

# 25 Pabna schools shut as flood water yet to recede

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Pabna

Academic activities at 25 primary schools in three upazilas of Pabna have remained suspended for the last one week as the institutions are still under flood water.

Of the schools, 20 are in worst affected Faridpur upazila, three in Bhangura upazila and two in Bera upazila.

Md Nasir Uddin, Faridpur upazila primary education officer, said flood water from 20 schools in two unions of the upazila is yet to start receding as the Padma and Jamuna continued to swell.

Though classes of two or three of the affected schools are being held at safer places, attendance of the students is very thin, he added.

Md Ariful Islam, acting headmaster of Hat Udhunia Government Primary School in Bhangura upazila, said they could not hold classes for the last one week as the school got waterlogged.

District Primary Education Officer Md Ekramul Haque said the flood-hit schools are not



PHOTO: STAR

**Like many other institutions in the area, Hat Udhunia Government Primary School in Bhangura upazila of Pabna district remains waterlogged following recent floods that affected Bhangura, Faridpur and Bera upazilas under the district.**

officially closed. Teachers of these institutions are trying to continue academic activities at safer places, but presence of the students is very poor, he added.

Upazila education officers have been asked to submit reports on the affected schools as early as possible, he further said.

In Bogra, fresh areas in three upazils of the district

have been inundated due to onrush of water from the upstream, according to a correspondent.

A flood control embankment collapsed yesterday morning, flooding 176 villages in 26 unions of the three upazilas. Water Development Board (WDB) sources said over two lakh people in the low-lying areas of the upazilas are

marooned

The Jamuna and Bangalee rivers were flowing 54 cm and 85 cm above the danger mark yesterday morning, the WDB sources said.

According to the district agriculture extension department, aman and vegetables on over 11,370 hectares of land in the upazilas have gone underwater.

# Once bread-earner and dear, they are now unwanted to children

SOHRAB HOSSAIN,  
Patuakhali

Driven out by the only son and daughter-in-law, Abdul Hamid Mridha, 75, a former official of Sonali Bank, is now a resident of an old home in Patuakhali town.

"When I was in service, I lived at Mirpur in Dhaka with my wife, two daughters, and a son in peace and happiness. In 1981, I lost my job along with 20,000 other bank staff for taking part in the movement demanding salary increase. Thus started a series of ordeal in my life," said Mridha.

"I came back to my parents' house at Dakua village under Galachipa upazila in Patuakhali district. I had to sell all the land that I got as share of my father's property to meet the case involving my job. I could not continue schooling of my children after my two daughters passed the SSC and the son attended class nine. Somehow I arranged their marriage later.

"I started tutoring for earning. As I grew old and lost the ability to earn, my son and his wife drove me and my wife out. We took shelter at a room in Hetali Ashrayan project. My wife started working as a domestic help," said Abdul Hamid Mridha.

"Lastly we took shelter at this old home. Just before the Eid ul Fitr last month I and my wife went

**This old home known as Dakkhin Bango Briddhasrom at Kalikapur in Patuakhali town provides shelter and food for a few senior citizens who were once the loving family bread earners and now unwanted to their near and dear ones.**



PHOTO: STAR

to my son's house but his wife physically abused us, forcing us to return.

"My son daily earns at least Tk 500 by driving a battery run three-wheeler. What have I got from my children whom I have brought up with so much care?" said a tearful Hamid.

"However, my daughters, now living at the home of their husbands, send clothes as gifts for me and my wife during festivals like Eid," he added.

Another resident of the old home, Dhalu Howlader, 80, of Haqtullah village under Sadar upazila, said, "My wife died nine years ago. I had to leave the house as my daughter-in-law abused me and did not give me meals properly. I started living on alms. After hearing the news of this shelter for old people, I came here two months ago."

Eight other old people also live at the shelter home

set up in Kalikapur area of the town as their sons or daughters do not bother to look after them.

Set up by People's Association for Social Advancement (PASA), a local NGO, the 10-bed old home named 'Dakkhin Bango Briddhasrom' for the old people was formally opened on July 7 this year.

"We run the old home with personal donations. We arrange food, cloths and medicines for the 10 residents. We need financial help to expand our activities as many poor old men want to live here," said Md Zakir Hossain, executive director of PASA.

