



PHOTO DELWAR KABIR

Farakka Barrage has kept a bad impact on the ecology of Bangladesh. Water levels have fallen sharply in all the rivers of southwestern districts of the country. As a result irrigation, navigation and ecology have been affected badly. Innumerable shoals have emerged in the riverbeds virtually turning the mighty rivers into canals. (Left to right) Miserable conditions of the River Kapatakha in Mohespur, (middle) the River Nabaganga which flows through Arappur of Jhenidah town and the River Chitra at Naldanga under Kalliganj upazila, all under Jhenidah district.

Incidents of torture on women rise in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Incidents of killing and torture on women are increasing alarmingly in Satkhira district.

A total of seven women were killed in different villages in the district during February 2 to March 15.

According to police sources, Rawshan Ara, 32, second wife of Babul Hossain of Math Para in Kalaroa upazila was beaten to death by her husband on March 15. The killer husband demanded dowry which her father failed to pay. Being angry, the husband tortured her mercilessly and she died on the spot.

On March 14, Moyna Begum, 17, wife of Samser Ali of village Bhadra Khali in Kaligonj upazila was beaten to death by her husband. Samser Ali married to Moyna, daughter of Panaulah of village Garia of the same upazila 13 months ago. At the time of marriage, he took dowry. Recently he demanded more dowry which her father failed to pay which led to the killing.

On March 11, Anowara Khatun, 16, wife of Liton Sardar of village Teghoria in Shyamnagar upazila was

beaten to death by her husband.

On March 6, Hajira Begum, 25 wife of Akram Gazi of village Majhira in Tala upazila was tortured to death by her husband. The killer husband demanded dowry which her father failed to pay and being angry, Akram beat his wife mercilessly. She died on the spot.

On February 13, Momena Khatun, 26, wife of Rejaul Islam of Patkelghata in Tala upazila was strangled to death by her husband. The cause of the killing was not known.

On February 12, Moyna Begum, 21, wife of Ashraf Haque of village Baikari in sadar upazila was beaten to death by her husband. The killer husband demanded dowry that her poor parents failed to pay and being angry the husband beat her mercilessly and she died instantly.

On February 2, police recovered the decomposed body of Tanzila Khatun, 15, daughter of Ismail Gazi of village Dudli in Tala upazila from Khalish Khali Bazar area. The miscreants raped and killed her, police said.



PHOTO AKHTERUZZAMAN BABLU

Haripur village in Sadar upazila of Sirajganj district is famous for its handloom industry. But the industry owners are least bothered to protect the environment around their establishments. Because they dump wastes of their industries in this water body (as shown in the picture) which runs through the middle of the village polluting its water. Rural women also wash utensils and clothes here which is harmful to health. But there is none to check the bad practice.

Tale of an ill-fated maidservant

UNB, Moulvibazar

The face of a poor maidservant was burnt badly when the angry mistress forced her face in hot water.

A case was filed for torture of the teenage girl. The court asked the police for report on the incident. But the residents suspect police have been acting under influence of the accused.

The incident took place in village Baliarbagh under Sadar upazila of Moulvibazar district about a couple of months ago.

According to the case, Yasmin, aged about 10 lost her father several years ago. Her mother married another man leaving Yasmin with her maternal grandmother Aysha Begum.

Because of poverty, the grandmother allowed Yasmin to work as maid in the house of Farooq Mia of Baliarbagh on a monthly salary of Tk 50.

Farooq assured that he would marry the girl off when she comes of age. But his wife, the mistress, was most unkind to the orphan and often tortured her physically.

In one morning in January, the mistress caught Yasmin by her hair and put her face in hot water. Finding the girl's face badly burnt, the mistress immediately broke an egg and applied to the injury. She also threatened Yasmin of dire consequence if she told the incident to anyone.

After three days Lakkhi Bibi, a village hawker, came to the house of Farooq Mia. Yasmin narrated her woes to Lakkhi Bibi to convey to her grandmother with an ardent appeal to rescue her from the clutches of the cruel mistress.

