

Thousands marooned as fresh areas flooded in 3 Sylhet dists

Downpour swells major rivers, stone quarries go under water

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Three days' downpour and onrush of water from across the border swelled all the rivers in Sylhet, Moulvibazar and Sunamganj, flooding fresh areas in the three districts.

All the rivers in the region were flowing above their danger marks yesterday, according to Water Development Board (WDB) sources.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Sylhet: Fresh areas in eight out of 12 upazilas in Sylhet have reeled under floodwater in last 24 hours ending 6 pm yesterday.

The affected upazilas are Balaganj, Beainbazar, Golapganj, Zikiganj, Companiganj, Kanaihat, Gowainghat and Jaintapur.

Over 30 per cent of Aus and Aman seed beds had gone under water in the areas, they added. All the rivers in Sylhet, which crossed their danger marks earlier, were rising yesterday, WDB officials in Sylhet said.

Stone quarries in Jaintapur and Gowainghat upazilas have gone under water, making over 10,000 labourers jobless. Sand quarries at Sari and Barogang were also

inundated yesterday with waters from hills across the border.

The Sylhet-Gowainghat road link was disrupted yesterday and vehicles stopped plying the road.

District administration said Tk 28,000 and three tonnes of rice were sanctioned as relief for poor flood victims in Gowainghat upazila.

Meteorological Department in the city recorded 162mm rainfall in 36 hours till 6 pm yesterday. However, there was less rain yesterday. Companiganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer GSM Zafar Ullah told The Daily Star yesterday evening that the flood situation was deteriorating and the upazila complex premises was under two feet water.

An emergency meeting of upazila officials and Union Parishad chairmen was held yesterday to review the situation and take steps, the UNO said.

In the city, most roads in Mendibag, Purba Zindabazar, Hawapara, Kolapara, Bilpar, Sheikh Ghat, Nawab Road, Bagbari areas were under water for hours as the drainage systems were clogged by encroachers.

Surma and Kushiya rivers

were flowing above danger levels at all points of the district, an official of WDB said yesterday afternoon.

The Surma was flowing 38 centimetres in Sykhet city town and 173 centimetres above the mark at Kanaighat.

At 6 pm yesterday, the Surma was flowing 67 centimetres above the danger mark in Sunamganj town.

The Kushiya was flowing 86 cm above the danger mark at Sheolaghat and 142 cm above the mark at Amolshid point in Zakiganj where the Surma and Kushiya entered Bangladesh.

Villages in bordering Chhatak, Biswambharpur, Doarabazar and Tahirpur upazilas of Sunamganj district had been inundated with waters from Indian hills.

Rains have also caused water-logging in Natunpara, Shomepara, Muktarpara, Jamaipara and Sholaghat areas in Sunamganj town.

The Tahirpur-Badaghat road went under water at some points yesterday afternoon. Our Moulvibazar Correspondent reports: The Monu and Dholai rivers were flowing above their danger marks and were rising

yesterday.

At least 150 villages of Kulaura, Kamalganj and Rajnagar upazilas have been inundated and over 80,000 people are marooned, according to preliminary report.

Water from Monu river is entering Moulvibazar town through several leaks in the town protection embankment in West Marmet area.

According to WDB control room,

Monu was flowing one metre above the danger mark at Chadiqhat bridge in Moulvibazar town and 2.70 metres above the mark at Monu railway bridge at 4 pm yesterday.

The Dholai river at Kamalganj was flowing at 20.33 metres (danger mark is 19.82).

Waters gushing through two breaches in Monu river embankment and 11 in Dholai embankment are inundating fresh areas.

Vast areas have gone under flood water in Kulaura, Rajnagar and Kamalganj upazilas.

The Monu river embankment is threatened at Ashrogram point in Tilagaon union and Ranchap in Hazipur union in Kulaura.

Local people are trying to save the embankment by filling earth, sources said.

Kamalganj UNO said 10 tonnes of rice and Tk 50,000 have been sanctioned for the flood victims in the upazila.



PHOTO: STAR
Flood water flowing over a road in Patanusher village in Kamalganj upazila in Moulvibazar yesterday.

Two held for bribery in Thakurgaon

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Joint forces yesterday arrested a project implementation officer (PIO) and the head clerk of his office for allegedly taking bribe.

Sources in the joint forces said, Samsul Haque, head clerk at PIO's office was caught red handed while he was taking Tk 5,000 from Dabirul Islam, a member of Amjankhor Union Parishad in the same upazila.

According to his confession the joint forces later on the day arrested PIO Mojib Rahman.

UP member Dabirul alleged that the PIO had demanded Tk 10,000 from him to release six tonnes of rice which was allotted for food for work projects.

He agreed to pay Tk 5,000 and informed joint forces. As he went to the office at about 5:30 pm to hand over the money to the head clerk, joint forces caught him.

The arrested persons were handed over to police.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA
Rains paralysed life in Chittagong city yesterday. The photo was taken from Sheikh Mujib Road at Dewanha.

3x2

Export of 9 items thru' Akhaura port resumes today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Export of nine items through Akhaura Land Port will resume today as their prices were reverted to previous rates.

Port source said Indian importers will start importing the items through Akhaura Land Port at the previous rates.

Indian importers stopped import of nine items through Akhaura port from Saturday as Bangladeshi exporters increased prices of the items due to rise in prices of the goods in open markets in Bangladesh.

The items are Hilsa fish, small fish, dry fish, flattened dry fish, stone chips, poultry feed, water

pump parts, waste cotton and 'Chitagoor' (molasses).

