



Marung Bazar in Khagrachhari (left) and people negotiating chest-deep flood water on Feni-Parshuram road yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR/FOCUS BANGLA

Flood situation deteriorates in Sirajganj and Feni, improves in Khagrachhari

30,000 marooned in Fulgazi-Pashuram: Jamuna swells, Teesta falls: Rain continues in Patuakhali

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The flood situation deteriorated in Sirajganj and adjoining Jamuna basin areas as the mighty river along with its tributaries further swelled due to rain and onrush of waters from the upstream.

The flood situation slightly improved in Khagrachhari hill district as rains stopped yesterday afternoon.

In costal Patuakhali, intermittent rains continued for the fourth day yesterday, inundating low-lying areas.

Meherpur, downpour inundated low lying areas of Sadar, Gangni and Mujibnagar upazilas, affected at least 200 out of 270 villages in the district. Meteorological department recorded 325 mm rainfall in 24 till 8 am Friday.

In Feni, the situation deteriorated as fresh areas were flooded in Fulgazi and Pashuram upazilas.

In Rangpur, the Teesta recorded fall, improving the situation.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent reports:

Rains stopped in Khagrachhari at about 2 pm after a downpour since morning, recording 59 mm rainfall in about eight hours. The two hill riversChengi and Maineeremained static after overflowing banks at several points and flooding vast areas in six upazilas.

Officials said the situation will improve fast if there is no rain. Deputy Director District Agriculture Extension Department (AED) TM Monjurul Islam said they recorded 47 mm rainfall on Thursday and 50 mm on Friday.

District administration officials

said flood situation improved in some areas as flow of the two hill rivers remained by and large static since morning but it remained static in rest of the affected areas.

As waters rolled down, the situation improved in Natunpara and Konchairepara in Panchhari upazila; Betchhari in Dighinala; APBN area; Muslimpara and Perachhara in Sadar; Kaladeva, Fenikul and Masterpara in Ramgarh upazila; Shantipur, Belchhari and New Ajoddah in Matiranga and some villages in Manikchhari, Laxmichhari and Mohalchhari upazilas, the officials said.

Till yesterday afternoon, the situation remained unchanged in Merung, Kobakhali, Youngrachhari, Choto Merung, Bara Merung, Merung Bazar and Babuchhara in Dighinala upazila; Ganjapara, Muslimpara and Shabdamiapara in Sadar upazila and Fatemanagar and Latiban under Panchhari upazila.

Several thousand affected people took shelter on high lands and structures. The local administration and Khagrachhari municipality distributed cooked and dry foods, biscuits and drinking water among the affected people.

Khagrachhari Municipality Chairman Joynal Abedin said they are helping the affected people and would rehabilitate them once the waters recede.

Additional District Magistrate Shamsuddoha said the district administration with cooperation from upazila administrations is providing all out assistance to the affected people.

The administration said about 500 families are marooned in Dighinala upazila. They have allotted 450 maunds of rice and 100 maunds of chira (dried food) for the affected people.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Mohammad Shamsuddoha, Assistant Police Superintendent Mohammad Tareq Ahmad, Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura and municipality chairman Joynal Abedin visited flood affected areas, sources said.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent reports:

Incessant rain and onrush of waters from the upstream further swelled Jamuna, its tributaries Korotoa, Fulzohr and Ichhamoti and Bramhaputra rivers, inundating fresh areas in Sirajganj yesterday.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said around 40 unions covering shoal areas and Chalon Beel reeled under water yesterday. Two spars on the Jamuna at Enayetpur and Meghai are threatened by the strong current of the river. Workers engaged by WDB under supervision of army are trying to protect the spars.

Jamuana swelled by 17 centimeters near Sirajganj town in 24 hours till yesterday morning but was flowing below the danger mark. It will cross the danger mark if the water rises at the present rate, WDB sources said.

Officials said at least 65 villages in Tarash, Kazipur, Sirajganj, Belkuchi, Chowhali and

Shahzadpur upazilas were inundated yesterday.

Meanwhile, body of a woman among the six victims who drowned in a boat capsized in Chalan Beel on Friday, was recovered yesterday. It was identified as that of Anjuara Khatun, 27. She was wife of Anwar Hossain, police said.

Agriculture Extension Department recorded about 300 mm rainfall in last four days.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reported that four days' rains inundated vast areas in five upazilas of the district. The affected upazilas are Kalapara, Mithaganj, Chakamaya, Nilganj and Latachapali.

