

Teesta shoals flooded, over 400 families marooned

Rain swells rivers in Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Moulvibazar

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two days' rains and onrush of water from across the border swelled the Teesta in Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat, inundating low-lying areas of the districts.

At least 2000 people of 400 families are marooned in Teesta shoals in Nilphamari.

In Moulvibazar, Monu and Dholai rivers started rising yesterday. In Bogra, at least 70,000 people are marooned in three upazilas as rains swelled Jamuna and its tributary Korotoa.

Our Nilphamari correspondent reported yesterday that at least 2,000 people were marooned in Teesta shoals and low lying areas in Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas as the river starting swelling Friday night.

There was heavy rain in the district yesterday and the day before.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources in Dalia said the Teesta is swelling as India opened all the gates of Gajal Doba barrage in the upstream to release the excess water.

According to WDB control room in Rangpur, water level of Teesta crossed the danger mark at Dalia at 3 am on Friday. It was flowing two centimeters above the danger mark, WDB sources said.

With rise of Teesta, its tributaries in Nilphamari, including Charalkanta, Deunai, Buri Teesta, Jamuneswari and Panga also swelled at various points, inundating newly transplanted Aman paddy on vast areas.

The flooded areas are Purba

Kharibari, Char Kharibari, Kisamoter Char, Dhohol Para, Baishpukur, Bhasanir Char, Khokar Char, Chhoto Khata, Fakrater Char, Sadhur Bazar, Jhar Singheswar in Dimla upazila and Bhaban Chur and Gopal Jhar in Jaldhaka upazila.

WDB Executive Engineer in Dalia Atiqur Rahman said they have opened all the gates of Teesta Barrage to keep the flood situation under control. They are also getting information from the Indian side on the river position, he said

Our STAFF CORRESPONDENT reports from Bogra:

A least 3,000 mud houses collapsed in three upazilas in Bogra due to heavy rains and stagnant water, according to primary estimate made by the local administrations.

At least 75,000 people are marooned in Kahalu, Nandigram and Dupchanchia upazilas.

Kahalu Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Azizul Islam said at least 2000 families have lost their mud houses in the upazila. Fishes worth about Tk 8 crore have been washed away.

He said over 5,000 affected people have taken shelter on the bank of Nagar river and at schools in Kahalu, Nandigram and Dupchanchia upazilas.

The affected people told this correspondent that they are facing crisis of fodder and drinking water.

About 50 educational institutions in the three upazilas have been closed due to flood, sources said.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent adds: Due to heavy rainfall in last two days, Monu and Dholai rivers swelled again yesterday in Moulvibazar district.

According to WDB sources, Monu was flowing two metres below the danger mark at Monu Railway Bridge and one metre below the mark at Moulvibazar town at 2 pm yesterday.

The WDB recorded 45 mm rainfall in 24 hours till yesterday noon.

The Dholai river was flowing above the danger mark, WDB sources said. But they did not measure the level as the river is not under their jurisdiction.

More areas reeled under flood Kamalganj, Kulaura and Rajnagar upazilas as water is flowing through several breaches in Dholai river embankment. The river burst its embankments last week.

A Correspondent reported from Lalmonirhat reported that the Teesta crossed the danger mark in Hatibandha upazila in the district Friday night. The river was flowing 33 cm above the red mark at about 1 pm yesterday.

WDB officials said they opened all the 44 gates of Teesta Barrage yesterday morning, resulting in inundation of about 15 villages in shoal areas in Hatibandha and Kaliganj upazilas.

At least 5,000 people of 100 families left homes in the villages and taken shelter in higher places, sources there said.



PHOTO: STAR

A marooned family at Fakirpara village in Kahalu upazila in Bogra.

23 Bhairab BNP men, 4 cops sued on extortion charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Twenty-three BNP leaders and activists of Bhairab and four policemen have been sued for alleged extortion.

The accused include senior vice-president of Bhairab upazila BNP Md Afzal Huq, Jubo Dal convener and Union Parishad chairman Nur Hossen Sentu and coordinator of upazila four-party alliance Mahfuz Ahmed. The rest are activists of BNP and its front organizations.

The four policemen sued are constables Prodip Kumar Chakrabarty, Abdul Karim, Kamrul Islam and Kamal Hossen of Bhairab police station.

Gazaria union Awami League (AL) secretary Farid Uddin Khan filed the case with the court of Magistrate Tahmina Akhtar in Kishoreganj on Thursday against the BNP leaders and activists and policemen alleging extortion of Tk

one lakh from him.

magistrate Tahmina Akhtar asked the officer-in-charge of Bhairab police station to investigate the allegation, court sources said yesterday.

