

'Dist admin played silent role, kept govt in dark'

Moulvibazar BNP alleges at flood review meeting: Over 8 lakh affected, food and water crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar.

The Moulvibazar district administration did not set up any relief camp for flood victims.

The administration played a 'silent role' and 'kept the government in the dark about the flood situation and its aftermath'.

The allegations were made by BNP leaders at a flood review meeting of district BNP Executive Committee, held Tuesday evening with its president Advocate Mujibur Rahman Mujib in the chair.

So government relief allocation for the district is poor, the leaders said.

More than eight lakh people have been affected, and about three lakh of them have taken shelter on

embankments, high lands and educational institutions on their own initiative, the meeting was told. Crisis of food, water and medicine is prevailing in the affected areas.

Sixty-five unions and three pourasbas in six upazilas of the district are still under water as all the rivers were flowing above red marks till yesterday.

Kulaura, Rajnagar, Kannalganj and the Sadar upazilas are the worst affected.

There is no arrangement for press briefing by the administration.

A flood control room has been opened at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, but latest information or statistics on the flood situation is not available there.

The District Relief and Disaster Management Officer said on Tuesday that 600 tonnes of rice, Tk 7,50,000, 200 tins of biscuits and Tk two lakh house building grant were sanctioned.

He said the relief materials will be sent to Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), who will distribute those in the affected areas through Union Council chairmen and numbers.

This correspondent visited flood affected Nazirabad, Khalipur and Akhalkura unions in the Sadar upazila on Tuesday and talked to many affected people. But no one said he got any relief from the government. Some socio-cultural and political organisations distributed some relief, they said.

The Chairman of Uttarbag Union Parishad in Rajnagar upazila said he did not get any government relief for flood affected people. Some voluntary organisations are distributing relief in areas near roads. They are not going to remote places where the situation is serious, he said.

A senior BNP leader told this correspondent that the district BNP will now inform the government about the situation through the Finance Minister.

Mentionably, Deputy Commissioner Md Muklesur Rahman left Moulvibazar on Tuesday to join his new assignment in the Finance Ministry. The new Deputy Commissioner took charge yesterday.

Magura Textile Mills reopens next month under new terms

No trade union, smooth power supply ensured

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

The Magura Textile Mills under the BTMC (Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation) will be reopened next month under new terms and conditions.

Maintenance work is now going on with a target to reopen it in mid-August.

This time, trade union, which was the main reason for losses earlier, will not be allowed, the mill authorities told this correspondent during a recent visit to the mill. It will run profitably if trade union is not allowed and smooth power supply is ensured they said.

It is being reopened after two years' closure from June 2002 with a total loss of about Tk 89.69 crore since its inception in 1985, they said.

Earlier, the mill was closed in 1999 also with a loss of Tk 67.14 crore.

The BTMC had decided to lay off the mill and kept it closed with a privatisation plan in the wake of continued loss.

"In such a situation, workers urged BTMC not to privatise the mill and agreed to comply with any condition to keep it running under government management," former secretary of MTM Workers Union Abdul Mannan said.

From March 2000 to May 2002, the mill had produced yarn for the Karnaphuli Traders of Pabna in

exchange of 'service charge' under only a contract. But the mill failed to earn profit this time also and the mill was closed. The loss during the period was about Tk 22.54 crore, the official said.

