

Hill water from across border floods Sunamganj boro fields

WDB yet to complete work on embankments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Sylhet

Standing boro crops on over 10,000 acres of land in Derai, Tahirpur and Dharmapasha upazilas of Sunamganj district submerged due to onrush of water from the bordering Meghalayan hills during last three days.

The farmers of Sunamganj district are passing time amid worry as the Water Development Board (WDB) is yet to complete the work on the protection

embankments in different upazilas of the district.

Farmers in Companiganj, Gowainghat and Jaintapur upazilas of Sylhet district are also worried about possible early flooding and loss of boro crops.

Several hundred acres of croplands went under water following reaches on Potua embankment, said Anwar Hossain of Kodomtala in Gowainghat upazila.

This year there was no work for protecting the 'crop saving' embankments in

Tahirpur upazila, where already 3,000 acres of croplands had already been inundated, said Uttar Sripur union Parishad Chairman Amir Uddin.

In Derai upazila, about 5000 acres of land in Udgal haor went under water as breaches developed on the sluice gate at Ghilakutia on Tuesday and yesterday.

In the neighbouring Dharmapasha upazila 2,000 acres of cropland went under water after breaches developed in Katakhal

embankment on Chandrasonarthal haor during the last two days. Locals joined work to repair the breaches with bamboos and sand bags.

The WDB was given Tk 20.1 crore for reconstruction and repair of the 221 km embankments in Sunamganj district this year. The work to protect boro croplands inside 37 haors in the district began through 258 Project Implementation Committees (PIC) formed with the locals. After expiry of the February 28

deadline for completing the work, the time was extended twice, giving March 31 as the last deadline.

Contacted, the executive engineer of the WDB in Sunamganj, Shailem Chandra Das told this correspondent on Wednesday afternoon, "About 80 per cent of the work has been done. Due to inundation in some areas during the last few days, work had to be suspended. In some areas it may not be possible to resume the task."

He refuted the allegation of large-scale irregularities in the project works this year.

Most of the crop fields in the haors of Sunamganj district went under water during the period from March 25 to April 20 last year, causing damage to boro crops worth Tk 1127 crore on 193,000 hectares of land, according to the DAE reports.

Large-scale corruption by contractors employed to repair and reconstruct embankments and others concerned alongside delay in the work were blamed for the crop loss.

"Almost every year the people face the same problem and lose their only crop of the year. The government should take stern measures against those responsible for the project failure," Sunamganj Unnayan Sangram Parishad convener freedom fighter Bazlul Mazid Chowdhury said.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals desperately try to repair the breached portion of the embankment at Katakhal on Thal haor (water body) in Chandrasona under Dharmapasha upazila in Sunamganj district to save their boro crops from flooding.

Boro farmers agitate demanding uninterrupted power supply

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Hundreds of farmers in Rajshahi, Madaripur and Nilphamari districts demonstrated yesterday and the day before demanding uninterrupted power supply for irrigation of boro fields.

Hundreds of farmers gathered at Rajshahi DC's office premises and demonstrated for one and a half hours yesterday demanding 18 to 20 hours of continuous power supply to boro fields.

Holding sickle in hands and wearing 'mathal' (hat), the protesters held a rally at around 11:00am and threatened to go for a tougher agitation if their demand was not met within 48 hours, reports our staff correspondent.

They also held a procession carrying placards and banners and submitted a memorandum to Rajshahi DC Muhammad Delwar Bakht in this regard.

They said the authorities must ensure power supply for around 20 hours a day for smooth irrigation of boro fields.

Most of the protesters came from Godagari and Poba upazilas where they said they were getting electricity for only four to five hours at a stretch.

In Madaripur, scores of farmers and locals of Rajoir attacked the residence of



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers demonstrate in front of the Rural Electrification Board office in Nilphamari on Monday demanding smooth power supply in the area to facilitate irrigation during the ongoing boro season.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and blocked Dhaka-Barisal Highway yesterday demanding adequate supply of electricity for irrigation.

After half an hour road blockade, the protesters submitted a memo to the UNO, reports our correspondent.

In Nilphamari, several hundred farmers from different villages besieged the office of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) on Wednesday demanding smooth supply of power for irrigation of boro fields.

About 500-600 farmers

from Charaikhola, Kalar Bazar, Dalaler Bazar, Basunia Para and surrounding villages of Sadar upazila gathered in front of the REB office at Suti Para village at about 1:30 pm shouting for smooth supply of power.

