

Flood situation worsens in Faridpur, Pabna, Madaripur

From Our Correspondent

News snaps

Dialogue Project's discussion held

RANGPUR, July 29: A discussion on "Priority areas of the Government and NGO Cooperation in Rangpur-Dinajpur region" was held at the conference room of local Prajatan Motel on Monday, reports UNB.

A European Commission NGO 'Dialogue Project' organised the discussion. In his opening speech, team leader of the project Dr Berthold Kuhn highlighted various activities of the Dialogue Project. He mentioned that the European Commission is one of the biggest donors to both Bangladesh government and NGOs has a distinct partnership approach. The Dialogue Project was established in order to better coordinate the NGO activities and to explore areas of cooperation, he added. The speakers described various problems faced by the NGOs in the existing areas of cooperation with government departments. They also identified the future areas of cooperation like disaster preparedness measures with community involvement, Health and Nutrition and Social awareness.

Valuables worth Tk 50,000 looted

KISHOREGANJ, July 29: Valuables worth about Tk 50,000 were looted in bus dacoity at Piripur bus stand on Kishoreganj-Bhoirab highway here on Sunday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the gang boarded the Kishoreganj bound bus from Bhoirab in the guise of passengers. When the bus reached at the bus stand the robbers forcibly stopped the bus and snatched away belongings of the passengers.

Another report adds: A dacoit was caught red-handed by the public while committing dacoity at Boroitola of Kishoreganj-Nikly road on July 22 night. The local people caught Mahub, 24, when he along with his accomplices started looting the belongings of the traders and passers-by. On information, police rushed to the spot and took the robber to their custody. In his confessional statement the dacoit admitted that he had been engaged in dacoity for a long time. Local people said a number of dacoities were committed at the same place in the last fortnight.

Man killed in Sirajganj road accident

SIRAJGANJ, July 29: A man was killed and two others were injured in two separate road accidents here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, while crossing the road Marium, 10, was run over by a speeding Dhaka-bound bus at Kodda near the Bangabandhu Bridge. Local angry people put barricade disrupting the road communication for an hour to protest the killing. The movement of vehicles restored at 12:10 pm when a team of police led by a Magistrate rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. In another incident, a Chhatra League leader and his associate were injured while their motor cycle collided with a tank lorry at Bhuiyagathi on Dhaka-Bogra Highway. BCL leader Nazmul Huq was sent to Dhaka for treatment in a critical condition. Two separate cases were filed with the police.

Dacoity at foreign company office

HABIGANJ, July 29: A gang of robbers looted valuables worth about Tk 2.5 lakh from the office of a foreign company at the Deorgachh area in Chunarughat thana, police said today, reports UNB.

The company made the makeshift office to supervise the construction works of an important bridge over the river Suling. A local company has been constructing the bridge since the last one year. The agent of the foreign company, according to police, at about 4 am, a gang of dacoits numbering 10 to 15 tied the night guards Kajal and Abdul Mannan of the office and decamped with valuable mechanical equipment by a truck on July 23.

A case was filed and police picked up the two night guards for interrogation.

Old-age allowance programme inaugurated

COMILLA, July 29: Old-age Allowance giving programme of the government has formally opened in six unions of Sadar thana here on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Chairman of the Public Administration Reforms Commission ATM Shamsul Haq inaugurated the programme. The Unions are: Amratoli, Panchthubi, Jagannathpur, South Durgapur, West Durgapur and Kalibazar.

41 Night Queens bloom

RANGAMATI, July 29: Night Queen a rare flower, bloomed in the garden of Rajkumar Chankma in the heart of the town tonight, reports UNB.

"It's not one or two, 41 flowers bloomed", said 65-year old Rajkumar with a broad smile. Retired official of Sonali Bank, Rajkumar is extremely happy at the blooming of the Night Queen in his home garden. "The blooming of Night Queen is a sign of prosperity and holiness", said Rajkumar, a happy and affluent father of three grown up children. His only son is a diploma engineer well placed in job in Chittagong.

Relief distributed among flood victims

RANGPUR, July 29: Begum Shahnaz Sarder MP and Fulu Sarker, a member of the central Awami League working committee distributed about five tonnes of rice, 100 pieces of sarees and lungis, 20 cartons of biscuits and one carton of oral saline among the flood affected people of Hatia, Buraburi, Bazra, Shaheer Alnagi and its adjoining areas in Ulipur thana recently, reports BSS.

