

PDB subscribers go on rampage in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 1: A section of consumers of Power Development Board (PDB) have ransacked the Belkuchi supply office on August 26 in demand of regular supply of power.

It is learnt that power supply in Kazipur, Belkuchi, Kamarkhanda and Chowhalli thanas remains disrupted everyday from 6 pm to 10 pm. The domestic consumers are the worst sufferers. Such irregularity of power supply for months together has created a serious dislocation particularly in handloom business in the district.

On August 26 noon, a section of consumers came to the Belkuchi supply office of PDB and went on rampage. The employees managed to escape. On pressure of the staff of Belkuchi, PDB, the Sirajganj supply offices continued power supply till eight at night and again supply was resumed at 11 pm after load shedding for three hours.

The local officials of PDB have contacted the higher authorities to regularise power supply at peak hours to avoid further untoward incidents.

One shot dead by hunter in Sundarban

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Sept 1: One fisherman was shot dead by a deer hunter in the Sundarbans recently.

According to an eye witness, one Abdul Gaffar of village Sohalia and Abdul Gafur of Kalinchi both under Shyamnagar thana while catching fish in the river Chanata in the Sundarbans, a group of deer hunters namely Girin Mondal of Bhetkhali, Abdul Mannan of Kalinchi and an influential person, thinking them decoys, opened fire on them. As a result Abdul Gaffar died on the spot.

Ten injured in robbery, clash in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 1: Three people were robbed and received injuries at village Kanapukuria in Saikupa thana of the district recently.

According to reports, three businessmen, Rabiul, 35, Roushan Ali, 52, and Majjul, 22, of village Charpara were returning home from Jhenidah hat after selling cows with Taka 10,500. When they reached near Kanapukuria, some armed miscreants numbering around eight to ten attacked them with ramda, Chinese axe and other weapons. The victims were rushed to Saikupa thana health complex.

Another report says, seven persons were injured in a clash at village Gopalpur in Saikupa thana of the district on Friday.

Reports say, two rival groups of villages Gopalpur and Aguniapara confronted each other with ramda, cha-pai, Chinese axe and other weapons following a negligible incident. Of them three injured Oliar Rahman, 50, Abdul Aziz, 25, and Elahi, 40, were admitted to Saikupa thana health complex, it was learnt.

Headmaster suspended

From Our Correspondent

MEHERPUR, Sept 1: Service of the Headmaster of Ashrafur Secondary High School of Meherpur sadar thana has been put on suspension on charge of corruption and misappropriation of school fund, it is alleged.

It is reported that Md Makhlesur Rahman, Headmaster of the school allegedly started committing corruption at random for some time. He took money allegedly from several persons of the tune of over Tk one lakh assuring them of giving service.

He also allegedly misappropriated about taka eight thousand from the fund of sadar thana Private Secondary School Teachers Benevolent Association. Later, he had to pay back the money on pressure and he was removed from the post of Treasurer of the Association.

In view of all these corruption and misconduct Management Committee of the school has put him on suspension.

It may also be mentioned that Moksures Rahman before joining as Headmaster worked in a local bank and he lost his job on charge of alleged misappropriation of money and was put behind bar.

Second time flood paralyses life in Brahmanbaria

From Sk Md Shahidul Islam

BRAHMANBARIA, Sept 1: Flood for the second time hit all seven thanas of the district during the current rainy season.

Continuously rainfall and onrush of hilly water from the up-stream from neighbouring Indian state Tripura inundated vast tract of lands here. Lakhs of villagers were directly affected by the flood.

The overall flood situation in all seven thanas of the district were gradually deteriorating as the Titas river and its tributaries were swelling fast here day by day. The river Titas was flowing 73.50 centimetre above the danger level on August 22.

Onrush of water from Indian hills across the border were the main reason of flood in bordering Brahmanbaria district, which is a regular feature here in every rainy season.

