

# RIVERS OVERFLOW DUE TO TIDAL SURGE 20 Dakope villages flooded for breach in embankments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty villages in Kamarkhola and Sutarkhali unions under Dakope upazila of Khulna district went under water in last two days as tidal surge overflowing Bhadra and Shibsha rivers caused breach of four embankments constructed by WAPDA.

As a result, members of over 700 families, mostly farmers, fishermen, bawalis (honey collectors), woodcutters and day labourers, of the 20 villages became homeless and hundreds of acres of land went under knee-deep water.

The embankments, earlier damaged by cyclonic storm Aila and accompanying tidal surges on May 25 last year, were not properly repaired, locals said.

The situation has added to the sufferings of the people of these 20 villages who are yet to recover from the ravages caused by Aila, said Dakope Upazila Nirbahi Officer Kazi Atiur Rahman.

Thirteen villages of Kamarkhola union went under water due to collapse of three embankments on Monday evening while seven more villages of Sutarkhali union faced the same situation as another embankment collapsed early yesterday, said the UNO.

The inundated villages are -- Srinagar, Parjoynagar, Shaharabad, Jaliakhali, Bhibhanga, Rajnagar, Rekhamari, Joynagar, Channirchawk, Kalinagar, Satgharia, Shibnagar and Fakirhdanga of Kamarkhola union are and Gunari, Katabunia, Maddhom Gunari, Kalibari, Purbo Gunari, Golbunia and Nalian of Sutarkhali union.

Dakope upazila parishad Chairman Sheikh Abul Hossain said the embankments collapsed as Water Development Board (WDB) had not taken any positive step to properly repair the breaches that developed due to the onslaught of cyclone Aila and tidal surges of May 25 last year.

WAPDA showed pretexts of fund shortage and different official formalities for not properly repairing the embankments, he said.

When asked, engineer Md Anwar Hossain of WAPDA told this correspondent yesterday that he had asked twice for necessary allocation of fund from higher authorities after submitting an official report in detail on the condition of damaged embankments.

"But we got only Tk 1 crore instead of Tk 10 crore which was asked for. As a result, no contractor wanted to work for doing repair works with this scanty amount of money although tenders were invited thrice," he said.



A farmer stays at night in a small hut beside his boro seedbed at Araj Shimultala in Baliadanga union of Chapainawganj Sadar upazila to guard against thieves as stealing of seedlings has increased in the area. Boro seedling on a katha (1.65 decimal) of land this season is selling for Tk 4,000 to 5,000 against last year's Tk 500 to 600 as the area sees decline in seedling production due to severe cold and dense fog.

## KILLING OF FFS 44 sued in Kushtia, Barisal

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Forty-four people have been sued on charge of killing three freedom fighters--two in Kushtia and one in Barisal--during Liberation War in 1971.

A case was filed with Daultpur Police Station in Kushtia district yesterday against 13 alleged collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces on charges of killing two freedom fighters in August 1971 at Gaserdia village under Daultpur upazila.

Robz Hossain of Gaserdia village lodged the case, according to our correspondent.

The accused are Rezaul Malitha, Sona Miah, Atahar Hossain, Abdus Sattar, Amanullah, Afsar Ali, Munser Ali, Ansar Ali, Forman Ali, Abdus Sattar (2), Mannan, Ramzan, Kasem of Gaserdia village and Khursed Ali of Hridipur village under the upazila.

In his case statement, the complainant said the accused picked up his father Mozammel Hossain and grandfather Aked Ali from their house at gunpoint on August 10, 1971. Later, their bodies were found on Gaserdia field.

Officer-In-Charge (OC) of Daulatpur Police Station Hasan Hafizur Rahman said they recorded the case as an FIR (first information report).

In Barisal, Rani Begum, daughter of martyred freedom fighter Yakub Ali, filed a petition case with Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, Barisal, on Sunday accusing 31 people of killing his father in 1971, reports a correspondent.

The judge fixed next Sunday for hearing on the petition.

In the petition, the complainant said rajakar Yunus Kazi and his 30 accomplices killed his fighter Yakub Ali in Bhasanchar area under Mehendiganj upazila on July 9, 1971.

Rani Begum filed the complaint with the court through a lawyer.

# Rubber farming on amid a volley of questions

JASIM MAJUMDER,  
Khagrachhari

At least 20,000 acres of land is being used for rubber cultivation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) is cultivating rubber on some 15,000 acres of land under rubber cultivation project while cultivation is going on some 5000 acres of land under private initiative, sources said.

CHTDB has about 26 lakh rubber plants on 13,200 acres of land (200 plants on each acre) while some 5 lakh more plants are growing on about 5,000 acres of land under private ownership.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided Tk 52.5 crore in two instalments for the rubber cultivation project from 1979 to 1995 and Tk 13.5 crore came from public exchequer after signing of the CHT peace accord in 1997.

Some 3,300 stakeholders of the project alleged that they are not getting 60 percent of total income as per the agreement they signed with the CHTDB. They alleged the authority is depriving them of their due share producing false data of production and income.

