

Diarrhoea claims two children in Rangpur

MOZAMMEL HUQ, Rangpur

Two children died of diarrhoea which broke out in an epidemic in the remote shoal areas in the 'Monga' (a period of crisis of food) stricken Gangachara upazila in Rangpur. At least 100 others were attacked by the disease, eyewitnesses said. The deads are Mariam, 2, daughter of Mafizul and Hossain, 8, son of

Rafiq. Both are inhabitants of the Chilakhal shoal area.

A physician of Gangachara Health Complex named Reazul Islam confirmed the death toll. Eyewitnesses alleged that most of the inhabitants of Chilakhal Ashrayan centre in Kolkond union were attacked by diarrhoeal diseases. Acute food crisis was prevailing across the shoal areas and other

parts of the upazila. The situation same pitiable situation prevails in the shoal areas, eyewitnesses said.

The poverty stricken people in the shoal areas were passing days unfed for two to three days or more. When they took animal fodder they were attacked by diarrhoeal diseases.

There was no good road communications between the shoal area

and the upazila headquarters. The river Teesta snapped the road link. People in the shoal areas were unable to come to upazila health centres.

Most surprising was that the shoal people were passing their nights without sleep. They beat drums, tins, steel plates, play bugles out of superstition.

The upazila authorities, however, distributed a meagre amount of GR rice among the people in a bid to mitigate their sufferings caused due to river erosions and unemployment.

The healthcare services were very poor. They had been no initiative to distribute oral saline among the people.

A spokesman of the health department said that medical teams were working all over the upazila. But, there were allegations that the people were totally deprived of health care facilities.

Local people urged the authorities concerned to rush medical teams there along with adequate food immediately.

10 hurt in clash over screening of video film

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 10 people were injured, three of them critically in a clash between two rival groups of villagers at an annual fair at village 'Boro-sholo' in Magura Sadar upazila on Monday night.

Witnesses said both the feuding groups equipped with lethal weapons clashed following an altercation over screening of a 'video-film' at the fair on the holy night of 'Shab-e-Barat'.

Seriously injured persons identified as Bazlur Rahman, 23, Saiful Islam, 28, and Ilias, 35, were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital at 10-50 pm.

No case was lodged in this connection till filing of this report in the afternoon on October 22.

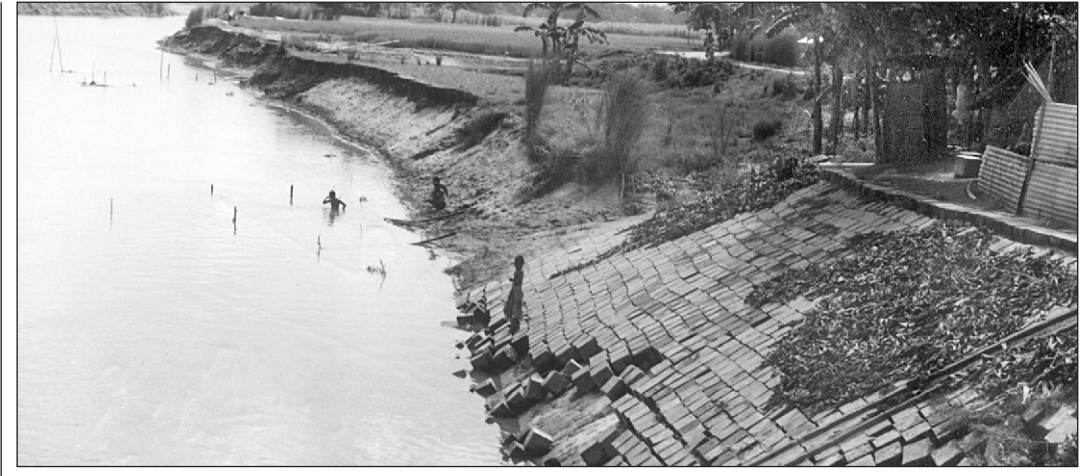


PHOTO: STAR

An embankment has been damaged badly due to unabated erosion by the river Ghagot in Rangpur. The embankment constructed by Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) with cement-concrete blocks, 25 kilometre off Rangpur town to protect erosion of the river. Mirzapur-Kaikuri road, a vital road in the area is also threatened by the river erosion.