Local leading persons and Awami League leaders and workers were present at that time of distribution of relief. The Awami League leaders went to the remote spot of the flood affected places boarding on country boat.

Indian pistol, bullets recovered

THAKURGAON, July 29: The Officer-in-Charge of Haripur police station recovered one Indian pistol with one round of bullets and arrested Sirajul Islam in this connection, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off the OC raided the house of Abdur Rahman of village Torra Paschim Para recently and recovered the Indian pistol and bullets from the room of Abdur Rahman's son, Sirajul Islam. Sirajul Islam was arrested and sent to jail here. A case was filed against Sirajul Islam with Haripur Police Station in this connection.

Old man crushed under wheels of truck

KUSHIA, July 29: An old man was crushed under the wheels of a loaded truck at Chourash bazar while he was crossing the road by bicycle recently, reports BSS.

The victim was identified as Asgar Ali of village Kumarghara adjacent to Chourash bazar. Local people stopped the truck, caught the driver and handed him over to police of Kushitia Thana. Police seized the truck and arrested driver Akbar Ali.

Workshop on Hilsha production

BARISAL, July 29: A day long workshop on "how to increase the production of the hilsha fish" was held on Sunday at the premises of the Bangladesh Development Society (BDS) here, reports BSS.

The workshop was jointly organised by the district administration and the district fisheries department. A number of resolutions have been adopted unanimously in the workshop for increasing the hilsha fish production. The resolutions included stopping of fishing during the breeding period from June to October through enforcement of laws. It was also suggested in the resolutions that Jhatka killing should be stopped. Besides, a discussion on "problems and prospects" of fish production was also held here recently. About 50 persons including pisciculturists took part in the discussion.

Transport owners submit memo to DC

JAMALPUR, July 29: The transport owners have expressed concern over an impending clash with armed musclemen as they stopped paying them tolls, reports UNB.

The association of truck, bus, mini-bus and tank lorry owners has submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner and the Police Super urging the authorities to take immediate action against the illegal toll collectors. The association apprehended armed attack on the transport owners which may lead to a bloody clash. The transport owners told a press conference on Monday that they have stopped paying the illegal tolls to the musclemen since July 21. The musclemen used to export Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,500 from each of the transport vehicles passing through the area. They said movement of transports, including the trucks carrying fertiliser from the Jamuna Fertilizer Factory, may be forced to withdraw from the roads if the musclemen are not rounded up immediately.

Bus dacoity on Jessore-Khulna highway

JESSORE, July 29: Valuables worth about Tk 2 lakh were looted from the passengers of a night coach near Basundia in the town on Jessore-Khulna highway on Thursday night, reports UNB.

According to police, 8/10 armed dacoits boarded the Dhaka bound bus from Khulna in the guise of passengers attacked the passengers with deadly weapons at the point at about 11 pm. Six passengers were injured in the attack. A case has been registered with the Kotwali police.

FARIDPUR, July 29: Overall flood situation of 17 unions in eight thanas has taken a serious turn following torrential rain and further rise of water level in all the rivers flowing across the district.

The Padma at Goalanda has been flowing 65 cm above the danger level. The Kumar, Arial Khan and their tributaries have started overflowing their banks submerging fresh area of adjacent villages.

Badly affected areas are Char Ghawkanda, Faridpur sadar, Char Bhadrasan, Sadarpur, Char Harirampur and Bhanga thanas. About one lakh people of the low lying areas of the thanas have been marooned.

Acute scarcity of drinking water is prevailing in the flood affected areas as all the tubewells have gone under water. Three persons have so far drowned. No report of water-borne diseases has yet been received.

Flood water entered into 5,000 dwelling houses of 120 unions of the affected thanas. More than five hundred houses

and a vast tract of land with standing crops have devoured into the river Padma and Arial Kha. The flood control embankment in Natun Shahepur char in Sadarpur thana has been overflowing. The affected people have taken shelter on high land under the open sky. Their miseries during this incessant rain in the last fortnight is beyond description.