At one stage, the security men closed the main gate of the office as the agitating farmers were trying to get into the compound to meet the general manager (GM) of Nilphamari REB to lodge their complaint.

At this, the farmers became more agitated and began to demonstrate on the

Nilphamari-Saidpur road in front of the office.

Finally, the general manager (GM) came out to meet the agitating farmers at the main gate.

The farmers expressed their grievances saying they could not irrigate the fields because of erratic power supply. A number of others also complained that a section of REB men were demanding bribe for providing electricity to their villages.

GM Habibur Rahman assured the farmers that he would soon seek more power from higher authorities for ensuring adequate supply.

16 back home after ending jail terms in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

At least 16 Bangladeshi nationals returned home on Wednesday after ending their jail terms in various jails in West Bengal of India.

PK Mondal, an Indian immigration officer at Hili land port, handed over them to Bangladesh officer Md Nurul Islam Ferdous through Hili border of Hakimpur upazila, sources said.

The deported Bangladeshi nationals were identified as Deepen Barman, Amulya Chandra Singh, Deelip Chandra Singh and Durbura Chandra Singh of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, Abdul Hamid alias Alam, Mokhlesur Rahman, Shahidul Islam alias Saiful, Habibur Rahman alias Jani Babu of Joypurhat district, Md Afzal Mondal, Ranjit Barban, Shahin Hossain alias Sayem of Dinajpur and Suman Akter alias Javed of Kusthia and Mithun, Pachu and Raju Rahman of Dhaka.

Sources said that the aforesaid Bangladeshis were trafficked to India in the last three years and Border Security Force (BSF) of India arrested them at various points of the border and pressed charges of illegal intrusion.



PHOTO: STAR

A candidate for the women's reserved seat of councillor, Nasima Kamal casts her vote at Syedunnesa Government Primary School centre during election to Jhalakathi municipality yesterday. About 65 per cent of 29,778 voters exercised their right to franchise at the peaceful election.

10 AL men hurt in Hatiya pre-election violence

8 motorbikes burnt, 5 shops vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 10 Awami League activists were injured, 8 motorbikes burnt and five shops vandalised as supporters of rival UP chairman candidates clashed at a market in Char Eshwar Union under Hatiya upazila yesterday.

The injured are Saif Uddin Ahmed, 32, Ashraf Haque Sohel, 25, Rajib Dakter, 27, Utpal Chandra Das, 26, Jewel Chandra Das, 27, Shankar Chandra Das, 34, Abul Khair, 40, Mamunur Rashid, 28, Aziz Mowla, 35, and Abdul Hai, 35.

Ashraf, Rajib and Utpal were admitted to Hatiya upazila health complex while the rest took first aid.

Subhash Chandra Paul, officer in-charge of Hatiya police station, quoting locals said that AL-backed UP chairman candidate Abul Halim Azad was talking to voters at Razar Hawla Rona Market in the morning.

Within a while, a group of AL activists led by Saif Uddin Ahmed and Md. Akbor, both supporters of another AL UP chairman

candidate Alauddin Al Azad, attacked the supporters of Halim Azad.

Halim Azad's group also made a counter-attack leaving 10 AL activists injured. Angry supporters later set eight motorbikes on fire and vandalised five shops of the market.

Two cases were filed with Hatiya police station in this connection.

Away in Bagerhat, a court on Monday sentenced two people to life term imprisonment for killing a female union parishad (UP) member, reports UNB.

The convicts were identified as brother-in-law Abdus Salam and step-son Rezaul Islam of the deceased of Rajoir village in Swarankhola upazila.

The court also fined the convicts Tk 10,000 each, in default, to suffer one year RI more.

According to the prosecution, Taslima Begum, a UP member of Ward No. 3 under Khontokata union of the upazila and second wife of Abdul Hai alias Alo Akon, was chopped to death by her in-laws on June 19, 2003.

89 mutineers jailed in 2 Khagrachhari cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

The special court-15 yesterday sentenced 89 mutineers, 60 from 30 Battalion under BGB Khagrachhari sector and 29 from the sector headquarters, to different jail terms ranging from four months to seven years.

