said.



From left: Rahim Uddin Bharosa, Karim Uddin Bharosa, Moshirur Rahman Ranga, Saifur Rahman Rana and GM Quader

## Helping them rise to challenge Tale of a 'happy home' that trains the physically challenged

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The Community Centre for Handicapped (NCH) is a 'happy home' for poor physically challenged children. They learn handicraft making there free of cost and become self-reliant.

About 50 children including 35 girls are now working at the NCH, making fashionable handicraft and earning Tk 100 to Tk 1500 a month. Their products include cushion cover, pillow cover, sofa cover, wall-mat, landscapes, hand bags, wallets, table mats and fashionable articles made with wool and gunny bags.

NCH was launched in 1992 at a small rented house at Kanchijuly in Mymensingh town with only five children. It is now called Shanti Nibash.

The children from poor families are happy as they are no more burdens to their families and the society. Most of them now contribute to their family's income.

Fifteen year-old Shahnaz Akhter, daughter of Hafez Ali, a mason in Akua area in the town, is working at NCH for about a year. Earlier, she was treated at the

Center for Rehabilitation from Paralysis (CRP) in Dhaka and took training on handicraft during treatment period. Her two legs were paralysed when she was nine.

"I was forced to leave school when I was a student of class two.

My father could not bear the treatment cost. NCH and CRP helped me and now I am earning for the family", she told this correspondent during a recent visit. Shahnaz works at NCH female section as a handicraft trainer. She is also skilled in embroidery

and sewing.

Tahmina Akhter Minu, 25, daughter of late Dr. Muazzem Hossain, became disabled after a back pain in 1997. She works there as Social Communicator. "Now I am self-reliant and run my family with my income", she said.

Shima, Jharna, Fahmi, Rupa, Maleka, Bilkis, Anki and Kulsum are among many other girls working under Shahnaz and Minu.

Jharna, Fahmi and Rupa are also dumb. Alongside training on handicraft, they study at the deaf and dumb school in the town.

Disabled Shima, daughter of policeman Amir Hossain in Faridpur, works as a trainer. There are also 15 boys working there.

Nilanjan Bose Mithu, Executive Director of NCH, said they have so far trained up about 2500 disabled boys and girls on different vocations.

"We have also job opportunity for them. Many of the boys and girls trained here are now engaged in different jobs outside NCH", she said.



PHOTO: STAR

Shahnaz Akhter (right) on a wheel chair training other physically challenged girls at the Community Centre for Handicapped in Mymensingh town.