## Army repair Teesta embankment temporarily

## Gangachhara villagers still in panic

RANGPUR, July 28: Although the army men put in their allout efforts to protect the vulnerable Teesta Embankment at Kolokando in Gangachhara upazila, villagers in the area still feel unsafe, reports UNB.

"The embankment is safe for now, but flooding still may cause harm to it as the repair work so far done on it is temporary," an Army expert told in response to a

The 80-km long embankment from India to Kawania developed huge cracks over 600-meter areas at North Kolokando under Gangachhara upazilla and 15-km northeast of Rangpur town as the River Teesta changed its course devouring a vast track of land in its southern part.

Every year hundreds of families living in the vicinity of the Teesta lose their homesteads in erosion by the river for lack of a long-term solution.

Mohammad Nawsha Miah of North Kolokando village in the Gangachhara upazila is among such victims.

Barely a month back, the 45year-old Nawsha had everything a home and 162 decimals of croplands. But the notorious Teesta has made him pauper, devouring his home and farmlands. He now lives at South Kolokando village on the mercy of others.



Members of Bangladesh Army repairing the erosion threatened Teesta embankment at Gangachhara in Rangpur.

Nawsha's case is not unique. Over 20 families of his villages also lost their homesteads during the period.

Erosion panic grips the vil-

lages in the upazila every year, as the Tk 1,500-crore Teesta Barrage Project could not yet be implemented.

But the donors were learnt to

have withdrawn Tk 600 crore as works on the gigantic project are not progressing as per its main

Over 12 kms area of the

and boats carrying hilsa

anchored the fish ghats in

Shariatpur, during the period,

but the fishermen could not reap

the benefit of it due to acute crisis

The adjoining areas of

Asarchar, Kuakata, Fatrarchar,

Alipur, Sureswar, Chandipur,

Dularchar and Shibchar are

some of the main fish markets,

where power outage is a regular

said ice is the main component

for proper preservation and mar-

keting of hilsa as it dies soon after

ished in five districts this year

simply for lack of ice although

there are 150 ice factories in the

Sources at Power Development

Board (PDB) said power supply in

the region was severely disrupted

during the period, due to two

major technical problems in the

national grid, plunging over

30,000 poor fishermen of the

Woman with dengue

fever hospitalised

in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

was admitted to Rajshahi Medical

College Hospital (RMCH) with

Professor Firoja Khondakar,

54, of Rajshahi College, who

resides Jhaotala area in the city.

fell sick on Monday. She was

diagnosed clinically, hospital

Meanwhile, two other patients.

admitted to hospital earlier, were

suspected to have been attacked

with dengue fever. They were

earlier suspected as malaria

The patients have been kept

under strict observation, said

BNP procession

From Our Correspondent

unit BNP brought out a proces-

sion here on Tuesday protesting

'deterioration of law and order' in

the district and demanding repeal

The procession paraded main

of the District Council Act.

NETRAKONA, July 28: District

patients, hospital sources said.

RMCH Director Mong Ten Win.

sources said.

dengue fever on Tuesday night.

RAJSHAHI, July 28: A woman

region," he regretted.

region into a deep crisis.

"A huge quantity of hilsa per-

netting.

Abdus Salam, a fish trader,

of ice across the region.

the gorge of the mighty river since '70s.

Recently, Teesta changed its course hitting hard the Kolokando area on June 29-30. As the situation deteriorated on July 8, the government sent army at the request of the Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur to assist the labourers of WDB to save 600 meters cracked parts of the embankment.

The army personnel were given the responsibility to save 300 meters of the cracked parts while WDB labourers repaired the remaining 300 meters. Some 100 troops on average worked a day on the embankment along with the civilians.

WDB provided the resources while Bangladesh Army gave the physical labour to save the embankment from the recent erosion using 21,150 sandbags. 192 porcupines (made of bamboo to protect sandbags), 1,285 cube blocks and 409 brick crates.

M Afsar Ali, sub-divisional engineer of WDB, said some places like Bashantapur, Kishoreganj and Syedpur still vulnerable as some tertiary and secondary works could not yet be finished.

