

# Water crisis worsens in Aila-hit Shyamnagar

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

Over two lakh people in 12 unions of Aila-affected Shyamnagar upazila in the district are badly suffering due to persistent water crisis during the ongoing summer.

Rural people in the upazila mostly depend on ponds and other reservoirs as sources of drinking water as the installed tube-wells cannot lift safe drinking water due to salinity in ground water level.

The government authorities re-excavated at least 250 ponds to solve drinking water crisis in the upazila but over a hundred of them have dried up due to lack of rainfall while the remaining ones contain inadequate water, said Masud Rana,

## Over 2 lakh suffer as salinity adds to the situation in the Satkhira upazila

Shyamnagar upazila project implementation officer.

Water of other ponds and reservoirs owned by the district administration and Zila Parishad has also become unfit for drinking as the influential people took lease of them from the authorities and are cultivating fish there, using chemical fertiliser and pesticides.

While visiting different areas including Munshiganj, Arpangashia, Atulia, Chandipur, Bayarsingh, Kalinchi, Kupot, Pankhali and

adjoining villages, this correspondent found people struggling to get drinking water.

Many women were found returning home with jars full of muddy and saline water from the ponds and reservoirs that no longer contain sweet water.

"I had to stand in a queue for three hours from 3:00pm to get a jar of water for my family members at a PSF [pond sand filter] at Fultala village on May 31," said Dipali Mondal, 34, wife of Pabitra Mondal of

Dhankhali village.

Nimai Chandra Chowkidar, who came to fetch water from a PSF at Fultala village about seven kilometres from his house at Arpangashia village, said, "I maintain my family by working in others' fields as a day labourer. But now I have to come here twice a week to fetch water from the PSF, suspending my work."

Dipali Haldar, 13, and Jamuna Mondal, 14, of Dhankhali village said they had to suspend going to school as they have to spend long hours to fetch water from Fultala village for their family members.

Amu Dasi, 50, and school student Sujon, 11, of Kalbari village and Amena Begum, 60, of Pankhali Chuna village said they had to fetch water from a pond of Water Development Board at Munshiganj village about four kilometres off their village due to lack of sweet water ponds in their locality.

Nur Jahan Begum, 50, of Pankhali village, Sona Moni, 55, of Munshiganj village and a few others said they earn Tk 60 per day by working in others' fields or shrimp enclosures as day labourers but they have to spend Tk 20 to fetch four jars of water.

They urged the government to take measures to solve the water crisis persisting in the area in an emergency basis.

There are 1386 deep and shallow tube-wells, 37 RWH and 50 PSFs in the upazila, said sources of Shyamnagar upazila Public Health Department.

But solution to drinking water problem has remained a far cry, they said.