Yasmin was finally rescued and admitted to Sadar Hospital. After treatment, she returned to her grandmother with marks of injuries in her face and other parts of her body.

Acute scarcity of bullocks in eight N dists

UNB, Rangpur

Acute shortage of bullocks has been prevailing in eight districts of the northern region, causing serious obstacles to cultivation.

Agriculture Department sources said about 15 to 20 lakh pairs of bullocks are needed for cultivation of some 30 lakh acres of land in the districts.

But the bullocks are much less than the required number. The districts are Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

Livestock Department sources said there are about 4.80 lakh pairs

of bullocks in these districts. Out of the total, about 50 per cent are unfit of work due to sickness.

Although some affluent farmers are tilling their lands using tractors and power tillers, 70 per cent are dependent on bullocks, they added.

Moreover, scarcity of fodder is prevailing in the region due to the recurring floods and drought. The poor farmers are forced to sell their bullocks failing to arrange fodder.

Taking advantage, a section of traders are purchasing these bullocks at throwaway prices and supplying those to the slaughtering houses every day. Informed sources said some 9,000 cows are being slaughtered in these eight districts in a week.

10 vessels fined Tk 1.27 lakh in Ctg port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) in a special drive fined 10 vessels Tk 1.27 lakh for their movement in violation of law.

The authority conducted the under Port Ordinance-1976 at port channel recently.

The drive, conducted by CPA Magistrate M Munir Chowdhury in collaboration with Chittagong Metropolitan Police and marines, technical and accounts departments of Chittagong Port, started from Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge point at 8:45 am and ended at Potenga Kalco Jetty point at 1:45 pm.

With this CPA has fined 129 vessels over Tk 18 lakh at port channel in the last five months.

30th anniversary of laying siege to Rangpur Cantt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The 30th anniversary of laying siege to Rangpur Cantonment was observed in Rangpur town.

District Awami League organised various programmes on the occasion.

The programmes included placing wreaths at the memorial, bringing out procession and holding meeting.

Local people equipped with arrows, sharp weapons and batons laid a siege to Rangpur Cantonment on March 28, 1971. Following the incident Pakistani soldiers started crack down and some one hundred villagers were killed.

Tk 1.21cr Seismic Centre work going on in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Work on the construction of Seismic Centre in Sylhet is progressing fast at a cost of Tk 1.21 crore.

Construction work of the ground floor of the six-storied building is likely to be completed by the year end.

After completion of the construction work of the ground floor necessary equipment will be installed to fulfill a long standing demand of the people of Sylhet, the most earthquake prone region of the country.

The long seismic centre of the

country is located in Chittagong, and the machinery of the centre is almost outdated. As a result, the exact monitoring of earthquake would not be possible.

As Bangladesh is one of the earthquake prone regions in the world the government has under taken a project to set up three more seismic centres and for renovation of the Chittagong centre.

According to a survey of the French Engineering Consortium in 1989 Sylhet was found most vulnerable region to earthquake in Bangladesh in last 100 years.

Besides, the epicentre of the Great Indian Earthquake was in Assam, when Sylhet was a tiny district of Assam province.

Most of the earthquake scientists said Sylhet lies in the Assam 'Dauki Danger Fault' line of earthquake and may hit by the tremor any time.

Some one-lakh people died in the recent devastating earthquake in Gujarat, India, which is situated on the same earthquake zone.

The new seismic centre could help provide early warning about the probable earthquake to the people to minimize the casualties.

Siltation hampers navigation in Shariatpur, Madaripur

UNB, Shariatpur

Heavy silts in rivers across Shariatpur district and the neighbouring Madaripur have been hampering navigation seriously.

Numerous shoals have emerged in the riverbeds of the Padma, Arial Khan, Kumar and Kirtinasha, hampering the plying of launch, steamer, trawler and other river vessels. At some points even the country boats are also facing problems due to share fall in water level.