As a result, export activities came to halt at Akhaura Land Port resulting in joblessness of hundreds of workers. A long queue of loaded trucks remained stranded outside the port.

Following intervention of the port authorities, prices of the nine items were reverted to their previous prices.

On contact, Akhaura Land Port Customs Officer Md Khurshid Alam said they have solved the problem for resumption of export of the aforesaid items from today. Indian importers will start importing the items through the port at the previous rates, he said.

Meanwhile, workers who have joined sacking sections at Star, Crescent and Platinum jute mills fearing termination were again refused even partial payment of their arrear wages yesterday, sources in the mills said.

There is no fund to pay arrears, some workers said quoting the BJMC zonal coordinator.

Four state-owned jute mills in Khulna were laid off 1st month following violent protest by workers and employees for payment of their arrear salaries and benefits.

Lay-off of the mills threw several thousand workers out of work. The BJMC who over, resumed operation of sacking sections of two of the mills but this could not draw good response from workers.

Leaders of the two organizations urged authorities of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) to provide medical treatment to workers who have been suffering from various diseases due to want of food

KHULNA JUTE MILLS Civic bodies appeal for payment of arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Leaders of Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee (GKDACC) and Civic Right Group 'Udbigno Nagorik Samaj' in separate statements yesterday appealed to the government for allocation of more funds to pay arrear wages of eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt. At least Tk 48 crore is needed for the payments to of about 30,000 workers.

They also demanded allocation of fund for buying raw materials and reopening of all sections of laid-off jute mills.

Leaders of the two organizations urged authorities of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) to provide medical treatment to workers who have been suffering from various diseases due to want of food

and medicine.

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BIRD FLU

2,577 poultry birds culled in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

About 2,577 poultry birds were culled in two days in Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district following detection of avian virus (bird flu) in the bodies of two chickens.

Lalmonirhat District Livestock Officer Dr Jitendranath Bormon said they thought that two chickens belonging to Mir Mahbub of Thanapara and Shila of Sohagpara might contain bird flu virus. They sent the chickens to laboratories in Gaibanda and Dhaka for examination on Friday.

Being confirmed, the DLO ordered to cull all the poultry birds within one kilometre area of Thanapara.

He said they started culling poultry birds Sunday night and continued it till all of them were killed. 'All the birds culled in two days were non-farm,' he said.

As avian virus was not detected in any poultry bird of farms, the department is keeping high alert on the farms, he added.

BSF returns two bodies

STAR REPORT

The Border Security Force (BSF) of India handed over bodies of two Bangladeshi to Bangladesh Rifle (BDR) in Kushtia and Sylhet yesterday.

In Kustia, Abdul, 35, of Dhamradah village in Daulatpur upazila was bullet-hit when BSF and BDR trade fire on Sunday.

The BSF dragged the injured Bangladeshi farmer into Indian territory, where he succumbed to injuries, BDR sources said. The body was handed over at a flag meeting yesterday.

In Shylet, Enamul Haque, 45, along with 5 others went near the Kalairag border outpost in Companiganj Sunday afternoon to buy timber. As they reached at the hilly area near the border pillar no 1253, some armed Khashi men opened fire. They shot Enamul dead.

The body was handed over to BDR, which yesterday sent the body to Osmani Medical College for autopsy.

3 criminals arrested in Benapole

ACORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), in a raid conducted yesterday at Kanyadaha village under Sharsha upazila in Benapole, arrested three 'top' criminals and recovered arms and ammunition from there.

The arrested are Jodin, 32, Younis, 35, and Tareq, 36.

Police recovered a pistol and three rounds of bullets from the house of one Gafur following a confession made by Jodin during interrogation.

Sharsha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Azizul Haq Sardar, said the arrested were top criminals in the area.

He termed Tareq as an accused in Jessore Fish Trader Mostafa Murde Case.

SATKHIRA AUG 17 JMB BLAST CASES

Khulna STT could not record statement as complainant, witnesses did not turn up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Judge Abdus Salam Shikder of Khulna divisional speedy Trial Tribunal could not record statement of any of the 40 prosecution witnesses in five cases filed with Satkhira Sadar police station against 19 cadres of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) for August 17 serial bomb blasts in 2005.

Ten out of 19 charged with being present in the court but none of prosecution witnesses including the complainant turned up for deposition yesterday.

Six charged with being present in the five cases are absconding while death penalty given to three others were executed earlier in the Jhalakati judges murder cases. They are JMB top leaders Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai, Shaikh Abdul Rahman and Ataur Rahman Sani.

The court will resume today for hearing of prosecution witnesses of Satkhira bomb blast cases.

Non-appearance of prosecution witnesses and complainant of the

cases were reportedly taken in seriously both by the Judge and the lawyers.

This reporter made several attempts but failed to contact the judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal over cell to know his reaction about non-appearance of complainant and prosecution witnesses.

The court on Sunday started trial of seven cases filed in Kushtia and Satkhira districts in connection with the August 17 blasts. Of these, two were filed with Kushtia Sadar police station and five in Satkhira.

On Sunday, statements of two prosecution witnesses of two cases of Kushtia were recorded. Recording of statements will continue till Wednesday.

Court sources said that trial of one out of two August 17 serial bomb blast cases filed in Kushtia has been completed.

Accused Habibur Rahman, Shamsul Alam, Md Akbar Ali and Hafez Mahmud now in jail were produced before the tribunal on Sunday.

These two cases were transferred to Khulna Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal from the Second Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge, Kushtia on May 21 on orders from the home ministry.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA
Rush of passengers at Shah Aman International Airport in Chittagong yesterday, first day of direct flights to Sarjah in UAE.

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