



JAMALPUR: A flood-hit family in village Adra of Melandah thana moves for a safer place with all the things they could carry. — Star photo by Md Meherullah

Overall flood situation further deteriorates in Jamalpur, Sherpur

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, July 10: The overall flood situation in all the seven thanas including Jamalpur pourashava has further worsened with inundation of fresh areas.

About 10 lakh people were marooned due to flood and have been facing serious problems because of inadequate supply of relief materials to the flood hit areas. The water in Brahmaputra was flowing 82 cm at Bahadurabad ghat above danger mark and Jamuna was flowing 80 cm at Jagannathganj ghat above danger mark till Sunday afternoon. A total of 60 unions out of 66 unions in the district were submerged by the flood water. Rail tracks on Jamalpur to Bahadurabad ghat was also submerged as flood water entered the entire area. The railway ferry communication between Bahadurabad ghat to Teestamukh ghat was under threat following continued rise in water level of the river Jamuna. The flood water entered 90 per cent of the residential houses. Shops in Madarganj, Melandah, Islampur, Dewanganj and Sarishabari thanas of the district were also badly affected. About 60,000 *kutcha* houses were washed away by the flood waters. The flood waters washed away rice, paddy, cattle, poultry and valuables worth lakhs of taka. Many people were taken shelter in different educational institutions, high roads and other safer places.

Road communication between

Jamalpur district headquarters and Melandah, Madarganj, Islampur, Dewanganj thanas and Sherpur district town remained snapped as flood water submerged many parts of the road. Total 300 educational institutions also remained closed.

Several robbery cases were reported in different char areas of the district. Several gangs of robbers are active in flood affected areas. They are looting paddy and valuable goods from the houses with country boat.

According to official sources 500 cattle, 10,000 poultry were killed by flood water. Five government flood shelter camps were opened by the government in the district.

The government has sanctioned Taka one lakh in cash, 100 metric tons of rice, 50 metric tons of wheat, 1000 sarees, 500 lungis, 100 tins of biscuits, for flood affected people.

Our Correspondent Sherpur adds: The over all flood situation in Sherpur district have deteriorated further since Friday with continuation of rain and onrush of flood waters from the hilly areas of India.

At least two lakh people have been marooned in different thanas of the district. No rescue team as yet have started to evacuate the flood victims. Only some voluntary groups are operating. The worst affected areas are Nalitabari and sadar thana. All the twelve unions of Nalitabari thana went under water. Hilly waters from

across the border swept away four people of a family in Nalitabari thana. The victims were washed away by strong current while they were in search of a flood centre on Thursday night.

Seed beds of Nalitabari thana have totally been destroyed, and 95 per cent standing crops were totally damaged of this thana. Numerous dwellings were damaged. In protest of rescue system of the administration, local people stage a big demonstration against administration and blocked the road for several house on Saturday.

Srebordi and Nalitabari thana have been disconnected as flood waters have marooned different points of the roads.

The river Surika, Dondhabdi and Chithalia are now flowing 35 cm above danger level in sadar thana while Brahmaputra is flowing above 32 cm above danger level in Sherpur-Jamalpur ferryghat point, according to administration sources on Sunday.

Thousands of flood-hit people have taken shelter in educational institutions and flood protection embankment. 10 unions under sadar thana were also badly affected. Flood waters have entered more or less in every dwellings. At least 5000 *kutcha* houses have been damaged. All the educational institution in remote areas have been damaged following the onrush of flood waters. Hundreds of braches have developed in all the

flood protection embankments.

Electricity supply to all these affected areas are totally or partially disrupted during the periods. More than 90 per cent tubewells in those areas have gone under water causing an acute crisis of drinking water. About ten flood godowns are submerged by the waters in the district.

Jobed Ali, 8, of village Valuka in Jhenaigati thana was killed by lightning while he was fishing amidst rain on Saturday. Another old woman Sufia Begum, 70, of village Dhamnagao of Nakla thana was buried under debris when her *kutcha* house collapsed on the same day.

Sources said that 48 unions out of 52 unions in the district were submerged under flood waters and about two lakh people have been marooned.