The affected river routes include Madaripur-Dhaka, Madaripur-Chandpur and Madaripur-Shariatpur routes. With the drying up of the mouths of Pajkhal and Talta canals the launches from here to Dhaka have to ply via Chandpur, adding 50 extra miles to the journey.

"The passengers as well as the transport owners have to spend more money and time for the journey," said the sources adding, "it needs five more hours to reach the capital from the district headquarters."

Meanwhile, ferry movement at Mawa Sheikhpur and Kazirtek terminals is also being hampered due to the reasons and sometimes the vehicles are to wait for hours for the high tide for crossing the river.

The river routes play a very important role in the trade and commerce of the region. The silt in the rivers may adversely affect agriculture, industrial growth and over all trade and commerce of the two districts if adequate measures for dredging are not taken immediately.

The business activities at the important river port of Charmuguria have reduced substantially due to the accumulation of heavy silts in the river Arial Khan. A similar situation has been prevailing at Rajoir and Takerhat ports.

Human habitation is also growing on different shoals of the district.

A BIWTC source said that the river Padma is the source of almost all the rivers in the two districts and accumulation of silt at the mouths has been hampering the flow particularly during the dry season.

Excessive use of fertiliser destroying soil fertility

BSS, Gopalganj

Excessive use of chemical fertilisers and continued cultivation of some crops on the same lands without interval are steadily destroying the production capability of soil in greater Faridpur district.

Farmers, having little knowledge of soil components, use chemical fertilisers unnecessarily to get maximum output which is destroying the production capability of soil in Gopalganj, Madaripur, Faridpur, Shariatpur and Rajbari districts.

They are also in the habit of cultivating the same crops in the same plot of land without interval.

They have almost forgotten the use of organic fertilisers that possess some properties of retaining the production capability and stopping the degradation of soil.

Erosion renders 1.5 lakh homeless in Sylhet division in three years

UNB, Sylhet

Some 1.5 lakh people of 10 upazilas of three districts under Sylhet division became homeless due to continuous erosion by river Kushiyara over the years.

Sources said 70 villages, 16 village bazaars, 15 high schools, four madrasahs (religious schools), eight health centres, over 50 primary schools and homes of 35,000 families were eroded during the period.

The upazilas are Jokiganj, Gopalganj, Bianibazar, Fenchuganj and Balaganj of Sylhet, Bajnagar and Sadar of Moulvibazar and Azmiriganj, Nabiganj and Baniachang of Habiganj.

The sources said due to lack of measures in checking erosion, the river gets furious during the rainy season and engulfs the homesteads.

Most of the arable lands of this region are used twice or thrice for growing crops every year, using chemical fertilisers.

Sixty to eighty kg of chemical fertilisers, including urea, TSP SSP and potas, are used for per 'bigha' of land.

Production capability of soil is also being destroyed by the presence of iron in groundwater, use of deep tubewells for irrigation and siltation in rivers during floods.

Experts suggested use of chemical fertilisers after proper testing of soil and application of organic fertiliser. Otherwise, production capability of soil will drop further, they added.

They put emphasis on proper training of farmers in the district to equip them with agricultural knowledge.

These people have taken shelter on embankments of Water Development Board and high lands and passing their days in great distress.

Mugger beaten to death

UNB, Narayanganj

An alleged mugger was beaten to death in Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj in the early hours of Tuesday.

Police said truckers caught Mobarak, 22, son of Manik Mia of Barogaon village in the upazila, when he stopped a man to mug on Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Lalit bridge at about 2:30 am. They gave him a mass beating leaving him critically injured.

Hoodlums attack house of businessman in Srimangal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Armed hoodlums have stormed into the house of a businessman at Srimangal upazila headquarters in Moulvibazar district, assaulted female inmates and looted cash taka and valuables.