The Deputy Commissioner visited the affected areas and distributed some relief materials which were too meagre to meet the needs of the needy people. Besides, different political parties and voluntary organisations including Zaker Party and Universal Welfare Foundation distributed relief goods among the flood victims. Flood victims have urged the government to launch an extensive relief and rehabilitation programme immediately for the flood victims. Otherwise, a colossal loss of lives is apprehended.

Our Pabna Correspondent says: Flood situation in the district has deteriorated further. The flood death toll caused by drowning rose to nine. Diarrhoea has broken out in all the nine affected thanas of the district. A total of 3,000 people, mostly children have already been attacked with the disease. Nearly 450 affected people have been admitted into different hospitals including Pabna General Hospital. However, no diarrhoea deaths were reported as yet from any affected area.

Although a total of 1,90,000 people have been affected by flood officially, relief materials distributed so far among them were too meagre. The preliminary estimate made by the field-level government officials with the help of the union parishad chairman shows that a total of 1,90,000 members of 45,150 families have been affected by the flood. A total of 1,850 houses have been completely damaged and 30,165 partially.

Standing crops on over 45,000 acres of land have been completely destroyed while crops on over 22,567 acres of

land damaged partially till filing of the report on July 26. A total of 77 village roads have been damaged completely and 270 roads partially damaged. Seven bridges and culverts have been damaged completely and 20 more bridges and culverts have been damaged partially. Three embankments have been washed away and 151 other embankments damaged partially.

The preliminary official assessment shows that a total number of 35 mosques and temples in Bera, Faridpur and Sujanager thanas have been damaged completely and 79 other mosques and temples have been partially damaged in Bera, Pabna sadar, Ishurdi, Bhangoora and Atgharia thanas.

The government have set up only four flood relief centres in Bera thana. A total of 7,000 flood victims took shelter there.

The worst affected thanas are: Bera, Sujanager, Pabna sadar, Bhangoora, Faridpur, Santhia, Atghoria and Ishurdi.

The total number of affected unions are 45 out of 71 in the district.

According to Pabna Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, the government have distributed a gratuitous cash relief of Tk 1,50,000 for 1,85,000 affected people. Besides, a gratuitous relief of 125 metric tons rice and wheat was distributed among the flood victims. Moreover, 5,000 pieces of sarees 1,200 pieces of lungi, 14 bags of old garments, 100 tins of biscuits were distributed.

No house-building materials have been sanctioned for the flood victims. Prices of Kerosene oil, match-boxes, firewood, milk for children have gone up. Other essentials are also in short supply.

UNB from Madaripur reports: About 57 unions of four thanas have been inundated by the onrush of flood waters in the district.

The thanas are — Shibchar, Sadar, Kalkini and Rajoir. Of them, seriously affected thanas are Sadar and Shibchar.

More than 350 villages in four thanas have already been submerged by the flood water. The low-lying areas of Sadar and Shibchar thanas are worst affected.

Nearly seven lakh people have been marooned by flood water and heavy rainfall for the last few days.

Standing crops on about 4,000 hectares of land were affected in the district. About 700 kutchra houses have completely been damaged.

Many flood-hit people have taken shelter in different schools and char areas. About 3,000 affected people have taken shelter on the Banju-Mawa highway in Shibchar thana with their cattle as there are no cow sheds and grazing fields in the flood-hit areas.

Most of the tubewells of the flood affected areas have gone under water. Scarcity of food and drinking water has been prevailing in the affected areas.

Local people have urged the authorities to take immediate measures to mitigate their sufferings.



SHERPUR: A rural housewife along with her son searching drinking water in Chandrakuna flood affected area. Most of the tubewells have already gone under water in the area. — Star photo

Kushiara has turned into a curse for Nabiganj people

From A Correspondent

HABIGANJ, July 29: The river Kushiara has turned into a curse for Nabiganj people of the district due to lack of initiatives and whims of the concerned agencies.

The Kushiara river flows through the northern border of Nabiganj thana originating from Assam of India. More than one lakh of people in four unions of the thana reside in the riverside areas. It covers an area of about 19 km from Sherpur to Chowki-Bousha. Over one lakh houses of Nabiganj and Baniyachong thana have been devoured into Kushiara due to erosion of the river.

The local people live in an alarming state at the advent of rainy season every year. They apprehend erosion of the river at any moment causing huge loss to human lives, cattle and property. The peasant cannot reap their paddy due to inundation of land every year. The flood control embankments in Husainpur, Durgapur, Fadullah, Digaebag and Kamargaon are washed away by flood water every year.

