

National

Teesta water level falls

Croplands in three districts remain fallow

KURGRAM, Jan 27: The rapid fall in water level of the River Teesta caused by unilateral withdrawal of water by India forced thousands of farmers in Nilphamari, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts to leave their croplands uncultivated this season, reports UNB.

Teesta Barrage, the country's largest irrigation project, had virtually failed to bring back smile on the faces of the beleaguered farmers in the region as India continues to unilaterally withdraw water constructing a barrage a Gazalloba, 65 kms off the Teesta Barrage.

Although the first phase work on the Teesta Barrage Project completed on June 30, 1998, most farmers under the project cannot avail of irrigation facility as the barrage surrounded by shoals and sands has no adequate flow of water.

According to officials, the Teesta Barrage Project was, in fact, taken in 1935. But the work

on its started on Dec 12, 1979 at Dalia Doani in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari district.

The barrage was formally inaugurated on August 5, 1990, aiming at producing 20 megawatts of electricity for providing irrigation facility to 13.35 lakh acres of land in 35 upazilas of Dinajpur, Bogra and greater Rangpur districts.

Later, the project was split into two phases, separating the power generation programme from it. Upon completion of the first phase work, some 3.81 lakh acres of land in 12 upazilas of the three districts were brought under its irrigation facility.

Various infrastructure works, including excavation of a 380-km canal, an 80-km flood control dam and a 30-km main channel along with a 74-km secondary and a 387-km tertiary channel, and construction of 157 bridges, 353 culverts and 2,000 outlets, were completed to irrigate croplands in the dis-

trict.

Although the authorities expect to produce additional 4.87 lakh mts of paddy and 82,000 mts of wheat from the croplands under the project, some 6,000 acres of land, out of 3.81 lakh acres, have so far been brought under its irrigation facility.

But there have been allegations that the barrage was opened hastily in 1998 in the face of pressure from the government leaving its various infrastructural works like excavation of an 17-km tertiary canal and earth filling incomplete.

To hush up the irregularities, and an amount of Tk 20 crore was later sanctioned to complete the uncompleted works of the project, according to competent sources.

Locals alleged that some contractors did not work as per the project profile.

Madhukhali Health Complex ailing

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, Jan 27: A 31-bed Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex is beset with manifold problems depriving the people of proper health-care.

The health complex, has been turned into a nominal institution without rendering health care facilities to mitigate the suffering of the ailing humanity.

Paucity of qualified doctors and in medicines, maladministration, corruption, misuse of power, despotism of the complex executives and administrative complexity have gripped the health complex so viciously that the patients have been denied of the treatment, they require.

The health complex was well equipped with modern OT, X-Ray plant, pathological laboratory, labour ward, dental ward and automatic generator facilities since its inception, but all these wards have still been underlock and key for want of doctors medicine, sources and gynaecology. But the employees against all the

sanctioned posts of all the aforesaid departments have been drawing their monthly salaries and other benefits without rendering any service to the patients. Thus a huge amount of government money is being squandered every month.

Hundreds of people submitted memoranda to the relevant higher authorities several times stating the stalemate of the health complex, but to no effect as yet.

It is reported that the present administrative officer of the health complex, Dr Nazrul Islam is a resident of the neighbouring district Magura. Inspite of having a government quarter within the health complex campus, he does not reside there. He attends his work at 216 vaccination centres. However, Dr Nazrul Islam could not be contacted for comment.

No action has been taken against him and he continues his malpractices unabated.

Moreover, there is no doctor at eight union health complexes under Madhukhali upazila.

From this dismal state of affairs prevailing in the health complexes it is evident that the people of Madhukhali upazila are completely deprived of any health care facilities.

He has allegedly rented his government quarter to some

Law and order downslide continues in Faridpur

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, Jan 27: The law and order situation of the district has reached its worst stage.

The people of the district, especially businessmen have become hostages in the hands of terrorist groups Babu Kashai Bahini, Jahangir Bahini, Alamgir Bahini, Selim Bahini, Shahin Bahini, Nuru Bahini and Shamim Bahini.