Farid Uddin in his complaint alleged that that upazila BNP vice president Afzal Haq with other BNP leaders and activists demanded Tk 25,000 during 2001 general election because he (Farid Uddin) worked for the AL candidate. He also alleged that Afzal earlier threatened him not to work for the AL candidate in the area.

On December 20, 2001 the BNP activists led by Afzal attacked and damaged his house and looted valuables, the allegation said.

He managed to escape and left the area out of fear district, Farid stated in his complaint. Farid returned home after seven months. Soon after, the BNP men led by Afzal attacked his house again with

firearms. Four constables of Bhairab police station helped him in this regard. He was bullet-hit in the leg as BNP cadre Badal Miah shot him during the attack, Farid stated.

He then came to an understanding with Afzal and his followers by agreeing to pay them toll to live in the area. The BNP men realized Tk one lakh from him during the four-party alliance government's tenure, Farid said in his complaint. The money was given in several installments, he claimed.

While contacted yesterday, Second Officer Aminul Islam of Bhairab police station said they were yet to get a copy of the case from court.

"We may receive the copy Sunday (today) and then take steps", Aminul Islam said.

Zia fertilizer silent again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The Ashuganj Zia Fertilizer Company Limited (ZFCL) stopped production again Friday night as a pipe leaked in the ammonia plant.

According to ZFCL sources, the authorities stopped functioning of the factory at about 7:30 pm Friday following detection of leak in the vital high pressure Scraver tube.

They said repair work started yesterday and may take two to three days.

The factory stopped rumbling at least 18 times during the current financial year due to mechanical trouble, sources said.

It incurs a production loss of 1400 tonnes of Urea a day.

AL leader among 5 held in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have arrested an Awami League (AL) leader and chairman of Hakimpur Pourasabha and four others on charge of extortion and creating chaos and confusion in the area.

Md Kamal Hossain Raj, chairman of Hakimpur Pourasabha and general secretary of Hakimpur AL, Md Abdur Rahman Liton, former panel chairman of Hakimpur Pourasabha, Md Abdul Gafur, Md Zahagir Malik and Md Afzal Hossain were arrested Friday midnight, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, the Rab team raided the office of the Clearing and Forwarding (C & F) Agent of Raj at Hili Bazaar in Hakimpur and arrested them in drunken state.

On contact, Hakimpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) confirmed the report saying a case was filed against the chairman on charge of keeping illegal drugs and alcohol.

Police sources said there are five cases against him for realising illegal toll and creating chaos and confusion in the upazila under AL banner in 2004 and 2006.

Last week, Raj and his men beat up a local reporter of Daily Sangbad demanding extortion. The victim, Md Nurunnabi Babu, filed a case with Hakimpur Police Station on June 10.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Rugged roads following days of heavy rain in Chittagong have become risky for vehicles. The photo was taken from Sagorika area.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

The turbulent sea in Patenga, whipped up by strong winds. Rains and inclement weather have stalled life in coastal areas of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

TIB REPORT ON JESSORE SADAR HOSPITAL Authorities realise 'extra' amount from patients, pocket Tk 3 lakh a year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Jessore Sadar Hospital realises an 'extra' amount of Tk 3 lakh from patients every year, according to a survey by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

The survey report said, the undue money is being realised under 17 heads, which is grabbed by the hospital authorities. This was revealed in a survey titled 'health service in 25-bed Jessore hospital'.

The report also said that from July 2005 to June 2006, a total of 1,59, 770 patients were treated at the outdoor and 14,740 patients inside the hospital. The authorities realised an additional Tk 1 as 'ticket fee' from each of the 91 percent outdoor patients.

Thirty-eight per cent of indoor patients had to pay Tk 25 as fee against the actual amount of Tk 7.70 as fee, the report claimed.

During 2005-2006 financial year, patients also had to pay extra money for various tests including

ECG and X-ray.

These are in addition to tips paid to staff, nurses and ward boys for getting beds, using trolley and also for pushing saline, injections etc. the report said. Even for getting blood at times of emergency, they had to pay undue money to staffs.

During the survey, 48 per cent patients complained that hospital toilets were filthy and not useable.

Fifty-seven per cent outdoor patients told TIB investigators that most of the doctors examined them in front of the Medical Representatives (MRs) of different companies and some doctors also directed the patients to go to their private clinics or chambers.