In the summer, the embankment facilitates irrigation to 30,000 acres of land against its target of 2,74,000 acres under

Gangachhara upazila went into Teesta Irrigation Project, while 1,60,000 acres in the rainy season, M Afsar said.

Locals alleged that the government have failed to come up with effective steps to protect the area from erosion by the river and their repeated appeals to construct a groyne embankment there fell into the deaf ears.

"The government can make the people of the area feel safe by constructing a permanent groyne embankment : at least over 2400-meter area," WDB official said.

According to WDB, Rangpur Bogra and Nilphamari districts have become an erosion-prone area with the construction of a 60-gate Gojaldova barrage by India at the upstream of Teesta Barrage at Dalia, defying international laws.

There have been allegations that India releases waters opening up all the 60 gates of the Gojaldova barrage during monsoon causing severe flooding in the frontier districts.

Another WDB official told that Bangladesh officials measure water in the Teesta twice a day at 6 am and at 6 pm. The Indian authorities too release water two times everyday, at 9 am and at 9 pm. So Bangladesh officials cannot collect any evidence to produce before the international authorities.

## 50,000 fishermen face unemployment

From Our Correspondent

CHANDPUR, July 28: About 50 thousand fishermen are facing unemployment due to drastic fall fries. in production of hilsa fish in the rivers Padma and Meghna in the current season. Production of nets worth about Taka 20 lakh hilsa fish has suffered a serious setback due to fishing of hilsa fries called 'Jatka'.

affected due to massive siltation in the rivers. Consumption of hilsa fish has become a luxury for rivers Meghna and Padma. the common people due to abnormal price like. Previously hilsa was available abundantly in the local markets during the rainy season. But now-a-days a few hilsa are found in the markets. At present each kilogram of hilsa is being sold between Taka 180 to 200 in the local markets.

According to Chandpur Fisheries Department, indiscriminate use of current nets to fish hilsa fries is the main cause of abnor-

Despite government ban on fishing of 'Jatka', it is being continued unabated in the rivers Padma and Meghna. Thousands July

current nets are being used everyday to fish hilsa and other

According to Chandpur Fisheries Institute, about 400 current had been seized by the mobile courts during the last three months. Mobile courts headed by Besides fish production is also magistrates raided from Neilkamal of Haimchar upazila to Shatnail of Matlab upazila in the Mobile courts are also in action at different hats and bazars here to arrest unscrupulous fishermen who are selling 'Jatka'.

Almost everyday a huge quantity of current nets are seized and set on fire on the banks of the rivers in front of public,

Hilsa fries measuring four cm to 15 cm called "Jatka' are prohibited for fishing. Two major nursery grounds of hilsa fries have been detected between mal fall in hilsa production in the Haimchar and Matlab along the poor output of the delicious fish River Meghna.

Jatka grows in fresh water in the River Meghna and Padma from the month of February to

After the period they migrate to sea water. During the growing period they are netted by unscrupulous fishermen. The average catch of total 'Jatka' in the area is estimated to be about 4 thousand tonnes in a year.

If 30 per cent of 'Jatka' can be protected annually, an additional production of hilsa worth about Tk 100 crore can be obtained.

UNB from Shariatpur says: When hilsa crisis has prompted a section of business people to import the delicious fish, some 1,500 maunds of hilsa perished in just one week in greater Faridpur district for lack of ice.

Market sources said hilsa worth about Tk 75 lakh perished in Shariatpur, Madaripur, Gopalgani, Rajbari and Faridpur due to ice crisis attributed to low production caused by erratic power supply.

Although the country saw a this season, there was a huge catch of it in the region during mid-July, flooding the local mar-

Hundreds of fishing trawlers

### Good news for eco-tourists SYLHET, July 28: Good news waterfalls.

for eco-tourists. Country's first eco-park is going to be set up on 1,500 acres of forestland in Moulvibazar district at a cost of Tk 11 crore, reports UNB.

The park, to be surrounded by waterfalls of Madhabkunda and Muraichhara hills in Kulaura, aims at protecting the biodiversity and checking the degradation of the environment.

The other objectives of the project, titled 'Madhabkunda-Muraichhara Eco-Park', are to protect and preserve rare plant species and orchids, set up a sanctuary for wildlife and develop eco-tourism.