Previously the local people took endeavour to resist erosion, but in vain. Onrush of flood water affects Nabiganj,

Baniyachong and Ajmiriganj thanas of the district every year. It has become a regular feature each year. There is no permanent government scheme to prevent erosion with a view to saving people of the areas from the disaster. Construction of embankment covering an area of 19 km could save about 30 thousand acres of land of Nabiganj, Baniyachong and Ajmiriganj thanas.

A permanent solution of this problem lies in construction of an embankment along the river bank with pebbles for protection against waves. It may be mentioned here that similar

embankment with pebbles in the Monu river of Moulvibazar district has been found successful to a great extent.

In the year 1990 Water Development Board took the responsibility of constructing a 33-km embankment from Sherpur to Markul, but till now this has not been done for reasons unknown. A few years ago 81 metric tons of wheat were sanctioned for prevention work of erosion, but no work was done. Moreover, the lion's share of wheat was misappropriated by the concerned authorities.

Octogenarian struggling with death in hajat

NETROKONA, July 29: An octogenarian, Hasan Ali, taken into custody in connection with a case of murder 24 years ago, is struggling with death in the jail here, reports UNB.

Zulekha Khatun, daughter of Abdul Kader who died on May 5, 1974, filed a case in December last year accusing six people, including the 85-year old Hasan Ali, of killing her father.

Hasan Ali and another accused person arrested by police were refused bail by the court.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), a human rights organisation, has expressed concern over the arrest of Hasan Ali and denial of bail to him.

Advocate Alina Khan, a human rights activist, told UNB Monday night, "We are investigating into the case. Hasan Ali is supposed to get the bail for his old age."

About the filing of case after so many years, Zulekha has reportedly clarified that circumstances were not favourable for filing the case.

Food poisoning kills one

TANGAIL, July 29: A man died and four others fell sick after taking 'goza', a kind of sweet cake made of flour, from a shop at Kalmegha bazar in Sakhipur thana on Monday afternoon, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Jahangir Alam of a nearby village, Sutapara.

One of the victims was sent to Dhaka for treatment in a critical condition and the rest were admitted to Sakhipur Hospital.

Water-logging a chronic problem in Gopalganj town

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, July 29: Water-logging has created a serious problem in 10 places of Gopalganj pourashava area due to unplanned drainage system, narrow, unplanned roads and unauthorised encroachments.

This has created serious trouble to the pedestrians as well as to the vehicular traffic. Slightest rainfall creates the problem at Bepari patti, Sahapara, Batasha patti, Natun Bazar, Tatepara, Theatre Road, DC Road, Janata Road, Tanapara and Launchghat Road in the pourashava.

Unplanned structures ob-

struct the normal flow of storm water and cause water-logging. The residential buildings and boundary walls at Gatepara, Chowringhee area, DC Road, Post Office area of Janata Road, Launchghat Road and Bepari Patti obstruct normal flow of storm water and create the problem.

With the slightest rainfall water-logging occurs at Bepari Patti, Batasha Patti, Natun Bazar Road and Tanapara as there is no proper drainage system. Illegal encroachments on Launchghat road, Chowringhee

and Swarmakar Patti areas of DC Road and Shahpara hamper water sewerage. Unwillingness of the pourashava authority to construct any drain in Banlari Patti and Natun Bazar areas attributes to creation of water-logging.

Most of the drains in the pourashava area are in pitiable condition as those are not cleaned properly by the pourashava authority.

Immediate and proper initiatives are required to remove the chronic water-logging problem.



GAIBANDHA: A village at Kuthipara in Fulchhari thana has been engulfed with flood waters. — Star photo

RU students protest tuition fee hike at DU

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 29: Rajshahi University students protested the recent decision by the Dhaka University authority to increase the tuition fee.

The protest was first made by left leaning student organisation Ganoantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) on July 23. Other student organisations followed them. The organisations are: Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Bangladesh Chhatra Maitri (BCM), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL, JSD) and other left leaning student organisations.

The protest meeting was addressed, among others, by BCU president (RU unit) Taslim Shakhawat, BCM, RU unit president Arif Rahman Azad, SCF, RU unit president Mahmudul Islam Arif and others.