Local meteorological department recorded 124 mm rainfall in 24 hours till 4 pm yesterday. Rains continued till yesterday evening.

Illegal small embankments built on canals for fishery projects created water-logging in the areas.

Officials said a large number of farmers yesterday staged demonstrations in different areas for removal of the illegal embankments to allow flow of water and remove the water-logging.

Assistant Director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority Shahidullah Mia yesterday said plying of small launches on 21 routes in the district was stopped till further notice due to inclement weather. Local ports have been advised to keep hoisted cautionary signal No 2.

At least 500 fishing trawlers are idle in ports due to rough sea, sources said.

Our Staff Correspondent reports

from Khulna: Downpour at short intervals paralysed life in Khulna city yesterday.

The local meteorological department recorded 138 mm rainfall in ten hours in Khulna city and adjoining areas.

Most of the schools were compelled to suspend academic activities due to thin attendance of students.

Office goers waded knee-deep water in most areas of the city to go to workplaces.

Rains inundated washed away shrimps from at least 200 farms and inundated vast crop lands in the district, officials said.

BSS adds from Feni:

The flood situation in Fulgazi and Parshuram upazilas in Feni district deteriorated yesterday due to heavy rain and onrush of water from hill across the border.

Hundreds of people in the two upazilas were marooned as all the roads were submerged. Both the upazilas remained disconnected from the district headquarters, according to Water Development Board (WDB) sources.

Cracks developed at least at 23 points on the embankment of Muhuri and Kahua rivers due to onrush of water, marooning 30,000 people.

Water was flowing 75cm above the danger mark at different points of Muhuri and Kahua rivers yesterday evening.

The district administration and the Red Crescent Society distributed relief materials including rice, lentil edible oil, and clothes among 1500 affected families.

BSS adds from Rangpur:

The situation improved significantly in the Teesta basin following sharp falls in the water level of the river at all points.

But other rivers and tributaries continued to rise in Rangpur area.

About 1,500 people in low-lying shoal areas of Dimla, Domar, Jaldhaka, Hatibandha, Kaliganj, Admitmari, Sundarganj, Rajarhat, Gangachara, Pirgacha and Kawlia upazilas in greater Rangpur in Teesta basins are marooned.

The Teesta marked a fall by 29 cm during the period and was flowing 34 cm below the danger mark at Dalia in Nilphamari at 6 am yesterday

The river also marked a fall by one cm in Kawlia and was flowing 148 cm below the danger mark.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources said the Dharla marked a sharp rise by 36 cm during the period and was flowing only 86 cm below the danger mark at Kurigram, deteriorating the flood situation in the district.

The Dudhkumar marked a further rise by 4cm and was flowing only 82 cm below its danger mark at Noonkhawa in Kurigram.

WDB recorded 14.5mm rainfall at Kurigram, 11 3mm at Chilmari, 6mm at Rangpur, 10mm at Dalia and 3mm at Kawlia during 24 hours till 6 am yesterday.

Executive engineers of WDB Atikur Rahman and Akmal Hossain told BSS that the present situation in quite stable as all rivers and tributaries were flowing below danger marks.

'Killers' of Sust student back on campus

No progress in probe in 2 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Law enforcers could not arrest any of the killers of Liton, a student of Shahjalal university of Science and Technology (SUST), about two years after the incident.

The alleged killers are moving freely, campus sources claimed.

Rafiqul Islam Patwary Liton was vice-president of Sust unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front BNP.

Hailing from a village in Chagalnaiya upazila in Feni district, Liton was the only brother of five sisters. He lost their father in his boyhood.

Liton, a student of Masters in Social Science, was beaten in front of hundreds of students and teachers near the administrative building on July 13, 2005. It was the first political killing on the Sust.

As he came out of examination hall at about 5 pm, a group of JCD cadres swooped on him near the

Gol Chattar on the campus. They hit him with iron rods and hockey sticks and took him to the employees' canteen, where they beat him again, leaving him unconscious.

Sources said earlier that hundreds of students and teachers witnessed the incident, but none dared to come to his rescue.

Liton was rushed to nearby Ragib-Rabeya Medical College and Hospital, wherefrom he was shifted to Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

He died after hours.

The Sust authorities filed a case with Kotwali police station. But there has not been any meaningful progress in the investigation, sources claimed.

