

2 lakh marooned for 2 months in Satkhira, Jessore

No step to remove long-drawn water-logging problem in Kobadak basin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over two lakh people in 227 villages in Kobadak basin areas in Satkhira and Jessore districts are marooned for about two months since onset of monsoon as outlets for draining out rain and flood water are clogged because the river has become silted.

Local people under the banner of Kobadar Bachao Andolok staged demonstrations and submitted memorandums to Satkhira Deputy Commissioner on several occasions in last two years to address the long-drawn problem, but to no effect. The latest memorandum was submitted last month.

The affected villages cover 28 unions in Tala and Kalaroa upazilas

in Satkhira and Jhhikargachha, Manirampur and Keshabpur upazilas in Jessore.

Most homesteads in the area are inundated, many of them by four to five feet water, as flood water entered the areas by overflowing Kobadak banks at several points. The problem began in 1980s, the victims said.

At least 657 families have taken shelter in 11 flood centers including Sarulia High School, Patkelghata High School, Putiakhali Primary School, Kashipur Primary School, Kashipur Madrasa and on Patkelghata bridge.

Intestinal and skin diseases have broken out in different areas as due to crisis of food and drinking water. Most of the tubewells are sub-

merged.

Paddy and other crops on about 30,000 acres were submerged in days with the onrush of Kobadak water that also inundated at least 20 shrimp enclosures. Fishes worth about Tk 40 lakh were washed away fishery officials and farmers said.

The most affected unions are Sarulia, Tala, Sadar, Islamkati, Dhandia, Kumira, Khalishkhali, Magura, Jalalpur and Nagarghat in Tala upazila; Darea, Jugikhali, Joynagar and Jalalabad in Kalaroa upazila; Bakra, Hajirabad, Nirjaskhola, Panisara and Shankarpur in Jhhikargachha; Trimohoni, Bidyanadakati, Mongalkote and Sagardari in Keshabpur and Jhapa, Mashimnagar, Shyamkuri, Harhamagar and Rohita unions in

Manirampur upazila.

"Kobadak is the lifeline for people in the area and the main outlet for rainwater. The problem has been aggravated by unplanned construction of small embankments and encroachment of the river at numerous points by fish farmers", Sarulia Union Parishad chairman Matiar Rahman in Tala upazila told this correspondent.

Neither the Water Development Board (WDB) nor the administration has taken any step over the years to address the problem, he alleged.

"We do not know how we will survive if we can not grow Aman in the current season", said Dulal Chandra Mondal of Raripara village.

Contacted, Satkhira Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Kefayetullah said a meeting on the issue was held on August 15 at his office. It was attended by chairmen of all the 28 Union Parishads, Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), Police Superintendent, representatives of joint forces and political leaders.

The meeting decided to prepare programmes locally to re-excavate the silted river on self-help basis by involving the local people.

The DC said Water Development Board (WDB) has the primary responsibility to address the problem.

WDB Executive Engineer Mojibur Rahman Hawlader said he submitted proposals this year and last year also for dredging the Kobadak but there has not been any decision yet.

Meanwhile the district administration, NGOs and political parties have started separate relief operations for the affected people.

Satkhira Deputy Commissioner inaugurated relief operations at Kumira High School and Patkelghata auditorium flood shelters in Tala upazila on Saturday.



PHOTO: STAR

Persistent sufferings... a marooned family at Raripara village in Tala upazila in Satkhira.

Because of 2 damaged sluice gates

15,000-acre vegetable fields in Pakundia now sheets of water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Vast areas in Pakundia upazila, known as a vegetable growing area, are now sheets of water with crops completely damaged only because two sluice gates on an embankment along the Brahmaputra is not repaired for long.

Vegetables and nearly ready for harvest, paddy on about 22,000 acres are now under water, according to Upazila Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Officer Prasanta Kumar Saha.

The crops include vegetables and chilly on over 15,000 acres, Amon seeds beds on 200, paddy on about 400 acres and 100 acres of other crops.

The 13 km long embankment cum road from Charjamail at

Hossainpur upazila to Mirjapur Bazar in Pakundia upazila along the Brahmaputra river protected the area from floods. Floods water inundated the area this year also as two sluice gates on the embankment were not repaired for long, Prasanta said.

One of the sluice gates is at Madhabpara in Char Kawa village and the other is at Char Kussa in Mirjapur Bazarin Pakundia upazila.

AED Block Supervisor Shafiqul Alam said, as repeated appeals and demonstrations failed to draw the authorities' attention, villagers repaired the sluice gates to protect their vegetable fields.

But their efforts were of no use as water level of the Brahmaputra river rose and entered engulfed the area overnight, inundating crops fields. They said they did not get any

assistance from the local administration in repairing the sluice gates.

Badly effected four unions covering over 50 villages are Jangalia, Egarosindur, Charparadi and Burudia, they said.

Prasanta said, Pakundia upazila is prominent for growing chilly and of vegetables, mainly supplied to the capital as traders from Dhaka with pickups could easily reach the upazila through Monohordi in Narshindi.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Anisuzzaman quoted a local Union Parishad chairman and said both the sluice gates were usable. The flood was caused by excessive rainfall.