According to local people, before attacking the house the gangsters at around 8pm on March 23 attacked Shahabuddin Sumon, son of Nurunnabi Patwari, in front of his house in Shantibag residential area. The terrorists also snatched Taka 1.60 lakh from Suman's handbag.

As neighbours came in rescue of Suman, hoodlums chased them. At one stage, the terrorists entered the house of businessman Nurunnabi Patwari, manhandled three daughters of Patwari and looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables.

When contacted over telephone, Sub-inspector of Srimangal police station Md Nurul Alam admitted the fact.

The sub-inspector also informed that a case was filed in this connection.

A man, identified as Sohel, was arrested and other six accused surrendered to the court, the sub-inspector added.

175 houses gutted in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT Rajshahi

At least 175 houses at village Nimtala under Godagari upazila in Rajshahi were gutted in a devastating fire recently.

About 30 cows and goats were also roasted alive. Six people including two children were also injured in the fire.

Locals said the fire was originated from a kitchen of one Kazem Uddin and it engulfed the entire village within a few minutes.

As a result, at least 175 houses of 50 families including huge quantity of paddy, wheat, clothes, gold ornaments, cash taka and other household goods were burnt. The loss was estimated at about Taka 151 lakh.

NEWS SNAPS

Jubo Dal leader chopped to death

UNB, Bagerhat

A local leader of Jubo Dal was chopped to death by terrorists at Sadar Hospital crossing in Bagerhat town on Wednesday night. Police said Quamruzzaman Tito, 25, publicity secretary of the town unit of Jubo Dal, was hacked by the terrorists over establishing supremacy in the area. He died at Bagerhat Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested four people from Muniganj in the town in connection with the killing. They are: Ruhul Amin Babu, 27, Mizanur Rahman Chandu, 30, Forkan Hawlader, 23, and Jalal Sheikh, 25. They also seized a countrymade gun and bomb making materials from their possession.

Biscuit factory worker shot dead

UNB, Feni

A biscuit factory worker was shot and killed at his workplace at Natunbazar in Feni town on Thursday. Police said Abu Bakar, 25, of Damdama village in Sadar upazila was attacked by two unidentified youths in the factory. He died on way to hospital.

Local sources said Mizan and Zia, locally known as ruling party cadres, opened fire on the worker for disclosing the names of muggers who had looted valuables from a truck during hartal on Tuesday.

Jubo League leader's body found

UNB, Laxmipur

After five days of abduction, body of Korshed Alam Liton, Dighali union Jubo League president, was recovered on Wednesday from the WAPDA canal in Luxmipur. Residents found the body floating along water hyacinth in the canal passed by the home of Korshed Alam. On information, police recovered the body.

Awami League and its front organisations brought out processions with the body and held Babul-led terrorists of BNP responsible for the murder of Korshed. They were critical of Police Super Intan Ali for failure to rescue Korshed alive and demanded his dismissal. Korshed was abducted at gunpoint from his home in the afternoon of March 31 allegedly by a group of terrorists belonging to BNP. Meanwhile, Abul Kalam, an Awami League activist, was severely beaten by BNP activists in village Narsinghapur of Dattapara in Luxmipur. The terrorists also displayed firearms and extorted tolls in the area.

New Godagari Municipality chairman

UNB, Rajshahi

BNP-backed candidate Anwarul Islam Chowdhury was elected chairman of Godagari Municipality in the by-election held on Wednesday. Chowdhury bagged 4,342 votes while his nearest rival Mawlana Abdul Malek of Jamaat-e-Islami got 4,082.

Some 15,435 voters out of the total 17,529 cast their votes in the by-election. A total of seven candidates, including three from ruling Awami League and two from BNP, contested the election. The post fell vacant following the death of former Municipality Chairman Abdur Razzak.

AL factions clash: 15 injured

UNB, Pabna

At least 15 people were injured in a series of armed clashes between rival factions of ruling Awami League at Kalachandpara in Pabna town from Tuesday midnight to Wednesday dawn. Locals said the clash was an outburst of long-standing dispute between the two factions. Scores of gunshots were fired and bombs exploded during the period creating panic in the area.