The Sust authorities expelled 13 students for one or two semesters, which some sources claimed to be a lenient punishment. Most of them are backed on the campus on expiry of their expulsion periods.

PROPOSED TOWN PROTECTION DAM

Survey team visits project site in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A survey team from the Planning Commission yesterday visited the site of proposed Patuakhali Town Protection Project, planned about 10 years ago top protect the coastal town from flooding and tidal surge.

The team led by Joint Chief of Planning Commission Hamidur Rahman, visited different areas of the proposed project and exchanged views with local people, journalist and district officials. The team came to Patuakhali on Friday.

Hamidur Rahman told journalists at the Circuit House that work on the project would start soon.

"We hope to start work in the current financial year (2007-2008) considering its importance", he said.

"We have already completed feasibility study at a cost of Tk 35 lakh", he added.

He said the project would be completed on priority basis.

The project profile would be sent to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) soon for approval, Hamidur said.

Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner AGM Mir Moshir Alam, Water Development Board Executive Engineer Zahir Uddin Ahmed and acting chairman of Patuakhali pourasabha Abu Zafar Samsuddin also spoke on the occasion.

The Patuakhali Town Protection Embankment-cum-Drainage Project involving Tk 17 crore was taken up 10 years ago after a visit by the then agriculture minister Majid-Ul-Haque.

Patuakhali town is surrounded by Lawkathi river on the north and Lohalia river on thee. Water from the rivers roll into the town during high tide, tidal surge and flood.

The project includes construction of 4.20 km flood control embankment, eight drains, eight

sluice gates, 38 out lets, one km wall and installation of four power pumps.

Earlier, a team from water resources ministry visited Patuakhali in January last year and submitted a report highlighting importance of a town protection embankment.

Lady doctor commits 'suicide'

RU CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouded unnatural death of a lady doctor in Rajshahi Friday night.

Dr Sulata Rani Pramanik, 33, a medical officer, of Marie Stopes Clinic allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself with a ceiling fan at her residence in Hetem Kha Boro Masjid area in the city.

Victim's five-year-old child saw the mother's hanging body at first and shouted. Inmates of the house immediately rushed there and recovered the body by breaking open the door.

Later, they informed the matter to Boalia police who recovered the body and sent it to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Dr Sulata's husband Dr Subroto Pramanik, also a physician working with RMCH was away from his house at the time of the incident.

On contact, Boalia Police Station sub-inspector (SI) Manjurul Haque said family feud might be the reason of the incident.

Terming the death 'mysterious', he said police investigation is going on.

An unnatural death (UD) case was recorded with Boalia Police Station yesterday.

Kamalganj AL leader held on extortion charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police yesterday produced an arrested Awami League (AL) leader of Kamalganj upazila and another one to a court here from where they were sent to jail, police said.

Kamalganj upazila AL general secretary Prof Rafiqur Rahman, also a former upazila chairman, and another person named Abdul Mannan were arrested in connection with an extortion case filed with Kamalganj Police station on Friday.

Zahur Miah of Sripur village under Kamalganj upazila filed the case, police said.

The plaintiff alleged the two promised him get lease of 'Champaroy Bamboo Mohal' in the upazila on July 14. For the purpose, they demanded Tk 20,000 from him.

The plaintiff claimed to have given them Tk 10,000 on July 16. Still then, Rafique allegedly created pressure on him to pay the rest amount. In such a situation, he filed the case, the plaintiff said.

AL leader held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An Awami League (AL) leader has been arrested from a hotel in Khulna, police said.

Joint forces arrested Shyamnagar upazila AL joint secretary Shafail Azam Lenin, also chairman of Gabura Union Parishad (UP), Friday night. But the reason behind the arrest is still unknown. He was handed over to Sadar police yesterday.

On contact, Satkhira Superintendent of Police (SP) Mirza Abdullahal Baki confirmed the arrest.

Erratum

In a news item headlined 'Ex-RU Syndicate member demands removal of VC', published on the National Page on July 9, the name of Prof Fayekuzzaman was printed instead of Prof Fakruzzaman. The inadvertent mistake is regretted.



PHOTO: STAR

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested alleged arms trader Altaf Uddin and recovered a 9 MM pistol, a revolver, 261 bullets and gun power from his house at Bandar Bazar in Sylhet city Friday night.