The speakers severely criticised the DU authority's decision to increase tuition fee saying this is a plot to make the education a commodity and to destroy the basic right of education of the common people.

Earlier, on July 21, a GCO workers' meeting was held which was presided over by the SCF President Mahmudul Islam Arif. The meeting discussed different problems of the RU students. One of the speakers Md Shaiful Islam, a BCU leader criticised the DU Treas-

urer's comment about privatisation of the university quoting the daily "Bhorer Kagoj" as source. The meeting demanded of the DU authority to cancel the tuition fee- hike decision.

AL-BNP clash leaves 15 hurt in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, July 29: At least 15 persons were injured in a clash between the activists of Awami League and BNP at Bagha bus stoppage in Bagha thana on Tuesday night last.

The clash ensued after hot exchange of words between two groups of Awami League and BNP activists on by-election in Barisal. Angry people ransacked and burnt four motorcycles. They ransacked and looted a shop and damaged furniture of the Thana Health Complex.

Seven seriously injured people were admitted into Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. They are Tofikul Islam, 26, Shamsul 30, Manzoor Kader, 35, Araj Sardar, 50, Rezaul Karim, 30, and Akul Ahmed, 27. Three separate cases were filed in this connection.

Number of early marriage, divorce on rise in Khulna

KHULNA, July 29: The number of early marriage and divorce are on the rise in the district creating social problem in the family life, reports UNB.

Though illegal, the practice of early marriage is going on unabated particularly in the rural areas of the district and in a good number of illiterate families in the urban centres.

The number of divorce is also rising creating various social problems. Local people said those who married earlier are segregating from each other even before attaining their adulthood. The legal age of marriage for the girls is 18 years while it is 21 years for the boys.

A survey conducted by a non-government organisation re-

vealed that about 10,000 incidents of early marriages took place in nine thanas of the district in the last 12 years. Of these marriages, 7000 have already been ended.

The causes behind the early marriage include dowry and other family considerations, said the survey report.

Early marriage creates some health problems specially for the bride due to early child bearing.

There are allegations that a number of marriage registrars are performing marriage registrations of under-aged girls and boys ignoring the rules.

There are even some fake marriage registrars or 'Kazis' active particularly in the rural areas.

Magura Newsletter

Miladunnabi celebrated

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, July 29: Eid-e-Miladunnabi was celebrated in the district with due religious fervour.

On the occasion milad mahfils have been arranged in different mosques, madrasahs and educational institutions. Various social and cultural organisations chalked out elaborate programmes, seminars and symposiums. Islamic Foundation, Magura arranged a discussion meeting where the speakers pleaded to follow the ideals and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SM) in our daily life for peace and prosperity.

Old-age allowance distributed

The old-age allowance distribution programme was inaugurated here recently by Babul Chandra Roy, Thana Nirbahi Officer.

A total of 90 old people including females were given allowance for three months. The distribution ceremony was presided over by TNO. It was addressed, among others, by Gollam Rabbani, President, Mohamadpur thana Awami League, Md Zillur Rahman, Thana Social Welfare Officer, Hara Prosad Biswas, DD, Magura, District Social Welfare Officer, Manager, Sonali Bank, Mohamadpur.

The nine-day long festival concluded after observance of Ulatrajatra. The main functions were held at Magura town and Langabandh. Village fairs were also held.

Meeting of TLM

A meeting of Total Literacy Movement (TLM) organised by Bikoshito Magura was held at Magura Shishu Biddyalaya recently.

Abdullah Harun Pasha, Secretary, Ministry of Woman Affairs was the chief guest while Md Nuruzzaman Khan, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Magura presided over. Among others, KC Mondol, Additional District Commissioner (General), Abu Naser Bablu, Organising Secretary, Awami League spoke in the meeting. The speakers hoped that Magura would be freed from the curse of illiteracy one day. The chief guest visited some Gano Shikha Kendro and expressed his satisfaction.

Rathajatra celebrated

Rathajatra of Jagannath Dev, a religious festival of the Hindu community was celebrated in the district with religious fervour.

The nine-day long festival concluded after observance of Ulatrajatra. The main functions were held at Magura town and Langabandh. Village fairs were also held.

Training course on nutrition

A training course on nutri-