All these bahinis have blessings of powerful stalwarts.

Now Babu Kashai Bahini is reportedly on the lead in extorting money, snatching, mugging, robbing in broad day-light and other crimes.

It is reported that Babu Kashai Bahini extorted Tk 50 lakh during the holy month of Ramadan from the businessmen, contractors, and transport owners.

A bus owner died of massive heart attack a day before the Eid-ul-Fitr following a deadly threat from Babu Kashai in demand of Tk 5 lakh as "Eid Bakshish". Following his death half-day transport strike was observed here and a big rally led by munici-

pality chairman Hasibul Hasan Labu and bus owners association general secretary Kamrul Hasan Siddique met the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and Police Super and handed over to them memorandum demanding immediate arrest of Babu Kashai and others.

Living at Kamarpur, his sanctuary, six kilometres off the town on Faridpur-Daulatdia Highway Babu Kashai Bahini let loose a reign of terror at villages Shuvarampur, Shibrampur, Dhuldi, Hat Gobindapur, Brahmkanda and Kanaipur over a vast rural areas in addition to the town. The people of the areas have been seized with Babu Kashai phobia.

On December 24 Babu Kashai and his accomplices made three abortive attempts on the life of the former district Awami League General Secretary Bipul Ghosh at his residence at Goalchamot as he vehemently protested the criminal activities of Babu Kashai at a big public meeting held here recently.

Besides extortion and terror-

ism, Babu Kashai Bahini reportedly commit rapes on rural women both young and elderly. It may be mentioned here that Babu Kashai was awarded death sentence in the sensational Firoz Murder Case in the district judge court but acquitted in the high court.

Since his acquittal, he became more atrocious. He had against him more than 50 criminal cases lodged with different police stations.

Bipul Ghosh, former district Awami League general secretary also registered a case against Babu Kashai with Kotwali thana under PSA on December 25 following futile design on his life. Babu Kashai Bahini reinforced with the joining of top accomplices of notorious Ershad Shikder have been committing crimes unabated to the horror and insecurity of the people of the district at large.

The concerned authority should take stern measures against these criminals to ensure the basic human rights of security to life and property.

Jamuna shoal brings fortune for them

A photo feature by Aktheruzzaman Bablu

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Innumerable shoals emerge in the River Jamuna throughout the year. A section of so-called contractors in collaboration with some touts collect sand from these shoals through day labourers at a nominal price. They carry it by boats and store it in front of Sirajganj Town Protection Embankment. Photos on top (L-R) (1) Some bare footed day labourers are seen carrying sand in severe cold from the boats, (2) sand is being dumped in front of the town protection dam in connivance with some middlemen. So-called contractors reportedly sell this sand on contract basis to fill up various ditches of the town and elsewhere. As a result the government is being deprived of revenue, but the government officials are quite indifferent to this practice. Bottom photos (L-R) show (3) the suppliers earn a good amount of black money by supplying sand through trucks, (4) a deep ditch situated on the rear side of the town and in front of the Sadar thana is being filled up by sand.



The teachers of Rajshahi University brought out a procession on the campus recently hailing the historic verdict of the High Court against fatwa.

--Star photo

Two freedom fighters pass away

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 27: Two freedom fighters died at their residences in the town on January 19 and 18.

Abdus Salam, 56, former president of Sirajganj Medicine Traders' Association, died of cardiac arrest in the early hours of January 19 at his Station Road residence.

He left behind wife, a son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Gupirpara in Sadar upazila. Home and Post and Tele Communications Minister Mohammad Nasim visited the residence of the deceased.

Advocate Golam Sarwar, 55, local Awami League leader and a senior lawyer of Sirajganj Bar Association, died also of cardiac arrest at about 9 pm on January 18.

He left behind wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Home and Post and Tele Communications Minister Mohammad Nasim, among others, attended the janaza of the deceased.

Advocate Golam Sarwar, 55, local Awami League leader and a senior lawyer of Sirajganj Bar Association, died also of cardiac arrest at about 9 pm on January 18.

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