

SNAPS

561-km road damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

About 561 kilometre road and 34 kilometre flood control embankment were damaged by incessant rain in seven days here. At least 5,115 tons of fish worth about Tk 13 cr were also washed away due to downpour from September 11 to 17. This was revealed by Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner Prasanta Bhushan Barua while delivering address at a meeting held in his conference room on Sunday. Commerce Minister and Minister-in-Charge of the district Altaf Hossain Chowdhury presided over the meeting while Commerce Secretary Aminur Rahman was special guest. The district administration urges the government to sanction Tk 25 cr for repairing the roads and embankment.

JCD activists beat

2 BCL activists CU CORRESPONDENT

JCD activists on Sunday beat two BCL men on the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus for attending the recent Paltan Maidan meeting of Awami League in the capital. Mustafa and Faisal, two second year students of Mathematics Department and residents of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hall (BSMH), were beaten inside Room No 113 of the hall by a group of 15 JCD activist led by Moin, Imrul, Arko and Saidur. The JCD activists asked them to quit BCL politics or face expulsion from the dormitory. BCL activists submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor on Monday demanding punishment to the persons responsible for the incident. In the memorandum BCL threatened strike on the campus if their demand is not met without delay.



Ebadul, a young grower takes care of coriander on his field at Char Gubadia village in Sadar upazila, Mymensingh. His success inspired other farmers at his village in its cultivation.

Coriander farming gains popularity

A young farmer who earns Tk 50,000 a year inspires other cultivators

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Ebadul Haque, a young farmer at Char Gubadia village in Sadar upazila has earned Tk 50,000 by cultivation of coriander (dhanian) on 50 decimals of land this year. Being inspired by his success, coriander cultivation gains popularity among other farmers at the village. Some of them are Abdul Gafur, Nuruzzaman, Joyal Abdus Salam Hazrat Ali Billal Hossain Makul Mondal and Hormoj Ali. Everyone fetches a good profit from it. First of all Ebadul became interested in its cultivation when he observed the success of Helal Uddin, a vegetable cultivator and vendor at the same village. He started its cultivation about nine years ago. He collected coriander plants from a

bazaar in Gouripur upazila and planted it on a piece of land. The plants grew well due to proper nursing. He cultivated coriander on seven decimals of land and earned Tk 18,000 as profit. He spent Tk 3,500 on its cultivation. It can be grown on elevated fallow land in all seasons but summer is the most suitable period of its cultivation, Gafur told this correspondent. Its cultivation does not require huge cost but it requires proper nursing, said Gafur adding excessive rainfall can be harmful. Coriander cultivation is more profitable than other crops, disclosed Ebadul. A farmer can earn a good profit, several times higher than other crops including paddy, he further disclosed.

expenses can be earned every year by its cultivation on one acre of land. Another farmer, Abdul Gafur told The Daily Star he cultivated coriander on seven decimals of land and earned Tk 18,000 as profit. He spent Tk 3,500 on its cultivation. It can be grown on elevated fallow land in all seasons but summer is the most suitable period of its cultivation, Gafur told this correspondent. Its cultivation does not require huge cost but it requires proper nursing, said Gafur adding excessive rainfall can be harmful. Coriander cultivation is more profitable than other crops, disclosed Ebadul. A farmer can earn a good profit, several times higher than other crops including paddy, he further disclosed.

When criminals are police informers ...

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Listed criminals are now being used by police to work as their informers, it is widely alleged by local businessmen.

The informers are simultaneously working as criminals' agents, it is alleged further.

It is alleged some informers are involved in collecting illegal tolls from drug peddlers and gambling spots. They share their collected tolls with their 'favourite' police officers, it is alleged. The informers give advance information to criminals about any operation launched against them. They also act as agents for release of those persons arrested on false charges.

When asked, DC (south) of KMP Akbar Ali admitted the fact assuring any excess 'would be severely dealt with severely'.

Meanwhile, 25 listed criminals died in crossfires in last three months in the southwestern (S-W) region.

The last victim was listed criminal and former ward commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu who was killed on August 29.

