



PHOTO: STAR

Erosion by Someshwary river, which took a serious turn in the last few days, devours homesteads and croplands in Dakumara village of Netrakona district.

SOMESHWARY TAKES SERIOUS TURN

Erosion devours 50 houses in 3 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Netrakona

Erosion has taken a serious turn along the western bank of hill river Someshwary in Durgapur upazila. Sudden swelling of the river following heavy rain in the last few days prompted the erosion, WDB source said. At least 50 dwelling houses were devoured by the river in last three days rendering more than 200 people homeless. The erosion victims took shelter on roads or went to relatives' houses. During a visit to the area, this correspondent found that

people of over 25 families have shifted to safer places. The badly affected areas are Dakumara, Khamarkhali, Shibganj and Birishiri. Local people dumped sand, bamboo and timber to protect their areas but the strong current of the river foiled all their bid. Khamarkhali bazaar was once a big village market in the upazila. But the river has devoured two-thirds of it. Over 500 families used to live at village Shibganj five years ago. But the river engulfed 800 acres of land leaving 350 families landless and homeless during the

period, locals said. Contacted, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Netrakona Mohammed Manirul Islam told this correspondent that they had started a 24 crore 'Someshwary River Erosion Protection Embankment' project two years ago. "But we could not complete the work due to shortage of fund," he added. River erosion has turned into a common feature in the area in the last few years, but the government is yet to take any effective measure to stop it, said a local elderly.

LOCALS BESIEGE HEADMASTER

Botrish Hazari school body 'cancelled'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

Local people yesterday confined the headmaster of Botrish Hazari High School at Botrish Hazari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila to his office room for an hour from 9:30 am. The headmaster, Toyebur Rahman Toyeb, remained absent since June 25 following disputes over formation of a controversial managing committee by him. He recently formed a managing committee with his chosen people from outside the locality to do a 'good business' concerning recruitment of six teachers in the school. As local guardians strongly protested the formation of the committee, the headmaster left the school on June 25, keeping all classrooms under lock and key. Other staff, including nine teachers, a clerk, a peon and a

night guard, also remained absent during the period. Local people released headmaster Toyebur Rahman from confinement following a request by the local AL leaders and upazila education officer at around 10:30 am. Later, local elite, AL leaders, guardians and the education officer held a meeting in the office room and cancelled the headmaster's 'personal' committee. At the meeting, they formed an eight-member convening committee with district AL General Secretary Adv Motiur Rahman as its convenor. Contacted, headmaster Toyebur Rahman said the convening committee will run the school until a full-fledged managing committee is formed through election. Sadar upazila assistant education officer Jahangir

Alam told this correspondent that all the 12 staff including nine teachers, were present at the school yesterday. He visited the school on Thursday noon following a demonstration by the students of Botrish Hazari High School in front of the deputy commissioner's office in the morning demanding removal of Headmaster Toyebur Rahman Toyeb. During the visit, the education officer saw the school closed. He asked the headmaster and other teachers over cellphone to come to the school but they ignored the message. As many as 275 students, including 155 girls and 125 boys, read in classes six to ten in this school. Several students said they came to the school everyday but had to go back without any classes as all the classrooms and teachers' room remained locked from June 25 to 30.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

People waded through knee-deep water in Suchakradandi 'model ward' of Patiya municipality under Chittagong district on Friday after heavy downpour inundated large areas of the upazila town.

Gas cylinder blast leaves 3 houses gutted

UNB, Chandpur

A devastating fire following a gas cylinder explosion left three dwelling houses burnt to ashes at Beparibari at West Rupsha village in Faridganj upazila on Friday evening.

Sources said, the fire broke out after a gas cylinder suddenly exploded at a house. It rapidly spread to adjacent houses, leaving rice, household articles and other goods and valuables gutted.

The members of the houses hastily came out in the street as the fire engulfed the houses within a few moments giving them no time to shift their belongings.

Locals tried in vain to tame the flame. Being informed, fire fighting units from Chandpur town rushed in and doused the flame.

Firefighters and affected families said the losses caused by the fire could go up to Tk 25 lakh.

Councillor finally starts returning bribe money

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

At last the guilty ward councillor has started returning back the money that he had forced poor lactating mothers to give for issuing them cards for benefit from 'fund for assistance to lactating mothers'.

One week ago, Abdul Hossain, councillor of ward No 4 under Lalmonirhat municipality, took Tk 500 as bribe from each of 220 lactating mothers, giving them assurance of issuing cards that would enable them to get Tk 350 per month for two years.

The government scheme for helping poor lactating mothers purchase nutritious food is arranged by women affairs directorate.

In Lalmonirhat municipality, the lists of beneficiaries are prepared by the ward councillors concerned.

Follow-up

Of the 220 lactating mothers in ward No 4, 170 women received cards but others did not get it as their applications for the purpose were not granted.

The matter created sensation in the area as the poor lactating mothers demonstrated in front of the municipality mayor's office on Wednesday.

The Daily Star ran a report on the matter on Friday.

On Friday night, councillor Abdul Hossain started going to the houses of the extorted women to return them the money.

Some lactating mothers have already received their money back from the councillor while many others are waiting.

"Councillor Abdul Hossain came to my house

on Friday night and returned Tk 500 that he had taken as bribe for giving me a card for getting benefit from the fund for assistance to lactating mothers," said Roshid Begum, 24, wife of Abdul Gony of Baltipotti village in ward No 4 under Lalmonirhat municipality. Another lactating mother Afroza Begum, 25, wife of Toyeb Ali of the same village said Abdul Hossain went to her house yesterday morning, begged pardon from her and returned Tk 500.

