

Clash over land dispute leaves seven injured

SATKHIRA, Oct 16: Seven people including a police man were injured in a clash over a land dispute between two rival groups at Babulia of the district Saturday last, reports UNB.

The injured, Assistant Sub-Inspector Humayun, Gafur, Majid, Moshir, Mizan, Aleem, Shawkat, were admitted to sadar Hospital.

Two cases were filed with the police.

Another report says Organisers of a local NGO were allegedly assaulted by some angry destitute women on Saturday as they did not get the food and money as per commitment.

Witnesses said Kaliganj Women Cooperative Society president Abul Hossain and vice president Nurul Islam were manhandled when they failed to provide with the committed relief and cash to the destitute women who gathered at Kaliganj thana auditorium.

Later, on information, police came to spot and rescued the two men from the captivity of the agitating women.

Wife files case against husband for demanding dowry

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Oct 16: A wife filed a case in the city magistrate court of Rajshahi on September 27 against her husband for his alleged demand of dowry from her.

Selina Begum of Bulanpur in the city under Rajpara thana, in her deposition accused that her husband, Mohammad Alam Shaikh, son of late Karim Shaikh of Darushahat village under Poba thana in the district beat and drove her away from home with her minor child of age three years for refusing to fulfill his demand of dowry of Taka five thousand.

She stated that she got married with Alam Shaikh on May 15, 1992. Since then, her husband tortured her in different ways demanding money. But it was impossible for her and her widow mother to pay the dowry. Being angry, Alam Shaikh beat her every now and then. Rajshahi City Magistrate, Muhammad Golzar Hossain Khandaker took the allegation in account as per clause No 4 of the dowry prevention law and served summons to Muhammad Alam Shaikh to appear before the court.

Traders fall prey to toll collectors

From Our Correspondent SIRAJGANJ, Oct 16: Traders of Chalanbeel oriented Tarash, Chatmohar, Bhangura, Gurudashpur and Singra thanas have allegedly become prey of the local toll collectors.

It was learnt that small traders use the river routes of Dhamaichhat, Nakdemra, Baghabari, Astomonishamirzapur and Bhangura for transportation of merchandise goods. It was alleged that toll collectors of Sirajganj, Pabna and Natore districts are active in the river ghats. Some businessmen bringing rice from Astomonishamirzapur ghat alleged that tolls are collected from every traders at the rate of between Tk 50 and Tk 2000 depending on the volume of business. The traders do not dare to protest as the groups are learnt to be very influential and well organised.

The law enforcing agencies allegedly keep mysterious silence about the evil practice.

The helpless traders have appealed to the higher authority to take steps for encouraging smooth business.

Wife tortured to death by husband

SATKHIRA, Oct 16: A newly married 'housewife' of East Moutola village in Kaliganj thana was killed allegedly by her husband on Saturday night, reports UNB.

According to police, the body of the victim Rehana Khatun, 19, daughter of Jainal Abedin of Gonopoti village in the thana was recovered from a pond near her husband's house. Rehana got married with Sunnat Ali only six months back.

