



(Left) Madhabkathi in Satkhira Sadar upazila still remains under flood waters, (Right) flood victims in Khalilnagar area under the same upazila waiting for succour for a long time.

-Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Chalan Beel project turns into farmers' bane

From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 16: The gigantic Chalan Beel Project which was supposed to be a boon to the farmers, has turned into a real bane for them.

Split into four polders ABC and D the ambitious project was launched in 1977 with financial assistance from World Food Programme, aiming to boost farm output by saving croplands from flood onslaughts. Under the project, embankments stretching over 12 Upazilas of Pabna, Natore and Sirajganj districts were constructed at a cost of Tk 43.46 crore. But faulty construction of the embankments continues to take its toll on the farmers. Crops on vast tracts of land under the project, especially in Singra and Atrai upazilas, are damaged each year due to faulty construction of its embankments. Hundreds of homesteads and educational institutions also come under flood onslaught every year.

As per the project profile, the project was supposed to have 251 miles of flood control embankment, 187 miles of water extraction canal, 24 regulators, 58 outlets and inlets, 55 bridges/culverts and 132 buildings. But the project was not implemented accordingly. The authorities had expected that additional crops worth about Tk 8.42 crore would be produced from some 2.13 lakh acres of land under the project area upon its implementation. Keeping this view in mind, some 225 kms of flood protection embankment were constructed along west bank of the River Atrai from Kalomnagar of Singra in Natore via Atrai upazila to Mohadevpur in four years from 1978. But the authorities stopped disbursing funds for the project in 1984 saying that 50 per cent works

of the project had been reduced following the installation of a regulator at the confluence of the River Barai near Chirghat.

The authorities, however, resumed implementation of the abandoned works in 1989 and constructed 129 miles more flood protection embankment. But they did not install any sluice gate on the embankments, except the one at Kalomnagarpara, causing severe water stagnation inside the project area.

Meanwhile, countless cracks have developed on the embankments in Sutkigacha, Badhaighara, Baithakhal and Sutrama of Atrai upazila, as locals cut away soils from the embankments for smooth movement of their carts. A 4 km embankment from Ninggol to Chalkpur has become vulnerable to floodwaters due to numerous cracks. It was learnt to have proposed the authorities to set up two big pump houses in C block of the project to save croplands from water stagnation, a proposal refused by the donor agency.

An official, who would not disclose his name, said during heavy rain in Naogaon's Barendra area, rainwater rolls down fast inundating low-lying areas from Mohadevpur to Kalomnagar, causing colossal damage to crops. The Atrai also bursts its banks with downpour, submerging croplands on its vicinity. Sometimes, the river water pours into the project area through the breaches of the embankments.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, addressing a public meeting here on January 12, 1999, had assured that necessary measures would be taken to resolve the Chalan Beel problem. But the government has failed to come up with follow-up programmes.

RANGPUR, Oct 16: Arsenic contamination beyond permissible level has been detected in tubewell water in 208 unions out of 679 unions in ten northern districts, causing concern among at least five lakh people. The districts include Rangpur, Nikhamari, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Bogra and Joypurhat.

A survey conducted recently by the Rangpur circle of Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) revealed that the arsenic level ranges between 1.05 mg and 3.07 mg in tubewell water, much beyond the permissible level of 0.5 mg.

According to sources, people in the affected areas are still using the contaminated water in absence of alternative source of water.

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Arsenic panic in 10 dists

From Our Correspondent

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The DPHE had sealed 51 tubewells at Pathak Shikar village in Kandi union under Pirogacha upazila in 1998 due to

arsenic contamination. But only five tubewells have been installed so far, the sources added.

At least 200 people have been affected with arsenic related diseases in Ullipur upazila in Kurigram district. According to local people, arsenic has been detected in water of a large number of tubewells in the upazila.

The authorities on Monday morning suspended the movement of Ro Ro ferry running on Aricha-Dauldolia route. A large number of long distance passengers had to undergo suffering in the hot weather as a lot of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the two ghats on Tuesday. The channel of the river is being gradually filled up with silts due to massive erosion and flow of sand with water from across the border. A BIWTA official said dredging works on Aricha-Nagarbari-Dauldolia route started from Sept 2 in order to maintain navigability on this sensitive route.

