



PHOTO: STAR

Homesteads facing erosion by the Jamuna in Khanchapara village in Fulchhari upazila in Gaibandha.

Erosion makes 530 families homeless in a week

220 more families prepare to leave village in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Erosion by the mighty Jamuna has taken a serious turn along its western bank in Fulchhari upazila. It devoured vast lands and homesteads, making at least 530 families homeless in Khanchapara village in a week.

Panicked people of Khanchapara and adjoining Sardere Char village are leaving homes for safer places as the two villages are on the verge of being washed away, local people told this correspondent during a visit to the area yesterday.

There were 750 families in Khanchapata. After Jamuna devoured homes of 530 families, most of the remaining 220 are

preparing to leave the area, they said.

About 45 homeless families have taken shelter at a nearby flood centre constructed by local NGO Samaj Kallan Sangstha, which is also facing erosion. The rest of the victims have moved to the flood control embankment. They are in a deplorable condition, suffering for want of food and drinking water.

The river has also devoured the Khanchapara Community Centre on Tuesday. Every day, big areas are collapsing into the river.

"You can't realise the fury of the river unless you see it", said Hashem Ali, a victim.

"We have nothing to do against the nature. Well-to-do people are

becoming landless in days", said Abu Sama Mandol, another victim.

Mamun, an NGO worker said they are trying to rescue erosion victims and help them to shift their houses and belongings".

Jamuna is playing the havoc all along its 25-kilometer western bank and the number of erosion victims is increasing day by day, Mamun said.

The most vulnerable areas are Kamarjani, Dhutichora, Gideri and Baguria in Gaibandha Sader upazila; Bhaserpara, Rasulpur, Sayedpur, Balashi, Kanchipara, Fazlipur and Fulchhari in Faulchhari upazila; Haldia, Ghurudaha and Kanaipara in Shaghata upazila.

Gaibandha municipal area is now only three and a half kilometers

off the erosion point.

Water Development Board (WDB) undertook two riverbank protection projects in Kamarjani and Fulchhari involving Tk 42 crore, which is too scanty to the requirement, local people said. The work is now stopped due to fund shortage.

The authorities allocate funds during the rainy season, which is of little use to stop the erosion, they alleged.

Local political parties on different occasions held rallies, formed human chains and submitted memorandums to the authorities for steps for a permanent solution to the problem but to no effect so far, the local people said.

Fertiliser prices soar in Rangpur

RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

Prices of fertilisers have increased in Rangpur in the last one week, making farmers anxious about their transplanted aman paddy.

The prices soared when farmers started applying fertiliser to fields after sowing aman seedlings.

TSP (Triple super phosphate) is now selling at Tk 590 per bag in retail markets against Tk 555 a week ago, farmers said. DAP (Diammonium phosphate) sells at Tk 940 against Tk 840 and MP (Murate of potash) at Tk 585 against Tk 550 per bag. At places, the sellers demand more, depending on the situation, they said.

Farmers said this is high time for use of these fertilisers in aman fields but poor farmers can not afford these.

When contacted, president of Rangpur unit of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) Abul Kashem Patwari said fertiliser dealers have nothing to do as importers increased the prices on the plea of higher rate of US dollar and price hike of fuel in the international market.

But some fertiliser dealers under BFA in Rangpur said there is no reason for importers to raise the prices of TSP, MP, and DAP.

Golam Moula, a fertiliser dealer in Mithapukur, said importers brought the fertilisers about three months ago and they were given 25 per cent subsidy on it by the govern-

ment. The fertilisers they are selling now are from imports made earlier and so there is no reason for them to increase the prices.

Recent price hike of dollar and fuel should not affect prices of fertilisers available in markets, he said.

Schoolboys held for 'mugging'

A CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police arrested six schoolboys while they were allegedly mugging passers-by on the Alenga-Balla road at Chechua in Kalihati upazila in the district Monday night.

According to police, eight youngsters intercepted an autotempo and a rickshaw van on the road and snatched money from the passengers.

As the passengers raised a hue and cry, people from nearby areas came and caught six of them. Two managed to flee. The six were handed over to police.

The arrested alleged muggers hail from different villages in Kalihati upazila. They are students of class IX and X at Ichapur Sher-e-Bangla High School in the upazila.

Police recovered Tk. 3,000 and a wristwatch from them.

The rickshaw van driver, Mohammad Ali, filed a case with Kalihati police station under the Speedy Trial Act, police said.