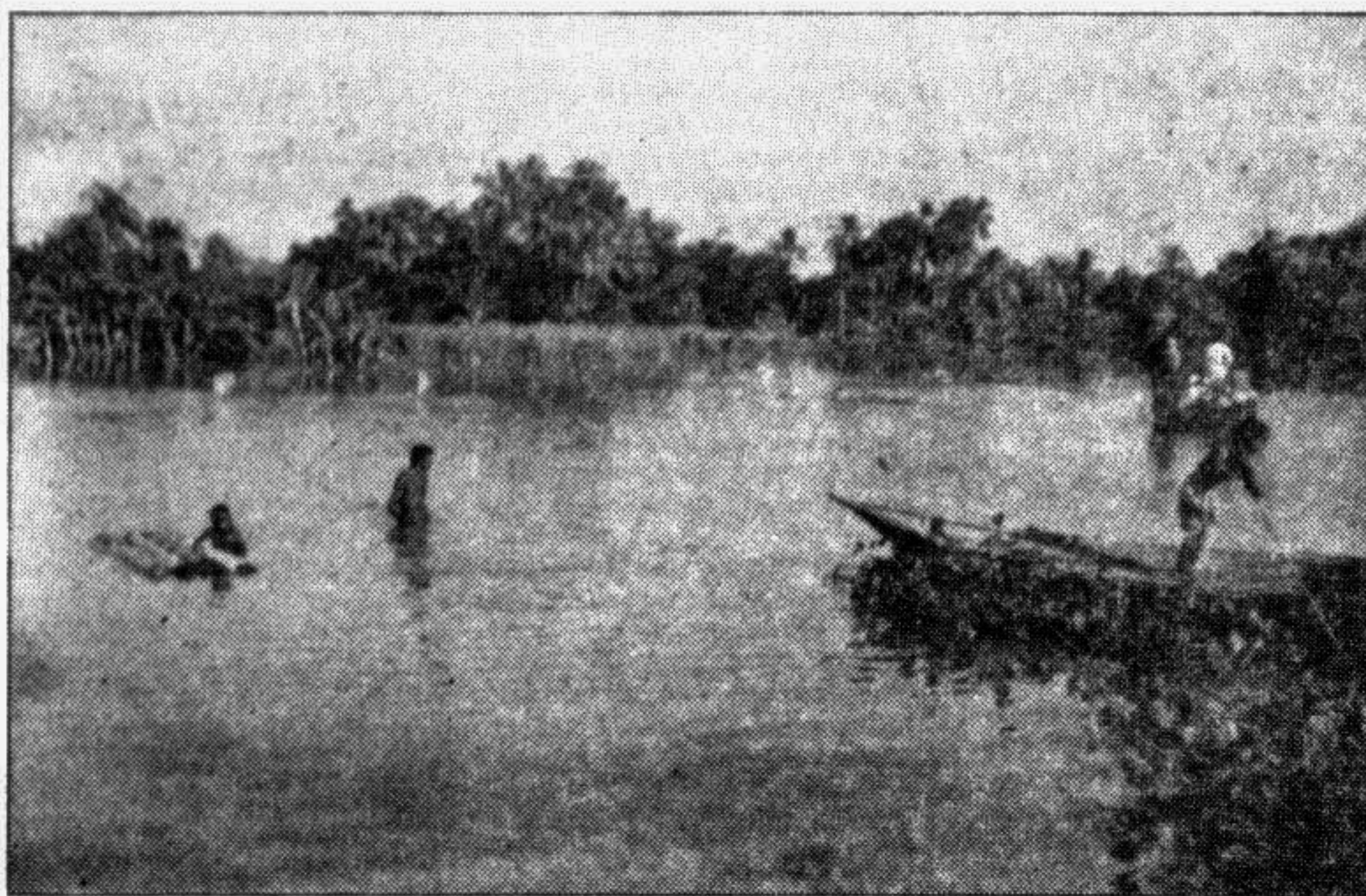
Family sources said Rehana, after her marriage, found Sunnat Ali involved with illicit affairs with another woman. When Rehana raised objection she was subjected to inhuman torture by her husband.

On the fateful night Sunnat Ali picked up a quarrel with his wife Rehana and at one stage tortured her to death and threw the body in to the pond.

Flood water receding at snail's pace

"What can we do when the godowns are empty"

