

## News snaps

## Flood victims need adequate relief

JHENIDAH, Aug 31: Paddy on at least 3,000 acres of land have been damaged due to recent flood coupled with heavy downpour in Motespur thana here, reports UNB.

A number of paddy fields have been damaged in most of the villages of Pantapara and Basbaria unions in the thana. Besides, a large number of dwelling houses have also been damaged and the marooned people are facing hardships due to lack of adequate relief materials. Meanwhile, local UP members urged the authority concerned to take necessary measures to rehabilitate the affected farmers waiving bank loans and providing necessary grants.

## Special prayer offered

NETRAKONA, Aug 31: A special prayer was offered at Netrakona Jam-e-Masjid after Juma prayers on Friday seeking blessings of Allah for protecting the people from the devastating flood, reports BSS.

A large number of people including district level officers, political leaders and local elite attended the prayers which was offered under the auspices of the district administration. The *Musaltees* prayed to Allah, the merciful, to save nation from this natural calamity.

## Caritas distributes relief materials

MYMENSINGH, Aug 31: Caritas-Mymensingh region has distributed relief materials among the flood affected 5,900 families of 22 thanas under seven districts with the cooperation of district and thana administration, chairmen and members of union parishad, reports BSS.

The districts are Tangail, Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Sunamganj. According to the regional director Albert Mankin each family received 10 kilogram of rice, 2 kgs of pulse, 1 kg of salt, and 2 packets of ORS. The regional management has chalked out an operational plan for the post-flood rehabilitation work in the sectors of agriculture, poultry, fisheries, rural road re-construction and housing.

## Indian goods seized

SATKHIRA, Aug 31: The members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized various kinds of Indian goods worth over Taka four lakh and arrested one person in this connection during the last week, reports BSS.

The BDR members of 21 Battalion of Satkhira raided the Boikari, Chanduria, Jhaudanga, Bhomra, Toluigachi, Sonbaria, Kakkanga Satani and Madra border areas of the district and seized various kinds of Indian goods smuggled into Bangladesh. BDR arrested one Abdur Rahim of village Rariukur under Sharsha thana of Jessore district. According to BDR sources, the goods included salt, sugar, sarees, stainless steel goods, bidi and bicycle. The goods were deposited to the Satkhira Customs authorities. The arrested person was handed over to police.

## Pirates storm into barge

BAGERHAT, Aug 31: Pirates swooped on a barge in Ghoshikhali river in Morelganj thana and looted cash and goods early Sunday, killing a man and injuring six others, reports UNB.

Police said one Shahidul Islam, 35, died on the spot as the robbers fired shots on the Mongla-bound barge from Vandaria of Pirojpur district at about 2 am. The pirates numbering 12-14 stormed into the barge, beat up the workers indiscriminately and made off with the booty, including cash Tk 10 lakh. The body was sent to the district General Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

## Indian sugar seized

MEHERPUR, Aug 31: The Meherpur district task force on Saturday seized 439 bags of Indian sugar worth about Taka six lakh from a godown at Kathuly road here, an official source said, reports BSS.

A case has been filed with Kotwali thana in this connection, but none was arrested. The district task force has taken a special drive against smuggling and hoarding.

## Wheat sanctioned for distribution

CHUADANGA, Aug 31: The government has sanctioned 494 tonnes of wheat for distribution among the 1,373 destitute families of the four thanas of Chuadanga district in the current financial year under the VGD programme, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 99 tonnes of wheat was sanctioned for 275 destitute families of the six unions of Chuadanga sadar, 214 tonnes for 595 families of the 13 unions of Alamdanga, 115 tonnes for 320 families of the seven unions of Damurhuda and 66 tonnes for 183 families of the four unions of Jibanagar.

## Tributes paid to national poet

TONGI, Aug 31: Speakers at a discussion organised by local Nazrul Smiti Sangsad to mark the 22nd death anniversary of Kazi Nazrul Islam on Thursday have paid tributes to the national poet, reports BSS.

Held at the office of the sangsad here the discussion was presided over by Pradip Adhikari, a teacher of Tongi Pilot High School. Prof JH Mollah, Mahub Azam, Nurul Islam and Muniruzzaman, among others, discussed various aspects of the life and literature of the great poet. The discussion was followed by a musical soiree.