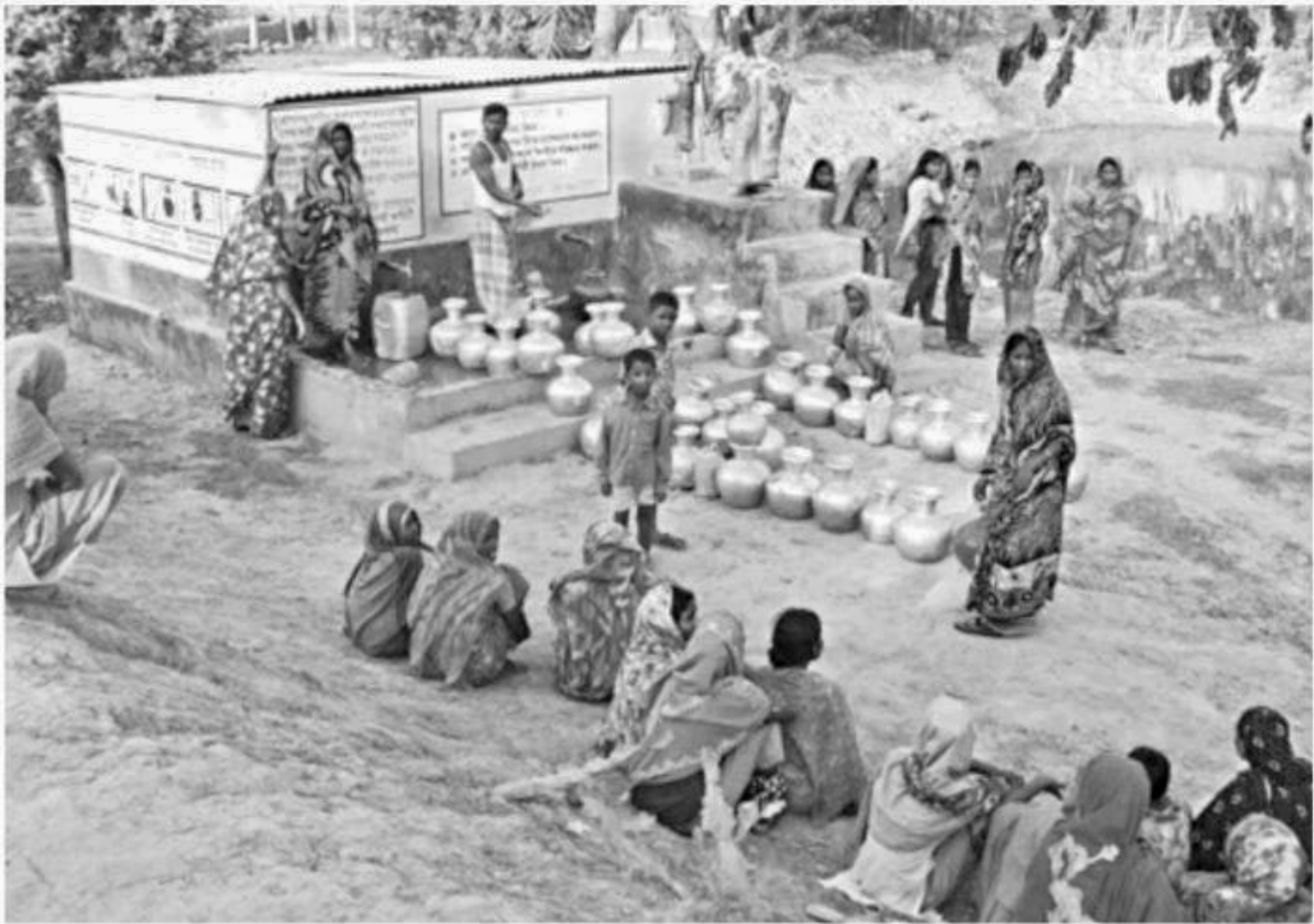


PHOTO: STAR

Women and children from different areas wait for their turn to fill up containers with safe drinking water at a PSF (pond sand filter) at Fultala village in Shyamnagar upazila under Satkhira district as many sweet water ponds and reservoirs have dried up due to lack of rainfall during the ongoing summer.

## ATTACK ON WHIP'S MOTORCADE 5,000 sued in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police on Sunday night filed two separate cases against 30 people and some 5,000 unidentified others in connection with the attack on the motorcade of Jatiya Sangsad Whip Sheikh Abdul Wahab in Jessore the day before.

Touhidul Islam, a sub-inspector of Monirampur Police Station, filed a case against 5,000 unidentified people bringing allegation of creating chaos, and attacking police and preventing them from discharging

ing their duties, said AKM Azmal Huda, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Sub-inspector of Abhaynagar Police Station Ferdaus Wahid filed the other case against at least another 5000 people mentioning names of 30.

The accused were charged with attacking the whip, the upazila chairman, officials of Water Development Board and police, vandalising vehicles and hampering government activities.

Hearing the news, women from Balidha, Panchakori, Nehalpur and

Kalibari villages brought out an agitation rally protesting the filing of the two cases. All the male inhabitants have fled those villages.