News snaps

Rail link restored

BENAPOLE, Oct 16: Rail communication between Bangladesh and India has been restored with the improvement of the flood situation in country's southwestern region, reports UNB.

Railway sources said only goods-trains are plying through Ranaghat of Shildah in India and Darshana in Bangladesh. Six more trains are waiting in Shildah station for entering Bangladesh. Banga-Benapole-Petrapole line is yet to be restored as the flood-affected people are still living on the rail line. Rail communication between the two countries remained suspended since September 18 due to the flash flood.

Cheques distributed

RANGAMAGTI, Oct 16: An amount of Tk 1.18 lakh sanctioned under a government programme has been distributed among 16 poor women and 12 women associations, reports UNB.

CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotindra Bodhi Priya Larma distributed cheques among the beneficiaries at a simple ceremony at the DC office Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Larma called upon the recipients to properly utilise the money for their self-employment.

Ferry movement suspended

MANIKGANJ, Oct 16: With the quick fall in water levels of rivers Padma-Jamuna, movement of ferry, launch and cargo vessels is facing problem on Aricha-Nagarbari-Dauldolia river route, reports UNB.

The authorities on Monday morning suspended the movement of Ro Ro ferry running on Aricha-Dauldolia route. A large number of long distance passengers had to undergo suffering in the hot weather as a lot of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the two ghats on Tuesday. The channel of the river is being gradually filled up with silts due to massive erosion and flow of sand with water from across the border. A BIWTA official said dredging works on Aricha-Nagarbari-Dauldolia route started from Sept 2 in order to maintain navigability on this sensitive route.



Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral A Taher distributing relief materials among the flood victims in Satkhira last week.

Ex-UP chairman sued

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 16: The district anti-corruption bureau filed three separate corruption cases against a former UP chairman and his two toll collectors, reports UNB.

The accused are Muhammad Fazlur Rahman, former chairman of Dana Patuli union in Sadar upazila, two union parishad toll collectors, Muhammad Shafuddin and Muhammad Abul Hashem. Anti-corruption office sources said the UP chairman during his tenure in 1992-97 embezzled a total of Tk 43,791 earned from lease of 'hat-bazaar' and 'kheyga ghat' and as deed registration fee. Shafuddin misappropriated toll money amounting to Tk 72,000 collected during the fiscal 1996-97 and 1997-98 and Hashem Tk 17,517 in fiscal 1990-91 instead of depositing with UP fund. After preliminary investigation, Anti Corruption Inspector Muhammad Iqbal Hossain filed the case with Sadar thana recently.

Govt medicine on sale

NAOGAON, Oct 16: A pharmacist was caught red handed while selling the medicine of Sapahar thana health complex in the market, reports UNB.

There are allegations of selling government medicine in the market instead of providing the patients in Thana Health Complex since long. Local people led by shopkeeper Monayem Chowdhury of Sapahar Market acting on a tip, caught Bachchu Chandra Pal, owner of Rekha Pharmacy of the market while selling 500-CC cholera saline recently and recovered 17 ampoules of saline from his procession. He was handed over to police. Bachchu confessed to police that storekeeper of the health complex Afzal Hossain sold the medicine to him. Health officials visited the spot and locked the store of the health complex but took no action against the storekeeper for reasons unknown.

Another victim of dowry

BAHMANIARIA, Oct 16: A court here sentenced a man and his mother to death on Thursday for killing his wife by throwing acid and setting fire on her for dowry, reports UNB.

Additional Sessions Judge M Nazrul Islam awarded the death penalty to Babul Miah and his mother Umema Begum of Sarail upazila. According to the case, Babul and Umema threw acid on Hajera and set fire on her body on January 30, 1998 for which Hajera died after one-month fighting. Babul married Hajera, daughter of Shamsu Miah of Kalki Kocher Dottopara of the same upazila three months before and used to repress her for dowry.