Its aims also include creating opportunity for education and research, and protecting the Madhabkunda and Muraichhara

The ambitious project has been taken up after an expert team, following an extensive feasibility study, declared Madhabkunda-Muraichhara and Hakaluki haor as vulnerable areas.

The Environment and Forest Minister accompanied by the Environment Secretary visited the area last year and decided to set up the park in Madhabkunda-Muraichhara area.

The project proposal was approved at an ECNEC meeting on July 11.

According to competent sources, physical works on the project will start soon after the floating of tender.

Upon completion of the project the government will be able to earn over Tk one lakh in revenue

## Anti-illiteracy programme in Comilla starts Sept 1

COMILLA, July 28: A massive anti-illiteracy programme, involving Tk 25 crore, under the government-sponsored Total Literacy Movement (TLM) is likely to be launched on September 1 this year, reports UNB.

Officials said the programme would be completed by December

According to government statistics, there are 8.04 lakh illiterate people of 16-45 age group in 12 upazilas of the district. Of them, women account for 4.38 lakh.

Under the programme, the illiterate people will be given the knowledge of letters through 27,023 centres in 1,826 blocks. The process of centre selection

is underway. Respective Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) will appoint supervisors while teachers will be appointed by UP chairmen. Supervisors will get Tk 1200 each while teachers Tk 500 each as allowances per month.

According to officials, there will be 30 illiterate people under one teacher in every centre and female illiterates will be taught for 2 hours a day before evening while men after evening.

They said evaluation examinations would be held in each centre after every six months.

Meanwhile, arrangement has been made to impart training to the supervisors before launching the programme.

Of the total budget, Tk 12 crore has been earmarked for salaries of the supervisors and the teachers while Tk 10 crore for buying educational materials and Tk 3 crore for campaign and monitor-

A pilot project under the TLM

Under the project, some 5,700 illiterate people learned reading and writing through 190 centres in 12 upazilas, including five municipalities.

The evaluation examinations of these centres were held on February 29, 2000. The success rate was said to be satisfactory.

Another report from Laxmipur says: A three-day orientation course on TLM was held recently for providing guidelines to local opinion leaders to make the programme a success.

A total of 150 representatives from various leading organisations, including NGO workers. cultural activists, imams of mosques, Ansar, VDP, scouts, BNCC members and girls guides attended the orientation course.

Held at the local circuit house, the training programme dealt with teaching techniques, inspection and monitoring of the programme, and ways to contain dropout rate.

#### Shamsur Rahman killing: Satkhira newsmen mourn

From Our Correspondent SATKHIRA, July 28: Journalists here last week brought out a silent procession in the district headquarters, mourning the killing of journalist Shamsur

Rahman. The procession paraded main thoroughfares in the town. Gunmen killed Shamsur

Rahman, a journalist of the Janakantha, at his office in Jessore on July 16. Later the journalists submit-

ted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner demanding punishment to killers.

#### The main hilsa market near the railway station in Chandpur town. thoroughfares in the town. Later -Star photo BNP activists held a rally. was launched here in July 1999. Leadership crisis in Sirajganj BNP

# From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, July 28: Serious disagreement and conflict between two factions of district BNP has been prevailing for the last one and a half years hampering organisational activities of the main opposition BNP.

Workers and supporters of BNP here are frustrated.

The conflict surfaced in April last year when the then former Jatiya Party leader and former Zila Parishad chairman Iqbal Hassan Mahmud (Tuku) left the Jatiya Party and later joined BNP. After his joining he has been trying to control the party. Because of this leaders and workers are divided. One group is led by Iqbal Hassan Mahmud (Tuku) and another group is led by Alamgir Alamin (Kazol), a former