According to District Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR) office, nearly 10.53 lakh people of 2.11 lakh families were affected by the flood. Flood water destroyed seedbeds of aman paddy in different areas of the district.

According to Agricultural Extension Department (AED), 87.59 lakh acres of seedbeds and crops lands went under knee deep to 3 feet water and jute, crops and seedlings were rotten by the flood water.

According to sources, 28 unions were completely affected and the rest 64 unions were partially affected by the devastating flood.

According to District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO), Md Tohidul Alam, standing crops like aus, aman, jute and vegetables on about 57,133 acres of land were completely damaged and varieties of crops on 30,462 acres of land were partially damaged.

Due to flash flood rural unemployment has taken a serious turn as a result the poor people and day labourers being jobless are passing their miserable days.

The price of almost all essential commodities are going up beyond the purchasing capacity of even the middle class people.

On the other hand, some dishonest dealers in Brahmanbaria town are hoarding the essential commodities creating artificial crisis to make extra profit.

There are also shortage of fodder and fire-wood in the flood affected areas.

It was reported that so far 14 persons have drowned in several flood related incidents in four thanas — Brahmanbaria sadar, Nabnag, Akawara and Bancharampur of the district. Two cattle were also washed away at Nabnagar thana of the district.

According to sources, more than 2,279 dwelling kutcha houses were totally damaged and at least 9,015 dwelling houses were partially damaged by devastating flood here. However, till writing of this report not a single affected person received any aid for house building purposes.

More than 185 educational institutions were damaged partially or totally here. Of them, 5 educational institutions in Bancharampur thana were damaged totally and the rest 180 educational institutions of five thanas were partially damaged.

Among the schools 50 educational institutions are in Brahmanbaria sadar thana, 35 in Saral thana, 42 in Nachirnagar thana, 24 Nabnagar thana and 29 in Bancharampur thana. DRR office sources said.

It was learnt that one kilometre of flood protection embankment was snapped in Akahawra thana while 219 kilometre flood protection embankment were eroded partially which was the one major cause of sudden flood in the district.

Road communication between Brahmanbaria district town and Nasirnagar thana headquarters has been dis-

rupted and the maximum link-road between thana headquarters and rural areas have been damaged.

According to sources, 148-kilometre of kutcha road were damaged totally and 697-kilometre of kutcha road were partially damaged.

Due to devastating flood at least three bridges collapsed and 50 bridges and culverts were damaged partially.

At least 1,270 tube-wells were affected partially or completely.

According to sources, fish and fishry worth about Taka two crore have been lost or washed away by the turbulent flood in all seven thanas of the district.

Office sources also said that about 4043 metric tons (MTs) of fish worth about Taka 1.12 crore and 2.88 crore of fish fry worth about Taka 85 lakh were washed away. Now the fishermen are passing their distress life facing starvation at one time in a day here. No rehabilitation programme has yet been taken to provide them till the reporting.

Overall flood situation in the district was pitiable as the victim in rural areas have no employment and have no scope of earning.

It was informed that about eight thousand people of Shahzadapur union who were victimised and are passing their miserable days.

While contacted local farmer Suruz Mia of Saha-zadapur village said that flood had damaged all kinds of crop land of the villagers. Most of the farmer of the villagers — Shahzadapur, Niamatpur, Dhawria and Malais have become jobless and no scope to earn their livelihood and are fully isolated by flood water snapping the Shazadapur-Wobaydullah road.

Only 79 thousand taka, 31 MTs of rice, 73 MTs wheat, 120 tin biscuit, 250 pieces sarees and 100 pieces of lungies were distributed in the flood affected areas of seven thanas of the district

where at least 10,52,405 people were affected and were praying for grants to rehabilitate them.

Our Correspondent from Rajshahi adds: Eighteen unions under four thanas and some places of the municipality in the district of Chapainawabganj were flooded for the second time this year.

The Padma, Mahananda, Pagla and the Punarbhaba swelled gradually and crossed their danger marks in the beginning of the third week of this month submerging huge areas of the district.

