



Mighty Teesta turns into a channel... (Left) Water Development Board's scale measures only five centimetre water near the Teesta Barrage (seen in the background) and boats stuck up on the sandy river bed (right). The photos were taken on Tuesday.

IRRI on 2.7 lakh acres under Teesta Irrigation Project threatened

Indian withdrawal reduces river flow to 3000 cusec from 3 lakh

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, *Nilphamari*

The flow of Teesta has decreased alarmingly, threatening irrigation of about 2.75,000 acres of IRRI-Boro lands under the Teesta Irrigation Project in 12 upazilas in Nilphamari, Rangpur and Dinajpur districts.

The flow is not more than 3000 cusec now against about three lakh cusec in the rainy season due to unilateral withdrawal of water by India at the Gojaldoba Barrage point in the upstream, experts and Water Development Board (WDB) sources said.

The Gojaldoba Barrage, constructed on the Teesta 110 km upstream, was commissioned in 1987.

The river has turned into a streamlet at many points, with water depths as low as six inches. It has

virtually dried up at many other points as numerous shoals have emerged, they told this correspondent yesterday.

In the 100 'risky zone' of the Teesta Barrage Project, the authorities somehow managed to keep the water depth at 12 feet for safety of the barrage through dredging, WDB sources said.

As there is no agreement, so it is up to India how much water Bangladesh will get, they said.

"We are getting the little quantity of water from upstream (India) at the mercy of God," a WDB official said.

He said the Gojaldoba barrage area is at a level about 33 metres higher than the Teesta Barrage area.

"So we are getting the small quantity of water that is seeping through the Gojaldoba Barrage and the soil".

Secretary level talks between the two countries held in the second week of November this year in Delhi produced no result, they said.

It was gathered from various sources that there are 3.20,000 acres of IRRI-Boro lands under Gojaldoba

Irrigation Project. Of these, 61,000 acres are in Jalpaiguri district, 17,000 acres in Darjeeling, 38,000 acres in Maldah and 20,4000 acres in the Indian Dinajpur district.

It is alleged that India is also diverting the Teesta water to Assam through the Brahmaputra and to Maldah through the Ganges.

In such a situation, the Technical Committee of Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission meets next month, which will be followed by a ministerial level meeting.

Many farmers this correspondent talked during a visit to the Teesta Irrigation Project area in the last three days expressed their frustration about prospects of IRRI-Boro crops because this is the prime time for cultivation. Fields will dry up if minimum irrigation can not be ensured, they said.

It was agreed to give 10 per cent of the water for normal flow of the river and another 25 per cent for irrigation and other purposes.

Bangladesh disagreed with this proposal.

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Top outlaw surrenders in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

A 'top leader' of outlawed Biplabi Communist party (BCP) here surrendered to Jhenidah police on Monday fearing death from crossfire.

At least 40 alleged criminals including some outlaws were killed in 'crossfire' during gunfight with police in the southwestern region of the country in the last few months, sources claimed.

Police said Mahi Uddin alias Mahi, 39, 'regional leader' of BCP, accused in a dozen murder cases, came to the police station and surrendered to police. He was also accused in the five-murder case in Jhenidah.

Police produced him in court, which sent him to jail.

Police said there might be a large number of firearms under his possessing. They said they would take him on remand for interrogation.

More Tk 20 lakh cellphones seized at Osmani Airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Mobile phones and chargers worth over Tk 20 lakh brought illegally were seized at the Osmani International Airport Tuesday morning.

These include 320 Nokia mobile phone sets, 600 chargers and 100 pieces of air phones, contained in two bags bearing VIP tags. These were carried in London-Dubai-Dhaka-Sylhet-Birman flight.

Seeing no VIP in the lounge to claim the bags, customs officials opened the bags and seized the cell phones, officials said.

The Biman airbus landed 11:30 am. A case had been started filed with police.

Our Sylhet Staff Correspondent reports: About 300 patients were detected in greater Sylhet region,

WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVED IN DISTS

AIDS: Nine die in 6 N dists, 306 patients detected in Sylhet, Khulna regions

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Nine persons died in the northern region and 306 AIDS patients were detected in Sylhet and Khulna region.

