

Flood victims returning to ruined dwellings

KM REZAUL HOQ, Gaibandha

With receding of floodwater, thousands of families in different areas of Gaibandha district have started returning to their houses, only to see ravaged condition of their dwellings due to inundation for around two weeks.

Sixty-seven thousand families have been affected as floodwater destroyed 43 thousand 844 dwelling houses in 26 unions of Sundarganj, Gaibandha Sadar, Fulchhari and Saghata upazilas of Gaibandha district, according to District Relief and Rehabilitation Department.

Besides, 33 thousand 595 houses have been partially damaged due to the flood in the area.

"We sustained huge losses as we were not prepared for the early flood. Water has receded, but we are struggling for survival as our dwelling huts

have been damaged and there is no work to earn bread for the family," said Altaf Hossain of Galna village in Fulchhari upazila.

"I am yet to bring my damaged dwelling huts back to liveable condition for want of money," said Abdul Quddus, a day labourer of Ratanpur village in Fulchhari upazila.

In the face sudden flood, many people could not save their little stock of food grain and they are facing starvation, said Aftab Hossain, a social worker of Fulchhari upazila.

The government has allocated cash Tk 30 lakh and one thousand tonnes of food grains for the flood affected people in the district but the amount is too scanty.

"Rice and cash grant allocated for my union is too inadequate to rehabilitate a large number of flood affected

people," said Abdul Hamid, chairman of Uria union in Fulchhari upazila.

"Many destitute families in remote char areas are suffering for want of food and shelter. We could not provide any help for them," said M Abdus Sabur Sarker, chairman of Fulchhari union.

Donor agency Plan Bangladesh distributed Tk 5 thousand each among 2,000 badly affected families of Fazlupur, Arendabari and Gajaria unions in Fulchhari upazila through local NGO Eco Social Development Organization, said M M Shakir Hossain, deputy programme unit manager of Plan Bangladesh.

"I have received 10 kg rice and cash Tk 500 from as government relief. Besides, a local NGO provided Tk 5 thousand grant for reconstruction of our damaged house," said Sufia Begum of Galna village in Gajaria union.



PHOTO: STAR

AFTERMATH: Flood-ravaged houses at Elendabari village in Fulchhari upazila of Gaibandha district, inset, an affected family rebuilding their house with the financial help given by an NGO at Galna village in the upazila.

Road links snap as bridge collapses

UNB, Khagrachhari

Road commutations between Khagrachhari and other parts of the country was suspended yesterday morning as a portion of a bailey bridge collapsed at Guimara in Sadar upazila.

Police and locals said a portion of the bridge collapsed when a loaded truck was crossing it at about 8:30 am.

A large number of vehicles got stranded on both sides of the road following the bridge collapse.

Roads and Highways department executive engineer Abdur Rashid said, a team has been sent immediately to repair the bridge.

200 'robbers' raid market, loot huge jewellery, cash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A big gang of 'robbers' looted 788 tolas of gold and silver jewellery and over Tk 5 lakh in cash from six shops in Sreenagar upazila of the district early yesterday.

Mizanur Rahman, officer in-charge of Sreenagar police station, quoting witnesses, said around 200 robbers, identifying themselves as law enforcers, decamped with 238 tolas gold, 550 tolas silver and the cash money.

The robbers came to Baghra bazaar on the bank of Padma River around midnight by three trawlers, and raided it for over two hours, the OC said.

In several groups, they took control over the entire bazaar within 30 minutes at gunpoint and entered four jewellery shops owned by Narendra Karmakar, Madak Pal, Bimal

Pal and Madan Das.

They also beat up the staff of the shops as they refused to surrender the keys of the lockers.

The gang looted cash Tk 5 lakh, including Tk 1,70,000 from the clothing shop of Bipul Mollah and Tk 30,000 from the tea stall of Alauddin, during robbery.

Secretary of Baghra Bazar Committee said that the gang tied up the four night guards and beat them mercilessly. They also beat up several shop owners and workers of the market.