More than 75,000 people of 15,000 families were affected by floods in the sadar thana, Shibganj, Bholahat and Gomostapur thanas.

All kinds of standing crops, especially ripening aus paddy and transplanted aman paddy were damaged completely or partially in about 300 sq km area submerged by floods.

The worst affected areas were Panka, Narayanpur and Ujirpur unions under Shibganj thanas. The Padma flooded these three unions at the beginning, damaging almost 90 per cent standing crops. The flood situation in these areas turned very serious when the Padma began to erode along its bank. More than 400 houses and another 300 homesteads left by the people were devoured since August 13 to August 25.

Many people earlier took away their houses to distant places. They sold their trees at very cheap rate just to earn some money, however, small it might be, before being washed away by strong overflowing current of the Padma. Panka, Narayanpur, Bablabona, Dighottola and Jokpara villages were worst affected in continued erosion by the Padma.

The Mahananda, though swelled slowly, also crossed the danger level and submerged a vast area. It also eroded at least 45 houses in Daldal union of Bholahat thana. Akandabaria, Bhagabonpur, Beelmata and Katabona villages of Maharajpur union were also affected by floods and erosion.

The Pagla and the Punarbhaba rivers inundated 5 unions of Gomostapur thana damaging standing crops of about 900 hectares completely.

More than 50,000 people of the charlands were marooned and disconnected from the mainland for more than 15 days.

Local people said that hundreds of houses were washed away by the Padma in about 15 km long area of Panka and Narayanpur unions under Shibganj thana every year but no measure had yet been taken to save the areas from erosion. Water Development Board sources acknowledged the informations and said that flood control embankment and T-dams were thought to be constructed. The people, however, demanded immediate action.

About 30-80 per cent areas of the erosion-affected villages have already been devoured in this area, it is learnt.

First they faced flood then came the furious erosion

From Ranesh Maitra



PABNA: Abdul Mannan Sheikh, another victim of devastating flood in Majpara union of Sujanagar thana.



PABNA: Gopal Sheikh, a flood victim of Majpara union under Sujanagar thana describing his helplessness due to devastating flood.

along with the members of my family in the house of a relative in the neighbouring village since my village and my house were completely devoured by Padma. Padma also eroded 2.5 bighas of land that I owned. My source of income was growing vegetables on the said land and selling them. But with the erosion — I have lost my only source of income. I have my wife, three daughters and two minor sons. Two daughters, however, are already married. Besides, I have got a few goats. I received only give kg of wheat and one piece of saree as relief during the last two months. I am now suffering from pneumonia," Abdul Mannan added.

Gopal Sheikh, 55, of the same village, however, said "I



PABNA: A road badly damaged by flood within Sujanagar union, known as Batpara Road.

PABNA, Sept 1: "Even after complete recession of flood-water, as expected within next two to three weeks, we shall not be able to go back home. Even if the government provide with house-building grants and loans and also with house-building materials adequately, still we won't be able to go back. Our home was not only inundated but completely eroded by the Padma." This is what several people of village Majpara of Raipur union under Sujanagar thana told this correspondent on Saturday last during an interview taken on the bank of the Padma.

Moazzem Hossain, Thana Nirbahi Officer, Sujanagar, earlier gave a description of the flood-damages in his thana.

The TNG said — "In Sujanagar thana, five out of ten unions were affected. Over 30,000 persons were affected belonging to 8,260 families. While 1,726 houses were damaged and standing crops on over 1,682 hectares of land were also damaged."

The TNO continued, "Raipur, Naziganj and Sagarkandi unions were badly affected as, besides inundation by flood the curse of erosion at the same time

grabbed a number of villages. No traces of those villages could be found as the entire area of the said villages, numbering nearly 30 — were completely devoured."

Erosion in Padma was still continuing despite continuous, although slow, recession of flood water.