Meanwhile, Whip Wahab addressing a press briefing at Jessore Circuit House Sunday night claimed that people dared to attack the motorcade because of "police inaction".

At least 40 people, including an upazila chairman and an assistant superintendent of police, were injured when locals, mainly fish farmers and traders, attacked Wahab's motorcade around 10:00am yesterday. The whip

was struck by a piece of brick but escaped unhurt.

Eyewitnesses said the attackers, who did not want the Tidal River Management (TRM) project the whip was going to inaugurate, torched three cars and four motorbikes. At least two women were hit by shotgun pellets fired by police to bring the situation under control.

Whip Wahab told journalists that there was no alternative to the TRM project for saving 20 lakh people of Bhobdaho from waterlogging problem.



PHOTO: STAR

At least 30 houses were damaged and vandalised during the clash between supporters of former and acting union parishad chairmen at Begura union in Shailkupa upazila of Jhenidah yesterday.

## FORMER, ACTING UP CHAIRMEN'S GROUPS CLASH 40 injured, 30 houses damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of former and acting UP chairmen over establishing supremacy in Bagura union under Shailkupa upazila yesterday morning.

The clashing groups also damaged around 30 houses

and looted gold ornaments, cash and other valuables during the clash, police and locals said.

Of the injured, Barik Biswas, Shawkot Ali, Mohammad Ali Mohon, Zillur Rahman, Tofazzel Hossain, shefali Khatun and Ranu Biswas of Kamanna village, were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital while the rest given first aid.

Assistant police superintendent Abdul Halim Mollah said there had been a long-standing rivalry between the former chairman of the union Sirajul Islam Makhon, secretary of Bagura Awami League unit, and acting chairman of the same union Nazrul Islam, president of the unit, over local and political issues.

The men of Makhon and

Nazrul equipped with sharp weapons attacked each other following an altercation over a trivial matter, leaving 40 from both sides injured.

At least 30 houses were vandalised during the violence, the ASP added.

Contacted, Makhon and Nazrul blamed each other for the clash.



PHOTO: STAR

A vehicle struggles to cross the gangway, submerged under the impact of high tide affected by the full moon, to disembark from the ferry at Hazipur terminal on Patuakhali-Kuakata road yesterday.

## CASES FILED IN RANGABALI AL, BNP both allege attack on activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 102 men of the ruling Awami League (AL) have been sued for alleged attack on a BNP meeting that was arranged to mark the death anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman, also founder of BNP, at Rangabali upazila headquarters on May 30.

Abdur Rahman Farazee, secretary of Rangabali upazila unit of BNP, filed the case with the Court of Executive Magistrate Md Nuruzzaman in Galachipa yesterday and the magistrate asked the OC of Rangabali police station to receive the case as an FIR (First Information Report) and take lawful action after proper investigation.

"BNP organised a discussion and milad mahfil marking the 31st death anniversary of Ziaur Rahman, at SCI square at about 10:00am on May 30. But just after its start, about 200 people led by Ahsan Kair Chan, president of upazila Awami League, attacked the venue and foiled the programme," goes the case statement.

On the other hand, AL men claimed that when their procession, marking 'victory over the sea', was crossing the meeting spot BNP men attacked them.

Earlier on Friday night, Abul Kalam Azad, vice president of upazila AL, filed a case with Rangabali police station accusing 113 people (73 identified and

the rest unnamed) of BNP and its associate bodies, including Kabir Talukder, president of Rangabali upazila BNP, in this regard. A large number of activists of BNP and its associate bodies in Rangabali went into hiding to evade harassment by police and political rivals as the case was filed against 113 BNP men accusing them of involvement in the alleged attack on AL procession.

AL men locked at least 50 shops and business establishments belonging to BNP adherents at different places of the upazila and continued searching for BNP men to hand them over to the police, said Kabir Talukder, secretary of Rangabali upazila BNP.