Standing crops on one lakh and fifty thousand acres were damaged. More than 150 educational institutions in the district were closed down as flood water entered in these schools. More than seven lakh people are affected by the floods. On the other hand more than 500 dwellings were damaged by the erosion of Brahmaputra and by river Bugai and Chalkhalha. At least 1500 peoples were rendered homeless due to erosion.

The relief sanctioned by the administration can meet only ten per cent of the requirement.

New Director of GTI

Agri-Varsity (Mymensingh), July 10: Professor Muhammad Amir Hossain has joined as Director, Graduate Training Institute (GTI) of the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), according to a press release.

An agricultural educationist of international repute, Professor Amir Hossain did his Bachelor of Agriculture in 1967 and MSc in 1969 from BAU. He attended special study programme in the University of Wisconsin, USA in 1979. He attended OTTA course at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, UK in 1989 and during 1991-92 he completed a course of instruction in education in UK and obtained distinction.

Professor Amir Hossain joined in BAU as Lecturer in Agricultural Extension in 1972 and was promoted to the post of Professor for his outstanding contribution in the agricultural education and research in 1991.

Professor Hossain has 25 research articles published in national and international journals including 30 GTI publications. He coordinated 100 training programmes of GTI participated by local and foreign participants. He participated several national and international seminar.

Flood engulfs 46 unions of Sherpur

SHERPUR, July 10: Forty-six out of fifty one unions of Sherpur district have been affected by the flood causing damage to forty per cent of the standing crops, reports BSS.

Official sources said that thirty-five culverts, bridges and a large number of *kutcha* roads have been damaged and over one lakh people have been directly affected by the flood.

Road communications with Bakshiganj, Srebordi, Nanni and Nalitabari with Sherpur sadar have been cut.

Water Development Board sources said that the Bhugai at Nalitabari point recorded 70 cm swell above the danger mark on Friday. About two lakh people in the district have been thrown into problems of shelter, food and pure drinking water.

The Deputy Commissioner of Sherpur said that local administration had distributed Taka eighty thousand, seventy MT of wheat and some cartons of biscuits among the affected people of Jhenaigati police station. He said Relief Ministry has allocated one hundred MT of rice and fifty MT of wheat in addition to Tk fifty thousand and two hundred cartons of biscuits for the affected people.

Flood damages crops on 5,000 acres in Feni

FENI, July 10: The flood situation improved to some extent in all the 26 affected unions of the district. All major rivers in the district were flowing below the danger level, reports UNB.

The road communication between Feni and Porsuram resumed on Sunday after its four-day suspension. The rail communication in Feni-Belonia section also resumed upto Fulgazi.

Law enforcing agents accused of sheltering criminals

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 10: Law and order situation has deteriorated in the city corporation area recently.

Offences are being committed one after another but the law enforcing agencies are not playing necessary role to curb the offences, rather some dishonest personages of the law enforcing agencies are giving shelter to the criminals, it is alleged.

According to sources, eight persons were killed and 14 women of different age were abducted and violated in different places of the city during June alone. During this period 27 incidents of street robbery were also recorded.

There are allegations that most of the criminals are well known and identified but the authorities donot take prompt and adequate measures to arrest or resist them when it is required.

According to police, eight persons were killed in the city last month. But police could not arrest the killers. The relatives of the victims alleged that police have not even tried earnestly to find the motive behind the killings. Tracing and arrest of the killers are far from expectations.

Rabiul Islam, a young boy was

chopped by *Hasua* (a carved, sharp, steel-made weapon) to death in broad day light on June 15 at Munshipara of the city. Police admirably took a prompt action, raided the area and arrested the accused persons. But a few hours later, they were released for an unknown cause. The case is also lying pending.

Incidents of abduction and violation were rare in Rajshahi. But recently it has increased alarmingly. Five house wives and nine other minor and young girls were abducted and some of them were violated during June. Police could not rescue the girls, nor could arrest the miscreants.

On June 2, some miscreants abducted a school girl Papi, but police could not find her as yet. A few days later, four *mustans* took a minor girl Marjina to a boggy of a train standing in Rajshahi railway station and raped her. Rail authorities reported the police about the incident and identified the *mustans* but police did not take any action, it was alleged.