Sources said, Baghra is one of the most remote areas of Sreenagar. Although the locals demanded setting up a police camp there several times, no step was taken in this regard.

In Jessore, robbers looted valuables worth Tk five lakh from a house at Khojarhat village in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The gang also injured house owner Babar Ali, his wife Khadija Begum, three sons -- Hashem Ali Mollah, Hazrat Ali Mollah and Yeakub Ali Mollah, reports our Benapole correspondent.

Babar Ali said, a gang of robbers stormed into his house at about 3:30am and took the members of the house hostage at gunpoint.

Later, they hit them with sharp weapons and looted goods from the house.

In Shibchar upazila of Madaripur, an armed gang looted the house of a freedom fighter.

On Friday midnight, 10-12 masked men swooped into the house of Yakub Ali at Utrail village in Shirnail union and decamped with 5 tolas gold ornaments, cash Tk 70 thousand, mobiles sets and other valuables, reports our correspondent.

Meanwhile, patrol police arrested six robbers from a bus in Moinamoti Cantonment area in Comilla on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway while looting passengers early yesterday, reports UNB.

Police said when the Comilla-bound bus of Tisha Paribahan from Sayedabad in Dhaka reached Shahidnagar area of Daudkandi upazila at about 12.15am, a gang of nine robbers, who were travelling in the guise of passengers, beat up the bus driver severely and took control of the bus.

On hearing the incident, the law enforcers with the help of locals stopped the bus in Cantonment area and held the six robbers while others managed to flee.

Transport strike starts in 10 dists today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Transport owners and workers yesterday called an indefinite strike in 10 districts of Khulna division from today.

The strike will start this morning in 10 districts of Khulna division to press home six-point demands, said transport owners and workers of the region.

The demands include end to extortion, traffic jam and harassment to passengers and motor workers at Dauladia ferry ghat, said Azizul Alam Mintu, president of Bangladesh Poribahan Shromik Samity at a press conference held in Jessore town yesterday noon.

Abdur Rahim Dudu, joint-convenor of Khulna Divisional Transport Owners and Workers Coordination Committee, Pabitra Kaputria, president of Inter-district Bus Syndicate also spoke at the press conference.

The leaders said that they urged the authorities concerned to meet their six-point demand several times, but to no effect yet.

"So we had no other alternative to calling indefinite strike," said a leader.

During the strike in the 10 districts of Khulna division, road links with the rest of the country including Dhaka will remain snapped, he said.

The leaders also advised the truck and pick-up van drivers, who will transport the perishable goods, to use Jamuna bridge instead of Dauladia ferry ghat.

The Daily Star - **বাংলা** ENGLISH FAIR



PHOTO: STAR

Prize-winning students along with their teachers pose for photograph at the end of the English language fair at Shaistaganj Girls' High School in Habiganj district on Friday.

Kids from two Habiganj schools join the fray

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Young learners from two schools in Habiganj district on Friday spent an eventful day as they took part in the English language fairs held under English in Schools (EIS) programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi.

Adcomm Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fair.

Over 100 students of Shaistaganj Girls' High School and Shaistaganj Ideal High School joined the fair held at girls' high school auditorium in the morning.

Jalal Ahmed, headmaster of Shaistaganj Girls' High School, inaugurated the fair at around 10:00am. Teachers of the two schools and guardians of the students also attended the function.

Following screening of The Lion King, a globally renowned movie, the students of the two schools



participated in spot quiz, vocabulary test, one word question and quick questions--all based on the movie. Selected students also took part in extempore speech on different topics and role-play.

Addressing the function, Assistant teacher Pranesh Chandra of Shaistaganj Girls' High School and English teacher Md Motahir Hossain of

Ideal High School said the learning techniques shown in the language fair are helpful for both the students and teachers as picking up a language is enjoyable and more effective than learning a language through a lot of effort.

The students entertained the audience by reciting poems, telling jokes and singing songs. Mohammad Fahad of Robi conducted the programme. Prizes were distributed among the winners of different competition at the end of the programme.

Aiming to promote English language learning among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

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For further enquiries please call +91 8981390009