Several other lactating mothers who had to bribe the councillor for getting cards did not get back the money as of yesterday noon.

"I and other lactating mothers at Shahid Shahjahan Colony village went to coun-

cillor's house at Khochabari village in the morning for getting our money returned. The councillor told us that he will return the money," said Sultana Begum, 22, wife of Unus Ali of Shahid Shahjahan Colony village of ward NO 4.

Councillor Abdul Hossain said, "I have already returned back the money to most of the lactating mothers in my ward. Some mothers are yet to be paid due to my financial problem. I hope I will be able to return back the money to all the lactating mothers by Sunday noon."

Local people of ward No 4 urged the authorities concerned to give due punishment to the guilty councillor Abdul Hossain.

Lalmonirhat municipality Mayor Reazul Islam Rintu said he preparing to take action against the guilty councillor.



A mobile court makes two men, caught for attempt to cast fake votes in the ongoing union parishad election, crawl on the flooded ground of Shibpur Government Primary School in Noannoi union in Noakhali Sadar upazila, right, the 'rebel' candidate of Awami League Md Zunayed is made to sit holding his ears as punishment for influencing voters at Shibpur Government Primary School and Shibpur Women's Madrasa centres yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

PROTEST ON IN GAIBANDHA

'Arrest Tajul's killers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

People of Shahpara union blocked Gaibandha-Palashbari road at Shakoa under Gaibandha Sadar Union for two hours from 4:30 pm on Friday and then formed a human chain at the same place demanding immediate arrest of the killers of Tajul Islam, a resident of the union.

Tajul Islam, 35, of Chalkchaka village in the union, received injuries during a clash between the supporters of member-elect Shahidul Haque and defeated member candidate Mominul Haque at the village on June 17.

Tajul was sent to Rangpur Medical College and Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries on June 18.

Addressing a rally at Shakoa, the speakers urged

the authorities concerned to arrest the persons responsible for killing Tajul as early as possible. Otherwise, they threatened to go for a tougher agitation.

Mahbubur Rahman Tulu, chairman-elect of Shahpara Union Parishad union said the killers must be brought to book. He asked the law enforcers to arrest the killers without further delay.

On June 20, people of the union demonstrated in front of the offices of Gaibandha deputy commissioner and police superintendent demanding arrest and punishment of the killers. They also handed over a memorandum to the deputy commissioner.

Police said the clash on June 17 ensued following an attack on defeated member candidate Mominul Haque's men by the supporters of elected member Shahidul Haque.

At least 10 people, including Tajul, were injured during the clash that continued for an hour.

Youth killed by BSF

UNB, Sylhet

A youth was shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Bholaganj border in Comiganj upazila Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Ashrafur Islam, 22, son of freedom fighter Abdul Ahad of Botertol village of the upazila.

Police said when some workers were extracting stone at Klaidahar in Bholaganj stone quarry at about 10 am some BSF men opened fire on them, leaving Ashrafur dead and four others injured.

Among the injured, Illash Miah, 24, was rushed to Osmani Medical College Hospital while three others were given treatment locally.

UP poll-related clashes hurt 55

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 55 people were injured in UP poll-related violence in Kishoreganj, Shariatpur and Natore districts on Friday.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reported that a post-election clash between the supporters of chairman-elect Md Omar Faruq and defeated candidate Nurul Islam Nuru in Itna Sadar Union left at least 20 people from both sides injured.

At Ershad Nagar village in the same union, the supporters of elected member Abdur Rashid and defeated candidate Dalim Mia clashed on the same day, leaving at least 15 people from both sides injured.

The injured were admitted to local health complex and one of them named Md Mushtaq Mia was shifted to Dhaka as his condition deteriorated.

In Shariatpur, at least 15 people were injured in separate clashes between the supporters of elected and defeated UP chairman and member candidates in Damudya upazila, reports UNB.

Police said the supporters of chairman-elect Dulal attacked the supporters of defeated chairman candidate Abdul Haque at Malgaon village in Islampur union, leaving four people injured.

The supporters of a defeated member candidate attacked the supporters of a newly elected member at Tarashimulia village in the upazila the same day. At least 11 people were injured in the attack.

The injured are undergoing treatment at

local health complex.

According to our Natore correspondent, post-poll clash between the supporters of chairmen-elect Siddikur Rahman and defeated chairman candidate Abdus Salam at Gatmati in Baraigram upazila left at least six people injured on Friday.

Locals said the clash ensued following an altercation between chairman-elect Siddikur Rahman's men and the supporters of Abdus Salam at noon.

Being informed, police from Bonpara investigation camp rushed to the spot, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to Bonpara health complex.

In Noakhali, election to 11 union parishad in Sadar upazila was held yesterday.

Our correspondent reported that the supporters of chairman candidate Adur Rahman assaulted the presiding officer at Karimpur Government Primary School centre in Newazpur Union as he prevented them from casting false votes.

Mobile court arrested a polling officer at Karmulla Primary School centre in Ayojbaria Union on charge of influencing voters to vote for his favourable candidate.

In Noannoi Union, mobile court punished 'rebel' AL chairman Md Junayed for influencing voters at Shibpur government Primary School centre and three others as they tried to cast false votes at the centre.

