

EIGHT UPAZILAS OF PATUAKHALI

Mahasen turns thousands of farmers into paupers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Crops on one lakh 28 thousand hectares of land in the district have been totally damaged as cyclone Mahasen accompanied by tidal surges hit the coastal region on Thursday, said sources at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE). The croplands went under water as tidal surges washed away flood control embankments at many places while heavy rainfall during the cyclone worsened the situation. This correspondent on Friday visited some of the worst affected areas and talked to farmers.



A farmer tries to save whatever he can from his flooded sesame field at Par Dauka village in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district, and right, a family makes futile attempt to remove water from their chilli field at Manikchandkathi village in the same upazila on Friday, the day after cyclone Mahasen hit the coastal areas in the southern districts.

Abdul Jalil Howlader, 50, a marginal farmer of Manikchandkathi village of Ratandi Taltali union in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district, said he cultivated ground nuts, chilli and pulses on 0.40 acres of land but all the crops went under water. "I would have reaped the crops after 15 to 20 days but the cyclone frustrated all my hopes," said Jalil who along with his wife and granddaughter were trying to remove rainwater from his chilli field. Alauddin Mia, 55, of Senerhowla village under Rangabali upazila, said he cultivated green crops on three acres of land but all the fields

have been flooded following breaches in the nearby flood control embankment on the Ramnabad River. Standing crops on five acres of land of Shawkat Hossain and four acres of land of Mahathir Mohammad Resad in the same village also got damaged in the same way. In Rangabali, 90 percent of the farmers have been affected by the cyclone. They need immediate help from government or non government level to resume their cultivation, said Md Liakat Ali, upazila nirbahi officer. All the eight upazilas in the district show similar picture.



PHOTO: STAR

The cyclone accompanied by tidal surge totally damaged crops on 1.28 lakh hectares (3.16 lakh acres) of land including sesame seed on 7,410 hectares, kidney bean on 24,100 hectares, sweet potato on 60,965 hectares, chilli on 13,200 hectares, aus seedbeds on 8,335 hectares and vegetables on 2,000 hectares of land, said sources of DAE in Patuakhali. A large number of farmers in the district are badly affected as crops on the lands flooded by tidal surge and heavy rainfall are rotting fast, said AZM Momtazul Karim, deputy director of DAE.

Jamaat calls for hartal in Joypurhat Wednesday

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Jamaat-e-Islami in Joypurhat will enforce a daylong hartal on Wednesday, demanding return of its leader Nazrul Islam, who was allegedly picked up by 'planiclothes'. The party demanded that the general secretary of Joypurhat Jamaat be placed before the media. A team allegedly of Detective Branch of police picked up Nazrul Islam from his Sahebpara residence in Joypurhat town on April 12 night. However, the law enforcers denied the allegation. Earlier, a half-day hartal was enforced on April 13 while two daylong ones on April 21 and April 22 in the district to realise the demand. In Sathkira, a half-day hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami demanding the release of its detained leaders and activists was enforced yesterday, reports UNB. Most of the shops and business establishments remained open in the district town. But no long-route buses entered or left the district due to the strike. Shibir activists torched a motorbike of police in Bakal area in the outskirts of the town and vandalised a truck. Meanwhile, hartal supporters put up barricade in Chaigharia area but police dispersed them. The Jamaat leader alleged that police arrested senior nayeb-e-ameer of district Jamaat Moinul Haque, former MP Gazi Nazrul Islam, nayeb-e-ameer Maulana Rabiul Bashar, publicity secretary of district Jamaat Azizur Rahman and many party activists from different parts of the district recently.

Abducted girl rescued

Police rescued a college girl from Rangpur city on Friday, four months after her abduction. The victim belonged to Hindu community at Kulaghat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. She is a first year honours student at Rangpur Carmichael University College. One Arif Rahman, 23, and his mother Shamima Nasrin, 47, of Lalmonirhat district town were arrested in connection with the abduction. On secret information, a team of Lalmonirhat Sadar police, led by sub-inspector Mahbub Islam, raided Chartola intersection in the city at night and rescued the girl from a house, said assistant superintendent of police Mahfuzul Islam. On January 23, the girl was abducted when she was returning home from her college at Barobari hat in the district town. Her father then filed a case with the PS accusing four people in this connection. The accused are Ashique Rahman, 25, Arif Rahman, Rajib Miah, 30, and Shamima Nasrin, said the ASP.



PHOTO: STAR

Tapan (extreme right) poses with his parents and younger sister for photograph in front of their residence at Rasulpur village in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur.

17 interviews not enough for a job for Tapan!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A freedom fighter's family at Rasulpur village of Birganj upazila under the district is struggling for survival while his son failed to get any government job under the quota for freedom fighters' wards even after appearing interviews 17 times in last five years. Tapan Kumar Mohanta, 28, eldest son of freedom fighter Dhiren Chandra Mohanta, 60, of Rasulpur village, passed the SSC examinations in 2001 but could not continue study

due to financial hardship. Schooling of his two sisters and a brother also discontinued for the same reason. They are managing the family by doing menial labour at others' houses as their father, an asthma patient, is too ailing and weak to do any work for earning. Starting in 2008, Tapan faced interview as many as 17 times for government jobs under the freedom fighters' wards' quota, the last one in this year for the post of night guard of M o h a m m a d p u r Government Primary

School. "In all the cases, I had passed the written examinations, but did not get any job finally. Many other people with lesser quality are getting jobs. I would have arranged a job if I could spend money for it," said a frustrated Tapan. Dhiren Chandra, who still dreams that someone would extend his/her hand to salvage the family from financial hardship, said, "I fought for the country, but could not do anything for my children. My only earning is freedom fighter's monthly allowance."

