

# 1.5 lakh marooned in five Sirajganj upazilas

Tk 1cr fishes washed away in Patuakhali as rains continue

## STAR NATIONAL DESK

Rains in last three days and onrush of water from the upstream have swelled the Jamuna further, inundating more about 150 villages in five upazilas of Sirajganj district.

Over 1.5 lakh people have become marooned in the second onslaught of flood in the district in the current season. Many affected families have taken shelter on embankments, high lands and educational institutions.

In coastal Patuakhali, monsoon rains continued yesterday as high tide and strong winds whipped up waters, paralysing life.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent reports: The Jamuna rose by 30 centimetres in last 24 hours near Sirajganj town. Water Development Board (WDB) officials said yesterday morning,

A portion of the Meghaj spur in Kazipur upazila has collapsed again though workers engaged by WDB are working under supervision of Army personnel to protect it.

The mighty Jamuna may cross the danger mark in 48 hours near Sirajganj town if the water level continues to rise at the current level, flooding almost the whole of the districts, they said.

The affected upazilas are Kazipur, Belkuchi, Sirajganj Sadar, Shahzadpur and Chowhali.

Many areas of Kazipur municipality have gone under knee deep water and flood water is gushing in to along the Sirajganj upazila.

About 40 villages in five unions of Kazipur upazila, 35 in six unions of Chowhali upazila, 30 in five unions of Belkuchi upazila, 15 in two unions of Sirajganj Sadar upazila and 30 villages in four

unions of Shahzadpur upazila have been affected by flood.

The worst affected villages are Monsur Nagar, Chargreesh, Khasrajbari, Natuarpara, Tekani, Nischintopur, Shubogachha, Kunkunia, Maizbari, Gandhail, Polashapuri, Sreepur, Ghorachora, Raghunathpur, Alompur, Meghaj and Rehaisuribar in Kazipur upazila.

Bhatpuri, Shimla, Khokshabari, Sailabari and Khalishakura in Sirajganj Sadar upazila, Beti, Enayetpur, Shohagpur, Randhunibari and Azugara in Belkuchi upazila, Kaizuri, Sontola, Gudhibari and Porzona in Shahzadpur upazila and Khaskawlia, Ghorzan, Jalalpur and Omorpur in Chowhali upazila.

District Agriculture Extension Department sources said, transplanted Aman, vegetables and jute on about 1000 acres have been affected in the areas.

At least 96 educational institutions in the affected areas have been officially closed and over 2200 handloom factories have fallen silent, keeping several thousand weavers idle.

According to district administration sources, the affected people are facing drinking water crisis. They have taken precautionary steps against outbreak of diarrhoea and other water born diseases, they said.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports:

Newly transplanted Aman crops on about 50,000 hectares have gone under water that washed away about Tk one crore fishes from ponds in seven affected upazilas in Patuakhali.

District fisheries department sources said, over 1200 shrimp enclosures and over 5,000 ponds in Galachipa, Kalapara, Dashmina, Baufal, Dumki, Mirzaganj and Sadar upazilas have been inundated.

The meteorological department here recorded 385 mm rainfall in the district in the last four days since Tuesday. High tide under the influence of new moon aggravated the situation, they said.

The worst affected shoals are Char Ganga, Lata Chaplee and Nizam pur under Kalapara upazila; Char Halim, Char Agunmukha, Char Karforma, Char Bangla and Panpatty in Galachipa; Rangopaldee, Khalishakali, Alupur, Char Hayder, Char Agustee, Char Borhan and Bashbaria in Dashmina; Muradia in Dumki and North Badura and West Auliapur in Sadar upazila. At least 40,000 people have been affected in the areas.

About 10 km flood control embankments have been badly damaged in the areas, WDB officials and upazila administration said. Patuakhali town is unprotected as the proposed town protection embankment has not been built in 10 years.

Police said, the trader stored a huge quantity of fertiliser and was selling it at Tk 14 per kg against the government rate Tk 6 per kg.

Being informed by locals, joint forces with officials of agriculture department and president of Gaibandha Fertilizer Traders Association raided the godown and seized the fertiliser.

Joint forces also arrested the trader Salimuddin Chowdhury.

A case was filed with Gobindagnaj thana in this connection.

## 2 boys fleeing forced labour in Dublar Char rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Coastguard personnel rescued two minor boys Thursday evening from Passur river.

The two boys were identified as Monir Gharami, 12 and Shahidul Islam, 11 of Pirojpur district.

According to a press release issued by Coastguard yesterday, the minor boys fled from Dublar Char fisherman's colony on noon to get rid of forced labour.

The rescued minor boys told Coastguard personnel that they had no other way but to cross Passur river by swimming, taking life risk.

Quoting them, the press release said dry fish trader Jahangir brought them to Dublar Char from Pirojpur district last month to work in the fisherman's colony.