Our Rangpur Correspondent reports: Nine persons died while a good number of people were attacked with AIDS in six northern districts in last three years. They were inhabitants of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Pabna and Nagaon districts. Four AIDS patients died in Parbotipur, Dinajpur.

Speakers at Meet the Press on World AIDS Day in Rangpur disclosed this. They called upon all concerned to make people aware about the deadly disease.

A meeting was held at the auditorium of Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry which was organised by the Centre for Communication and Development (CCD) in collaboration with CARE Bangladesh.

Rangpur Civil Surgeon Zoynal Abedin was the chief guest while Present of Rangpur Press Club Sadru Alam was special guest.

Speakers sought adequate measures to check spread of AIDS in Bangladesh.

Rally was brought out in the town after the meeting. Almost all journalists of all national and local dailies participated in the rally.

Another meeting was held at a local hotel in the afternoon. Care Bangladesh through its partner organisation Paribarik Shastha Clinic organised the meeting where journalist Hamidur Rahman was present as chief guest while Monwarah Begum, director of the clinic was present as special guest.

Our Sylhet Staff Correspondent reports: About 300 patients were detected in greater Sylhet region,

according to senior physicians of Osmani Medical College and leading NGOs here.

Sylhet region is vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, because it is closer to the border of Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam in India.

The highest number of expatriates in the region is also another cause of unfortunate situation.

Moreover, lack of awareness about AIDS is also responsible for spread of the deadly disease.

The Director of Health, Sylhet division, Dr. Asad Uddin said that lack of coordination of government and NGOs is also a reason of its prevalence in the region.

According to a senior physician of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Dr. Sofir Uddin, the situation is getting worse day by day. Every month new patients are getting admitted in the hospital. Five new patients were admitted in last two months.

They were deported from Saudi Arabia, he said. Most of the patients had from Fenchugan and Kanaighat upazilas in Sylhet, Barlekha and Moulvibazar districts.

Besides, some AIDS cases were detected in Sylhet Sadar and Beinabazar upazilas, according to the physicians. They were deported from Saudi Arabia and other gulf states.

They hesitated to take treatment from physicians here due to superstition and other reasons.

In most cases, they were seen hiding their medical history. They told doctors that they were suffering from TB and skin diseases. After several tests, physicians detected them as HIV positive/AIDS patients.

About 30 NGOs are working here to create awareness among people and counseling to AIDS patients. The organisations are providing service to different risk groups like truck drivers, sex workers and stone quarry

labourers.

But, they are indifferent to expatriates patients. According to record of Asha Alo Society, a national NGO working with HIV positive/AIDS patients, 48 patients were treated by their physicians. Of them 11 patients died, said an official.

According to Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Shibli, Head of the Community Medicine Department of Osmani Medical College, the situation is getting serious.

Meanwhile, blood screening of suspected patients have been stopped for the last two years in Sylhet Osmani Medical College as the 'ELISA' machine.

Required for different pathological and microbiological tests became inoperative due to lack of spare parts.

Moreover, reagents required for the test are also not available.

A technician was sent to Philippines for undergoing training on operation of the sophisticated machine.

Although some private diagnostic centres started testing, yet charges are too high for a common man. The reports are also controversial to many senior physicians.

Our Khulna Staff Correspondent reports: Six patients AIDS patients were detected here which include a couple.

All are undergoing treatment with assistance from CARE Bangladesh. All of them are migrants.

Deputy Civil Surgeon Daud Ali told a press conference all-out measures are underway to prevent its outbreak.

He said condoms for female sex workers are also being supplied by some NGOs here.

Meanwhile, a six-day programme was chalked out from December 1 to 6 to mark the World AIDS Day-2004.

'Treatment of the poor is our religious duty'

Foreign doctors at medical camp at a remote Satkhira village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Internationally reputed eye specialist Dr Michael H Cunningham (USA) said he came to Bangladesh to render medicare services to the poor and helpless patients.

"We joined the medical camp not for fame or earning money. We will be happy if poor people in the area are benefited from us," he said.

He was speaking at the Bangladesh-American International Seminar On Rural Health Care, held at Nalpa Hospital premises, a remotest village in Kaligonj upazila.