The doctors prescribed medicines for 94 per cent outdoor patients, but 65 per cent of them did not get any medicine from the hospital. Forty-nine per cent indoor patients were also deprived of medicine, the report said.

The report however said that 48 per cent patients expressed their

satisfaction regarding food and 57 per cent were happy with the security arrangement.

The report was made available to this correspondent recently. TIB Jessore district joint-convener and leader of Sacheton Nagorik Committee (SNC) Prof Dr Mustafizur Rahman said the report also placed a 26-point recommendation to remove the prevailing problems and provide better service to patients.

The function was addressed by, among others, TIB Research Officer Dipu Roy, TIB official Sadhan Kumar Das and SNC officials Abu Saleh Tota, Sheikh Golam Faruk, Fakhrey Alam, Sukumar Das and Mobinul Islam Mobin.

Some doctors including Superintendent of the hospital Dr Hasan-al-Mamun attended the function. They rejected the TIB report.

Extortionists demand toll from RU VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Altaf Hossain was allegedly threatened yesterday with death in case he fails to pay illegal toll.

At around 11.30am, an anonymous caller identifying himself as a member of outlawed Sarbohara party told Prof Hossain over cell phone that somebody would go to his home soon to realize the toll.

The caller threatened the VC with death if he declines to pay the toll or informs police.

The VC filed a general diary with Motihar police station.

The caller told the VC that they need money to function as some of their leaders and activists were killed by law enforcers and many were arrested.

Talking to the The Daily Star, the VC said, he switched off his cell phone before the caller could tell anything about the amount of toll money.

Officer-in-Charge of Motihar police station Khandakar Ferdous Ahmed said, police have already started investigating the matter.

A number of RU teachers including a former pro VC were threatened either by outlaws or Islamist militants since 2005, but none of the culprits could be identified so far.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Proud teachers and students of Noakhali Zila School. Fifty students got GPA-5 in SSC examination this year.

19 SSC examinees yet to get results in Jhenidah

Practical exam mark sheets not sent to board

HOSSAIN SERAJ WITH AZIBOR RAHMAN in Jhenidah

Nineteen SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinees under Jessore Education Board (JEB) from Baliadanga Secondary School in Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah district could not know their examination results even five days after publication of results.

"We are very worried as we could not know the fate of our wards", Shahjahan Shiekh, father of an examinee said while talking to this correspondent yesterday.

Two other guardians-- Mohammad Ali Bhutti and Sadananda Sheikh also echoed the same sentiment.

"I performed well in the examination and was hoping to get GPA-5. I am yet to know my result," said

examinee Sharmin Akter.

Sharmin said 18 other brilliant students of Science Group of her school also could not know their results as their roll numbers were 'missing' from the result sheets. The frustrated students and their guardians crowd the school every day, waiting for results but the school authorities can not say anything, Shamim said.

Goura Sundar, another examinee, alleged that the debacle happened as their practical examination mark-sheets were not sent to the education board in time.

When contacted, the headmaster-in-charge of Baliadanga Secondary School Samir Ali said, "talking to Jessore board officials, we came to know that results of the (19) examinees could not be announced as mark sheets were not

sent to the computer section of the board'.

He however said they have taken step for sending the mark sheets and hoped their results would be known in a few days.

This correspondent also contacted headmaster of Naldanga Bhushan Pilot High School and secretary of Kaliganj upazila examination centre Lutfor Rahman. They claimed that the mark sheets of Baliadanga secondary school examinees were supposed to reach the board along with those of other schools under the center. All the mark sheets were sent in one packet.

"We are yet to find out the real cause behind this", he said.

Moulvibazar ward commissioner, 2 UP members held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police arrested a ward commissioner of Kulaura Pourasabha named Iqbal Ahmed Shamim on charge of extortion and criminal activities Friday night.

Later, he was sent to Moulvibazar jail.

In another drive, Enam Ahmed Chaudhury, a member of Rajnagar UP and Rafique Ahmed, another member of Tengra UP under Rajnagar upazila were arrested on charge of snatching money from a businessman at Kulaura, police said. They were remanded for three days yesterday after their arrest Friday night.

An amount of Tk 16 lakh was snatched from Jasim Uddin, a businessman, on Wednesday. Jasim was coming to Moulvibazar town from Kulaura by a micro-bus at night. When the bus reached near Luhaiuni tea garden on Moulvibazar-Kulaura Road, criminals snatched the trader's money at gunpoint.