Others who died in crossfire with Rab and police are Imam Sardar of Rampal upazila in Bagerhat, Swapan of Bagerhat town, Babu Molla of Gaola village of Mollahat upazila in Bagerhat, Shupon Gain of Dumuria upazila in Khulna, Elias Shaikh of Dumuria upazila, Abdur Rashid alias Tapu of Mohishaguni village in Rupsha upazila, Khulna, BDR Altaf of Batiaghata upazila in Khulna, Abdur Rahman Chhoton of Ramnagar in Rupsha upazila, Raja Chowdhury of Mirzapur road in Khulna thana, Islam Bepari of Digholia upazila in Khulna, Rashed Golder of Paikgachha upazila in Khulna, Khabir of Bhadua village in Alamdanga upazila, Chuadanga, Ratan of Alamdanga upazila in Chuadanga, Ujjal of Atharokhada village in Alamdanga upazila, Anif of Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga, Zianarul of Bamannagar under Damurhuda in Chuadanga, Shawkat of Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia, Razaul, Rabiul Shaikh, Shariful of Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia, Anarul of Chechua village and Arab Ali of Kalishan Karpur in Kushtia Sadar upazila and Shaban Ali of Gangni upazila in Meherpur.

Work on second phase of Teesta Irrigation Project yet to kick off

Tk 1,166 cr sanctioned in ECNEC meeting on January 21

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Extension work of the second phase of Teesta Irrigation Project is yet to be started.

For its implementation, an amount of Tk 1,166 cr was sanctioned in the ECNEC meeting on January 21 this year. But no donor country or organisation came forward to finance the project till now while the second phase work is supposed to be completed by nine years.

The second phase is divided into three units. Expenditure of the first unit is Tk 309.99 cr while that of second unit Tk 444.29 cr and that of third unit Tk 410.64 cr.

Experts opined, after completion of first unit of the second phase, an additional 96,575 hectares of land would likely be brought under irrigation network resulting in production of

additional foodgrains worth Tk 300 cr.

The second phase work is aimed at covering more 4,48,774 hectares of land with additional production target of 16,64,000 metric tons (MTs) of foodgrains in greater Rangpur, Dinajpur and Bogra districts. Locals opined that it would not be wise to sit idle for foreign assistance, rather it would be wiser to begin its implementation work with financial support of GOB.

If the work is completed with the financial support of GOB then Tk 3.5 cr would be saved which was spent earlier as foreign advisors' fee.

The first phase included construction of barrage which brought 79,000 hectares of land under irrigation network.

About 7,90,000 MTs of foodgrains are produced annually through utilisation of irrigation facilities provided after completion of first phase

work in 1998.

Before construction of Teesta barrage, only 3,16,000 MTs of foodgrains were produced on the lands.

Following success of the first phase' work, people in agriculture-based northern districts want quick implementation of the second phase' work.

In the first phase construction of barrage and other structures were included. The target was irrigation on 5, 40,000 hectares of land. But creation of 35.67-km long Bogra canal which was included in the first phase remained incomplete. Only 5.37-km work of Bogra canal was completed with parts of secondary and tertiary canals. For non-completion of remaining work of first phase, 20,180 hectares of land remained out of irrigation network.



A partial view of the Teesta Barrage in Nilphamari.

PHOTO: STAR

Tk 300 cr crops damaged by flood in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The recent flood damaged crops worth about Tk 300 crore in the entire district.

Sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) told The Daily Star, crops on one lakh hectares of land submerged by 7 floodwaters caused by heavy downpour recently.

Crops on 65,000 hectares of land were completely damaged. As a result, production of crops is likely to fall short by about 2 lakh and 25,000 metric tons (MTs) here this monsoon.

The DAE office sources told this correspondent a vast area of crop land in eight upazilas went under water during the flood. About 99, 915 out of one lakh 73 thousand 25 hectares of land were damaged. In addition, vegetables and rabi crop on 45,145 hectares of land were also damaged. About 70 per cent crops of Sarsha upazila were damaged. Around 23 thousand 70 hectares of croplands in this worst affected upazila were affected.

Meanwhile, 16,050 hectares out of the total cultivated 22,200 hectares of land in Jhikargachha upazila was flooded. In Keshabpur T-aman

was cultivated on 14,550 hectares of land but 10,795 hectares were damaged. In Sadar upazila, about 29,800 hectares of lands were cultivated but crops on 10,650 hectares were damaged. Aman paddy was cultivated on 28,600 hectares of land in Monirampur upazila, but 13,450 hectares were damaged. About 8,800 out of total 16,350 hectares of land in Chowgachha upazila were damaged. As many as 11,750 out of 18,900 hectares cultivated land in Bagharpara upazila were damaged.

Huge quantity of rotten fish seized in Syedpur: One fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The Syedpur municipal authorities on Wednesday seized a huge quantity of rotten fish from the local market.

A small fish trader, Md Nadim was fined Tk 200 on charge of selling inedible fish. But it is a strange, whole-seller Kallu Mia fled away from the scene.