Jubo Dal central leader. Lacals say the family conflict between Tuku and Kazol has also been persisting since long. Now

the conflict has taken a serious

In the meantime the two groups take part in organisational activities separately from April '99. It has caused frustration among grassroots level activists. The conflict has taken another serious turn when the then district BNP organising secretary and former municipality chairman T R M Nur-e-Alam (Helel) was suspended for his anti-organisational activities. Although one year has passed the suspension order yet not been withdrawn. Kazol led group has established its stronghold along the new Dhaka Road area in the town with establishing of a sepa-

rate party office. The group which is regarded as the mainstream is guided by T M A Mannan, MP, convener of the district unit of BNP. The group holds its organisational activities

in Sirajganj town. Former Zila Parishad chairman Tuku, Advocate Makaddes Ali, Humayun Islam Khan, Azizur Rahman Dulal, Nazmul Haq Babla, district unit president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Nazmul Hassan Rana, general secretary Rashidul Hasan (Ranjan) are the main backers of the group known as Mannan group. The central leaders of BNP usually join the programmes organised by Tuku

Alamgir Alamin Kazol, son of defeated candidate of 1996 parliamentary election Shamsul Alamin, Mokbul Hussain Chowdhury, president of sadar upazila BNP, Abul Hussain, Abdul Kader, JCD leaders Sydur Rahman Bachchu and Shafful Alam Dolar, expelled organizing secretary Nur-e-Alam Helal, Jubo Dal president Ershadur Rahman Niru and secretary Munshi

Kamaluddin have sided with the dissident group. Alamgir Alamin Kazol is regarded as the staunch supporter of Helal.

It is an open secret that some leaders of both the groups take part in BNP activities at day time, while at night they maintain liaison with Awami League (AL) leadership for a long time.

Some supporters of BNP alleged that these leaders on various occasions left Jatiya Party and BNP and at present joined Awami League. They are known as present government partymen. Previously they hung picture of Begum Khaleda Zia in their houses when she was in power. At present they joined Awami League and occupied top leadership. On several occasions they welcomed Home Minister Mohammed Nasim in their houses hanging Sheikh Hasina's picture. Another so-called Awami

League leader occupied the convener post of Zia Parishad when BNP was in power. When Ershad was in power

district council member. Now he is an Awami League

this leader's wife was made a

Another former BNP leader of Ganj Bhanghabari ward and a former top leader of BNP sent his younger brother to Awami League office and got involved himself in Prodipto Sirajganj Movement, a literacy movement.

Another leader of BNP secretly working for Awami League as its

It is widely alleged that some ruling Awami League leaders along with two leaders of the two factions of BNP are involved in the inferior standard of work of Local Government Engineering Department's (LGED) Taka one crore 42 lakh Nimgachhi-

Raninshaf Road Project. Local people protested and condemned their acts, but they, in collaboration with police, chased the protesting people recently.

The image of late President Ziaur Rahman and that of Begum Khaleda Zia is being tarnished day by day due to opportunist role of local BNP leaders.

BNP workers are getting frustrated gradually. Awami League has been gaining due to this reality.

People of the locality are very annoyed with these political leaders.

Some district BNP leaders seeking anonymity said central leaders should resolve the conflict immediately for the greater interest of the party. They added if this situation continues, the party will face serious setback in the next general election.

## snaps News

## Hotel waiter slaughtered

NAOGAON, July 28: Unidentified assailants slaughtered a waiter of a hotel in the town early Tuesday, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Mohsin, 22, a waiter of Hotel Proshanti and son of Tofazzal of Kittipur area in Sadar upazila. Police said the hoodlums entered the hotel at dead of night and killed the hotel boy. Police suspected that the miscreants might have killed him sequel to disputes over flesh trading at the hotel. Meanwhile, police arrested the hotel manager and a night guard of the area for interrogation. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with the police.

Scholarship for wards of FFs

BARISAL, July 28: Barisal district unit of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad, organisation of freedom fighters, awarded scholarship to the wards of freedom fighters of the district this year

under the laws enacted by the present government, reports BSS. A total of 100 students from ten upazilas of the district were awarded this scholarship this year at the rate of Taka 1,000 each. Chief Whip of the parliament Abul Hasanat Abdullah distributed the cheque of Taka 1,000 to each of the students in a simple ceremony on the first week of this month which was presided over by Sheikh Kutubuddin Ahmed, commander of Barisal district command.