A house wife Razina, 21, was abducted on June 18 from her residence in Basua. Her father went to the thana but police did not even register a general diary, he alleged.

Street robbery has also increased alarmingly in the recent months. Matihar thana informed that more than Tk 50 lakhs including gold ornaments were robbed off in June last. Twentyone incidents of robbery were recorded under this thana.

Meanwhile Rajshahi Metropolitan Police sources said that crimes have increased a little but did not exceed the limit. They further said that RMP could not function as per expectation due to shortage of manpower, as well as vehicles. Moreover, RMP personnels were mostly engaged in managing the political incidents, especially in Rajshahi University. That is a major problem and RMP could not pay full attention in curbing crimes. Political pressure was another hindrance to the normal functioning of the police, it was informed.

It is to be mentioned here that crimes and all types of offence have remarkably decreased in the city just after the inception of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police in 1992 and the civic life were more or less peaceful during last three years. Political unrest and clashes were the exceptions. But all types of crimes have recently increased making people anxious.



MOULVIBAZAR: Muktijuddha Chhatra Command, Moulvi Bazar unit brought out a mourning procession marking the first death anniversary of Jahanara Imam. — Star photo

Works of two bridges in progress

BARISAL, July 10: Work on a 152 metre long and 7 metre wide bridge over the Taltali river on Taltali-Shaivasthabad road is progressing satisfactorily at a cost of Tk 2 crore, reports BSS.

According to an official source, about 20 per cent work of the bridge has already completed.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) has been implementing the project. RHD has also been constructing another 60 metre long and 7 metre wide bridge over Karapur river on Barisal-Nabagram road at an allocation of about Tk 50 lakh.

Satkhira flood Men, animals suffer alike

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, July 10: About 32 villages under Assasuni thana of the district have been inundated due to onrush of water following the damage of Jelekhal-Balabaria WAPDA embankment near the river Marichchap. A total of 70,000 people of the area have been affected by the onrush of water.

The water started entering the areas when the embankment was washed away due to tidal waves on May 15. Since then Jelekhal-Balabaria embankment has remained un-

repaired. As a result the entire area has been inundated due to onrush of water following the recent downpour.

According to latest information, about 10,000 *kutcha* houses have been damaged. Standing crops on 8,000 acres were damaged. More than 100 shrimp enclosures were also washed away causing loss of over Taka 10 crore.

Cattleheads and poultry birds are not getting food. Acute crisis of drinking water is persisting in the affected areas as most of the tubewells are affected by saline water. The affected people are compelled to drink water of ponds, canals and other water bodies. As a result they have been suffering from intestinal diseases and born disease like diarrhoea.

The homeless people have taken shelter on different embankment and verandahs of schools of these areas. They are passing hard days due to lack of relief and shelter.

The correspondent visited the affected areas and found that all the *kutcha* houses of these areas have been affected.

When contacted, the Deputy Commissioner Satkhira said that he had already ordered the WAPDA authority to take immediate measures to save lives of the suffering people and construct the damaged embankment as early as possible.

Dairy farmers get incentives in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, July 10: To promote dairy farming, the government has sanctioned Taka two lakh as incentive bonus for Moulvibazar district.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has distributed cheques of incentive bonus to six private dairy farm owners of Moulvibazar district at a simple function on July 6.

Glasnagar Dairy Farm received Taka 43,750 and Motin Dairy Farm received Taka 31,250 as incentive bonus. Both of the farms are located under sadar thana. Four other dairy farms which have received Taka 31,250 each as incentive bonus from the Finance Minister are Layla Dairy Farm of Srimongal thana, Sumon Dairy Farm of Rajnagar thana, Ala Dairy Farm and Adarsha Dairy Farm of Kularua thana.

When this correspondent contacted with Shaquatul Wahed, President of Live-Stock and Poultry Farm Owners Association (LSPFOA), Moulvi Bazar told that ten more farms are under active consideration of the authority concern for incentive bonus during the current financial year. He added that about 200 farm owners of Moulvibazar district are facing great troubles due to acute scarcity of fodder. He urged the government to supply quality cows and to provide adequate medical facilities for cattlehead.