## Law and order reviewed

KHULNA, Aug 31: A law and order review meeting was held at the DIG office of Khulna range on Wednesday, reports UNB.

The meeting decided to launch special drives in the division following the deterioration of law and order in some areas. The meeting expressed concern at the growing terrorist activities of the outlawed party activists in the region. Chaired by DIG of Khulna Range Lutful Kabir, the meeting also decided to conduct special drives to bring the activists of outlawed party into book. Among others, Additional IG of Police, Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner and 10 Police Supers of the division were present.

## CT scan yet to reach Sylhet OMCH

SYLHET, Aug 31: The CT Scan machine allotted for Osmani Medical College Hospital (OMCH) by the previous government is yet to reach here from the capital, reports UNB.

The machine is used to detect various complications of brain including brain tumour and other diseases of serious nature. Sources said the decision to set up the machine at the hospital was taken considering the necessity of at least one crore people of the region and the present government also finalised all formalities in this regard. But it added that due to undue influence of an interested quarter the authority in the capital is delaying matter.

## 3,811 tubewells installed in 5-dists

BARISAL, Aug 31: The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has completed installation of 3,811 different types of tubewells in 11 southern districts under Barisal circle of PHED at a cost of Tk 10,49,16,420 during 1997-98 fiscal, reports BSS.

The districts are: Barisal, Jhalakati, Bhola, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Rajbari and Shariatpur. An official source said 2,113 deep tubewells were installed at a cost of Tk 9,50,85,000 and 625 shallow tubewells at a cost of Tk 36,18,750. Ninety very shallow shrouded tubewells (vast) were sunk at a cost of Tk 5,21,100 while 918 shallow tubewells re-sunk at a cost of Tk 53,15,220. Taka 3,76,350 was spent for 65 pond sand filters (PSF).

## Minister distributes relief materials

CHANDPUR, Aug 31: Home Minister Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, distributed relief materials including rice, pulses, flattened rice, molasses, and cash money to the flood victims at Bernalya High School and Nawra High School relief camps under Shaharhat thana on Saturday, reports BSS.

The flood situation of this year is more devastating than that of 1988, he said while addressing a gathering at Bernalya High School maidan during relief operation. The government is trying best to face the flood with all its efforts, Rafiq added. He said the government has enough food stock to face the situation and no body will die of starvation, he said.

## Valuables worth Tk 2 lakh seized

JHENIDAH, Aug 31: Armed dacoits robbed villages worth about Taka two lakh raiding two houses at village Bagharpara under Shalakkupa thana of the district on Thursday, reports BSS.

Witnesses said, a gang of about 10/12 dacoits raided the houses of Md Shaidul Alam, Commissioner of Shalakkupa Pouroshava and his neighbour by breaking the doors and robbed cash taka, gold ornaments and other goods at gunpoint. The dacoits also injured two persons when they tried to resist them. A case was filed with Shalakkupa thana in this connection.

# Death toll now 14

## Diarrhoea spreading fast in flood affected Kishoreganj dist

KISHOREGANJ, Aug 31: More than 500 houses in four thanas went into the river in the last two days as the erosion intensified further, reports UNB.

The affected thanas are Itana, Matamain, Austogram and Nikil.

The rivers Meghna at Bhairab and Dhanu at Itana were flowing 86 and 96 cm above their danger marks respectively.

Meanwhile, diarrhoeal diseases death toll rose to 14 so far. Of the total, four died in Sadar, two each in Kullarchar, Pakundia and Karimganj, one in Austragram and three in Bhairab thanas.

According to the District Flood Control Room, some 6 lakh people of 1,24,586 families of 13 thanas have been affected in the current monsoon flood.

It said 40 people so far died in the flood including water borne diseases. Some 19,765 flood victims have taken shelter in 33 shelters, the source added.

It said some 8,207 houses have been damaged completely while 60,134 houses partially. 46 educational institutions completely while 1,028 partially and 335 km roads were damaged completely and 930km partially in the district.