It was arranged jointly by Nalpa Hospital and Rotary Club. Dr A F Mahmud Bahee, Director, Nalpa hospital, presided over the function. It was addressed by, among others, Prof Dr AFM Ruhul Haque (Orthopaedics), Dr Ahsanurullah-al-Baki, Dr MA Kabir, Dr Akshedur Rahman, Dr Farukuzzaman, Dr Mehjabin Haque.

The speakers said the poor will be benefited from treatment by renowned physicians from home and abroad at nominal costs.

"We are serving helpless people by giving treatment at nominal costs because we think it out religious duty," said Dr. George W Bagby, one of the founders of Nalpa Hospital.

The speakers also discussed causes of common ailments and diseases and also their remedies.

They also answered various questions from among the participants. Doctors at the medical camp and seminar lauded the role of renowned orthopaedics Prof Dr AFM Ruhul Haque for establishing the unique hospital, at a remote village in Kaligonj upazila for better medicare facilities to the poor and helpless people who are deprived of such facilities.

Dr. George W Bagby and Prof. Dr. AFM Ruhul Haque established the hospital four years ago.

Specialist doctors from the USA are treating patients and conducting operations since November 21, which will continue till December 10. Hundreds of patients are coming to the hospital every day from far flung areas for treatment.

Teachers, lawyers, doctors, political leaders, civil society members, elected representatives were present at the function.

He called upon the youths to build up their career in agriculture, dairy and poultry farming through proper utilisation of fallow 'khas' land and RAKUB loan.

He has a future plan to bring 500 bighas of land in the residential area under vegetable cultivation programme, he added.

Three senior teachers get new responsibilities

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University authorities on Tuesday appointed three senior teachers to important posts, allegedly on political reasons.

RU Syndicate member and Subwardhy Hall Provost Prof Nazrul Islam has been appointed Director of Accounts, replacing Acting Director Anwar Hossain.

Sources said his appointment violated University Grants Commission rules, which say any person to be appointed to the post should have at least 15 years experience.

No one was appointed Director of Accounts in the last 13 years, they claimed.

Anthropology Department Chairman Prof Abu Bakar Siddik Bhuiyan was appointed Public Relation Department Director. Assistant Proctor Belal Hossain, who is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, was appointed provost of Shamsuzzoha Hall.

Talking to this correspondent, many senior RU teachers expressed their concern and said the appointments were made to reward those responsible for the October 30 violence.

"The appointments would tarnish the university's image because the

three teachers were involved in attacking students during the October 30 violence", said a teacher seeking anonymity.

When contacted, Prof Nazrul, who is also a member of at least 20 important committees, denied the allegations and said, "The authorities did what they thought right about me".

Abu Bakar Siddik Bhuiyan also denied his involvement in the October 30 violence and said, "I was always loyal to the VC and the Proctor".

Belal Hossain thanked the administration for his appointment.

Outlaw killed in bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

A cadre of outlawed Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP) was killed in a bomb attack at Talshar village in Courchadpur upazila in Jhenidah Monday night.

The dead was identified as Abdul Aziz, 35.

Police said an unidentified gang hurled two powerful bombs on Aziz when he was returning home from a market. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the dead body and sent it to Jhenidah Sadar hospital for autopsy.



BAKHRABAD GAS SYSTEMS LIMITED
(A Company of Petrobangla)

PO Box No. 97

Chapapur, Comilla, Bangladesh

Bid Reference No. BGSL/IFB-33/2004

dt. 20.11.2004

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Sealed bids are invited from the bonafide manufacturers/suppliers or their authorised agents or importers for supply of line pipes under local cash source.

1. Company Name : Bakhrahd Gas Systems Limited
2. Source of Funds : Local Cash Source.
3. Tender Package No : 01 (one).
4. Invitation for Tenders : BGSL/IFB-33/2004 dt. 20-11-2004.
5. Ref. & Date : Bid Name : Supply of line pipes at BGSL store yard Fauzderhat, Chittagong, Bangladesh.
6. Time for completion of delivery : 120 days.
7. Eligibility of tenderers : Manufacturer/suppliers/importers or their authorised agents having experience of similar works/supply.
8. Price of tender document : Tk 5,000.00 (five thousand).
9. Amount of tender security : Tk. 8.00 lacs.</