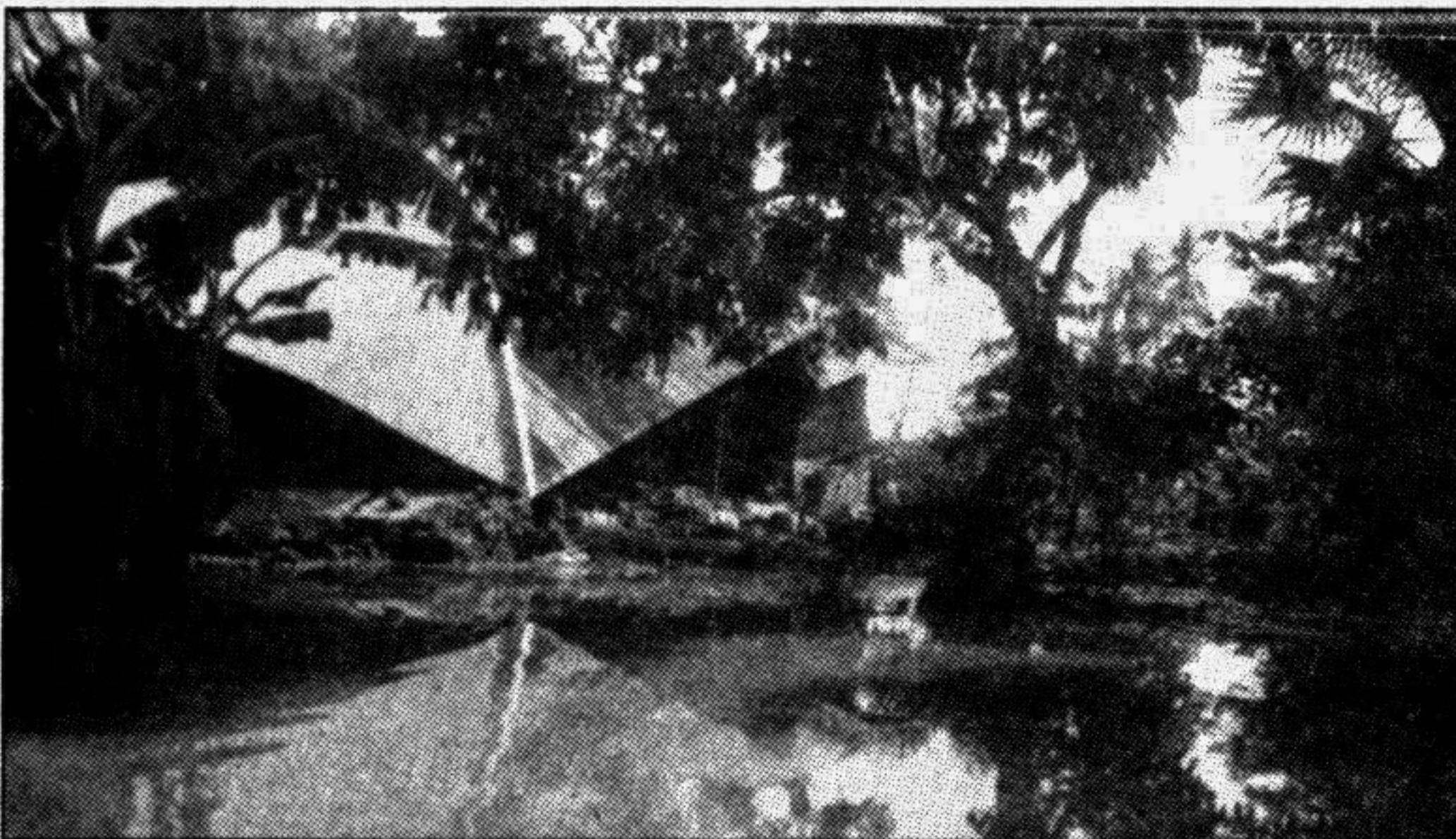
From Our Correspondent



RAJSHAHI: Flood water entered even the interior places of Bagmara thana. Boat and raft have become the only means of transport in the areas. —Star photo



RAJSHAHI: Floods inundated and damaged 70 per cent houses in Sonadanga village of Bagmara. This photo was taken on October 10 last. —Star photo



RAJSHAHI: About 75 per cent houses have been destroyed in the flood affected 54 unions of 7 thanas in the district by recent flood. The picture shows a damaged mud house in Ratandanga village near Kesharhat under Mohanpur thana of Rajshahi district. —Star photo

RAJSHAHI, Oct 16: Rajshahi, comprising a part of the Barind Tract and well-known for no serious flood, have faced an unexpected devastating flood along its northern area. Fifty-four out of 58 unions of seven thanas have been inundated by the latest floods this year.

The thanas are Tanore, Godagari, Mohanpur, Bagmara, Puthia, Durgapur and Poba. All unions of Bagmara, Mohanpur and Tanore thanas went under 4 to 7 feet water.

Flood water however, has started to recede from the affected areas since October 11 but the recession is very slow. It will take at least 10 days more for complete recession of flood waters from Mohanpur, Bagmara and Tanore thanas, it is apprehended.

