



Tornado victims not on relief lists demonstrate at Pabanpuron Monday (L) and Army medical teams treating injured people at Maddhya Shahbaj village in Gaibandha.



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of tornado victims under open sky

Poor sanitation threatens outbreak of diseases, allegations of unfair relief distribution in Gaibandha, Rangpur

REZAUL HAQ in Gaibandha and RAFIQUE SARKER in Rangpur

Several thousand tornado affected people in five unions in Rangpur and Gaibandha districts are passing days in misery under open sky amid fear of diseases due to lack of sanitation and proper treatment of the injured patients.

Five children attacked with diarrhoea were sent to Sundarganj Upazila Health Complex from Doshlia and Sanandapur villages.

Doctors and NGO officials working in the area however do not apprehend large scale outbreak of intestinal diseases because there is adequate stock of food relief.

But the sanitation situation is very bad, which is ominous. This is because most of the affected people are living under the open sky.

The house building relief is too inadequate, they said.

One family is given two bundles of CI sheet and Tk 1000. This is inadequate compared to the devastation.

Bamboo, used for raising tin sheds, is scarce as most of the bamboo clusters have been damaged by the tornado that affected about 11000 people in the areas.

The Daily Star correspondent during visits yesterday and the day before saw a devastating situation in Dakxin Dashaklia, Naldanga and Sarbananda unions in Gaibandha and 17 villages in Pirgacha and Mithapukur upazilas in Rangpur district.

Over a week into the crises, army and BDR teams are now treating injured patients and preparing fresh lists of affected people following demonstrations protesting anomaly and nepotism by the administration and local body leaders in relief distribution.

Gaibandha Deputy Commissioner and Sadullapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer were withdrawn earlier for neglect to duty and irregularities in post-tornado relief work.

Miseries of the affected people have increased after Sunday's rains in the areas.

Many of the affected people in Khamar Dashlia, Sarbanando, Kuthirpara Sadullahpur and Sunderganj, Materhat, Imadpur,



PHOTO: RAFIQUE SARKER

Well to do farmer Jalil Sardar, failing to feed his family, weeping in front of his devastated house in Rangpur.

and Haripur in Mithapukur upazila alleged that they did not get food relief from the government.

Army personnel were distributing corrugated CI sheets, money and 10 kilograms of rice per head among the affected people following complaints of irregularities by upazila administrations and Union Parishad members. Army teams have erected makeshift tents in some areas.

Janhangir Alam Chowdhury, Chairman of Dhopadanga Union Parishad said the local administration listed 1,425 people from nine villages in the union whereas at least 2,105 victims are still out of list, said.

Farmer Shahidul of Sarbanando said many unaffected people were given CI sheets and other relief materials. He mentioned the names of Bakkor and Awalad Sha of Kishmot Sarbanando village.

Some affected people in Dhopadanga village in Sunderganj

said they assaulted a BNP leader for irregularities in preparing the list in the village.

The affected people said they can not take care of their IRRI-Boro lands because of lack of money to buy fertiliser and fuel for irrigation.

Jalil Sardar, an affluent farmer, was weeping in front of his damaged pucca house, its roof blown away by the tornado. He said his family was starving as he had nothing to feed them.

Rush of outsiders to see the devastation is another problem, said some victims. This is increasing the sanitation problem. Every day thousands of people from far-flung areas are visiting the areas to witness the scene, they said.

"We are fed up replying questions from visitors", said Saidur Rahman in Kuthirpara village.

"We have no privacy at all", said Anita Rani, a housewife in Haldi Bazra village in Sunderganj upazila.

Unwanted visitors are making relief and rehabilitation work difficult, said a volunteer of Gano Unnayan Kendro.

According to an estimate by Power Development Board and Palli Bidhut Samity, the tornado tore down 117 electric poles, snapping 14.20 kilometers of transmission line. Resumption of power supply is uncertain, PDB officials said.

The district administration estimated the total loss at Tk 25 crore. The tornado damaged crops on 231 hectares of land, razed to the ground 60 educational institutions, 46 mosques and nine markets, uprooted 12000 big trees and made 779 shallow tube-wells inoperative.

The government has allocated 200 tonnes of rice, Tk 12.5 lakh as house building grant, 1800 bundles of CI sheet, 500 tents and 500 cartoons of biscuits.

No treatment at govt hospitals

Tornado injured people allege

OUR CORRESPONDENTS

People injured during last Sunday's tornado in Gaibandha and Rangpur are not getting proper treatment at government hospitals.

Many of the injured sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) and other government hospitals said they returned home without treatment there.

The army, BDR and some NGOs have opened temporary treatment centres in the affected areas but those lack adequate facilities for treatment of grievous injuries and minor operation.

The Daily Star correspondents during a visit to the affected areas yesterday and the day before saw Army and BDR medical teams referring serious patients to RMCH and other hospitals, but they were reluctant to go there as many had returned days before.

Nabi of Taluk Sarbanando village in Naldanga union said, he took his injured wife Shamoli to

RMCH but brought her back home due to lack of proper treatment there.

"While at hospital I could not buy medicine from outside as I had no money."

"I brought her back but an Army doctor again referred her to RMCH," he said.

Another injured patient, Monju Ara of Sarbanando village, said she returned from Sunderganj upzila health complex as she was not getting proper treatment there.