As regards to relief materials received from the government and distributed among the people, the TNO disclosed that only 11 metric tons of GR, wheat and Tk 6,000 GR money were sanctioned for Sujanagar thana and all of those were distributed through the concerned union parishad chairmen and members. He added that 10 tins of biscuits were also received and already distributed, he added.

As regards to erosion-affected people, villages and houses, the TNO said that in fact this is a continuous problem round the year. The problem, however, became more acute during the floods the year. He gave instructions for assessing the losses suffered in different sectors due to erosion by the river Padma.

Abdul Mannan Sheikh, 65, whom this correspondent met in village Majpara in Raipur union said, "I live

became homeless about four to five years back. I have my wife, four sons and three daughters of whom two daughters are already married. I have no land and no job either."

Three burglars arrested

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 1: Kaliganj thana police arrested three burglars at village Paikpara in the thana on Saturday, it was learnt.

According to reports, acting on a secret information, a team of police led by OC Abdur Rashid raided the house and nabbed Mohar Ali, Nurul Islam and Touhidul in this connection, police sources said.

Twin brothers drown in Moulvibazar

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Sept 1: Twin brothers drowned in a pond at village Abda-Chalia of Chunarughat thana on August 17.

Illegally extracted timber worth Tk 5.5 lakh seized

From CHT Correspondent

KAPTAL (Rangamati), Sept 1: Forest officials have here recovered a quantity of 2,500 cubic feet (cft) of timbers, illegally extracted from the government reserved forest and seized nine sampan boats used in transporting the illegal forest produce at Raingkhiong valley recently, officials said.

Acting on a tip, the forest officials led by the station officer, Raingkhiong mukh Forest Check and Tolls Station of Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division (CHTSFD), Kamaluddin Ahmed conducted a raid at Kaptal lake in Raingkhiong valley and recovered miscellaneous valuable species of timbers including teak, ganar and garjan valued at about 1000 cft, logged in round from covered by a quantity of 1500 cft fire wood loaded in 9 sampan boats.

Sensing the raid, the mafias of the boats managed to flee. The timbers recovered were illegally extracted from the government raised reserved plantations in Shuvalong range of CHTSFD, the sources presumed adding that on reaching and stacking at Rangamati, these illegally extracted timbers either would be transported to outside of Rangamati under the cover of 'jot-permit free license' or consumed locally in manufacturing furniture.

Erosion freshly attacks as flood water recedes

From Our Correspondent

GAIBANDHA, Sept 1: Overall flood situation in Gaibandha district improved rapidly with the sharp recession of flood water. Yet flood water still remained stagnant in crop fields on vast tract at Gobindaganj, Shaghata, Fulchhari and Gaibandha sadar thanas.

Meanwhile reports of four children drowning was received here. Within the last five days Helena, 5, and Khuki, 3, of village Gajaria under Shaghata thana, Sufla, 8, and Kushum, 7, of village Nayanpur under Sadullapur thana drowned while playing in flood water adjacent to their dwellings.

The farmers of flood ravaged areas could not collect aman seedlings since all the seedbeds were washed away by the flood water. With the sharp recession of water, erosion has taken an alarming turn in some areas of Purbo Sathalia, Purbo Hahilkandi and Hatbari under Shaghata thana and Arednabari, Decatier Char, Algerchar and Kalurpara under Fulchhari thana. Within last one week, nearly 1000 families were rendered homeless and were compelled to take shelter on nearby embankment.

Fodder crisis is now a main problem in the flood hit areas. During the consecutive floods straw of last WRI-Boro season were either damaged

or washed away by the surging flood water. In remote areas the farmers are using water hyacinth, as a result the cattleheads are attacked with diarrhoeal disease which caused death of large number of cattle.

In flood affected areas of Gobindaganj, Shaghata, Fulchhari and Gaibandha sadar transplanted aman seedling have already been damaged by the flood water. Due to high price and scarcity of seedling, most of the crop lands in the said area are expected to be remain fallow during this aman season. Farmers could not afford to procure costly seedling from distance areas.