This time flood was caused in Rajshahi by incessant rains and onrush of waters in the rivers from the upstreams. The rivers Atrai, Baranai and Fakirni suddenly showed sharp rise from September 30 and rapidly overflowed the banks and the fields already filled with rain waters and caused flood.

The flood in Rajshahi at the end of the monsoon this year turned serious as flood waters from the neighbouring Manda, Rautinagar and Atrai thanas of Naogaon district rushed to the south in the northern areas of Rajshahi.

According to the district flood control cell, 784,288 square kilometer area of 54 unions under seven thanas of the district have been affected by the recent flood.

5,43,138 people of 1,36,998 families experienced the disaster. Twenty-two thousand five hundred sixteen houses have been damaged com-

pletely and another 40,134 houses partially. The flood destroyed crops of 22,783 hectares of land completely and 6,009 hectares partially. Two men died under collapsed mud walls and thousands of domestic poultry animals and cattle have been washed away by strong current of turbulent flood waters.

The district administration distributed 400 metric tons of rice, 250 metric tons of wheat and Taka one lakh by October 10 among the flood stricken people. The district administration identified 57,573 families eligible for getting relief materials and sent a demand of 1,728 metric tons of rice to temporary cell of Ministry of Flood Control and Disaster Management, established recently. The army took the charge of relief distribution activities.

In Bagmara thana all 16 unions have been flooded out of which situation in Ganipur, Sonadanga, Autchpara, Shuvadanga, Naradas and Basupara have been affected severely. About 80 per cent areas of these unions went under 4 to 7 feet water.

Abdul Malek Pramanik, Principal of Mosmol College of Bagmara, who was collecting rice and money from the able persons of Mosmol Bazar for the flood hit people of the area, told The Daily Star that they did never face such a severe and extensive flood in the area. About 85 per cent houses and 75 per cent crops have already been damaged, he said on last October 9.

He expressed deep concern over the negligence of the government authorities in helping the undone flood-

hit people, who were virtually starving.

Abdul Karim, 47, a small farmer of Sonadanga alleged that nobody came to see them for last seven days. "We are starving. Our children are about to die, but nobody is there to hear our cry, he said in a grief mood.

"Hundreds of people rushed to collect relief bringing relief materials for them. Children were seen to cry in hunger. Aged people were sitting looking indifferently with sunken eyes.

Turbulent water was overflowing from miles after, miles barring some extremely high places. Most houses have collapsed and have been damaged. Only the trees were standing.

Four to seven feet deep water was overflowing over the roads and cropfields. Boat

was the only means of transport.

Situation was almost alike in Mohanpur thana. Abul Qasem, Chairman of Raighati union, one of the worst affected unions of the thana said that all 36 villages of the union were inundated by flood waters from the Shib river. Eighty per cent houses of these villages have broken down. He said on October 7 that eight relief centres had been opened in that union and the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Abdul Malek distributed some relief materials among the flood-stricken people. Since then no relief material reached them. "People are starving the Chairman said."

Sherena Bewa, 49, of Ratandanga village said weeping that she had been starving for two days. Akbar Ali, 41, of Parila village told that his family had been living on fish only that they have managed to catch for last four days.

An official of the district administration said that they distributed all they had in hand. He acknowledged the mounting sufferings of the people and said helplessly, "but what can we do when the godowns are empty?"

Tanore thana was the first among the seven thanas of the district to be inundated by the recent flood. About 80 per cent areas of all unions of the thana have been submerged in water. Eighty-five per cent mud houses collapsed in this thana and more than 75 per cent cropfields have been damaged by flood.

In addition to the transplanted aman paddy betel leaf which is the main cash crop of Mohanpur, Tanore and Bagmara thanas have been completely damaged by flood water. More than 2,500 pan-

bazar (garden of betel leaf) have been submerged in water. Betel leaf cannot bear water stagnation, it was learnt.

Beel Hilna, the largest of its kind in the area, other small beels and thousands of ponds have been overflowed by turbulent flood waters and all fish have been washed away to the open flood plane making heavy loss to the fish farmers. However, the flood stricken people are catching fish and eating to sustain.

All educational institutions in the flood affected areas of the district have remained closed, as most of these were inundated by water and others are being used as relief centres or shelter by the flood-hit people.