They were engaged in heavy work and tortured, the boys told Coastguard.

The rescued boys were sent to their guardians Thursday night.

## Joint forces seize 68 sacks fertiliser, one arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Joint forces in a drive on Thursday night seized 68 sacks of fertiliser from the godown of a dealer at Kamorpur Bazar in Gobindagnaj upazila for selling the fertiliser at higher price.

Police said, the trader stored a huge quantity of fertiliser and was selling it at Tk 14 per kg against the government rate Tk 6 per kg.

Being informed by locals, joint forces with officials of agriculture department and president of Gaibandha Fertilizer Traders Association raided the godown and seized the fertiliser.

Joint forces also arrested the trader Salimuddin Chowdhury.

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PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Risky for trains and vehicles... A bus approaches the Shankarpur Bhanga level crossing in Jessore yesterday while a train is coming.

## Former Satkhira BNP lawmaker sued for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An extortion case was filed yesterday with Kalaroa police station against former BNP lawmaker Habibul Islam Habib and five others.

Satkhira district BNP president Habibul Islam Habib was elected from Satkhira-1 (Tala-Kalaroa) constituency in 2001 election.

Habib is now on the run to evade arrest as he is on the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) list of corruption suspect.

Army led joint forces raided his house at Kalaroa to arrest him on July 4, police said earlier.

Abdur Rahman Biswas of Sreepatipur village in Kalaroa upazila filed the case.

The other accused are Kalaroa Pourasava BNP president Meherullah, Romel and Bellal Hossain of Kalaroa, Palash and Afzal Hossain of Mirzapur village in the upazila.

Plaintiff Abdur Rahman Biswas, a rice mill owner at Kalaroa bazaar, in the case alleged that the then BNP lawmaker Habibul Islam had Habib demanded Tk one lakh from him.

On October 1, 2002 Habib

sent the five persons to him to collect the money.

Biswas said, he paid Polash Tk 30,000 on October 4, 2002. Polash is a relative of Habib.

As he refused to pay the rest of the toll money, the accused led by Meherullah, on order from the then lawmaker raided his house at Mirzapur and damaged furniture and took away valuable worth Tk over 2 lakh, he alleged in the case.

Biswas said he did not file a case against them earlier fearing reprisal as they were ruling party leaders at that time.

On contact, Kalaroa thana officer-in-charge (OC) Farid Uddin confirmed filing of the case and said action will be taken after investigation.

On contact over cell phone, Habib denied the allegation and said the case is false and motivated.

"A vested quarter filed the case against me to tarnish my image", he told this correspondent from an undisclosed place.

Habib also faces allegations of corruption and sheltering miscreants during his tenure as a lawmaker.

## Kushtia trader abducted for ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals yesterday abducted a businessman for Tk 2 lakh ransom in Meherpur and killed another one in Kushtia Thursday.

Police said, a group of criminals numbering five went to the house of Abdul Mannan at Shaympur village in Sadar upazila, Meherpur at about 3:30 am. They picked up his son Hamidul, 40, a businessman, at gunpoint. Then they demanded Tk 2 lakh ransom from the family members for his release.

Ali Kadam, a relative of the abducted informed newsmen the gang demanded Tk 50,000 as illegal toll from Hamidul two months ago.

## Fisheries Technology Fair-2007 begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Prof. Dr. Musharraf Hossain Miah yesterday said all out efforts should be made to protect fish varieties now becoming extinct in the country.

He was speaking while inaugurating the Fisheries Technology Fair-2007 with a slogan 'Movement to preserve local variety fishes and its extension', held at Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI), Mymensingh.

Presided over by Dr. MA Majid, Director of BFRI, the function was also addressed by Joint Secretary Parikit Dutt Chowdhury and Dr. Saleh Uddin Ahmed, Chief Scientific Officer of Fresh Water Center here.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed laid the foundation stone of Bir Shrestha Shaheed Md Ruhul Amin Library and Memorial Museum in Noakhali yesterday.

## BOAT CAPSIZE IN TAHIRPUR Two bodies recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Bodies of two persons, who were missing after the boat capsized in Labor Haor in Tahirpur upazila in Sunamganj Wednesday were recovered yesterday.

They were identified as Zamena Khatun, 55 and Munnas Miah, 60, both hailing from Puranghat village in Tahirpur.

They were among six people missing after the mishap. The rest four are yet to be traced out. They are freedom fighter Ahmed Ali, 60, and Halud Miah, 45 of Puranghat village and Islam Uddin, 25 and Babul Miah, 28 of Bhrhamaon village.

A mechanised boat with 16 people and goods sank in Lobar Haor near Badaghat at about 8 pm Wednesday. Ten of them managed to reach the shore.

The boat was going to Puranghat in Tahirpur from Kazlaghat in Kishoreganj district.