Kallu allegedly brought one truck of rotten sea fish from Dhaka on the day. A portion of it was unloaded in Rangpur while a major portion it was brought to Syedpur at late night. The fish was being sold hurriedly by him at a rate of one taka per kilogram (kg). Such kind of sea fish is usually sold in the market between Tk 50 to 60 per kg at local market. Within a short time a large portion of the fish was sold to small fish traders of rural areas. At that time many poor people also gathered there to buy the fish at a record cheaper rate.

Being informed, the municipal authorities reached the spot and seized about one and a half maund rotten fish. Later, the seized rotten fish was destroyed underground.

Grabbing opportunity of near famine (monga) situation during pre-harvest period of aman paddy, a section of dishonest fish traders, at regular interval, bring rotten and inedible fish from outside of the district sell them to the poor people at a very cheaper rate. Half-fed or unfed people buy those and get attacked with diarrhoea and other intestine diseases after consumption.

Fund shortage hampers work on Dholai bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Fund shortage hampers work on Dholai bridge on the River Dholai near Bhanugachh on Srimgang-Kamalgonj-Kulaura Road.

Construction of the bridge started in November 1998 with an allocation of Tk 3 cr 20 lakh during the Awami League regime. According to original plan, the length of the bridge is 94 metre and width seven metre with a 716 metre connecting road on its two sides. The work was scheduled to be completed in March 2000.

When contacted, the Executive Engineer of the Roads and Highways Department, Moulvibazar said over 50 percent work of the bridge was completed.

While talking to this correspondent over telephone, senior Awami League leader and former Kamalgonj upazila Chairman Prof Rafiqur Rahman blamed the government for non-allocation of fund as according to him the 'constituency belongs to Chief Whip of the Opposition Vice Principal Abdus Shahid'.

Dream unfulfilled

Improvement of communication system and establishment of a bazaar are desires of a woman UP chairperson in Barmachhori, Khagrachhari

Z A M KHAIRUZZAMAN

Debrani Chakma of Barmachhori union in Lakkhichhori upazila, Khagrachhori is the lone elected woman UP (Union Parishad) chairperson in the entire hill district.

Everyday she has to cross a lot of hurdles to perform her duties. She walks through 22-kilometre inaccessible hilly path daily to reach her ordinary tin-shed office at the upazila Sadar.

As there is no UP Bhaban (building) in her union, she and other UP members including female ones are compelled to work at such a distant place from their homes.

Suppose a meeting is convened at the office at 10 am. Then they have to start walking from 5 at early dawn from Barmachhori union, situated in a remote area down the Kalapahar hill on the Sarta.

Like other conscious people, Debrani Chakma too thinks they are not destined to live in such a bad condition, rather they have fallen victims of disparity.

Acute scarcity of water prevails in the undeveloped area. Most of the tube-wells are inoperative. So, people are forced to drink river or canal water.

The state of education is discouraging. Officially, 30 per cent people are educated. The statistics includes school dropouts. The status of female education did not improve. Four out of seven primary schools are nationalised ones. Teachers do not attend schools regularly. There is none to supervise daily activities in the schools. The situation could have been avoided if locals had been appointed on



Debrani Chakma

priority basis, thinks Debrani. Debrani involved herself in politics after murder of her UP chairman father Rabi Bhusan Chakma by former Shantibahini men in 1985. She was brought up in the family in a political atmosphere. The urge to enter politics intensified after death of her father.

Her father Rabi Chakma cherished a dream to develop his union as an ideal one. Debrani wanted to accomplish the unfinished task of her father who had a vision. Her husband Anil Chakma also encouraged her. Her priority areas are communication, education, water and sanitation, electricity and health care. She thinks many problems will be solved easily with development of communication system. She initially dreams of a metal road connecting Barmachhori with

Lakkhichhori. She also wants to establish a bazaar in her area.

But Debrani is a bit frustrated because she could not proceed according to her desire. Life comes to a standstill for 8,000 people in the area just after dusk because her union is yet to be brought under electrification programme.

Debrani who was elected chairperson only one and a half years back wants more government allocation for development of the neglected area. She is critical of the policies of local government. Because the centre which allocates an inadequate amount for uplift work also dictates the sector-wise expenditure.

Despite odds Debrani still believes it is possible to turn her UP into a people oriented organisation through direct solution to basic problems. People's participation in identifying problems and their solutions can ensure development in her area, according to her.

Announcement

Women's participation in local government affairs increased and improved than before. Most of women UP chairpersons came from well-to-do families with political background. Their influence in society has brought them in leadership. A series of stories about their struggle and achievement will be published in this column from today.

—In-Charge, National Page.