

# Pneumonia hits Thakurgaon kids

One killed, 400 hospitalised; Over 200 take outdoor treatment a day

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A child died at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital on Friday while around 400 other children with pneumonia and cold related diseases have been admitted to different hospitals and health complexes in the district as the area now sees much fluctuation of temperature between day and night.

The deceased, five-month-old Babu, son of Jagadish Chandra of Molani village in Sadar upazila, was admitted to the hospital at his last stage on Friday morning, hospital sources said.

In last two days, at least 117 patients were admitted to

children's ward of Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital although there are only 18 seats at the ward.

Sixty per cent of the patients are attacked with pneumonia, Dr Shahajahan Nawaj, a child consultant of the hospital, said.

Besides, at least 200-250 patients are receiving treatment at the outdoor everyday. About 250 patients, most with respiratory problem, received treatment at the outdoor on Saturday, hospital sources said.

The number of child patients with pneumonia and cold related diseases sees a sharp rise as the children are

most vulnerable during fluctuation of temperature between day and night.

During a visit to the hospital on Saturday morning, this correspondent saw many child patients and their mothers lying on the floor and veranda.

"I admitted my pneumonia-affected two and a half month-old son to the hospital on Friday morning. We are staying on the floor due to shortage of space in the children's ward," said Shamsun Nahar of Molani village under Sadar upazila.

Hasho Rani, wife of Profullah Barman of Puratan Atwary village under Atwary

upazila in Panchagarh, admitted her one-year-old son with infection in the respiratory tract on Thursday. She is also staying at the hospital corridor.

Alema of Bhulli village under Sadar upazila admitted her pneumonia-affected 10-month-old baby to the hospital on Thursday but she is staying on a space beside the staircase.

"Two or three nurses, meant to serve 18 patients at the children's ward, are now attending over a hundred patients. Despite the pressure, we are trying our best to tackle the situation," Dr Shajahan said.

Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital sees rush of child patients as there is no child specialist at the upazila level and in adjacent district Panchagarh hospital, he said.

"Fluctuation of temperature between day and night causes bronchitis, pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses. Children are more vulnerable to these infections because their immune system is weak. If the patients come to hospital in time it is easy to give treatment. The situation is likely to improve within two or three days as the weather is becoming normal," he said.

About 150 child patients with similar problems were admitted to the clinics in the town. Ahsan Habib, owner of Ehia Clinic in the town, said 25 child patients were admitted there. Of them 14 patients were admitted on Friday.

Twenty-six child patients are taking treatment Appolo Hospital in the town, said Mithu, manager of the hospital.

Besides, around a hundred patients are taking treatment at the upazila health complexes, hospital sources said.



Kuakata Rest House, virtually unusable since the onslaught by cyclone Aila on May 25 in 2009, now faces extinction as erosion by the Bay of Bengal has reached its premises.

PHOTO: STAR

## Kuakata rest house about to be devoured by Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Kuakata rest house, which has remained virtually useless since cyclone Aila damaged it on May 2009, now faces devouring by the Bay of Bengal as erosion has reached its compound.

Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) built the impressive rest house cum biogas plant on the Kuakata beach in 1988 to make the scenic spot more attractive to the tourists from home and abroad.

Sitting in the rooms of the two-storied building, tourists could see the sunset scene and hear the roaring of the Bay.

Rooms of the rest house always remained filled up or booked by tourists and LGED earned good amounts as rent as tourist.

LGED also set up a biogas plant run by human waste from the rest house and electricity was supplied to the rest house round the clock from this biogas plant.

But super cyclone Sidr on November 15 in 2007 washed away the boundary wall and badly damaged the beautiful building and over 100 tamarisk trees that were planted around the building.

Considering demand of tourists, LGED renovated the rest house at a cost of Tk 25 lakh.

But cyclone Aila damaged it again on May 25 in 2009, turning the rest house virtually unfit for use.

Authorities should take fresh step for renovation of the rest house as it has a great demand to the tourists from home and abroad, said Ruman Intiaz Tushar, a cultural activist and journalist in the area.

"We requested the authority concerned to take step to repair the rest house as it is situated on the best place in Kuakata sea beach but to no effect. LGED can protect the rest house from tidal surge by building a flood control embankment around the building," said local UP chairman Abdul Bareq Mollah.

When contacted, SM Abdus Salam, executive engineer of LGED, said, "We renovated the rest house after Sidr but it was again damaged by Aila. High tide, especially during the rainy season, often hits the spot. Now water touches the rest house as erosion has increased in recent times."