AL cadres caught Jubo Dal activist Rasel, 20, beat him up and handed him over to police on Saturday, he said.

"Awami League men foiled our peaceful meeting on May 30 at ASC Square in Rangabali upazila headquarters and then filed a false case to harass us. They are also extorting BNP men in the area," Kabir said.

On the other hand, Ahsan Kabir Chan, president of Rangabali upazila AL, said their party activists are not involved in harassment of BNP men.

"BNP men attacked our party procession when it was crossing ASC Square. We filed a case and police will take lawful action," he added.

## 2 killed, 7 hurt as storm lashes two Bogra upazilas

UNB, Bogra

At least two people were killed and seven others injured as a tornado lashed Sadar and Gabtali upazilas on Sunday night.

The deceased were identified as Jatindra Nath, 50, son of Rameshwar Nath of Pirgacha village in Sadar upazila and Shamsul Haque, 45, son of Rahim Uddin of Nagarkanda village in the same upazila.

Locals said, betel-leaf trader Jatindra Nath and fish trader Shamsul Haque died on the spot when a tree collapsed on them around 7pm.

Seven other people were also injured during the storm that lasted for half an hour.

On information, firefighters from Bogra fire station rescued the injured and sent them to Bogra Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The storm also damaged over 500 thatched and tin-roofed houses, a number of educational institutions and crops on vast areas of land.

Besides, a large number of trees and electric poles were uprooted during the storm in the two upazilas.

## 13 youths rescued from illegal drug rehab centre

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Police rescued 13 young men and seized materials used for alleged torture from an illegal drug rehabilitation centre in Sholaghar area of the district town on Sunday.

The rescued youths hail from Chandpur, Comilla and Laxmipur districts, said police.

They also arrested five staffs of the centre 'Punarjanma' on charge of attempt to kidnap a youth.

The arrestees are Abdus Samad, 32, Sohag Mia, 28, Kartik Saha, 42, Imran Hossain, 30, and Saikat Bhoumik, 30.

Recently two youths managed to escape the centre while another got stuck in its fence.

All of them alleged intolerable torture in the name of

water therapy and other methods.

One of the victims said so-called physicians used to pour water into their noses keeping their hands and legs tied.

Mahbub Morshed, officer in-charge of Chandpur Sadar Model police station, said on secret information, a team of police led by executive magistrate Md Bazlur Rashid raided the area and rescued the youths.

The people of centre could not show any legal documents in favour of their activities, the OC said, adding that the team also found no doctor there.

Additional police superintendent Md Amir Jafar said legal action would be taken against the authorities of the centre after investigating the matter.

### MUNSHIGANJ, JESSORE

## AL, Jubo Dal men stabbed to death

STAR NATIONAL DESK

An Awami League leader and a Jubo Dal leader have been stabbed to death in Munshiganj and Jessore.

Ripon Fakir, 40, son of Sikim Ali Fakir of Shimulia village under Tongibari upazila of the district, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday while undergoing treatment for stab injuries he sustained at Shimulia village on Sunday night, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Ripon Fakir was president of No-4 ward unit of local Awami League.

As a sequel to previous enmity centring offering prayers at a local mosque, a gang stabbed Ripon and left him in a critical condition on Sunday midnight, police said.

Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries yesterday morning.

## PCJSS activist killed

UNB, Khagrachhari

An activist of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) was gunned down near Tabalchhari Bazar in Matiranga upazila yesterday.

The victim was identified as Amolendu Chamka, 60, a retired primary school teacher and a resident of Tabalchhari Masterpara in the upazila.

Quoting witnesses, police said two youths riding a motorcycle waylaid

Amolendu on his way back home from Tabalchhari Bazar and sprayed him with bullets around 5:30pm, leaving him critically injured.

He was taken to Matiranga Upazila Health Complex where he succumbed to his injuries about 7:30pm.

Confirming the incident, Akhter Hossain, officer-in-charge of Matiranga Police Station, told UNB that they launched a drive to track down the killers.