Dr. Zakir Hossen, medical officer of Gono Shastha Kendro, said about 75 percent of injured patients are suffering from infection. Doctors are providing only primary medicare services like stitching, dressing and medicines, he added.

They are referring patients to different hospitals in major cases of injury.

Capt Masud, a doctor of 10 Field Ambulance however said, the number of infected patients is decreasing. Infection in injuries had increased as there was no effective treatment in the initial stage, he explained.

27 DAYS INTO INCIDENT

Abducted Shahnaz yet to be rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A female SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinee is yet to be rescued after 27 days of abduction from village Bangkhuri in Manikganj Sadar upazila.

Shahnaz Akter, 15, was abducted by identified criminals from her father-in-law Mohammad Noab Ali's house at gun point on March 2, according to family sources.

Shahnaz, the eldest daughter of Mohammad Shahjahan of Manikganjpara of Purbanagar Singhapur village in Savar Police Station Dhaka was an SSC examinee of Nawab Habibullah Adarsha High School at Uttara in the capital.

Her father was in Saudi Arabia when she was abducted.

On return home from Saudi Arabia on Monday, Shahjahan complained to journalists at Manikganj Press Club against Soheli and his accomplices. He disclosed that Soheli and his accomplices used to tease her daughter for a long time. Soheli proposed to her daughter to marry her. 'Because of our denial, Soheli in collaboration with his accomplices abducted my daughter,' Shahjahan said. He lamented police failure to nab Soheli, the main culprit. He further said that the criminals had been threatening to abduct her 13-year-old younger daughter Shamima Akter. He announced a reward of Tk 50,000 for rescuing his daughter.

A case was filed with Savar



Shahnaz Akter

Police Station under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on March 3 accusing Soheli, son of the Abdul Baten, and his accomplices Rasel, son of Motaleb, Bappi, son of Mejbah Uddin, Babul Mollah, son of Samsuddin Mollah, Sultan, son of Helal Uddin Mollah, Anwar, son of Fazar ali, Monir Hossain, son of Helal Uddin Mollah and Farid, all of Purbanagar Singhapur village.

Victim's father-in-law filed another case against Motaleb, Jewell, Rafique, Safi, Sultan, Monir Babul, Rasel, Saiful with Savar Police Station for giving death threat to her daughter-in-law's family members.

When contacted with Investigation Officer (IO) Sub-Inspector (SI) Zahid, he told this correspondent they already arrested a few of the criminals.

14, not 7 kidnapped from Naniarchar, army says

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Fourteen indigenous people were abducted from Rangimara, Sakkapara, Morachengri, Sapmara and Borpolepara villages in Naniarchar upazila on Saturday, allegedly by members of UPDF (United People's Democratic Front), a body opposed to the CHT peace accord, according to army sources here yesterday.

Earlier it was reported that seven people were abducted. They detected the actual number during a combing operation in the

area, launched on Sunday, to nab the culprits, the sources said.

They said at least 22 people were abducted from hills in the trouble-torn upazila from March 23 to 26.

Armed hoodlums belonging to UPDF raided the five villages on Saturday night and abducted the 14 people, who are reportedly supporters of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati (PCJSS), a body of indigenous people supporting the peace accord.

Six army teams each comprising 20 troops, are searching for the victims and their captors. But none was found till yesterday, they said.

SBMC STUDENTS' UNION POLLS

JCD, Shibir demand date shifting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) have demanded shifting of students union election at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College, scheduled for April 5.

In a joint application to the SBMC authorities yesterday, presidents and secretaries of JCD and ICS units have appealed for shifting the date in view of examinations at the medical college. They also urged the authorities to create an atmosphere for a free and fair polls.

As only JCD and ICS are contesting in the election, SBMC Election Commissioner Dr. Syed Jahangir Hussein has requested the Academic Council to take a decision regarding the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

The workshop on Adolescent Reproductive Health in progress in B'baria.

Imams vow to resist child marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A day-long workshop for religious leaders (Imam) on Adolescent Reproductive Health was held at Nasirnagar upazila auditorium in the district yesterday.

It was organised by Save the Children in cooperation with Islamic Foundation.

Some 50 Imams of different mosques in Nasirnagar upazila and other areas attended in the workshop.

The workshop was moderated by QE Dilder Mahmud, Impact Area Manager of Save the Children.

Mawlana Kazi Abu Huraira, Deputy Director of Islamic Foundation; Maulana Abbas Uddin, Deputy Director of Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB); Dr Ziaul Haque Selim and Nasirnagar Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFI)

were the resource persons in the workshop.

It was addressed by, among others, Md Abdul Malek, Deputy Director of Brahmanbaria Islamic Foundation; Prof Md Aminul Islam, Imam Hafez Samsuzzan; Md Nurul Amin, Director of Imam Training Centre of Islamic Foundation; Imam Hafez Gulam Mawla, president of Brahmanbaria Imam Samity; Md Habib Mohmud, Deputy programme manager of Save the Children; Nurul Islam Paturay, Imam of Dathmendal; Mawlana Zoynal Abedin.

The Imams said there is a lot of discrimination between taking care of male and female children by families. They said they would work to remove the attitude.

They will also motive villages in this regard and stop child marriage in the area.