## Nine rescued: One trafficker held

BAGERHAT, July 28: Police rescued nine people, including housewives and kids, from a microbus on Rupsha-Mongla highway at Katakhali area Tuesday while allegedly being taken away outside the country, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted the microbus at the area and rescued the people who were being trafficked into Pakistan via India. Police arrested one Akter Hossain, 38, of Kutubdia upazila of Cox's Bazar district in connection with the trafficking. He was taking them to Pakistan in the name of giving jobs. The rescued people were identified as Anjuman Ara Begum, 55, Rehana Akhter, 26, Rehana Begum, 20, Ashia Khatun, 15, Laila Begum, 14, Abu Bakar Siddique, 9, Khurshida Begum, 25, Rasheda, 4, and Nurul Islam, 38. All of them hail from different parts of Cox's Bazar district.



A procession was brought out by journalists in Feni on Monday condemning the killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman.

-Star photo

### Four hurt in bomb blast

BARISAL, July 28: Four youths were injured when a bomb exploded at Khanjapur village in Gowranadi upazila here Monday night, reports UNB.

The bomb went off while the youths were allegedly making bombs at the house of Habib Sarder in the village, witnesses said. The injured are identified as Sanjib, 26, Chhoton, 20, Rubel, 25, and Quddus, 27. The injured were admitted to private clinics to avoid police arrest.

Four pirates arrested

BAGERHAT, July 28: Four alleged pirates were caught redhanded from a Dhaka-bound steamer near Morolgani ghat recently, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Rahim Sardar, 30, Sheikh Afsar, 38, Siddique, 35, and Mizan, 24. Police said the four disguised as travelers boarded the steamer, Ostrich, and swooped on its passengers in a bid to loot their valuables. But police nabbed them when the passengers cried out for help.

#### Body of maid recovered

PATUAKHALI, July 28: Police recovered the body of a teenage housemaid from a godown at Natun Bazar area in the town last week, reports UNB.

Locals and police said the body of Firoja Begum, 17, the housemaid of merchant Nannu Mia, was found hanging from the roof of the godown adjacent to the merchant's residence. The body was sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

#### Boy killed in road accident

SHERPUR, July 28: A boy was killed and ten other people were injured in an accident on Sherpur-Nakla road at Tarakandi recently. reports UNB.

Police said the accident took place when a maxi bus bound for Mymensingh overturned after it crushed the boy. The dead was identified as Sabuj, 10, son of Abdus Salam of Tarakandi village in sadar upazila. Five of the injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital while two to Nakla Health Complex and three others to Sadar Hospital. The driver of the vehicle managed to flee the scene soon after the accident.

#### Rapist gets life term

NATORE, July 28: A court here has condemned a youth to life term in jail for violating a girl, reports UNB.

According to the case history in brief, Shariful Islam, 18, of Mallikhati in the town violated a nine-year-old girl of the area on November 23, 1999. After examining the records and witnesses, District and Sessions Judge AKM Anwar Hossain handed down the judgement on Monday.

#### Token strike

MYMENSINGH, July 28: Angered by excessive rent hike by leaseholders, merchants of four markets in the municipality area observed a 2-hour token strike on Monday, reports UNB.

The traders of Mechhuabazar, Natun Bazar, Kewatkhali Bazar and Sankipara Bazar under the banner of Municipality Dakbazar Traders Unity enforced the strike at 8 am. They later submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of the district urging him to take measures against excessive rent hike by leaseholders of their shops. They later submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of the district urging him to take measures against excessive rent hike by leaseholders of their shops. They threatened to enforce a daylong strike if their demand is not met soon.

## Hunger strike

SHERPUR, July 28: Ruling party's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League observed a six-hour hunger strike here on Monday to register their protest against the recent wave of political violence in the country, reports UNB.

They went on hunger strike at 12 noon in front of the DC office protesting the attempt on the life of the Prime Minister, killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman, eight murders in Chittagong and demanding a ban on communal politics in the country. Local MP Atiar Rahman Atiq spoke on the occasion and expressed solidarity with the strikers.

## Madaripur Municipality budget

MADARIPUR, July 28: Madaripur Municipality announced a Taka 6 crore budget for fiscal 2000-2001 recently, reports BSS. Chairman of the municipality, Khalilur Rahman Khan, announced the budget in presence of journalists and people's representatives at the municipality auditorium. Taka one crore 47 lakh 85 thousands will come from government grants.