6 Pabna BNP, AL leaders' detention extended again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The detention of six arrested front ranking politicians of both the BNP and the Awami League (AL) here has been extended for third time.

All are accused in corruption cases and they include former lawmaker and chairmen of two municipalities.

The arrestees are district BNP president and former lawmaker from Pabna-4 constituency Sirajul Islam Sarder, district BNP organising secretary and Pabna Pourasava chairman Kamrul Hassan Mintu, Ishwardi Pourasava chairman and

Hearing on ex-BNP MP's extortion case deferred

A CORRESPONDENT, C'Nawabganj

A court here has deferred the date for examination of witnesses of an extortion case filed against a former BNP lawmaker here.

District and Sessions Judge Court Judge Hrishikesh Saha deferred the date yesterday in response to an argument by the defence lawyers who said that a writ challenging the system of trial under the Emergency Powers Act is pending with the High Court and its hearing would be held this month.

Shahjahan was elected a lawmaker from Chapainawabganj-1 (Shibganj) constituency.

Nurul Huda, a teacher of Babupur Idrisia Dakkhil Madrasa filed a Tk 80,000 extortion case with Shibganj Police Station against the lawmaker and four others on May 9.

Other accused are vice president of Shibganj upazila BNP Ashraf Ali, Shibganj upazila BNP secretary Ashraf Alam Rashid, Pourasava BNP general secretary Shamim Kabir Halim and Babupur Idrisia Dakkhil Madrasa principal E Haque. Three of them excepting the former lawmaker and Shamim Kabir Halim have been absconding.

Outlaw held in Jhenidah

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A regional leader of the outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) was arrested from his village home at Mohishadanga in Sadar upazila Sunday night.

On a tip-off, members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) conducted a raid at the house at about 1 am and arrested Mosharraf Hossain, 50, son of Moinuddin of the village.

They also recovered two pipe guns, one shotgun, one revolver and two rounds of bullet from his possession.

When contacted, sub-inspector (SI) Alamgir of Jhenidah Sadar Police Station said, 'The arrestee is being interrogated'.

JOURNO HUMAYUN KABIR MURDER IN KHULNA

Charge sheet rejected again

Godfather left out, victims son claims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Asif Kabir, son of slain journalist Humayun Kabir Balu, has again rejected the charge sheet of his father's murder case.

He submitted an application to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court here on Sunday rejecting the charge sheet, alleging that it was submitted 'secretly' without his knowledge.

Asif however said the fate of his application will be decided after hearing but the date has not been fixed, he told this correspondent yesterday.

The supplementary charge sheet was submitted to the CMM court on August 12 by investigating officer of the case Inspector Chittya Ranjan Pal of Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP).

The court of CMM accepted the supplementary charge sheet on August 16.

Asif Kabir, has rejected the supplementary charge sheet terming it 'biased and motivated'. He said the supplementary charge sheet was submitted without informing



Humayun Kabir Balu

journalists and demanded reinvestigation by a senior officer of CID for fair trial of the case.

Seven persons have been named as accused in the supplementary charge sheet.

They are founder of Janajuddho faction of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Abdur Rashid Maitiha alias Dada Tapan, Masum, Zahidur Rahman, Iqbal Hossain Shadhin, Nazrul Islam alias Khorha Nazu, Sadique Rahman

alias Rimon and Nazmuddin.

Godfather and financiers behind the murder have been left out of the charge, Asif claimed. The IO did not record statement of any prosecution witness, he also alleged.

Judge of Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal ordered further investigation of the case on January 22 last year following a petition by special public prosecutor SM Abu Zafar.

Inspector Chittya Ranjan Pal of KMP DB is the third IO who took up the case for further investigation on April 5.

Sheikh Nazimuddin, a leader of Khulna Transport Owners Association and a neighbour of slain journalist Humayun Kabir has been named as an accused in the supplementary charge sheet.

Humayun Kaqbir Balu, editor of Khulna daily Dainik Janmabhumi, was killed in a bomb attack on June 27, 2004 in front of his residence cum office at Haji Ismail Road in Khulna city.

84 KM flood control dam damaged in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Erosion has damaged over 84 kilometre (KM) flood control embankment in seven upazilas here in the ongoing rainy season, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) sources said.

Twenty-two out of 32 polders have been washed away during the period. At present, erosion has been threatening about 50 KM embankment in the areas.

Patuakhali BWDB office has submitted an emergency project proposal (PP) of Tk 8.72 crore to the higher authorities to repair the damaged embankment on July 31, said BWDB executive engineer Md Jaheer Uddin Ahmed. But the PP is yet to be approved, he said.

Local BWDB office sources said the erosion has affected a vast tract of land in the district.

The Andharmanik has damaged flood control embankment of 44, 46,47/1, 47/4, 47/5 and 54/Apolders in Patua, South Dhangkhali, Khajura villages in Kalapara upazila. Over 40,000 acres of land have been flooded by saline water. As a result, Aman paddy on a vast tract of land has been threatened.

The Buragouranga has flooded Char Kapalbera, South Panpatti, Chalitabunia and Badnatai villages in Galachipa upazila by saline water threatening Aman cultivation.



PHOTO: STAR

Kishoreganj district administration along with some NGOs distributing relief among flood victims in Bhairab yesterday.

7x3

5x2

8x3