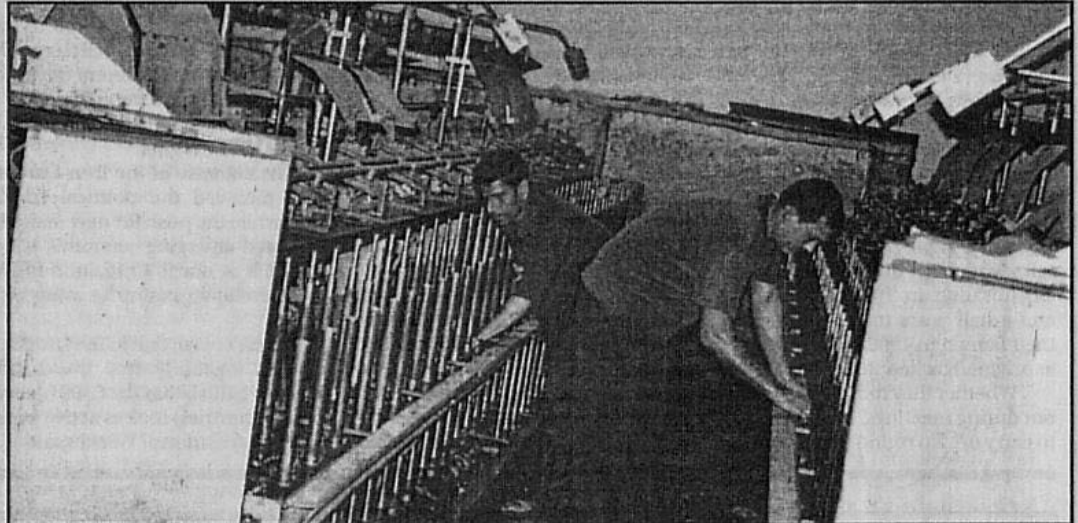
It will produce yarn again and realise only 'service charge' under contract. Karnaphuli Traders will now supply raw materials and purchase the yarn.

Talking to this correspondent, the mill's Chief Executive Abdus Salam Kabir expressed his optimism that it would run profitably if workers perform their duties sincerely and smooth power supply is ensured.

When asked why he expects

profit this time, he said the situation is different now and a good working atmosphere will prevail after reopening. The mill incurred loss earlier due to excess manpower and loadshedding. The problems have been minimised, he said.

The spinning mill with 25056 spindles was set up on 16 acres land at Bhaina area in Magura town at a cost of Tk 37.77 crore, the officials said.



Spindles are being spruced up for reopening of Magura Textile Mills.

PHOTO: STAR

Narayanganj Pourashava District: Narayanganj Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Memo No. Na. Pou/Prokrow/21/(Works)/11(PW)/87/04-05/81 Date: 27.07.2004
IFB No. 03/04-05 Date: 27.07.2004
IDA Credit No: 3177-BD Credit Name: Municipal Development Fund

- 1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) in various currencies towards the cost of Municipal Development Fund (MDF) and intends to apply part of the credit proceeds to cover eligible Municipalities for Infrastructure & Service Development.
2. The Superintending Engineer, Narayanganj Pourashava, District: Narayanganj invites sealed bids for the improvement of road, drain and truck terminal as mentioned below. Procurement is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the IDA's Procurement Guidelines. However, countries not eligible under the Project also include: The Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, United Arab Emirates.

Table with 5 columns: Contract Package No, Name of the work, Bid security (Taka), Time for completion of work (days), Price of bidding documents (Taka). It lists various road and drainage improvement projects in Narayanganj.

- 3. Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased from the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, District: Narayanganj OR Superintendent of Police, District: Narayanganj OR Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Narayanganj OR Superintending Engineer, Narayanganj Pourashava, District: Narayanganj on submission of a written application upon the payment of a non-refundable fees mentioned in the above table for each set in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh drawn in favour of Chairman, Narayanganj Pourashava, Narayanganj during normal office hours on all working days up to 30-08-2004. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the same address during office hours up to 30-08-2004.
4. The provisions in the instructions to bidders and in the conditions of contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Works (SBD), National Competitive Bidding (Trial Edition-January 1998, revised February 2003), issued by the World Bank Office, Dhaka.
5. Bids shall be valid for a period of 91 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security as mentioned in para 2 above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee drawn in favour of Chairman, Narayanganj Pourashava, Narayanganj. Bids must be delivered to the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, District: Narayanganj OR Superintendent of Police, District: Narayanganj OR Executive Engineer, LGED, District: Narayanganj OR Superintending Engineer, Narayanganj Pourashava, District: Narayanganj on or before 31-08-2004 by 2:00 PM.
6. Bidders may deliver their bids by either in person or by Courier Service or by mail, which must reach the above office before the deadline for submission of bids. Bids received after the deadline will not be accepted.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 3:00 PM on 31-08-2004 at the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Narayanganj Pourashava, District: Narayanganj.
8. A pre-bid conference will be held on 21-08-2004 in the office of the undersigned at 11:00 AM. The bidders are requested to attend the conference in time.