Of the injured bullet-hit Rubel, 28, and Sabuj, 35, were admitted to Pabna General Hospital while others were taking treatment at different clinics to avoid police arrest. Riot police have been deployed in the area to prevent further clash. Apprehending possible clash, all shops and business establishments remained closed in the area on Wednesday.

Two murdered

UNB, Kishoreganj

Two people including a housewife were murdered by their rivals on Thursday.

Police said the rivals following a dispute over purchasing a house attacked Janab Ali, 50, of village Gobindapur in Hossainpur upazila in Kishoreganj district while he was returning home from the local market. At one stage they beat him mercilessly causing his instantaneous death. In another incident on the same day Rashida Khatun, 60, wife of Abdul Motaleb of village Panchukhi in Nandail upazila, Mymensingh, was stabbed to death by her relations over a land dispute. The bodies were sent to Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Separate cases were filed with the police.

Thieves make away with Tk 1 lakh valuables

UNB, Bagerhat

A band of thieves took away valuables worth Tk one lakh making all the nine members of a family unconscious in Mollahat upazila in Bagerhat on Friday night.

Police said unidentified criminal tactfully mixed sedatives with dinner of Saidur Rahman's family of Hallimpur village in the upazila on the night. All the nine members of the family fell deep asleep after eating the dinner. Unconscious family members were given treatment locally and conditions of seven were stated to be critical. A case was filed.

Nine extortionists sued under PSA

UNB, Panchagarh

Kotwali police in Panchagarh filed a case against nine extortionists under Public Safety Act Friday.

Police said a number of criminals under the banner of a transport workers' association have been collecting illegal tolls from the stone carrying trucks in Jagaddal area in Sadar upazila since long. Sub-inspector Abdus Salam of Kotwali thana after field investigation filed the case. He said on the basis of the complaint they rushed to the spot on Friday and the hoodlums sensing police presence left the spot leaving two receipt books and Tk 3,500 in cash behind. Police recovered the money and receipt books and filed the case including gang leaders Jahur Ali, Mainuddin, Atar and Hamidul.

BCL leaders tendons cut off

UNB, Shariatpur

Terrorists cut off tendons of legs and hands of a Chhatra League leader at Dildewnia village in Nana upazila of Shariatpur on Thursday.

Local people Zuhas Matabbar alias Ripon, 22, a BCL leader of Zazira College, came under attack of a gang of terrorists allegedly led by Mujibur Rahman over capturing a house in the area. He was first admitted to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

JP leader announces candidature

UNB, Bagerhat

Farid Hasan of Jatiya Party (Ershad) on Wednesday announced his candidature for the upcoming general election from Bagerhat-2 (Sadar-Kachua) constituency. Announcing this at a press conference at Jatiya Party office Farid Hasan claimed himself as nominee of the BNP led 4-party opposition alliance.

His premature move has evoked sharp criticism in the alliance. District leaders of other component parties of the alliance dismissed Hasan's claim saying it is too early and he has no sanction of doing it. District BNP president MAH Selim has been campaigning for the last two years to contest the election from Bagerhat-2 constituency. Selim was not immediately available to comment on the claim of Farid Hasan.

Businessman robbed

UNB, Narayanganj

Muggers snatched about Tk 5 lakh from a businessman at gunpoint near the bailey bridge at Syeedpur in Narayanganj Thursday. Victim Monirul Islam, a cloth trader and also godown inspector of National Bank, was coming from Lalmonohar in Bhola by launch and got down at Kathpatti in Munshiganj.

"Three armed gobs snatched by briefcase with the money while entering Narayanganj town by a rickshaw" he told journalists. Monirul Islam, who resides at Shah Suja Road in Narayanganj told journalists that police at sadar thana did not receive his case.