The flood washed away crops on 6,311 hectares of land completely and 9,026 hectares partially. About 21 km embankment was also damaged by the flood.

Some 13 bridges and 51 culverts have also been damaged in the district. More than 500 cattle and 50,000 poultry birds died in the flood. Forty-four deep and 2,000 shallow tubewells also have been damaged, the sources said.

The government has so far allocated Tk 7.15 lakh and 729 metric tons of rice, 100 pieces of saree, 700 pieces of lungi, 200 pieces of old clothes and 200 matches for the affected people.

The government has also distributed 32,100 VGF cards in the district.

While contacted District Civil Surgeon office sources said 173 medical teams have already been engaged in the district to combat the spread of the diseases.

Meanwhile, the local UP chairmen alleged that water borne diseases particularly diarrhoea is spreading seriously due to shortage of medicine and absence of doctors in the affected areas.

**Our Gopalganj correspondent Md Alimuzzaman reports:** Floodwater continues to rise in Gopalganj town threatening the locality of thirty thousand people.

Already three fourth part of the town is under water. It now appears that within the next

three to four days, the flood will submerge the whole town.

The water level of adjacent river Madhumati is currently flowing 65 cm above the danger level, officials of Flood Control Room said.

The affected parts of the town include Miapara, Mohammedpara, Bankpara, Herabari, Sonakair, Panchuria, Getpara, Thanapara and Christanpara.

Services of all inter-district transports, including buses and trucks, remain suspended for the last few days. All schools and other educational institutions have been shut down by their respective authorities due to the flood.

The flood-affected people of Gopalganj town have taken their shelters at schools and highways. Flood victims told this correspondent that they were not getting any relief goods.

The prices of essentials in the district have shot up and the administration has not taken any necessary steps to control price till filing of this report on August 29.

**Our Rajshahi Correspondent Abdul Wadood reports:** The flood situation in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj deteriorated further with the increase of water level in the rivers Padma and the Mahananda and their tributaries. At least five people died of snake-bite in the districts. Breaches in the T-groyne protecting Rajshahi City Protection Embankment have been further widened and threatened to be washed away at any movement. The Water Development authorities recently announced through micro-phones to the local people to rush with spades and baskets to help the workers and the armed force members working round the clock to repair the damaged part of the T-groyne. As a result, hundreds of panicky people assembled near the T-groyne and the Town Protection Embankment near Sreerampore and helped repairing the damaged part by throwing sand bags, bricks and boulders.

The erosion of the T-groyne was for the time being, but the western part of the groyne sunk about one foot.

District Flood Control Room of Rajshahi informed, so far 23 unions of the district have been badly affected by flood. The river Padma was flowing over the danger level till filing of this report. The Mahananda was also flowing above the danger level. The officials of Water Development Board have hoisted red-flags in the vulnerable centres of the City Protection Embankments.

Meanwhile, the flood situation in Chapainawabganj

turned worse with washing away of some embankments in the district. Basudepur Sluice gate, Gobratola embankment, Dhukhumari embankment, Saper bandh and the Nutun hat bridge gave away inundating 24 square kilometre areas of Chapainawabganj municipal areas. At least 29 flood protection dams of the district are threatened to be collapsed at any moment. Thousands of people are watching round the clocks these dams. No relief activities have yet started in the flood affected areas of the district.

The control room sources of Chapainawabganj reported, 97 thousand 29 families have been affected in the district by flood and 696 square kilometre areas have been affected and crops on 66 thousand acres have been damaged completely.

Meanwhile, BNP activists of Godagari thana and Rotaract Club of Rajshahi distributed relief materials in the flood affected Char Asariadaha union of Godagari thana.

**Our Kushtia Correspondent Fakhrun Nessa says:** With further rise in water level of both the rivers Padma and Gorai flood situation in the district aggravated again.

New areas have been inundated, damaging more crops and dwelling houses, washing away roads, bridges and culverts, bringing affected unions from 44 to 53 and affecting two and a half lakh people. Loss was estimated to be more than Taka one crore. The river Padma is flowing 55 centimetre above the danger level while the river Gorai is flowing 40 centimetre above the danger level till filing of this report.

