

Sand lifting from Ghaghat River in Rangpur threatens erosion

MEHEDY HASAN, Rangpur

A section of influential people have continued lifting sand from the Ghaghat River flowing between Pirgachha and Mithapukur upazilas under Rangpur district, intensifying the threat of erosion in the area.

Around five hundred acres of cropland and over a hundred dwellings at Benipur village under Mithapukur upazila and Atshattipara village under Pirgachha upazila have gone into the river and more areas including several establishments are under threat due to unplanned sand lifting for years.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw 10/12 excavators lifting sand in Trimohoni Kheya Ghat area under Atshattipara village.

Huge amount of sand, sufficient to load at least one hundred tractors, is lifted daily for sending to different areas of Pirgachha and Mithapukur and sand loaded in a tractor is now selling for Tk 300 to Tk 350, said Sujon and Sobhan, workers of the sand lifting syndicate.

"An excavator can lift 30 to 35 tractors of sand daily. Although illegal and harmful, sand lifting in the area serves as earning source of 50 to 60 families as many people are engaged with the act," said Joyanal Abedin, a sand trader and owner of an

excavator.

Sand traders Abdus Sattar, Saidur, Anarul of Benipur village and Raza Mian and Momin of Atshattipara village said they lift sand from the river as their arable lands went into the river.

Koikury union parishad member Afsar Ali, Hasen Ali and Nuru Mian of

Atshattipara village said they lost their landed property due to the river erosion caused by the callous act.

Several locals requesting anonymity said no action is taken against the illegal sand traders as they are related to the ruling party leaders.

Jahanara Begum, headmistress of Atshattipara Government Primary

School, said kids of the school remain vulnerable to accident while crossing the road in front of the school as many sand-laden tractors daily ply the road.

Shafiqul Islam, chairman of Koikury union parishad, said the villagers on April 18 submitted written complaint to the upazila nirbahi

officer (UNO) of Pirgachha and the local lawmaker to stop the illegal sand lifting but no step has been taken yet.

UNO AKM Sarwar Jahan admitted receiving the complaint and said, "We will start drives to stop the illegal sand lifting within a short time."



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal sand lifting from the Ghaghat River at Trimohony in Pirgachha upazila under Rangpur district adds to the problem of river erosion in the area.

BRUR classes resume May 14

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Classes at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) will resume on May 14.

Professor Dr. AKM Nur-un-Nabi, the new vice-chancellor (VC) of BRUR said this at a view exchange meeting with the journalists of both print and electronic media yesterday.

Earlier on April 20 last, the BRUR authorities at a syndicate meeting suspended all academic activities of the university for an indefinite period after a clash between police and members of 'Durniti Birodhi Mancha', a joint platform of a section of teachers, students, officials and employees of the university who demanded resignation of Professor Muhammad Abdul Jalil Miah, vice-chancellor of the university.

2 kids drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two kids drown in pond in Shahpur village of Ishwardi upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased are Shakib Rahman, 10, son of Siddikur Rahman and Siam Hossain, 11, son of Rakibul Islam of Shahpur village in the upazila.

Locals and the family sources said, the two boys were playing near the pond near their houses.

Suddenly one of them fell into the water. When the other tried to save the other, he also drown, as both did not know how to swim.



PHOTO: STAR

Wife of armyman Saidur Rahman, who was killed during Hefajat attack in Hathazari of Chittagong, breaks down after the body was taken to his village home in Pirgachha of Rangpur yesterday.

Two killed during Hefajat attacks buried at villages

STAR NATIONAL DESK

An army personnel, killed in attack by Hefajat-e Islam activists in Chittagong district on Monday, was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Rangpur yesterday morning.

Earlier, a pall of gloom descended on the area when the body of Md Saidur Rahman, 35, a sergeant of Bangladesh Army at Chittagong Cantonment, reached his home at Haricharan village in Pirgachha upazila, reports our correspondent.

The namaz-e-janaza of Saidur was held in front of his home attended by AKM Sarwar Jahan, upazila nirbahi officer, Arman Hossain, officer-in-charge at Piragachha police station and others.

He was then buried with state honour, said family members.

Saidur, who was killed

while performing his duty in front of Hathazari upazila health complex, left behind wife, daughter and mother to mourn his death.

Meanwhile, a member of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), killed in a clash with Hefajat men in Narayanganj district on Monday, was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Kurigram yesterday afternoon.

The body of Lovelu Hossain, son of Sobhan Ali of Shaljhor village in Bhurungamari upazila was brought to his home by a helicopter of Bangladesh Army at around 12:00pm, reports our Kurigram correspondent.

