

Scanty relief in flood affected areas

Situation precarious in Moulvibazar haors, Fenchuganj, Bogra, Sirajganj

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Flood affected people are passing days virtually without food in many areas in Fenchuganj in Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Bogra and Sirajganj districts, according to reports by our correspondents.

Unlike other areas of greater Sylhet, the flood situation is deteriorating in haor areas of Moulvibazar as waters are flowing into those from Kushiya and Monu rivers.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Sylhet: Sixty-year-old widow Sitara Begum and four others of her family are on a boat for five days in the village.

"A man came on Saturday and gave us some chira (dry food). We take this twice a day, but no water", she told this correspondent on Sunday.

The village is near the Kushiya river. But the river can not be demarcated now. There are vast sheets of water all around, dotted by trees with most of the homesteads underwater.

Only a small stretch of the pucca road in the village is dry, where flood victims have taken shelter.

Almost all dwellings in the area have gone under water, forcing people to shift to high lands, flood shelters or relatives' houses in other areas.

Flood hit the region twice in only ten days, local people said.

Sitara said she neither got any rice crop this year nor could retrieve any of her household belongings from floodwater.

Elderly Kola Miah and 45 year-old Nuruddin were on makeshift raised platforms built with bamboo as their houses are inundated. They said they are without food for two days. Flood took away their crops earlier. They sent their cows to relatives' houses in Burikari and Munshibazar villages in Rajshahi upazila.

They are not leaving the inundated homesteads apprehending theft or dacoity.

"We do not know what will happen to us and our cattle. There is no food and fodder", worried Kola Miah said.

"We may survive on doles but our cattle will die for want of fodder", he said.

The situation in other areas has improved a little. But it is reverse in several upazilas in the Kushiya basin with a rise in the water level.

Day labourer Femai Biswas of Mainpur village has no work for the last eight days.

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Surendra Biswas and Sushanta Biswas and their families were seen on rafts. Their families were cooking khichuri (food prepared with water, rice and pulses).

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The upazila complex is inundated with knee deep water for seven days. As floodwater entered the upazila food godown, the stock was shifted to officials' quarters. Boats are plying alongside vehicles on the highway.

Ferry service on the Kushiya on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway is suspended since July 18 as pontoons on both sides have been inundated.

Vehicles going to Dhaka now use the alternative road via Sherpur amid risks as that is also inundated at places.

According to official sources, 75,000 people have been badly affected by floods this time in the Fenchuganj upazila.

The floods damaged 45 km embankments, 15 km roads completely and 100 km roads partially and 55 educational institutions.

They said only 72 tons of rice, Tk 55,000 and 32 tons of biscuit have been sanctioned, which is very scanty for the upazila.

However, some individuals and organisations came forward with food and other relief materials for flood victims.

The administration has opened six flood shelters. Some other shelters are being run by individuals including expatriates.

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Water Development Board officials in Moulvibazar said the flood situation will deteriorate in the haor and MRIP command areas.

Sixty out of 67 unions in six upazilas in Moulvibazar have been flooded, affecting at least 2, 50,000 people, according to official. They are estimating the flood damage including crop loss.

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About two lakh flood affected people of Bogra and Sirajganj out of about 16 lakh have taken shelter on roads and embankments.

Sources in Bogra District Relief and Rehabilitation office (DRRO) said 28 flood shelters have been opened in Bogra.

Civil Surgeon (CS) office sources said 125 medical teams including two from army are working in deferent areas in Bogra district.

District administration sources said about six lakh nine thousand 954 people have been affected by flood Bogra. Of them, at least 25,000 families in seven upazilas lost everything.

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Rajshahi people have already observed a day's hartal and called another dawn to dusk hartal on July 31 for gas supply. They are holding agitation programmes almost every day demanding gas supply within the current financial year.

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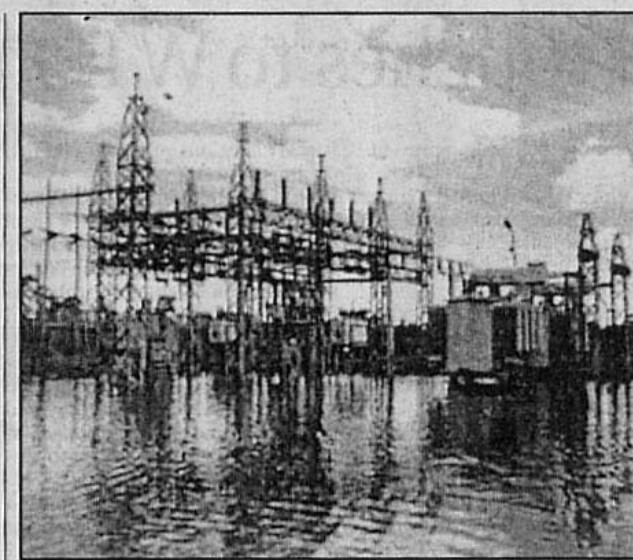
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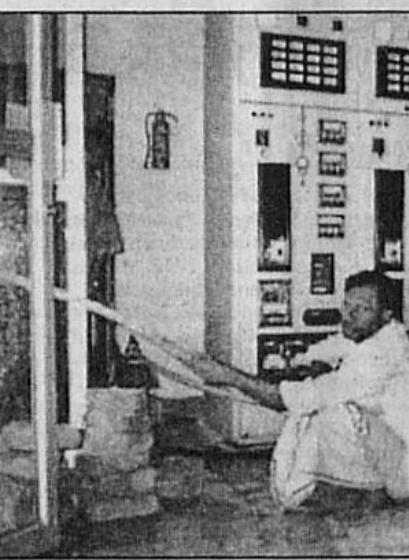
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The inundated compound of the 33 KV sub-station (left) and water is being pumped out of the control room (right). The photos were taken yesterday.



Blackout in B'baria any moment

Three feet water on 33 KV sub-station compound, 9 cm rise will stop power supply

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Power supply from the Dattara 33 KV PDB sub-station in Brahmanbaria may stop any moment if the flood situation deteriorates, PDB officials said yesterday.

The whole compound of the sub-station is inundated with about three feet water.

According to PDB officials, two transformers in the sub-station distribute 20 MW power. The main control room of the sub-station is also inundated. Water is being pumped out of the control room with an irrigation pump.

If the floodwater on the com-

power rises by nine centimetres, all effort to keep the control room operational will fail and power distribution will stop, they said.

PDB Assistant Engineer Md Sana Ullah said flood protection walls have been raised but water is leaking through drains and seeping into the control room.

"Flood water is going to touch the main transformers. If that happens, power supply will collapse," he said.

He also informed that 20 small 'unit transformers' have gone under water in different areas of the district and 50 electric poles including 30 with 1100 volt wire are partially affected by floodwater.

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'Rajshahi will not get gas soon'

Fund constraint main reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

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