Body recovered

BARGUNA, Oct 16: Police recovered the body of a mother of three children from village Kalbari in Patharghatia upazila on Saturday.

On information, police rushed to the village and found the body of Rashida Khatun, 30, wife of Salam Khan, hanging from the ceiling of her house. Victim's family, however, alleged that Rashida's husband tortured her to death for her refusal to pay dowry money.

Woman succumbs to burn injuries

LALMONIRHAT, Oct 16: A housewife, who suffered severe burn injuries about five months back, died at Sadar Hospital on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said Alami, a microbus driver, of Haribhanga area in the town married Dulal Begum, 15, one year ago and set her on fire by pouring petrol for refusing to pay dowry on May 20. Meanwhile, police arrested Alami and his father Azad Mia after Adv Shamsul Haque filed a case with the police on behalf of Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR).

Girl rescued

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 16: Police have rescued a girl from the Mohananda river bridge near the town after two and a half hours of the hunt and arrested 14 youths in this connection, reports UNB.

Police said Sultana Razia Ruma, 20, daughter of Abdur Razzaq of village Basmahal in Shibganj upazila was abducted by co-villager Wadud Ali, 22, along with his 13 accomplices from the river ghat on Oct 7 at gunpoint. On the basis of information from the Ruma's father Shibganj police informed Sadar thana police that the miscreants were going to the Sadar town in two microbuses with the girl. Accordingly Sadar police laid an ambush on the bridge, arrested the youths and rescued the girl. Razzaq also filed a case with the police. But Ruma informed this correspondent that she married Wadud on Sept 12 this year. She said she along with her husband and his friends were going to visit a house of their relation but police arrested them unnecessarily. She also said her father filed the false abduction case, as he could not accept their marriage.

Four thieves arrested

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 16: Police have arrested four people for stealing remains of human body from a graveyard in Sadar upazila, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Minhajul, 30, Shahin, 20, Alim, 19, and Bablu. They haled from Annur Dihingar village in the upazila. Police said the gang dug the grave of Ruhul, 18, son of Subed Ali of the same village on the night of Oct 3 and took away the bones of his legs and hands. Ruhul was killed in lightning one and a half years ago. Later, on secret information, the local people caught them with the bones and handed them over to police. It may be mentioned that stealing of human remains, particularly of the people killed in lightning are on rise.

LP Gas Limited
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
House # 386, Road # 28
New DOHS, Mohakhali
Dhaka
Ref: LPG/FP/UTM/2000-2001 Dated: 15-10-2000

International Tender Notice

LP-Gas Limited invites sealed international tender from internationally reputed manufacturers/suppliers for supply of group (a) Digital Ultrasonic Thickness Gauge, group (b) Pressure Hydrometer and group (c) Gas Chromatograph.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on submission of a written application and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tk 200/- (two hundred) for each group from the office of General Manager, LP-Gas Limited, House No 386, Road No 28, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka from 19-10-2000. No tender document will be sold on the date of opening.

All bids must be accompanied by a security of Tk 5,000 (five thousand) or US \$100 (one hundred) for group (a) bid, Tk 2,000 (two thousand) or US \$40 (forty) for group (b) and Tk 6,000 (six thousand) or US \$110 (one hundred & ten) must be submitted separately in the Technical Offer for each group. All the tender must be submitted in two separate sealed envelopes marked on the top as "Technical Offer" and "Commercial Offer" and both the envelopes will be inserted in another sealed cover on the top of which tender inquiry number should be clearly mentioned. Offers for group (a), group (b) and group (c) bids must be submitted separately. Bidder has the option to quote for any one group or combination of groups. Tender revaluation will be made on individual group basis.

Only the Technical Offers will be opened in the office of General Manager, LP-Gas Limited, House No. 386, Road No. 28, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka at 12-00 hrs. BST on 20-11-2000 in the presence of bidders, representatives, if any. Commercial offers of the technically responsive bidders will be opened on a later date under intimation.

LP-Gas Limited reserves the right not to accept the lowest offer and to accept or reject any or all the offers partly or wholly without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager

GD-959

General Manager

General Manager