CHTDB officials said many farmers have become solvent through rubber cultivation while farmers and agriculturists term it non-profitable and hazardous to health.

About 50,000 people, who have been living in rubber garden areas or are engaged in rubber production, are suffering from different diseases, sources said.

Binoy Bhusan Chakma, a farmer of Bhaibonchhara in Sadar upazila of Khagrachhari, said most of the farmers are suffering from different diseases as they are not aware of the



Sap from a rubber tree is being collected in a bucket during the ongoing peak production season, below, a rubber garden under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board at Panchmail in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila.



Coastal Development Partnership forms a human chain in front of Bagerhat Press Club marking World Wetlands Day yesterday.

## Garment owner murdered in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Rajshahi

Criminals yesterday morning murdered a garment owner in West Boalia area in the city.

Victim Israfil Hossain Swapan, 25, was son of Aminul Islam of the area and he was the proprietor of Swapan Garments at Harapan Bazaar.

Police recovered his body lying in a pool of blood at a mango orchard.

Swapan went missing on Sunday night after Tarikul Islam, an employee at the local Warid Telecom Tower called him out of home, police said.

Police later in the afternoon arrested Tarikul from Andharkota area of Paba upazila and seized blood stained cloth from him.

A murder case has been filed with Rajpara police station in this regard.

According to police, Swapan was engaged in illegal phensidyl trade. He was called out of home for purchasing seized phensidyl bottles at low rates. He went out with Tk 10,000 to buy those, they said.

# Ruling party men block rail, road in Bhairab

A CORRESPONDENT,  
Kishoreganj

Awami League and Jubo league men put up barricades on rail tracks at Bhairab station and on Dhaka-Kishoreganj road yesterday to press the demand for arrest of those who attacked a Bhairab Jubo League leader on Thursday.

Police and locals said a gang of ten criminals attacked Jubo League Bhairab unit General secretary Mozammel Haque Mithu at Bhairabpur village under the upazila as a sequel to previous enmity Thursday afternoon.

Mozammel, son of former upazila chairman Haji Md Kalu Mia, filed a case with Bhairab Police Station against nine people the same day.

Protesting the attack on Mozammel, Jubo League Bhairab unit held a rally at the upazila headquarters at 6:00pm on Thursday demanding arrest of the attackers and

gave a three-day deadline that ended on Sunday.

As police could not arrest the attackers within the deadline, hundreds of AL and Jubo League men blocked rail routes at Bhairab and Kalika Prasad and Dhaka-Kishoreganj road in Mirarchar area, causing sufferings to thousands of passengers.

Kishoreganj-bound Agarsindur train in Kalika Prasad area and Dhaka-bound Agarsindur in Bhairab station remained halted for four hours from 8:00am.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Bhairab Police Station said the AL and Jubo League activists withdrew the blocked programme after AL leaders and local administration assured them of taking necessary steps to arrest the attackers as soon as possible.

Rab personnel and additional police have been deployed at Bhairab to avert further incident, the OC added.



Speed breakers with faded markings pose risk of accidents, especially at night during foggy winter. The photo was taken from Birganj upazila in Dinajpur district recently.

# Unmarked speed breakers pose risk for Dinajpur commuters

KONGKON KARMAKER,  
Dinajpur

Absence of adequate traffic markings on 438 kilometre roads under the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Dinajpur district poses risk for thousands of commuters, especially during the foggy weather.

Centre lines, zebra crossings, edge bars, stop bars, direction arrows, lane markings, speed breaker markings and parking lines play an important role in the regulation of traffic but the road markings frequently fade away due to heavy traffic rush.

The markings need frequent re-painting to ensure

their visibility, especially during night and foggy weather, but the RHD authorities are not paying due attention, said vehicle operators and owners.

Md Mozibor Rahman, general secretary of Dinajpur Transport Workers Association, said it is true that the traffic markings do not last long due to heavy traffic rush in the district but it is duty of the RHD to ensure visibility of the road markings that have faded away.

These markings, classified as longitudinal, transverse, object markings and word messages, are meant to guide and control the flow of traffic

on highways and supplement functions of traffic signs.

Over the years, the number of speed breakers see a gradual increase but most of them are unlit and without reflectors. There are no warning signboards in most cases.

Recently a number of illegally set speed-breakers, raised by villagers without markings, have become a nuisance for drivers and commuters. Instead of preventing over-speeding, these illegal structures have become a major cause of accidents, especially at night during the foggy winter.

As speeding vehicles pass-

ing through these villages often hit children and farm animals, villagers started erecting steep speed breakers on their own on different roads.

The mushrooming of educational institutions along the highways has also led to an increase in the number of speed breakers in recent years, but absence of marks often cause accidents.

When contacted over phone, Md Abu Etesham Rashed, executive engineer of Dinajpur RHD, said, "We regularly repaint the road markings but they disappear due to heavy traffic rush."