

Bagerhat areas submerged

BAGERHAT, Sept 4: Low lying areas in four upazilas continued to be inundated with the rise of river water and breaches in a cross dam marking the deterioration of flood situation, reports UNB.

Due to the heavy downpour for the last three days river waters swelled further and submerged the low lying areas in Rampal, Swarankhola, Mongla and Morolganj upazilas.

Sources said a breach was developed in Swarankhola Berabekha cross dam on Friday that rendered 4,000 people of Southkhali union marooned.

Official sources said huge shrimps in shrimp enclosures and sweet water fishes were washed away causing huge loss to the fish farmers.

Water level of most of the rivers including Poshur, Boleswar, Bhalrab and Panchori rose on an average by six feet during last three days.

Number of voters up

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Sept 4: The number of voters has increased in six upazilas here by 1,56,892, according to the rough voters' list.

The male voters have increased by 80,462 while women by 76,430. The District Election Office sources said, there were about 7,64,731 voters in the district in accordance with the voter list made in 1995. This year, the rough voter list shows the number of voters are 9,21,621. Out of the total, female voters are 4,57,064 and males are 4,64,559.

Diploma engrs to observe hunger strike

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Sept 4: Diploma engineers working in the district will observe token hunger strike in front of the office of the Deputy Commissioner on September 13 demanding introduction of four-year diploma engineering courses in institutions.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Diploma Engineering Students, Teachers and Professionals Action Council of Moulvibazar district unit announced the programmes in a press conference recently.

Diploma engineers said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had declared the government decision of introducing four-year diploma engineering course, but a 'vested quarter' is trying to thwart the decision.

Replies to a question, they blamed graduate engineers for creating obstacles to the implementation of the decision.

Truck stolen in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 4: A truck was stolen from Bazaar Station area here in the early hours of Monday.

Owner of the Tata truck Pares Nath Chowdhury said the vehicle was parked in the area.

The vehicle, which was purchased recently, was not recovered till Tuesday.

The town, however, has no truck terminal.



Scarcity of fish is acute throughout the country. In some rural markets common fishes have already disappeared. In such a period of fish crisis dry fishes are used as substitute. Kuakata in Patuakhali district is famous for its sea beach with enchanting scenic beauty. Sea fishes are available here in large number and many people depend on fishing for their livelihood. Photo shows fishes being dried by some fishermen.

--Star photo by A KM Mohsin

Erosion onslaught in 3 dists

Erosion by rivers has taken alarming turn in Tangail, Faridpur and Bogra districts, causing concern among people, report agencies.

In Tangail, erosion by the River Jamuna has devoured homesteads of over a thousand people since the advent of the rainy season in three upazilas.

Over 500 acres of arable lands are also eroded in the district particularly in Katuli, Kakao and Hugra villages of sadar, Solla and Durgapur villages of Kalihati and Arjuna, Gabbara and Nikrul villages of Bhupur upazila.

Meanwhile, the erosion-affected people formed a Jamuna River Erosion Protection Committee and held a number of meetings urging the authority concerned to take necessary measures to check the erosion.

They also demanded of the authority to take steps for their early rehabilitation.

Faridpur district is under threat of erosion by the mighty rivers Padma and Arial Khan.

The local leaders said the situation was turning grave as no proper steps have yet been taken to combat the menace.

These are Devbhanga, Hasnabpara, Kutupur, Borolakandi, Kornbari and Chandaia of Sariakandi upazila, and Sohorbari and Banajani of Bhupur.

A source at the Water Development Board said they have informed the matter to the higher authorities, and continued piling and placing sand-filled bags on the breached points.

He, however, admitted the measure is not sufficient to protect the embankment.

Another source said similar breaches also developed last year as the construction was done during the rainy season, leaving the embankment weak to resist the onslaught of the swelling Jamuna.

Last year, erosion of the Jamuna grabbed 22 villages in Sariakandi, 16 in Sonatola and six in Dhunot and the affected people have been living an inhuman life on the embankment.

Erosion by the Padma damaged three km areas

Women play major role in Garo families

From Jahanagar Alam

NETRAKONA, Sept 4: The Garo community live in Meghalaya of India and in Hauaghat, Dhubaura in Mymensingh, Madhupur in Tangail, Kalmakanda, Durgapur upazilas in Netrakona and bordering area of Sherpur and Sunamgonj district in Bangladesh.

In tribal Garo society women make the decision. A Garo woman does not leave her family after marriage. Daughters, not sons, inherit the family's property.

Garo women are hardy, but Garo men are lazy. They always depend on women. From genera-

tion to generation Garo women maintain their living.

Once Garo women are happy with their sufficient croplands.

Then they had to depend on cultivation. They cultivate their croplands and produced sufficient crops. But now they are landless. The landless Garo women are now compelled to sell their labour in other people's field.