Lack of respect for family relationships and degradation of moral values is responsible for abuse of older people, said Atul Chandra Das, a human rights activist in Patuakhali

town, recalling the International Day of Older Persons today.

A staggering 88.4 percent old people are mentally tortured in the family, 83.3 percent neglected by the family men, 54.5 percent are economically deprived, according to a survey conducted by population science department of Dhaka University.

Prof Dr AKM Nur-Un-Nabi of the department presented the survey report at a seminar titled 'Abuse against Older People within the Family among the Urban Poor in Dhaka City' organised by the department at DU on September 6.

According to the report, the number of old people in the country is about one crore that is 6.5 percent of the population and the figure would reach 4.5 crore by 2050.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

**Female farmers, at a rally organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Barisal unit at Central Shaheed Minar in the city, yesterday demanded recognition as professional and wages equal to their male counterparts. They also called for a wage board for the female workers in agri sector.**

## 2 schoolgirls commit 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Two schoolgirls allegedly committed suicide in Atpara upazila on Friday midnight. The deceased are Lipi Akter, 14, daughter of Abdul Majid of Khila village and Beauty Aktar, 13, daughter of Ektu Mia of Narachatal village. Lipi was a class eight student at Khila High School while Beauty at class seven at the institution, said police. Of them, Lipi hanged herself with a rope from the ceiling of her house and Beauty took her live by hanging herself from a mango tree near their home. On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to Netrakona Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. The reason behind the suicides could not be known immediately, said Salemuazzaman, officer in-charge at Atpara police station.

## 15 fall sick for lightning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 15 students fell sick, 10 seriously, after a lightning struck a spot close to Beruan Girls' High School in Atghoria upazila yesterday afternoon. Among the injured, Shikha, 14, Alpona, 14, Hira, 15, Rupali, 14, Jinia, 14, Sharmin Khatun, 15, Boishakhi, 14, Sohagi, 15, Kakoli, 15 are undergoing treatment at Pabna Medical College and Hospital. Md. Jalal Uddin, headmaster of the school, said the students belonging to classes vi to x were hurt when a lightning struck a spot near the school. Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim, medical officer of Pabna Medical College and Hospital told this correspondent that the girls fell sick due to huge sound and light.

## Accused flees police custody

UNB, Narsingdi

An accused, who was arrested for injuring a college boy, managed to flee police custody in the town on Saturday night. Police said Rahat, 24, son of Jashimuddin of Dattapara in the town, hit Khokon Khandaker, a BBA first student of Narsingdi Government College, with sharp weapon near the college, leaving him injured at about 9pm. The injured was rushed to local National Hospital. Rahat later went to the hospital just to know the condition of Khokon. At that time, the victim's friends caught Rahat and handed him over to Detective Branch (DB) of police. Mostaque, assistant sub-inspector of DB police, said a team of DB police along with Rahat went out to nab other criminals in the town when Rahat managed to flee in handcuffs.

# Teacher murdered on school premises

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A schoolteacher was hacked to death on the premises of Habibur Registered Primary School in Shyamnagar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased, Mizanur Rahman, 42, was son of Abbasuddin of Hariipur village in the upazila.

Headmaster of the school Abdul Hye said local youth Hasanuzzaman called Mizanur out of the classroom at about 11:00am and started stab him as soon as they reached the backyard of the school.

Fleeing from the clutch of the attacker, Mizanur ran towards the school and fell on the floor in front of the officeroom.

He was rushed to the

Shyamnagar health complex where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Locals said Hasanuzzaman used to take drug on the school premises. Mizanur had asked him to refrain from taking drugs at the school which angered Hasanuzzaman.

Meanwhile, police with the help of locals caught Hasanuzzaman from Godown More area of upazila about two and a half hours after the incident.

Hasanuzzaman, however, said the teacher used to visit his house to meet his mother which he disliked and protested several times.

This is what had angered and prompted me to kill him, he told police.

# 110 trees of Dinajpur forest illegally felled

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Dinajpur

Criminals felled at least 110 acacia trees of a forest beat at Dharmajan under Biral upazila of Dinajpur on Friday night.

Forest officials quoted locals as saying that around 150 people led by Md Alamgir Hossain, brother of Dharmapur Union Parishad Chairman Md Nazrul Islam, started felling trees on an acre area of a forest land at around 10:00pm.

