

Teesta Barrage area now virtually a desert

Farmers face crop damage due to scarcity of water

E A M ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

When a passer-by looks at the Teesta Barrage in Dalia, a remote village of Nilphamari district, he is puzzled to find it now standing on huge sand and sand only instead of water. The sun rays falling on the sand although look like water in fact mirage.

Teesta Barrage plan had been executed with promising hopes and aspirations. It was planned that with the implementation of Teesta Barrage, a huge area in the northern region of the country would be benefited and paddy cultivation will be increased tremendously. But the situation is far away from target. Concerned PDB source unwilling to disclose his identity has informed that during this year's dry season, plan for water supply to the lands coming under this project has not been implemented due to acute water shortage. In last year's aman season, it was possible to supply water on 35,000 hectares of land out of total land under this plan. In the current season, cultivators hoping for water supply on 60,200 hectares under this programme cultivated IRR1-Boro paddy on equivalent cultivable land. But in fact failing to get a single drop of water supply, farmers have been in great distress.

TLM programme begins in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

With the objective to make Habiganj district illiteracy-free within six months, a Total Literacy Movement (TLM) titled 'Jagrata Habiganj' began here on Saturday.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria inaugurated the programme at a function at local stadium.

A total of 4.05 lakh illiterate people aged between 11 and 45 years of eight upazilas and four municipalities of the district will be made literate under the programme.

Inaugurating the programme the Finance Minister hoped that the country would be made illiteracy-free by 2006 although the previous deadline was 2003, said an official handout.

Terming education key to development and eradication of poverty he said the present government is functioning with a view to prepare the nation to face the challenges of the days to come.

Kibria referred to various development works in the district and

Although different sewerage committees have announced through hectic miking for abundant availability of water, but in fact the scenario is completely opposite.

However, despite non-existence of any target for water supply, due to storage of a small quantity of water in the connecting drainage in Dimla and Jalghaka upazilla, a few lands in this region have got a little bit water supply.

On the other hand, it was estimated for storage of 5,000 cusec water near the barrage, but it has been gathered from reliable source that the real cause of no water supply, according to original plan is different. India has constructed a barrage along "gajal" canal in the Indian part, which is only 90 km away from Teesta Barrage and has withdrawn water supply. At present a small quantity of sucked out sand filled water from this barrage is the only availability. Other than this, there is no supply of a single drop of water in the downstream. This has turned Nilphamari district as well as the adjoining areas desert.

Getting totally upset over such frustrating situation, cultivators are trying their best to find alternate arrangements. But that too is handicapped owing to short availability of

drainage pump and spares together with higher price of diesel mobile.

Last year a meeting of Joint River Commission (JRC) was held in Dhaka at secretary level of India and Bangladesh although an agenda was prepared to discuss this stalemate situation in water distribution of the Teesta river. But in fact it was decided only to watch the situation and no further progress has since

then been made.

Due to this unilateral withdrawal of water supply by India, not only the whole area under Teesta Barrage project has been deserted, but also the Teesta Barrage itself built with huge sums of money has lost its utility and has turned out as an architectural structure of tourists attraction only.

Tk 5 lakh valuables looted

UNB, Noakhali

A band of armed terrorists ransacked shops, injured 14 people and looted valuables worth Tk 5 lakh from Choumohani Bazar in Noakhali district on March 10.

Police said the hoodlums, earlier, demanded toll from the traders, who refused to pay the same. Angered by the refusal, the armed ruffians launched the attack on the business establishments at the dead night and looted the cash money and goods after injuring 14 employees.

A case was filed with local police in this connection.

Air pollution poses threat to health in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Presence of excessive sulfur dioxide in air has emerged as a threat to public health in the divisional city. A recent study conducted in some selected areas of the city shows that the air contains this poisonous chemical beyond its permissible limit.

The air contains 1.07 ppm (per cent per mg) sulfur di-oxide while the permissible limit of this chemical compound is only 0.02 ppm, the study said.

The research was conducted by the students of Environment

Engineering and Pollution Control Department of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

The quantum of hydrogen sulfide is also high in the air, the study said.

According to public health experts, excessive sulfur di-oxide and hydrogen sulfide in air causes bronchitis and other diseases in the respiratory system of human beings.

The researchers said indiscriminate use of coal and hydrocarbon as fuel and emission of black smoke from vehicles are the main reasons behind the air pollution.

The study was conducted in

Ambarkhana, Bandarbarazar, Chouhatta, Sobhanighat and Kadamtoli areas of the town.

Attack on wedding party

UNB, Patuakhali

Armed terrorists swooped on a post-wedding function and assaulted the newlywed bridegroom and bride at East Kartikpasha village in Dumki upazila of Patuakhali district on Monday. Villagers said the hoodlums, numbering about 15, attacked the function for not being invited by the bridegroom.

NEWS SNAPS

Miracle indeed!

UNB, Thakurgaon

It is miracle that a four-year-old girl has survived after falling from the rooftop of a three-storied building.

Khama, only daughter of hospital nurse Rubina Akter Pervin, fell on the ground from the rooftop. Parents thought she is not alive. But neighbours rushed her to Ranishangkail health complex and later to Dinajpur Medical Hospital where doctors said the baby is saved.

Workshop for women

UNB, Joypurhat

A workshop, aiming to successfully rehabilitate 810 distressed women in four upazilas of Joypurhat district through income-generating programmes, was held Wednesday.

Women Affairs Department, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, World Food Organisation and BRAC jointly organised the workshop at the BRAC regional office in Khanjonpur.

Loan for sugarcane growers

UNB, Panchagarh

Panchagarh Sugar mill produced some 9,602 metric tons of sugar from 9,7000 mts of sugarcane in its 98 crushing days this season. Mill sources said the mill posted 8.35 per cent extraction rate this year despite high price of diesel, scaling down its loss rate.

Meanwhile, the authorities have distributed loan amounting to Tk 1 crore among the sugarcane growers to achieve their production target next year.

Female Writers' Association launched

UNB, Thakurgaon

Female writers here have launched an association in a bid to promote women rights. The association, Female Writers Association, was launched at a meeting at Women Affairs Department on Feb 28 with renowned female writer Syeda Jahanara presiding. A 10-member committee was also formed at the meeting.



A painting competition was organised by the UNESCO Club Of Narayanganj on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day at Narayanganj Jute Association Auditorium recently. Winners of the competition are seen with medals.