CLOSED PEOPLES JUTE MILLS

Terminated workers to get all arrears next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) will pay the entire amount of Tk 187 crore by next month (August) against arrear wages, salaries and other financial benefits of workers and employees of Peoples Jute Mills.

The state-owned mill at Khalishpur will be finally closed from August 1. All its workers and employees were terminated earlier by the government.

Besides, government will allocate Tk 1200 crore for smooth running of 18 jute mills in the country out of which Tk 138 crore is likely to be available as bank loan, sources said yesterday.

Apart from this financial allocation and bank loan, government has

decided to allocate more Tk 200 crore for these jute mills to purchase raw jute, said Director (Finance) of BJMC Md Harisuddin who came to Khulna on Friday at the head of a three-member team to visit all state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt.

Two other members of the BJMC team are General Manager (Admin) Md Abu Saeed and Deputy General Manager (Marketing) Nalini Ranjan Roy.

They held an emergency meeting from 5 pm to 8.30 pm on Friday at the zonal office of BJMC. It was attended by all high officials and general managers of all the eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt.

Members of the BJMC team yesterday visited the jute mills and held meetings separately with their general managers.

The Director (Finance) of BJMC who is heading the three-member team did not say if arrear wages of terminated workers of other jute mills would at all be paid or not.

A total of 5,427 workers of five out of eight state-owned jute mills have so far been retrenched by BJMC.

Police on Thursday forced members and volunteers of the newly formed National Relief Committee (NRC) to close two gruel kitchens opened at Khalishpur to provide members of workers' families of Peoples Jute Mills and Platinum Jute Mwhit cooked rice and lentil.

NRC co-ordinator Alamgir Kabir Friday evening alleged that police raided houses of volunteers and beat up some of them for distributing food at gruel kitchens.

17 jailed for killing Rajshahi BNP leader

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal has sentenced 17 people to varying jail terms in BNP leader Dulal Sheikh murder case.

Dulal Sheikh of Kishorepur village in Bagha upazila was murdered on July 19, 2003. His body with marks of was recovered from a sugar case field.

Judge ATM Mesbaudullah pronounced the verdict in a packed courtroom on Thursday.

Of the convicts, eight were sentenced to 10 years RI, five to seven years and four persons to three years imprisonment.

The eight convicts who got 10 years RI are Mofil Uddin, Hafizul Islam, Shahidul Islam, Ajdar, Shahadul, Sumon, Abdur Rashid

and Nowshad.

The five who were given seven years imprisonment are Muhammad Aslam (absconding), Mamun-ur-Rashid, Maksudur Rahman alias Shohel, Abdul Majed and Ayub Ali.

The court also sentenced four absconding accused to three years' imprisonment. They are Kawsar, Habibullah alias Prince, Shamim and Ripon.

The victim's brother Abdus Salam filed a murder case with Bhaga thana a day after the murder. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted charge sheet on November 20, 2004 accusing 20 people.

Twenty-three witnesses were examinee by the court.

Vow to remove dowry, early marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

It was a unique day yesterday for over 150 adolescent girls and their guardians when they vowed to remove early marriage and dowry from society.

They joined hands to raise voice against the social curse at a function held at Binerpota in Sadar upazila. The programme was organised to mark the fourth founding anniversary of 'Amar Sonar Paribar', a project of Rishilpi, an NGO working for eradication of early marriage and dowry. The project was launched four years ago.

An elaborate programme was chalked out to mark the occasion. The programme included rally, discussion and cultural function.

The discussion was held at the Rishilpi auditorium at Binerpota with assistant director Syed Hasan Mahmud in the chair.

Satkhira Ladies Club chairperson Sadia Afroz attended as chief guest while Bangabandhu Peshbhittik High School headmis-

stress Laila Parvin Sejuti was present as special guest.

Speakers stressed on creating mass awareness against early marriage and dowry. They also underscored the need for marriage registration.

They said lack of knowledge about bad effects of early marriage, religious superstition, ignorance and lack of social awareness as the main reasons behind early marriage and marriage without registration.

They said early marriage and dowry were behind repression on women which is a common incident in the country. They urged villagers to work for elimination of the social curse.

Speakers praised Rishilpi for its success in removing early marriage and dowry from society where literacy rate is poor and the age-old superstition still prevails.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Rescued DANIDA official Hossain Shahid Sumon with his two sons at a press conference at Chittagong cantonment yesterday after treatment at the CMH. Sumon, abducted from Khagrachhari hills on June 25 was rescued on July 8.