Battalion commander of 45 BGB in Kurigram Lt. Col. Md Ziaul Haque Khaled, UNO Ershadul Ahshan Habib and others were present when the body was handed over to the family members.

Bogra AH College badly needs more teachers, classrooms

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Academic activities of thousands of students at Bogra Government Azizul Haque College are being seriously hampered for long due to shortage of teachers, classrooms and other facilities.

The college is now running with only 44 classrooms and 182 teachers against the requirement of 80 rooms and 275 teachers, said principal Dipakendra Nath Das.

The college famed for educating hundreds of thousands was nationalised in 1968. But the financial support to the college is yet to see any remarkable improvement, he said.

Established in 1939, the

institution offers 46 courses, out of them, 23 at honours' level while the rest at masters' level for over 40,000 students, he said.

"Before the schedule time, we often leave the classrooms for students waiting to take other classes", said Krishna Chandra, a student of History department.

Meanwhile, more than 20,000 students reside at around 500 private dormitories and messes near the college as three of the four residential halls remained closed for the last three years due to political unrest on the campus, said sources.

Begum Rokeya Hall, the lone women's dormitory, accommodates 800 students

against its capacity of 350, causing immense sufferings to the girls, said Tania Islam, a fourth year student of Zoology department.

In addition to the four existing buses, at least two more are needed to ferry around 25,000 students coming from different parts of the district, said the college sources.

Shahnaz Sharmin, a former student of English department, said, "Due to scarcity of books at the library, we used to take help of private tutors for preparing notes".

Despite all, the college authorities started construction of an exam-cum-academic building last month, said the principal.

Storm injures 80, damages 250 houses in B'baria

Lightning kills 8 in 2 districts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

At least 80 people were injured, 25 of them critically, and over 250 tin-made and thatched houses were damaged as a nor'wester lashed two villages in Kasba and Nabinagar upazilas yesterday morning.

The affected villages were Niamatpur under Mulagram union of Kasba upazila and Kunaura under Uttar Kaitala union of Nabinagar upazila.

According to locals, hospital, administration and police sources, a severe nor'wester lashed Niamatpur and neighbouring Kunaura villages at around 10:30am for about 30 minutes.

More than 80 people were injured and over 250 houses were damaged, they said adding that the storm also uprooted a large number of trees and electric poles.

Of the injured, 25 were sent to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital, Kasba upazila health complex and two privet clinics.

The uprooted trees blocked local and link roads at the affected villages till writing of the report.

Two rescue teams, headed separately by Kasba UNO Jalal Saifur Rahman and Nabinagar UNO A.N.M. Najim Uddin, went to the spots to prepare the final lists of affected families.

Md. Abu Zafar, the OC of Nabinagar PS, has informed that the number of the affected houses may rise to 600.

Meanwhile, four people were killed and three others injured by lightning in Nabinagar, Sarail and Bijoy upazilas in the district yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Bachhir Mia, 35, of Biddyakut village and Sufia Begum, 30, of Mirpur village under Nabinagar upazila; Anwar Hossain, 32, of Shahbajpur village under Sarail upazila and Ansar Ali, 50, of Rampur village under Bijoy nagar upazila in the district.

Bachhir Mia was struck by lightning during rain at Biddyakut village.

Sufia Begum was killed while she was going from one house to another at Mirpur village.

Anwar Hossain lost his life when a lightning hit him under a tree at Shahbajpur village.

Lightning killed Ansar Ali, 50, and injured three others -- Hannan, 44, Jamal, 42, and Badal, 50, -- while they were harvesting paddy in the field during rain at Rampur village in Bijoy nagar upazila.

In Kishoreganj, lightning killed four people in two upazilas on Tuesday, reports our correspondent.

Locals and police said, Ali Akbar, 47, a farmer and a resident of Urianda village under Mithamoin upazila, was struck by lightning when he was working at a paddy field.

Another farmer, Rubel Mia, of Sharifpur village under Goddighi union in the same upazila, was hit by lightning when he was harvesting paddy.

Harishchandra Das, 53, was killed by lightning while fishing at Choudanto village under Adampur union in Astogram upazila.

Panshu Mia, 40, of Purba Astagram village in the upazila, was struck by lightning at noon when he was working at a paddy field.



PHOTO: STAR

Government Azizul Haque College, one of the biggest and most famed in Bogra, is now beset with manifold problems.

Tender postponed after clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The tender for building toilets at 35 schools got postponed as rowdy people allegedly belonging to the ruling Awami League (AL) beat up a contractor, stabbed his companion, and exploded bomb at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) office in the district town yesterday.