Md Khairul Islam Superintending Engineer Narayanganj Pourashava District: Narayanganj

C-1879

High security alert in Khulna city

Sabotage apprehended: Citizens asked to submit bio-data to KMP: Police deployed at key installations,

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Security forces have been put on "high alert" in Khulna city following a series of powerful bomb explosions at different places since Wednesday. Sources in security forces said they have information that incidents of frequent bomb explosions may be followed by 'major attack either on any key institution or important political or social leaders'.

Armed policemen both in uniform and in plain cloth have been deployed at residences of top political leaders of ruling parties and the opposition.

Similar arrangements have been made for other important places like Khulna Press Club, local newspaper offices, bureau offices of Dhaka dailies, and Khulna stations of Bangladesh Betar and BTV.

Security has been strengthened in major academic institutions including the Khulna University and the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUJET).

Rab and Khulna Metropolitan Police teams have launched 'special operations' in different areas of the city and the district with lists of criminals and extremists in hand.

Mentionably, explosion of powerful bombs at Dakbunglow Road on Wednesday night, Basupara and Daulatpur Bazar on Thursday night, Kshipur New Road at Khalishpur and at Dumuria Bazar on Friday night has created a panic among the city dwellers.

Armed guards have also been deployed in front of most of the mosques, temples and churches. Metal detectors are being used for

scanning ahead of public gathering held by political parties and socio-cultural organisations.

"We are fully alert against any sabotage by saboteurs and terrorists", said a high official of KMP.

He said ward commissioners in the city have been requested to help law enforcers nab criminals hiding in slum areas.

People in all residential areas have been asked by the KMP Commissioner to submit their bio-data to respective ward commissioners by July 31.

There has been no clear clarification from the Commissioner's office why both permanent and temporary residents have been asked to submit bio-data.

But sources said this unprecedented move has been taken to identify suspicious persons.

MODHUPUR ECO-PARK

Dhaka-Tangail road barricaded for release of aboriginal leaders

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Modhupur (Tangail)

Netrakona: Aboriginal people in Modhupur, angered by the government's stand on the planned eco-park and recent arrest of five of their leaders, are preparing for tougher agitation against the government plan.

On Tuesday, they barricaded the Dhaka-Tangail highway at Telki for about an hour demanding release of the arrested leaders.

They withdrew the barricade after the Modhupur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) accompanied by other officials assured them of releasing the arrested people on the following day (Wednesday).

They would launch tougher agitation if they are not released, some aboriginal leaders told this correspondent during a visit to the area on Tuesday.

The arrested persons are Ajoy A

Mre, Michael Nckrak, Naba Dalbals, Pancharaj Gagra and Albert Mankin.

They were sent to jail when they appeared in a court in Tangail in connection with cases filed for alleged pilferage of timber from reserve forests.

They are among nine people against whom the Tangail Divisional Forest Office recently filed 16 cases with Modhupur police station and Tangail Magistrate Court.

The aboriginal people claimed that the cases are false, filed to thwart their movement against the eco-park. These nine people were engaged in the movement.

They claimed that timbers are being pilfered by some people within the knowledge of forest officials and police but their leaders have been falsely implicated.

This correspondent talked to some local Garo people including Rakhi Mrong, Tapan Marak and Jerum

Hagidok.

They alleged that their leaders, accused in "false" cases, are fleeing homes as police are raiding their houses almost every night.

Rakhi Mrong said, "We are aboriginal. We have separate culture, language and tradition. "We will preserve those at any cost for our existence."

"We made a prayer to the Prime Minister to stop the eco-park work but we did not get any sympathy."

Tapan Marak said, "The forest department in league with police filed the false case against our leaders. We urged the authorities to withdraw the false cases and stop harassment to aboriginal people, but to no effect."

When contacted, Modhupur thana Officer-in-Charge said, "Court will decide whether the cases are false or not. We have to arrest the accused and so were raid their houses."

SNAPS

Work on 5th RU female hall begins

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) Vice Chancellor Professor Faisal Islam Faruki opened the construction work of the 5th residential hall for girl students on the campus recently.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of the hall on December 21 last year during the Golden Jubilee celebration of the university.

Pro Vice Chancellor Professor KHM Shahadat Hossain Mondol, Treasurer Prof Abdul Zabbar, Registrar Abdus Salam, teachers, officers and students were present during the opening ceremony.

However, the name of the hall is yet to be decided.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union and Sarajitrantrik Chhatra Front have been demanding naming of the hall after great revolutionary Ila Mitra for a long time.