Body recovered in Satkhira

BSS, Satkhira

Assasuni thana police recovered an unidentified body from a paddy field at Gunakarkati in Assasuni upazila on Tuesday.

Police sources said, being informed by the villagers, police came to the spot and recovered the body. It was sent to Satkhira Sadar hospital for postmortem.

Ghost bills puzzle phone subscribers

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

Nearly 100 telephone subscribers in Magura town have become puzzled after receiving abnormally inflated ghost bills which they received in the first week of October.

Even Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTTB) issued bill amounting to Tk 2 lakh as bill for the month of July, 2001.

All the recipients objected to the BTTB authorities about the ghost bills.

"They had issued a ghost bill amounting to Tk 1 lakh 92 thousand which was about 30 times higher than the actual bill of a single month which usually ranges between Tk 600 and 700, alleged a telephone subscriber of MR Road in Magura town on condition of anonymity.

The BTTB authorities did not clarify their position officially about the inflated bills of July 2001.

Benzir Ahmed of the College para (Telephone no 62718) was puzzled with a ghost bill amounting to Tk 1 lakh 90 thousand for the month of July 2001, while Mafizur Rahman, another telephone subscriber of the Bhaina area in the town received a bill amounting to Tk 1 lakh 95 thousand against his telephone no 63545 for the same

month.

Nearly 200 telephone owners in Magura town used to receive slim bills for their 'underhand deal' with former BTTB officials. Sixtyfive persons have illegal telephones which they use for business purpose.

Some unscrupulous officials of BTTB allegedly used to receive Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500 per month from these businessmen who usually receive bills ranging between Tk 600 to 700 per month.

This way the government is being deprived of huge revenue.

However, when the care-taker government came to power in 2001, some corrupted BTTB officials sent ghost bills to those traders also, only to adjust the unexpected shortage of government revenue, subscribers alleged.

When contacted with the sub-assistant engineer of Magura Telegraph and Telephone Board Shamsul Alam, he admitted the fact of abnormal inflated bills and said a total of 164 applications of objections were already sent to the higher authorities for consideration." He further said that the bills were not below Tk 70 thousand.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers in Gopinathpur area of Raiganj upazila in Sirajganj planting boro saplings on their land during the ongoing boro cultivation season. An extensive boro faming scheme has been taken up by the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) this year for 16 districts in the northern region.

Boro output target fixed at 43,26,538 tons for 16 dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An extensive boro paddy cultivation scheme has been taken up for 16 northern districts in the current season.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources, a total of 43,26,538 tons of paddy will be produced from 12,72,600 hectares of land in 16 districts.

Of those, 42,95,546 tons of hybrid variety of paddy will be produced from 12,56,300 hectares of land and 29,992 tons of local variety will be produced from 16,300 hectares of land.

Necessary measures have already been taken to make the scheme a success. The district-wise break-up of production is as follows:

6,22,700 tons of paddy will be produced from 1,83,800 hectares of land in Sirajganj district, 1,48,848 tons of paddy will be produced from 43,800 hectares of land in Chapainawabganj district, 1,91,546 tons of paddy will be produced from 56,100 hectares of land in Rajshahi district, 2,06,618 tons of paddy will be produced from 61,200 hectares of land in Natore district, 1,93,278 tons of paddy will be produced from

57,900 hectares of land in Pabna district.

A total of 3,75,196 tons of paddy will be produced from 1,11,000 hectares of land in Noagon district, 5,40,884 tons of paddy will be produced from 1,54,800 hectares of land in Bogra district, 2,13,408 tons of paddy will be produced from 62,400 hectares of land in Jaypurhat district, 3,18,586 tons of paddy will be produced from 93,200 hectares of land in Rangpur district, 3,11,718 tons of paddy will be produced from 91,400 hectares of land in Gaibandha district, 2,30,530 tons of paddy will be produced from 68,700 hectares of land in Kurigram district, 2,11,724 tons of paddy will be produced from 62,000 hectares of land in Nilphamari district.

A total of 1,42,140 tons of paddy will be produced from 41,700 hectares of land in Lalmonirhat district, 4,36,050 tons of paddy will be produced from 1,27,500 hectares of land in Dinajpur district, 1,24,488 tons of paddy will be produced from 36,400 hectares of land in Thakurgaon district and 58,824 tons of paddy will be produced from 17,200 hectares of land in Panchagah district.