Poor Garo women survive by hard work says Ranta Kubli, a 45 year old Garo woman of Durgapur.

She said, loss of land has encouraged many Garo women to

take up the jobs of labourers this is one of the factors which encouraged Garo people to send their children to schools. Previously Garos were happy with their lands.

Illiterate Garo women work in the fields or collect fire wood for sell, while the educated one's take up jobs offered mainly by the NGO's. Lack of farm lands is forcing Garo women to take up jobs elsewhere. In providing jobs to the Garo people CARITAS and World Vision are playing a leading role. Even though Garo women get priority, Garo men are also welcome for the jobs.

A demonstration plot of fruit bearing jamrul tree at a horticulture centre in Mymensingh.

--Star photo

MYMENSINGH, Sep 4: Jamrul, a traditional rainy season fruit, is disappearing gradually. Indiscriminate felling of trees, especially fruit-bearing ones, in rural areas has been attributed to the decline in production.

The small greenish-white juicy fruit was once available here like other places in the country. Jamrul cannot be seen easily in markets these days, said Abdur Rahman, an elderly man in the town.

However, Mymensingh Horticulture Centre (MHC) has taken steps for the development of the fruit.

The centre has been distribut-

ing seeds and saplings of hybrid variety of jamrul among people in a bid to expand the cultivation of the traditional fruit.

Usually the colour of the fruit is white, but the improved variety, developed by the centre, is white and pink in colour, said Zakia Begum, assistant horticulturist of the centre. The new variety has gained popularity among farmers, she added.

The fruit is enriched in Vitamin-B, Vitamin-B2 and Vitamin-C, said Md Rafiqul Islam, horticulture specialist of local Agriculture Extension Department (AED).

SYLHET, Sept 4: A local court has sentenced a man to 10 years' Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) in an arms case, reports UNB.

According to the prosecution, police recovered a pipe gun along with two cartridges from the house of Abdun Noor of Bade-Deuli village in Fenchuganj upazila on August 18, 1996. Later, police filed a case against the convict. Solaiman alias Chunu Mia on charge of possession of the firearm. After examining the records and witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge Shamsul Alam Khan handed down the punishment on Tuesday.

Dacoits kill jewellery shop-owner

COMILLA, Sept 4: Armed dacoits killed a jewellery shop-owner after looting 50 tolas of gold from his shop at Bangadda bazaar in Nangolok upazila on Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said the robbers picked up Tazul Islam from his shop at gunpoint, looted the gold ornaments and killed him beside a nearby road. Police recovered the body from there and sent it to the hospital morgue for autopsy. Father of the victim Ali Ahmed lodged a case with the police in this connection.

Safe haven of drug traders

JAMALPUR, Sept 4: Chhontia bazaar and its adjacent areas have become a safe haven of drug traders due to lack of police action, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that various drugs, including hemp, fermented liquor, phenyl and rectified spirit are being sold openly among the people, including youths, at the bazaar and Bihyanpara area.

Dishonest traders in collusion with the local terrorists are carrying out the drug business, gambling and other anti-social activities. Police maintain indifference in taking action against the terrorists or unscrupulous traders as they are being paid tolls regularly, it was learnt. Local people urged the authorities concerned to take proper action against the drug traders to prevent the youths from drug addition.

Rape incidents on rise

BENAPOLE, Sept 4: The number of rape incidents is on rise in the five southern districts in absence of punitive actions against the rapists, reports UNB.

According to competent sources, at least 85 women and children were allegedly raped in last seven months. Of the total, 42 women and children were raped in Jessor, 19 in Satkhira, 12 in Jhenidah, seven in Narail and five in Magura districts. A number of insane women also fell prey to the rapists in the five districts, mainly in Jhenidah. Three mad women were raped at Hatgopalpur, Keshabpur and Shyampur in Jhenidah and Jessor districts from May-July. The number of rape incidents is increasing as most of the rapists go unpunished, sources said adding that most of the accused in rape cases this year were not arrested.

Devastating fire

KHAGRACHHARI, Sept 4: A fatal fire broke out at a Cotton Mill in Dighinala upazila on Sunday. The mill has been totally burnt into ashes in the fire, reports BSS.

According to Dighinala police source, the incident occurred early in the morning from a cigarette butt and it was brought under control within an hour with the help of local people.

National

Woes of paying bed patients

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Sept 4: In spite of paying the due fees, patients of the paying beds in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) are not getting the expected services.

According to RMCH sources, a patient has to pay an amount of Tk 480 for the first seven days and another amount of Tk 55 for the next three days for a paying bed in the hospital. It usually takes four to 10 days for a patient of medicine wards to get release after cure, while a patient of surgical and gynaecological problems usually has to remain in the ward from 10 to 21 days. So a paying-bed patient spends much money, but gets no additional facility for that. Even the beds are not at all better than those of non-paying ones.