2 Indian traffickers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two Indian nationals were arrested from Patkelghata overbridge in Tala upazila on Monday while trafficking an 8-year-old girl to India.

The arrested persons are Shahanara Begum, and Sujon Mondol of two villages in Bashirhat thana in West Bengal.

Shahanara worked as a cook in a restaurant owned by Shaiful Islam at Dalubazar in Tala upazila for a few months.

Baralekha AL leader receives death threats

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Former lawmaker and President of Baralekha upazila Awami League (AL) Md Shahabuddin Ahmed received death threats from unidentified hoodlums.

Since July 21 he has been receiving death threats at his Baralekha house for several times.

"They are from Dhaka and they threatened me to give up the AL politics or 'face death'," Shahabuddin told this correspondent. Previously, criminals attacked him twice, he disclosed local journalists.

He filed a general diary (GD) with Baralekha police station. Baralekha police told this correspondent over telephone that they are investigating the matter.

Baralekha upazila units of Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League condemned the death threats.

Saudi expatriate abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Saudi expatriate youth was abducted from Tekpara area here on Sunday.

The abducted youth is Zakaria, 30, son of Abul Hossain of Chapaldandi area in Sadar upazila.

He was going to Tekpara in the town by rickshaw when five abductors waylaid him and took him to an unknown destination by an auto-rickshaw.

Police arrested one person named Habibullah on suspicion.

Victim's elder brother Abu Bakar filed a case with Sadar thana.

Bad days for Modhupur pineapple farmers

Flood damages 3000 pineapple farms: Price falls for lack of buyer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Flood has brought hard days for pineapple farmers in Modhupur, an area well known in the country for producing very tasty varieties of the sweet summer fruit.

The flood had damaged vast pineapple plantations and the ripe ones are rotting in fields due to lack of buyers.

The price has also fallen drastically. Pineapples are now sold at Tk 1.50-2 against Tk 4-5 last year.

People of the area are dependent mainly on cultivation of pineapple, banana, ginger and turmeric because the soil is suitable more for these crops than for rice, wheat and cereals. Over fifty percent of farmers in the region are dependent on income from the once-a-year cash crop. Sources in the Agriculture

Extension Department (AED) and farmers said the current floods have damaged about 3000 big and small pineapple farms.

On many of the unaffected farms, pineapple is rotting for want of buyers due to flood, they said.

The damage would be worth around Tk two crore, AED officials told this correspondent during a visit to the area on Tuesday.

Arjun Hagidog of Joynagacha village said he cultivated pineapple on five acres, but all were damaged by flood. Arjun said last year he sold about two lakh pineapples and earned about Tk eight lakh.

He could sell only 10,000 pieces so far this year at Tk 1.5 to 2 apiece against last year's price between Tk 4 and Tk 5. The price has fallen because few buyers came in view of the flood. Widow Nirmala Chisim is a rich

farmer in Bhaduria village. He has four gardens spread over about eight acres.

Last year she sold about three lakh pineapples at Tk 12 lakh. But this year he earned only round Tk 20,000 against the cost of about Tk one lakh. She has two daughters and one son, who are college student.

Abdul Hakim of Talki village said flood completely damaged his two-acre garden. He cultivated pineapple for the first time this year. Flood has taken away the crop, he lamented.

According to Modhupur AED, pineapple is cultivated on about 5000 acres of land in the upazila.

Streams of trucks were usually seen on roads here during July-August every year, carrying pineapples to different districts. But this correspondent saw only three trucks on Tuesday, carrying pineapple to Dhaka.

Fake journalist held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A fake journalist was arrested on Tuesday while he was trying to blackmail a medical officer.

Fake journalist Azharul Islam Milon, 35, son of contractor Abdul Mannan of South Tootpara in Khulna Thana was arrested by Dumuria police on charge of blackmailing Dr Mohammad Mohsin.

Dumuria Thana Officer-in-Charge (OC) Abu Hena told The Daily Star, Milon branded Dr Mohsin a corrupt Medical Officer of Dumuria Upazila Health Complex and demanded Tk 500 from him.

Earlier, he pretended himself as the Khulna bureau chief of Bangladesh News Syndicate (BNS).

Dr Mohsin filed a case against him under Speedy Trial Act.