The district administration has taken steps to protect the flood protection embankment with a view to preventing water from entering in Kushtia town. The erosion of the river Padma has caused havoc in Daulatpur thana where one fourth of the thana area have gone under river bed during last several years.

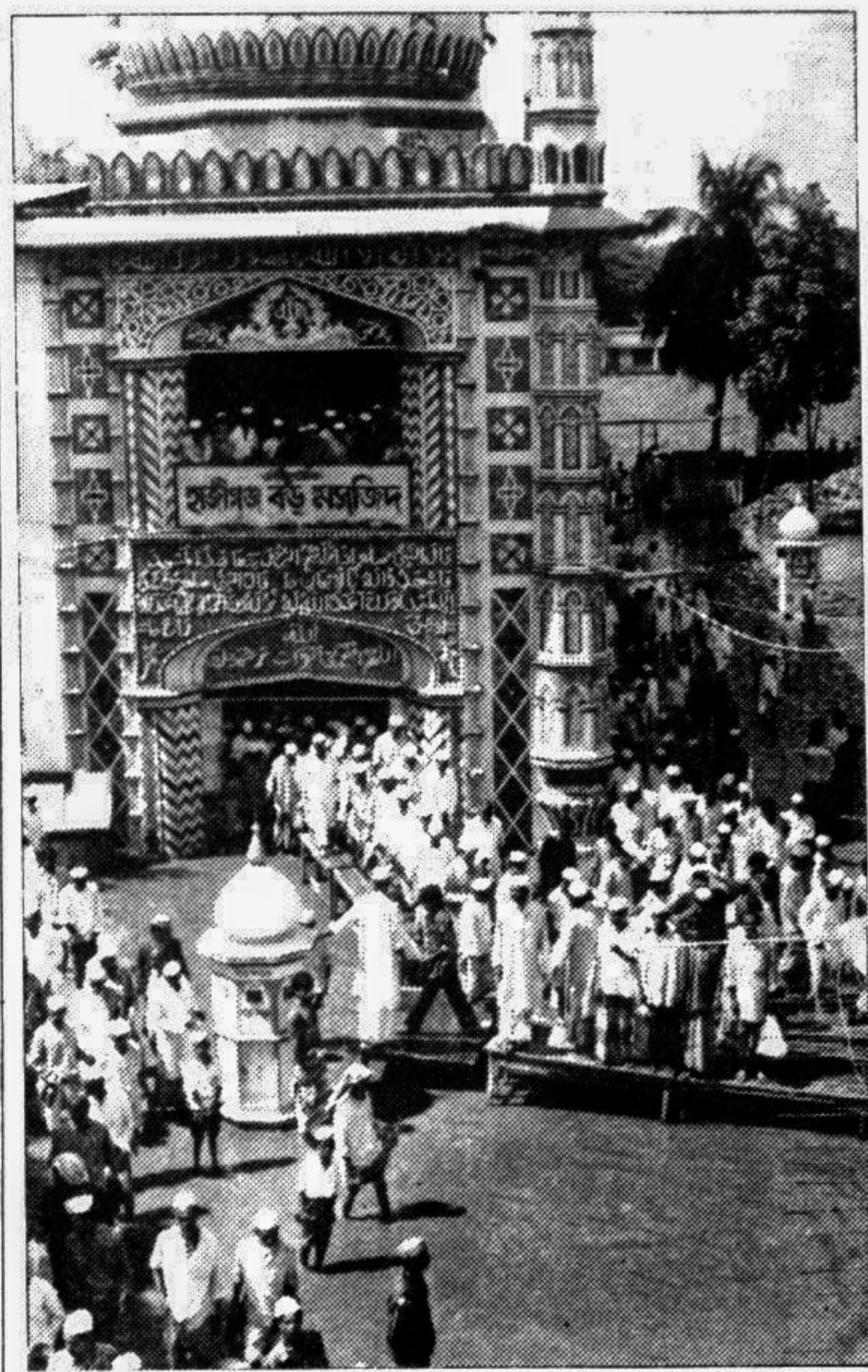
Raita Mohiskundi Flood Protection Embankment constructed in the year 1972, eight miles away from its previous course have been damaged seriously as the course of the river changed during last 20 years. The erosion of the river Gorai has devoured many institutions and business establishments in Kumarkhali town. Two earthen armoured groyne constructed during Pakistani period did not work due to faulty selection of site. Now Kumarkhali town itself is under threat of erosion of the river Gorai. Gorai Railway bridge and railway track is also under threat of being eroded as the RCC groyne constructed by the railway department did not last

and washed away by the fury of erosion.