The court headed by Khagrachhari Sector Commander Col Abu Wahab Md Hafizul Hoque fined the convicts Tk 100 each and acquitted 22 others as mutiny charges brought against them could not be proved. The two other members of the court were Lt Col Sayed Sayed Saklain and Major AZM Golam Mostafa AL Mamun.

In the morning, the court pronounced the verdict in the case for mutiny at 30 Battalion in Ramgarh on February 26 in 2009 and punished 60 rebels.

Of them, 11 were jailed for seven years, two for five years, two for four years and six months, six for four years, eight for three years and six months, nine for three years, four for two years, two for

one year, eight for six months, five for four months and one was jailed for two years six months.

The court also acquitted nine jawans of mutiny charges. They are Nayak Kuddusur Rahman, Nayak Saraf Uddin, Lance Nayak Nasirul Hoque, sepoy Salauddin, Abdul Wadud, Abu Sufian, Shah Alam, Mohsin Ali and Zakirul Islam.

The same court delivered judgement in the mutiny case against 29 jawans of the sector headquarters in the afternoon and sentenced the mutineers to different prison terms.

Of them, four were jailed for five years, four for three years, two for one year and six months, three for one year, 12 for six months, two for four months and one was jailed for four years while another for two years and six months.

Thirteen jawans of the sector headquarters were acquitted as allegations brought against them could not be proved. They are Subeder Major Azhar Ali, Subeder Tofazzal, sepoy

Sohel Rana, Arifur Rahman, Badrul Ahsan, Farid uddin, Firoz, Ariful, Amit Hasan and Shariful, Nayek Afiur Rahman, Havilder Hafizur Rahman and Lance Nayek Harunur Rashid.

BGB sources said Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Md Hafiz Ahmed filed a mutiny case against the 69 jawans of 30 Battalion on October 24, 2010 and Assistant Subadar Md Sirajul Islam of Khagrachhari BDR Sector Headquarter filed a similar case against 42 jawans of the sector the same day.

In the cases, both complainants stated that the jawans revolted against their officers at the battalion and the sector headquarters on February 26, 2009. They also looted firearms and ammunition from armouries, fired blank shots and misbehaved with the family members of the officers, the complainant said.

Prosecutors Major Md Jashim Uddin and Major Jabad Hasan and public prosecutors Aminur Rahman Khan and Habibur Rahman were present.

Accused at large, complainant on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

About two months into the killing of Abdul Khaleque, a farmer of Mozaffarpur village under Kendua upazila of Netrakona district, the accused in the murder case have remained at large.

On the other hand, Khaleque's elder brother Mallik Mia, also complainant of the case, and its witnesses are on the run due to 'false' cases filed by the accused in Khaleque murder case, said Mallik.

After criminals hacked to death Khaleque, 36, at Eidgah Maidan

near his house in broad daylight on January 27, his brother Mallik filed a murder case with Kendua police station accusing 39 people including Abdur Rezzak, Golam Mostafa and Shahjahan Kabir of the same village.

On March 16, Mallik Mia submitted a written complaint to the Netrakona superintendent of police (SP) against Mosharaf Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) Kendua police station, and sent its copy to the DIG of Police (Dhaka Range) and the inspector general of police (IGP), saying that the accused are moving

freely in the area in collusion with police.

"After my brother Abdur Khaleque was killed, OC Mosharaf Hossain created pressure on me not to include the name of Abdur Rezzak, Golam Mostafa and Shahjahan Kabir in the murder case but I did not agree. Later the OC took the case but he became displeased.

"The accused also filed two false cases with the help of police only to harass me and witnesses of Khaleque murder case. As accused in false cases, we have to remain absconding while the accused in my

brother's murder case are moving freely," goes the complaint submitted by Mallik.

When contacted, OC Mosharaf Hossain said, "We are trying to arrest the accused in Abdur Khaleque murder case but the have gone into hiding. Mallik is accused in a triple murder case, a robbery case and an arms case. Now he is under bail from the High Court."

Netrakona Superintendent of Police Sheikh Nazmul Alam said, "We did not file any case against Mallik and his men. A case was filed against them with the court."



PHOTO: CHEVRON

External affairs manager of Chevron Bangladesh, Obaidulla Al Ejaz along with officials and teachers poses with students of Doluchhara Government Primary School near the Chevron office adjacent to Moulvibazar gas field as the organisation recently distributed 131 sets of uniform among the school children as part of its programme to support students of several schools in the area.