Controversy over Barind project

by Asiuzzaman

RAJSHAHI, July 10: Aftabuddin was in a happy mood. He was supervising half a dozen day-labourer who were harvesting in his two acres of farmland at Hatatpara village under Rajshahi district. The reason of his happiness was that he reaped at least 15 maunds of paddy per bigha in a season when a drought-like weather swept the northern parts of the country.

"It was possible because of that

travel the neighbouring districts in search of employment. But the situation now entirely changed and people are coming from other areas to look for jobs here.

"We were in hardship as most of us were unemployed almost throughout the year," said Habibur Rahman, a labourer working in Aftabuddin's paddyfield. "Now we earn Tk 40 a day during the harvesting seasons." he

added.

According to statistics maintained by the Project officials, an additional four lakh tons of food is being produced following the operation of the project.

A contrasting picture was observed in another paddy field located just two kilometers away from Aftabuddin's field. An elderly farmer, Amanullah expressed his dissatisfaction over the poor production in his land as there was no water

of deep tubewells. Tree plantations, reexcavation of 14,000 derelict ponds and increasing the crop intensity were other aims of the ambitious project which became the centre of controversy and faced criticism from the environmentalists.

The project is a 10-year programme in two phases with government assistance. Both the phases ended this June. From July 1995 the project would have to run with its own

"Everything is going well. The rainfall, ground water level and water recharge are recorded normal in the areas," Asaduzzaman said adding, "We are working for the wellbeing of some five million people of socially and economically backward areas."

He however, admitted that water level go down in some of the areas particularly in the summer seasons.

Environmentalist M I Zuberi of

"They are running after temporary benefits at the cost of millions of people," he said adding, "environmental changes take place gradually but it has a long-lasting effect." "Our posterity will suffer as it will damage the echo-system," he added.

pump," Aftabuddin, in his sixties said pointing his finger at a nearby deep-tubewell installed under Barind Integrated Area Development Project. He said that before operation of this project, the farmers of the areas used to get one crop in a year, which was also depended on rain.

Now they get at least two and sometimes three crops each year. July through November is the irrigated aman season. Now through March is the boro season and March through

June is the irrigated aus season, he informed.

Aftabuddin's only complaint was the high rate for supply of water from the deep tubewell (DTW). According to the project rules, a farmer has to pay Tk 75 per hour of water supply to his land from a DTW.

"We could get more benefit if the project authorities reduced the rate for supply of water," he added.

He went on narrating that project brought fortunes for a large number of farmers in the areas who had completely been dependent on nature.

Earlier, the day labourers used to

supply.

Amanullah alleged that despite repeated appeal to the project officials, they failed to install of DTW in this area where he had about seven acres of land.

Amanullah said, a DTW which has a 60 acres of command area, could have doubled the production in his land. Despite this apparent success of the project, environmentalists cautioned that this 'happiness' would not last long.

They are working against the nature which may bring disaster for the whole region," said one environment

source of income and resources. The project currently has 525 staff.

The hard red soil, typical dry climate with comparatively high temperature and poor cropping intensity are the phenomena of the Barind Tract.

The Executive Director of the project, M Asaduzzaman termed the project a 'success story' saying that "we are producing three crops in the same land where the farmers used to get one crop before the project started." Some 5,000 deep tubewells have been sunk in the specified areas where more than 100,000 saplings were planted, he further informed.

Rajshahi University contradicted Asaduzzaman's version saying, "the project will bring environmental disaster for the region." They are running after temporary benefits at the cost of millions of people," he said adding, "environmental changes take place gradually but it has a long-lasting effect."