Flood water has threatened Kushtia-Ishardi road. Roads and Highways Department has taken precautionary measure to protect the road. Meanwhile, all sorts of communication between Kushtia and Dhaka have been snapped due to flooding of Daulatdia and Aricha ghat. Railway tracks in Daulatdia is also under flood water snapping rail connection between Kushtia and Daulatdia. Communication between the northern and southern part of the country are also on the verge of collapse as ferry service at Bheramara Paksey ferry ghat remained almost disrupted due to heavy current in mid-river.

Large number of vehicles are stranded on both sides of the ferry ghat due to slow movement of ferry and shortage of ferry too. Miseries of 2 lakh flood hit people in six thanas of the district have intensified following scarcity of food, drinking water and medicine. The relief materials so far distributed among the flood-hit people are 167M tons of rice, Taka 88,600 cash, 3,707 pieces of sarees, 500 metre of poplin. A total of 12 persons were unofficially claimed as dead till filing of the report due to flood, while officials sources confirmed six deaths including minor boys and girls. The Deputy Commissioner Kushtia said 27,447 families in 53 unions of the district have been affected. 21,821 houses have been badly damaged, 15 cattle have died, 26,731 acres of crop lands have been totally damaged and 27 bridges or culverts have been washed away. While unofficial source said that 2.50 lakh people have been affected, 25,000 houses have been completely damaged while 30,000 houses have been partially damaged, 100 cattle have died, 75 thousand acres of crop land have been damaged, 30 educational institutions, 50 mosques, 3 cattle markets, 166 kilometre Kutcha roads, 27 kilometre beribundh, 30 kilometre embankment, 25 hats and bazaars, 5 BOP camp have so far been eroded. Thousands of affected people have taken shelter on the side of highway, high lands, flood protection embankment and educational institutions. The victims are passing their days with agony of water borne diseases and without food.

Meanwhile, diarrhoea, dysentery and fever have broken out in the affected areas and 200 persons have been attacked with the diseases. But the district health department has not yet taken any measure to combat the diseases. Scarcity of pure drinking water has been prevailing as most of the tube wells have gone under flood water.



CHANDPUR: *Musaltees* leaving Hajiganj mosque after offering their prayers through a make-shift platform due to stagnant flood water in the area. —Star photo

## Mosquito menace in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Aug 31: Mosquito menace has made life miserable in Cox's Bazar Pouroshava. It has become extremely difficult to carry on with any sort of work anywhere in the house or in the office.

Such a situation was not found in this town for at least the last three decades.

This correspondent visited some areas of Cox's Bazar town last week and noticed a dismal picture in all the areas of the three wards. It was observed that all the ponds and tanks were full of water hyacinth, with no trace of water. All the ponds have turned into safe breeding centres for mosquitoes.

Besides, both the pucca and kutcha drains built in an unplanned manner, are hardly cleared and full of stagnant water, mud and other garbage. As a result most unhealthy and unhygienic atmosphere has been created in all the areas of this tiny town. Pucca drains were so badly built that water is hardly found to pass through those

drains, while the kutcha ones are full of mud and dirty water with harmful odour. It is polluting the atmosphere.

It was further found that dustbins, built during 1994-95 are not regularly cleared, but those are found filled with garbage, filth, dead dogs, cats or rats lying for days together. It is creating a most unhealthy and harmful atmosphere all around. Even, whenever the garbage is cleared, the places are not sprayed. So is the case with the so-called drains.

Four years ago in 1994, Cox's Bazar pourashava was upgraded into a first class pourashava, but the dismal picture witnessed by this correspondent only reminds the days of third class pourashava.

When asked, an official of the pourashava, claimed that the drains and dustbin are cleared thrice a month, but due to lack of provision of fund, spraying of insecticides is not possible. He however, admitted that the ponds were now full of water-hyacinths.