RMCH sources said that all the beds of the hospital had been non-paying since the inception of the hospital in late 50s. The government suddenly created some paying beds in late eighties.

"Actually no new bed was added, but some of the non-paying beds were declared paying ones," said a seminar RMCH official on condition of anonymity. "These beds are not at all different or superior to the non-paying ones in terms of quality, cleanliness and service," he said.

In some wards, the paying beds have been separated from the non-paying ones by a five inch thick wall, while in some other wards, the paying beds have remained in the same row.

To explain why the patients choose paying beds when there is no extra facility, the RMCH official said that the patients chose the paying beds only to have a bed, to avoid flooring.

The beds of the wards always remain occupied and some patients are always have to take their beds on the floor in the face of short number of beds in comparable with excess number of admitted patients. So a newly admitted patient is to do flooring for several days prior to taking a

bed.

On the other hand, paying beds are usually always available. So a patient who has the minimum financial ability, hires a paying bed to avoid flooring. This is the only advantage.

"This is nothing but one kind of black-mailing," the RMCH official said adding, "Taking the advantage of shortage of beds some people are being forced to hire a paying bed without offering any extra facility to them."

Another RMCH official said that the target of the government had been to earn some revenue from the wealthy persons. "But those who are wealthy in true sense do not usually come to the hospital, rather they go to the private clinics, he said. If any wealthy person come to the hospital, he/she hires a cabin, not a paying bed," he further said.

So the burden of the paying beds is borne by the people of low-income group who cannot afford to take service from the private clinics or cabins and do not get non-paying bed at the time of getting admission to RMCH.

The paying beds have been placed adjacent to the toilets.

"The toilets are not cleaned regularly and properly. Bad smell evolves always from the toilets creating sufferings to the paying bed patients and their attendants," said Aminur Rahman, a guardian of a paying-bed patient in a surgical ward.

Expressing grave anger, he opined that the hospital authorities should give the minimum facilities to the paying-bed patients from whom they took some money.

RMCH authorities acknowledged the observations and informed that the same situation had been prevailing in all the medical college hospitals. "We have nothing to do with it. The issue should be considered in the policy making level of the government," said the RMCH official.

News snaps

Construction work progressing

COX'S BAZAR, Sept 4: Construction work of the first phase of Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre is progressing fast at a cost of Taka five crore, reports UNB.

The centre on two acres of land will have 500-seated auditorium, a museum of traditional folk culture and system for imparting training to the artists and finding talent. State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader visited the construction site on Friday and expressed the hope that the centre would play an important role in attracting domestic and foreign tourists. He instructed the concerned authorities to complete the first phase of work by next May.

Two unnatural deaths

PATUAKHALI, Sept 4: Two unnatural deaths were reported here on August 30 and 31, reports UNB.

Police said unidentified assailants slaughtered Hemela Begum, 18, wife of Jahangir of Uttar Hazikhal village in sadar upazila by a sharp weapon while she was sleeping with her husband on August 30. Police arrested Jahangir in this connection. The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. In another incident, Dakhin Sabujbag area of the town on Thursday. Local people said family feud might be the reason behind the killing. Hanif and his family members are absconding. Separate cases were filed.



There is no proper time for cleaning garbage in Sirajganj town. As a result the town dwellers have to suffer a lot. Usually the local municipality staffers remain busy in cleaning wastes during busy time of a day. This picture has been taken from Barabazaar area where an unhygienic environment has been created by the sweepers during peak hour of trading at the bazaar.

Poor HSC result

COMILLA, Sept 4: Only 16 students out of 1,768 appeared from Nangolok centre came out successful in this year's HSC examination, reports UNB.

The students appeared in the examination from eight colleges. Of the successful candidates, 10 (out of 989) were from Nangolok Hassan Memorial Degree College while three (out of 206) from Nather Petua College. One each student passed from Homakhal Bazar High School and College, Bhulian High School and College and Chalon College. But, not a single student could pass from another three colleges Hosnabad College, Banggoda Badsha Mia College and Dr Zobaida Hanan High School and College.

Erosion threatens homesteads

NETRAKONA, Sept 4: Erosion by the River Dhanu has intensified threatening several hundred homesteads in Khalazuri upazila, reports UNB.

The worst affected villages are Baniapara, Banihati, Kurhati, Barohati, Chhotabati, Dighalhati, Asadpur and Jagannathpur. Apart from the erosion, big waves created due to high winds and plying of cargoes, launches and steamers round the clock are also eroding out soils of the houses of the villages. A number of government offices along the River Dhanu have also come under threat. Local people said the government is yet to take measures to protect their homesteads along the river.

JCD wins in college union poll

JOYPURHAT, Sept 4: Jatiyatabadi Chhota Dal (JCD), student wing of opposition BNP, swept in the Joypurhat Government College Students' Union election, reports UNB.

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