"The rest house is now under threat of total extinction by the Bay. We are not taking further steps for renovation as it would mean loss to public funds," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Mothers, along with their children admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital for treatment of pneumonia and other cold-related diseases, huddle on the corridor yesterday as the 18-bed children's ward of the hospital is too inadequate to cope with the situation.

## Party rivals kill Jubo League man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Jubo league activist was stabbed to death by his party rivals near Nandita Cinema Hall in Sujanagar upazila on Friday night.

The dead was identified as Abu Bakkar Khan, 35, son of Abdur Razzaque Khan of Hugaladangi village under Pabna Sadar upazila.

Police said Bakkar's rivals swooped on him while he was crossing the cinema at

around 11:00pm. He was taken to Pabna General Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Victim's cousin Md Babul Khan filed a case with Sujanagar Police Station yesterday against 24 people including upazila AL Secretary Abdul Wahab and Jubo league upazila unit Secretary Tofazzal Hossain Tofa.

Police arrested three of the accused named Md

Osman Gani, 40, and Santosh Ali, 45, of Chartarapur village, and Shantu, 35, of Char Sujanagar village. Operation is going on to nab the other accused, said the officer-in-charge of Sujanagar Police Station.

The body was sent to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Upazila AL president-led faction blamed upazila AL Secretary Abdul Wahab and his

supporters for the incident.

A procession was brought out at Sujanagar upazila headquarters yesterday demanding arrest of the killers. Additional police have been deployed there to avert any further incident.

Locals said Bakkar might have been murdered following a long-standing dispute between AL Sunjanagar upazila unit President Abul Kashem and General Secretary Abdul Wahab.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer plucks paniphal, an aquatic fruit found in rural areas, from a pond at Paroil village in Naogaon district as commercial cultivation of the fruit has become popular in the area, especially among the unemployed youths.

## BSF returns bodies of 2 Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Friday handed over the bodies of two Bangladeshis who were killed three days ago in BSF firing on Daulatpur border.

Bangladesh Rifles sources said the BSF personnel returned the bodies of Monsur Ali, son of Nader Ali; and Delwar Hossain alias Delu, son of Abdul Jabbar, of Chilmari village in Daulatpur upazila to the 32 Rifles Battalion after a flag meeting.

The Indian border guards early Tuesday gunned down the two and took away the bodies while they were trying to enter Indian territory through Jalangi border of Baharampur district of West Bengal.

Relatives of the deceased informed the incident to BDR on Wednesday that led to the flag meeting.

The flag meeting was held at Udaynagar frontier in Daulatpur where BDR Nayak Subedar Ayub Ali led the Bangladesh team and commander of Joyrampur camp Lalit Bhatti represented Indian side.

## Ensure power supply, stop lifting excessive underground water

Barapukuria villagers demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Residents of three villages around Barapukuria 25MW coal-fired power plant have threatened to launch agitation to realise their two-point demand including smooth power supply to the villages.

The other demand is to stop lifting of excessive water from underground for the power plant as the villagers are not getting drinking water through tube-well due to fall in water level.

The villagers urged the authorities concerned to meet their demands by September 13. Otherwise, they threatened to besiege the power plant and cut electric supply lines to 14 pumps, which are lifting underground water for operating the power plant, on September 14.

The villagers under the

banner of "Dudhipur Pani and Bidyut Sangram Committee" raised the demands at a press conference at Phulbari on Thursday.

Md Anwarul Haque, general secretary of the committee, read out a written statement while Md Shariful Islam, convener of the committee, and members Md Moslem Uddin and Mahmud Hossain spoke.

They alleged that hundreds of tube-wells at Dudhipur, Ishaapur and Sherpur villages have remained inoperative for long as water level has fallen due to lifting of excessive water by 14 pumps.

The villagers have to collect drinking water from far-flung areas and use tainted water released by the power plant for bathing and washing their clothes, the speakers said, adding that skin diseases are spreading at the villages.

They said though the gov-

ernment has set up a 250MW power plant in the area, they are not getting smooth power supply. "We appealed several times to the authorities concerned to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the villages, but to no effect," they added.

Md Anwarul Haque, general secretary of "Dudhipur Pani and Bidyut Sangram Committee" said if their demand is not met by September 13, they will besiege the power plant and stop operating the water pumps by disconnecting electric supply lines.

According to the officials of Dinajpur Public Health Department, the water released by the power plant is harmful to public health and widely spreading skin diseases. But the power plant authorities claim that they are releasing water after treating it inside the plant.

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