## Incessant downpour paralyses life in Bandarban

Bandarban, Aug 31: Incessant downpour during the last three days caused disruption of public life and sharp rise in prices of essentials in the district, reports UNB.

The rain forced the people to stay at their homes causing untold sufferings to the poor class people. The downpour caused the Naikhangchhari and Lama thanas. Communication remained snapped with the Roanhangchhari thana due to non-functioning of the telecommunication system.

Meanwhile, prices of essentials including rice have shot up abnormally causing sufferings to the low income group of people.

At present onion is being sold at Tk 40 per kg and garlic at Tk 50 per kg. The price of per kg rice has shot up by Tk two to three.

A local food official expressed dismay over the sudden price-hike of rice despite sufficient food stock in the government godown.

The traders, taking the advantage of inclement weather, have created the abnormal situation by manipulating the market, local people alleged.

The dairy and poultry farm owners said, sudden scarcity and price-hike of fodder and poultry feeds put them in great problem.

Locals called upon the administration to take necessary steps to alleviate their sufferings.

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## 'Facts for Life' launched in Cox's Bazar

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Aug 31: The Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar, Ali Imam Majumdar said, the information technology is bringing dramatic changes in societies in the present day world.

"We are now living in an age when technology enables information to travel rapidly, breaking through political boundaries and cultural barriers", he said while addressing a function to mark the launching of a booklet 'Facts for Life' at the DC's conference room recently.

Presided over by DC Ali Imam Majumdar, the function was also addressed by District Information Officer Md Nazrul Islam, Executive Engineer of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Director of Islamic Foundation Abul Hayat Md Tareq, District Co-ordinator of UNICEF Fahim Uddin Ahmed, District Primary Education Officer Mohammad Ali, Senior Health Education Officer of Civil Surgeon office Md Rafiqul Islam, PM Khali UP Chairman Master Abdur Rahim and Dr Mujibur Rahman.

The booklet 'Facts for Life' was published by the Ministry of Information. The publication ceremony was arranged by Cox's Bazar district information office. Government officials, NGO officials, lawyers and local journalists attended the function.

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MAGURA: Inundated village Char Chakdah in Sripur thana of the district. — Star photo



GOPALGANJ: A submerged non-government primary school at Chachania in Gopalganj municipal area. — Star photo



MYMENSINGH: A government primary school remained closed for more than a month due to flood in the sadar thana. — Star photo



CHANDPUR: 'Ongikar' — the Liberation War monument has been inundated by flood water. — Star photo

## Corrupt officials involved in false land record

SUNAMGANJ, Aug 31: The landless people have been deprived of the possession of 8,700 acres of khas land in the district, reports UNB.

UNB local people and the victims claimed that a section of influential people have occupied these lands though the authorities allocated these to the landless.

Land Revenue Department sources said they have allocated 42,977 acres of khas land against the names of landless people in 10 thanas of the district during the last few years.

Of the total lands, 8,700 acres are being occupied by the influential quarters, they said.

Clashes over the possession of land is frequent in particularly the char areas every year, said the sources adding that the clashes in Diral, Shalla and Dharmapasha thanas left about 500 people injured during the last five years.

## 17 lakh hectares brought under T-'Aman' farming in 16 dists

From Our Correspondent

25 per cent. The balanced rainfall and available fertilisers including insecticides have created an encouragement among the farmers in massive 'Aman' farming, it was gathered.

It may be noted, during the last 'Aman' season, the farmers faced a drastic fall in 'Aman' production, due to shortage of fertilisers, seeds and meagre irrigation facilities for want of fuel. These were resulted in the high prices of 'Aman' rice in the markets, it was alleged. The food department had also failed to fulfill the target of 'Aman' procurement across the region, according to the informations received here.

The high prices of foodgrain is still persisting in the northern region. This is due to 40 per

cent less cultivation of 'Aman' crop in last year as the shortfall could not be recouped by other foodgrain farmings, agriculturists said.

There is a hope among the farmers that the output of 'Aman' paddy will be much higher this season in the region, if everything goes well. This would also help curb price spiral of foodgrains.