Kalihati police produced the boys before court yesterday. The court sent them to jail.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Akter, his wife Sabrina and their minor daughter Arna.

B'BARIA TRIPLE MURDER Another arrestee tells the tale

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Arrested Jamir, accused in the sensational triple murder case in the town, yesterday confessed to his involvement in the gruesome incident. He was arrested Tuesday night.

He gave confessional statements to police and then to a First Class Magistrate Habibur Rahman under Section 164.

Till yesterday, police arrested five of the killers of Akter, his wife Sabrina and their minor daughter Arna. They are Jamir, Masum, Pias, Kabir and Babul.

Police also arrested Akter's elder brother Siraj, Sohail and Rajib who were also involved in the murder.

Tipped-off, a police team from the Sadar thana headed by OC Md Ismail raided a tea stall at Salda

rail station in Kasba upazila Tuesday night and nabbed Jamir, 25. Police brought him at Sadar thana.

In his confessions, Jamir narrated how the murders were committed, police said. Jamir was hired by Masum at Tk 25000.

In the first week of August, Akter's elder brother Siraj held a meeting with the gang at Birasharfield.

At the meeting, Siraj promised Masum, Pias, and Jamir to give them Tk two lakh to kill his brother's family and paid them Tk one lakh on the spot.

Police also recovered the billhook and machete and a grill cutter from the pond after pumping out its water.

Rajib and Sohail were placed on two days' fresh remand yesterday.

Police are yet to arrest another killer, Manik.

Bomb hoax at Nilphamari school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A bomb threat at Nilphamari Government Boys High School yesterday made students scream and scramble to come out of classrooms, leaving five of them injured.

Knowing the incident over cell phones, many anxious guardians also crowded the compound to know the fate of their children. Many others phoned the headmaster.

But finally no bomb was found

after a thorough search by law enforcers.

Headmaster Badiar Rahman later told this correspondent that a former student of the school, Adnan Hossain Ripon telephoned him at 10:35 am yesterday and said there were several bombs at different places in the school which would explode at 11 a.m.

At 10:50 am he (Ripon) phoned again to remind the headmaster that the bombs would explode after 10 minutes.

Bewildered, the headmaster

instantly informed all including students.

The panicked students hurriedly came out of their classrooms, gathered at the school ground and raised a hue and cry.

Being informed, Police Superintendent Shobeb Ahmed rushed to the spot with a team of policemen, equipped with metal detectors.

They thoroughly searched all classrooms and the compound but did not find any bomb.

The headmaster said Adnan and

two other students were expelled from the school for misconduct on August 17 this year. They were students of class seven.

They might have done the mischief, he asserted.

The SP instantly ordered police to launch a hunt for the three former students.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Nilphamari also visited the spot. A case has been registered with Nilphamari thana.



PHOTO: STAR

Nilphamari Awami League and its front organisations protesting price hike of fuel and essentials in the town yes-

Somo Odhikar leader held in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Moshiul Alam Humayun, Rangamati District Co-ordinator of Somo Odhikar Andolan (SOA), a platform of Bangalee settlers of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), was arrested from his Pathorghata residence in the town in the early hours of yesterday.

He was produced before court, which sent him to jail, police and court sources said.

He has been arrested ahead of observation of Pakuakhali Tragedy day in Longdu upazila tomorrow by the SOA, marking killing of some people by some members of Shantibahini, armed wing of erstwhile PCJSS (Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity).

Humayun, an influential leaders of SOA, was scheduled to attend the Longdu function, sources in the organisation told this correspondent.

SOA is opposing the CHT peace agreement, signed by the then Awami League government with PCJSS in 1997 on the plea that it will affect the interest of Bangalee settlers in the hills.

Fake medicine recovered in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police recovered a huge quantity of spurious medicine from a godown in Rangpur town Tuesday night.

The godown is owned by Rangpur Medicine Shop Owners Association.

Police said, they recovered a large number of bottles bearing the label of Health Z-cal company of USA following complaint by its importer Alauddin Ahmed.

Alauddin complained to police that Health Z-cal is a calcium tablet and he is the sole importer and distributor of the medicine.

Three of his medical representatives terminated from jobs by him earlier were producing and marketing a fake medicine using the label of Z-cal company.

As per Alauddin's complaint, Kotwali police filed a case against the three Abdulla Patwari of Gaibandga, Habibur Rahman of Magura and Abul Kalam Azad of Natore, police said.

Police said the shop owners suspected that the medicine could be fake the kept those at the godown.