Meanwhile, diarrhoeal diseases have broken out in extensive areas of the flood-

affected thanas. Three deaths have been reported so far and more than 1500 people have been attacked by diarrhoeal diseases.

Dr Monsoor Ali, Deputy Civil Surgeon of Rajshahi said that drastic diarrhoea control measures had been taken to prevent attack of diarrhoea and treat the patients as well to resist death. "The situation, though abnormal, is still now under control," he said.

Experienced sources, however, fear that diarrhoea may turn serious with recession of flood water. Measures have already been taken to distribute water purifying tablets, beaching powder, oral salines and necessary antibiotics among the vulnerable people and sink hand tubewells for drinking water, concerned sources said.



RAJSHAHI: Rabeya Khatun received only one kg of rice on October 7 three days after taking shelter in a primary school of Mohanpur which brought smile in her face. —Star photo



RAJSHAHI: Rajshahi Imam O Ulema Samity collected and distributed about 70 mounds of rice, 40 mounds of chira, one and a half gunny bag biscuit, three cartoon medicines and about 5000 pieces of clothes among the flood-hit people of Tanore, Mohanpur, Bagmara and Poba thana of Rajshahi district recently. —Star photo

Further rise apprehended

Prices of vegetables, spices almost double in N-dists

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 16: A huge amount of vegetables have been submerged by the recent floods in the northern districts, the main vegetable producing areas of the country, seriously affecting supply of vegetables in the markets.

The short supply of greens and potherbs has already caused sharp rise of price of these goods.

This is the hightime of greens and vegetables of almost all kinds grown in our country. Rajshahi, Bogra, Naogaon and Natore, along with their main crop paddy and sugarcane also growing huge amount of vegetables, as for example, laishak, palongshak (spinage), punkashak, pushak, radish, carrot, potato, tomato, green plantain, papaya, brinjal, onion, garlic, gourd, pumpkin, balsam apple, esculent root of

arum, cucumber, lady's finger, capsicum etc.

These are mainly crops of the winter season that starts from the Bangla month Kartik (October). But the farmers to grow the crops in advance, to get comparatively high price and cultivate rabi crops from the Bangla month of Agrayayan (November), prepare lands in the month of Bhadra (August) and start to harvest vegetable from the Bangla month of Ashwin (September). As a result the markets of the northern districts become overflooded by huge amount of green vegetables and kitchen-fruits. Hundreds of trucks everyday carry vegetables from the northern markets to the eastern and southern regions of the country.

Due to motivation and extension works of Agriculture

Department and loan facilities offered by Rajshahi Krishi Unnyan Bank (RAKUB) and nowadays, by other commercial banks also, farmers of the northern districts have been attracted much to cultivate green vegetables and potherbs in increasing amount every year, as the cultivation of vegetables has been proved commercially more profitable. Some vegetables are also being grown in almost all seasons.

The Agriculture Extension Department could not give the actual figure of cultivation of vegetables, but assessed that about 75 thousand hectares of lands were cultivated for vegetables in northern eight districts of greater Rajshahi, Bogra and Pabna every year. Out of the total, more than 40 per cent lands

were already cultivated this year which have been severely damaged by floods.

This damage, however, could be recovered said an official of Agriculture Extension Department of Rajshahi, as the peak season for vegetable cultivation extended upto November. Due to collection of humous silt on lands carried by flood waters, production of vegetables, as well as other crops would be good, he said.

Meanwhile, damage of vegetables already cultivated, has already started to adversely affect the market. Visiting some of the big markets in Rajshahi, as for example, Laxmipur Bazar, Haragram Bazar, Shalbagan Bazar and Shaheb Bazar, it was learnt that supply of potherbs and all kinds of kitchen fruits and roots had

been decreased by about 50 per cent during last 10 days resulting sharp rise of price.