Hearing the sound of chopping trees, locals went to the area and saw that 80 acacia trees of the beat on 92 acres of forest land have already been cut down.

Being informed by locals, forest official Md Sadequr Rahman along with a police team of Jagatpur police camp reached there at around 11:30pm. Sensing

the arrival of the law enforcers, Alamgir and his men managed to flee.

The forest officials filed a case with Biral Police Station yesterday accusing 167 people. Of the accused, 17, including Alamgir, were identified.

After filing of the case, police arrested three of the accused, the OC said, adding that they are looking for the remaining accused in the case.

Locals and forest officials said some influential people, including Alamgir, Ayzul Islam and Rubel Mia, have been trying to grab an acre area of the forest for long, claiming that it belongs to them.

Alamgir and his men cut down the trees on Friday night to occupy the land, the forest officials alleged.

Alamgir Hossain could not be contacted despite repeated attempts as his cellphone remained off.



PHOTO: STAR

**This spot under Dharmapur forest beat in Biral upazila of Dinajpur district lies barren, save a number of stumps that bear testimony to massive tree felling in the area on Friday night, allegedly to grab the land.**



PHOTO: STAR

**Octogenarian Koitori Begum of Nohata village in Sreepur upazila of Magura has been trying in vain to get the old age allowance for the last 15 years.**

# When will Koitori qualify for old age allowance?

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

International Day of Older Persons remained meaningless for octogenarian Koitori Begum as luck was never on her side.

For the last 15 years, since the government announced the Old Age Allowance Programme, Koitori has been waiting in vain to qualify for the allowance.

The programme entitles poor citizens of over 65 years of age to a yearly allowance of Tk 3,600. But for a frail Koitori, the allowance is as illusive as ever. She has a voter ID card but she is unable to obtain a birth certificate, needed for the allowance.

Koitori of Nohata village in Sreepur upazila is now physically too weak to walk. She cannot remember when her landless husband Ramjan Ali died. The mother of six daughters and a son, ill-fated Koitori is now forced to live with her daughter Anna Khatun at Sarongodia village as her only son Razab Ali is too poor

to help her.

Anna tried to convince the UP members to arrange the allowance for her 82-year-old mother but nothing has been done so far. "We approached the UP member several times for the allowance, but he did not pay heed to our plea", said an aggrieved Anna.

Mohammad Shahabuddin Ahmed, an official of Social Service Department in Sreepur upazila, said a six-member committee headed by the UP member concerned prepares the list of allowance recipients and sends it to us. Subsequently the list is approved by the upazila committee headed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO).

Contacted, UP member Meer Hafizur Rahman, expressing his regret claimed that Koitori's name was left out from the list of old-age allowance recipients mistakenly.

The UP member, however, promised to put Koitori's name on the list next time.

## GHAGHOT TAKES SERIOUS TURN IN RANGPUR

# 100 houses devoured in a week

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Rangpur

Erosion by River Ghaghot has taken a serious turn in Mithapukur upazila devouring over 100 houses in Imadpur, Bhangni, Balarhat and Pairabandh unions in the last one week.

Most of the affected families are very poor, many of them day labourers.

Locals said, the homeless families took shelter on high roads and dykes in the upazila. The victims are passing their days in misery without drinking water and foods under the open sky as the local administration are yet to arrange any relief for them.

Amzad Hossain, a local Awami League leader alleged that people of the affected areas had urged the authorities concern to protect them from erosion several times.

Since 1991, five to six projects were taken to construct a dyke to protect the villagers, but unfortunately none of the projects was implemented, he added.

our homestead, cropland and everything," said Mohsene Begum, wife of day-labourer Hafizar of Imadpur. "Where will we go now?" she posed.

Hundreds of other houses, Imadpur Registered Primary School and a vast

tract of croplands in the area are now under the threat of erosion, locals said.

Belayet Hossain, Headmaster of Imadpur school, said that the river was now only 50 metres away.

"If the authorities do not take immediate steps to

protect the school, it will go into the river soon," the headmaster said.

Harun-Ar-Rashid, UNO of Mithapukur, said that upazila administration was taking preparations to help the erosion victims soon.



PHOTO: STAR

**People helplessly watch as Ghaghot continues to devour their homesteads and croplands at Imadpur village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur.**