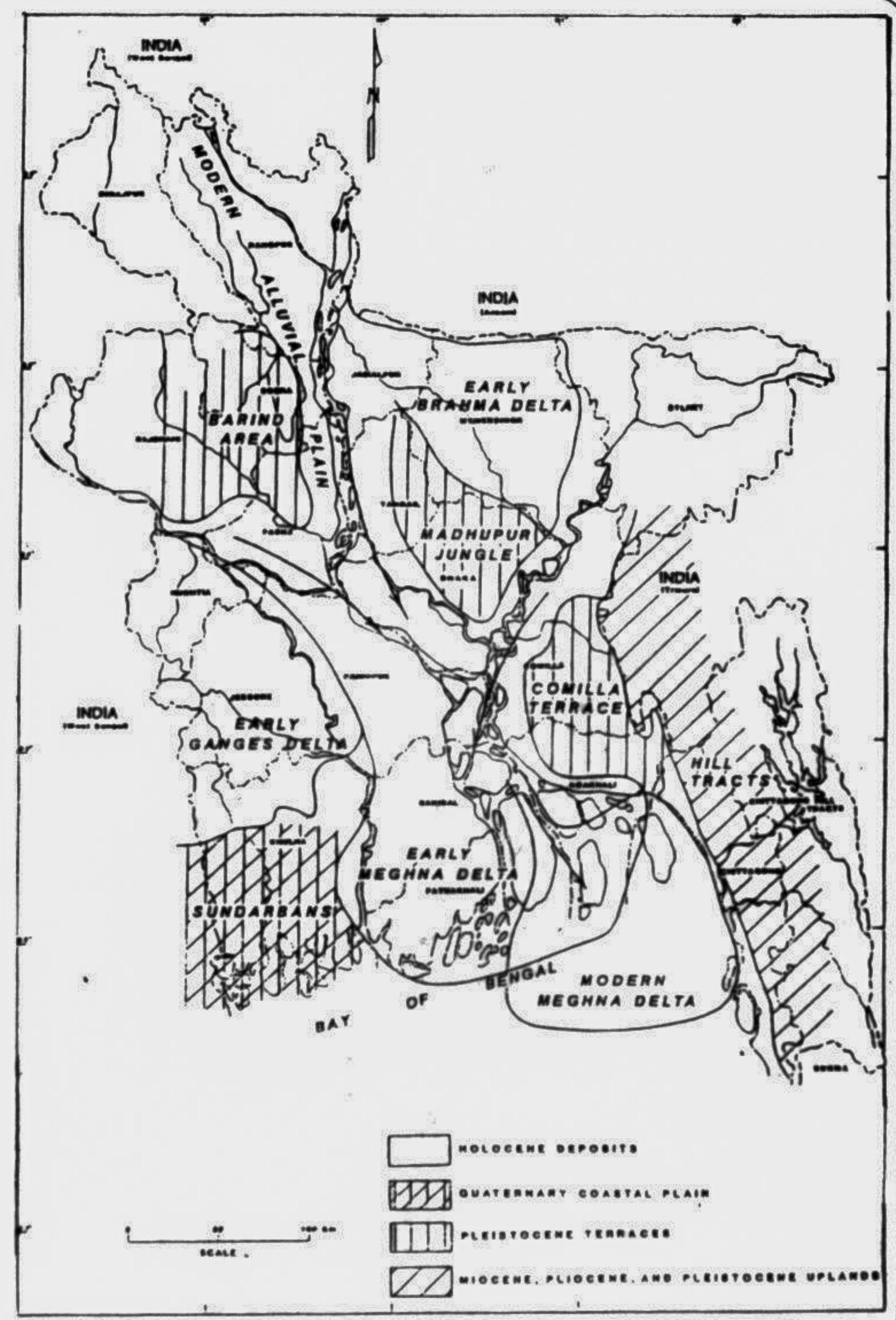
"Our posterity will suffer as it will damage the echo-system," he added. A survey of the Public Health De-

partment revealed that the ground water level receded upto 40ft in some areas where the level was in between 25 ft to 30 ft. But the Executive Engineer of the Barind Project said, under the present situation another 2,000 deep tubewells are possible to install in the project areas.

The issue is being debated in different seminars and symposia in Rajshahi and other cities.

Only an extensive scientific survey can assess the environmental and economic impact of the Barind Project.

(The article is prepared under the Panos Fellowship Programme).



Map showing the area of Barind Integrated Development Project.