On October 11, laishak and pushak sold at Tk 7-8 per kg against Tk 3-4 of last week. Price of potal

increased from Tk 7/8 to Tk 14/15 per kg. One kilogram of brinjal sold at Tk 16-17 against Tk 10 in last week. Price of korolla (balsam apple) increased to Tk 29 from Tk 12 per kg. One gourd (lao) of Tk 5-7 sold at Tk 12-16. Prices of barbat (one kind of kitchen bean) increased from Tk 6-7 to Tk 11-12 per kg, one kg cucumber from Tk 6-8 to Tk 10-12, kachu (potarum) from Tk 6-7 to Tk 9-10 per kg, lady's finger from Tk 12-14 to Tk 18-20, one kg papaya from Tk 2 to Tk 4-5, two pairs of kach kola (green plantain) from Tk 3-4 to Tk

5-6 and so on.

All kinds of spice vegetables also showed sharp rise in price. Onion sold at Tk 8-9 per kilogram just a week ago that sold at Tk 18-20 on October 11. Price of garlic has risen from Tk 32 to Tk 40 per kg. One kg ginger sold at Tk 58-60 against the price of Tk 48-50 per kg last week. Green capsicum showed a rise of price per kilogram from Tk 26-28 to Tk 38-40.

The market sources apprehended that prices of all kinds of potherbs and vegetables would further rise due to short supply. Breakage of road communication by floods and hartals are also contributing to the short supply of vegetables in addition to damage of cultivation of vegetables by floods, the sources said.

Frustrated man commits suicide

From CHT Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Oct 16: A poverty-stricken frustrated man unable to afford new clothings for his children and wife in the just ended puja has ended his own life by committing suicide recently at Chengi near Reservebazar of Rangamati town, police quoted his neighbourers as saying.

Rangamati Kotowali police recovered the body of Arjun Baidhya, 30, hanging with a sharee from the ceiling at his bed room.

Frustrated with poverty, Arjun killed himself while his wife and children were asleep, his family sources said.

Arjun's disappearance left his wife Mangali, 30, daughter Papri, 3, and son Uzzal, 5, in the uncertain dark future.

The victim of the irony of the fate, Arjun, son of Nukul Baidhya once hailed from a well-of-family, observers said.

2-day workshop of BARD concludes

COMILLA, Oct 16: A two-day workshop on evaluation of research activities of Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) concluded here at its auditorium recently, reports UNB.

Thirty-seven resource persons from different government and non-government organisations, universities and international organisations participated in the workshop.

Some 21 research papers were evaluated by the participants. They also gave future indication and put some suggestions on development activities of BARD.

BARD Director General Dr Saleh Uddin Ahmed presided over the inaugural and closing sessions of the workshop.

Five dacoits arrested in Pabna

PABNA, Oct 16: Police arrested five dacoits and recovered a shutter gun along with two rounds of bullets from Mohehpur bypass road on Pabna-Nagarbari highway on Wednesday last, reports UNB. Police said they arrested them when they mistakenly halted a police patrol van assuming a night coach early morning at the point.

The arrested were identified as Sujan alias Delwar, 22, Makbul 22, Asraf Ali, 20, Shamsu, 25, and Abdul Barez, 27, of Ragabpur area of the district town.

A case was filed with the police.

Two drivers die in road accident

COMILLA, Oct 16: Two truck drivers were killed in separate accidents on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in the district, police said today, reports UNB.

Driver Abdul Majid, 32 died on the spot when his truck collided head on with another truck on the highway on October 9. Majid hailed from Balarampur village of sadar thana in the district.

Another accident occurred when the driver of a truck with oil lost the control of the steering near Noabazar on the highway on October 10. Driver Abdul Haque, 35, died on the spot.

Two separate cases were filed with Choudhagram police.

Another message adds: Morsheha Begum, 18, daughter of Akkas Ali of village Joyanagar in sadar thana allegedly committed suicide on Sunday last by taking poison.

Police said Morsheha was rushed to the Comilla General Hospital where she died after a few hours.

School teacher crushed to death

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Oct 16: Hafizur Rahman, 45, a school teacher of Radhanagar high school was crushed to death under the wheels of a speeding bus near Ramnagar on Magura-Kamarkhat highway on October 12 last, it was learnt.

According to reports, while the victim was riding on a motor bike, a Faridpur bound bus No. Khulna-Ba-1005 crushed him and he died on the spot.

A case was lodged with Magura thana in this connection and the body was sent to morgue for post mortem, police sources said.