The victim contractor, Abdul Khaleq, also forest and environment secretary of district AL, said, "When I went to the office at about 11:00am, followers of Masuk Hasah Joy, son of a lawmaker, came to me and demanded my tender documents. As I declined, they beat me and stabbed my companion Raju, also an Awami League activist, and snatched

the tender documents. They left the spot, exploding a bomb."

"The attackers include Tazu of Bejpara in the town, Saddam, Nadim and 10/12 others. I am going to file a case in this regard," Khaleq said.

Wednesday was the last day for dropping tender for building toilets at 35 schools at a cost of Tk 1 crore 25 lakh and 42 tender papers were sold for this purpose, DPHE sources said.

But man of an influential Awami League leader prevented general contractors from dropping tender at the office, said several contractors seeking anonymity.

This correspondent failed to contact Masuk Hasan Joy for his version as his two cell phones remained switched off.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The district administration has imposed a ban on fishing in Kaptai Lake for three months from today to boost fish production.

The order was issued yesterday, said an official of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC).

All kinds of netting, marketing, preservation, drying and transportation of fishes have been banned.

Apart from this, the fishermen have been asked to

move their dried fish from the district to other destinations within three days.

The administration also asked all people to refrain from catching fish from the sanctuaries landing ghat, UNO office at Longudu, DC bungalow and Parjatan areas.

Every year, the authorities enforce the ban for three months from May for breeding and boosting fish production in the lake. During the period, mother fishes lay eggs while fish fries are also released in the lake.

A section of fishermen

with the connivance of some dishonest BFDC and district fisheries officials catch fish and fish fries indiscriminately during the ban period, locals allege.

To prevent this trend, a total of 12,696 fishermen, who earn their livelihood through fishing in the lake, have been brought under three-month VGF (vulnerable group feeding) programme by the authorities.

A fisherman would get 30 kilograms of rice per month under this programme, said deputy commissioner Mostafa Kamal.

Ban on fishing in Kaptai Lake to boost production

SNIPPETS

Jalil mayor of Talora

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The first mayoral election of newly declared Talora municipality was held in Dupchachia upazila yesterday. Election office sources said, BNP-backed candidate Khandakar Abdul Jalil was unofficially elected mayor defeating AL-backed candidate Amirul Islam Bakul. Jalil bagged 4588 votes while Bakul got 3373 votes. The election was held through EVM (Electoral Voting Machine). Election office sources said that 12,925 voters have elected their candidates for one mayoral post, three reserved women seats and nine general councillor posts of the municipality.

Schoolgirl dies in mishap

UNB, Khulna

A schoolgirl was killed as a pillar of an old building of her house crashed on her in Khalispur area of the city on Tuesday night. The deceased was identified as Ajhora, 7, a class I student of Taiyaba Jamiatul Madrasa and daughter of Mojahidul Islam of Taiyaba Colony in the area.

Magura mayor elected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Iqbal Akhter Khan (BNP rebel group-backed) has become the new mayor of Magura municipality by winning the bi-election on Monday. Returning officer of the polls AKM Tarek announced the result on Monday night. Akter bagged 14, 736 votes while Awami League-backed candidate Khurshid Haider Tutul secured 9,478 votes. A total of 42,401 voters, out of 61,502, cast their votes, said the returning officer. The mayoral post fell vacant following the death of Mohammad Altaf Hossain on February 12. Former mayor Altaf died due to old age complication.

Man murders wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A man killed his wife, as she resisted his second marriage at village Charpara in Shaghata upazila yesterday. Police arrested Saju Mia, 45, from Badiakhali bazaar and recovered a sharp weapon from his possession. Police said, Saju Mia after returning from Saudi Arabia recently decided to marry for the second time and his wife Shahiba Begum, 35, strongly protested it. Over the issue, they often locked in quarrel. Yesterday Saju Mia hacked his wife with a sharp weapon killing her on the spot.

Tempo driver killed

UNB, Benapole, Jessore

Police recovered the body of a tempo (human hauler) driver from Gulbaghpur village in Jhikorgachha upazila on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Jahangir Alam, 27, son of Sirajul Islam, resident of Krisnanagar village of sadar upazila. Police said, four youths along with Rubel, son of Azizul of Gulbaghpur village, hired the tempo of Jahangir from Jhikorgachha bus stand area at about 8:00 pm on Tuesday and since then he remained missing along with his vehicle. Later, villagers saw his slit-throat body lying in a bush of the village in the morning and informed police. The criminals also severed the tendons of his legs and hands.