SSC examinee commits suicide

From Our Correspondent

MOULVI BAZAR, Sept 1: An SSC examinee allegedly committed suicide by taking poison following the unsuccessful results of her examination recently.

According to family sources, Shirin Aktar, 18, daughter of Md Abdullah of BTRI Srimongal of the district took poison after few days of publication of the results, when she learnt that she could not come out successful.

Workshop on dev of fish in N Bengal Fish output can not be improved in northern region, say experts

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Sept 1: Fish production in the northern region of the country can not be improved upto the desired expectation due to adverse effects of unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka by India.

This was observed by the experts in a scientific workshop on "Development of Fish in North Bengal" organised by the Directorate of Fisheries, Rajshahi Division on August 26 at the auditorium of Postal Academy in the city.

The experts also identified uncontrolled use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in the crop fields as another major reason behind low fish production.

To explain the causes behind the setback of pisciculture in the northern region of the country, the experts said that unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water from the upstreams at Farakka caused drying up of the Padma, its branches and tributaries, canals, beels, ponds and all kinds of surface water reservoirs just at the beginning of November that persisted upto June every year. That is, the water-

reservoirs remain devoid of water for 7-8 months severely hindering pisciculture in the northern districts of the country.

About 4 lakh metric tons of pesticides are used every year in the crop field to combat pests, out of which 25 per cent mix with waters in the open water reservoirs like canals, beels etc. In addition to immediate effects of the pesticides, some of these have long lasting action upto five years. Fingerlings of most species can not live in such an adverse environment and ultimately die.

More than 200 species of fish have either become extinct or also face extinction in last 15 years in these areas. Ninety per cent of the total fish production was harvested from the internal open water-resources like beels and flood-plains in the '60s that has been decreased to 49 per cent in 1992-93. Production of Ruhl' spey has turned almost zero from the beels and flood-plains in the recent years.

Out of the total amount of water area in the northern regions of 16 districts, there are 1,31,518 hectares of

reservoirs and canals, 33,694 hectares of beels, 6,09,982 hectares of flood-plains and 76,599 hectares of ponds and closed water-reservoirs. There are also 70,291 hectares of ponds which are not cultivated for fish. A total of 1,23,122 metric tons of fish was yielded from the northern region in 1992-1993 fiscal year.

The experts offered a series of recommendations in the workshop to improve fish production in the northern region and the country as a whole. The recommendations were invention of fast-growing species of fish, measures to lessen restoration of water through the bottom of the water reservoirs. Introduction of modern technology to pisciculture, control over use of pesticides especially in the flood-plains and open water lands, loan facilities for the farmers etc. and after all realisation of just share of the Ganges water.

The inaugural session of the workshop organised on the occasion of on-going "National Fish Fortnight '95" was presided over by Dr. Nuruzzaman, member (Director) BARC and ad-

dressed, among others, by Barrister Aminul Haque, State Minister for Establishment as the chief guest, Mizanur Rahman Minu, mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation, Begum Lutfunnessa Hussain MP, Azizur Rahman MP, Professor Muhammad Yusuf Ali, Vice Chancellor of Rashahi University, A F M Yahia Chowdhury, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division and A K Ataur Rahman, ex-director general, Directorate of Fisheries as the special guests. Siddiqur Rahman, Deputy Director, Directorate of Fisheries, Rajshahi Division presented the welcome-speech.

Prof. Atif Hussain, Pro-VC of Rajshahi University, among others, Dr. M A Hamid, Professor in Economics, Dr. M Khalequzzaman, Professor in Zoology, Dr. Ataur Rahman Khan Professor in Zoology, Zahidur Rahman, Professor in Zoology, Prof. Dr. Shahadat Hussain Mandal, Director of Institute of Biological Science of Rajshahi University, Yasmin Ali, GM of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Najib Wadood, took part in the discussions.