SNIPPETS

New BGB sector

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has formed a new sector in Ramgarh upazila of the district. Director General (DG) of BGB major general Aziz Ahmed formally inaugurated the operation of 'Guimara Sector' by hoisting a flag on Ramgarh BGB Battalion premises on Saturday. Addressing the programme, the DG said that the new sector was formed to ensure border security in CHT region.

Temple set on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Criminals set a temple on fire at Kwarbil village under Shivalaya upazila early yesterday. Secretary of the temple committee Gour Chandra Mandal said that a gang entered the temple breaking open the iron grill and set fire to the idols at the temple. Assistant police superintendent of Shivalaya Circle Md Wahiduzzaman, Shivalaya upazila nirbahi officer AKM Galib Khan, Mohadevpur union parishad chairman Mahmudul Hasan Duke and Puja Udjapan Parishad members visited the spot in the morning.

Notorious robber held

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Locals caught a robber at Khayerhat Bazar in Daulatkhan upazila Saturday evening. Police said Mohsin, 40, a notorious robber of Meghna-Tentulia River and ring leader of "Mohosin gang" was handed over to police after a good beating. Angry mob also gouged out his eyes. In-charge of Banglabazar police camp of Daulatkhan, SI Awal said that Mohosin was son of Kaiser Ali of Dakkhin Joynagar union in the upazila. He faces more than 21 criminal cases filed with several police stations of the district, Barisal and Noakhali, he added.

Schoolboy hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A schoolboy was killed at Raghbaria Char in Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj district yesterday. The deceased, Md Mehedi Hassan, 16, son of Shah Jamal of Raghbaria was an SSC examinee, police said. Officer in-charge of Ullapara police station Md Habibul Islam said locals found the body in a field at the village in the morning and informed the police. Criminals hacked the boy to death and dumped the body in the field. He was killed over a family feud, the OC said.

Youth 'commits suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of a youth, who allegedly committed suicide by hanging from a jack-fruit tree in Bania Bazar area, on Saturday noon. The dead was identified as Majnu, 25, son of Khalilur Rahman of village Sharifpur under Sadar upazila. Locals said Majnu, who had been living with his maternal uncle Nazrul, a local vegetable trader of Bania Bazar for long, was a drug addict unemployed youth.

Criminals attack cop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A gang hacked a police official indiscriminately in Gafargao railway station area on Friday night. The victim was identified as Monwar Hossain, a sub-inspector of Government Railway Police (GRP), Mymensingh. Police said, Monwar Hossain was the investigation officer (IO) of a case filed against Jamaat-Shibir men for torching a compartment of Mymensingh bound Brahmaputra intercity train at Gafargao railway station on March 7 this year. Officer in-charge of GRP Mymensingh Abdus Sattar said, Monwar was attacked when he went to Gafargao to investigate the case.

No road link for 5 days as pontoon sinks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Road communication on Pirojpur-Nesarabad and Kaukhali-Nesarabad road in the district has remained suspended for five days as the pontoon of Amrajhuri ferry terminal in the Sandha River on the estuary of Gabkhan Channel sank during the onslaught of cyclone Mahasen on Thursday. In absence of the pontoon, vehicles including passenger buses cannot go from Pirojpur and Kaukhali to Nesarabad

and the passengers have to borrow immense sufferings as they have to count extra fare for other means and take risky boat ride to cross the river. Akbor Hossain Dulal, the lessee of the ferry terminal, alleged that the pontoon sank as Roads and Highways Department (RHD) did not take any precaution before the arrival of cyclone Mahasen. Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal, executive engineer of RHD in Pirojpur, said, "We are trying to rescue the pontoon. We hope to do it by today (Sunday).

Storm lashes B'baria, Lalmonirhat

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Nor'wester lashed two districts on Saturday night, damaging at least 600 houses and uprooting scores of trees. At least 500 thatched houses were damaged and dozens of roadside trees uprooted as a storm lashed eight villages in Lalmonirhat Sadar, Aditmari and Kaliganj upazilas on Saturday night, reports our correspondent. The storm also damaged crops, mainly boro paddy and maize, in Hakiganj, Lohakuchi, Bamonerbasa villages in Aditmari upazila, Chandrapur, Chaklarhat, Chaparhat villages of Kaliganj upazila

and Mohendranagar, Karnapur villages of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. In Brahmanbaria, at least 100 thatched houses and more than 150 trees were damaged as a nor'wester swept over Mulagram, Moydagonj and Pukurpar villages under Kasba upazila on Saturday night. According to Kasba UNO office sources, the storm the villages at around 7:30 pm and lasted for half an hour. Five people were also injured, reports our correspondent. Earlier, a nor'wester lashed Niamatpur and Kunaura villages of the same upazila on May 8, leaving 80 people injured and 250 houses damaged.



PHOTO: STAR

A storm lashed eight villages in three upazilas of Lalmonirhat on Saturday night. Photo shows a house damaged by the storm at Lohakuchi village in Aditmari upazila.

TALE OF 9 HAPLESS VILLAGES

Power snaps over a month ago, not to return yet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Nine villages in Kulaura upazila plunged into darkness during a storm over a month ago but nobody came to the rescue of several hundred villagers yet by restoring the power connection. Meanwhile, a 250-kilovolt transformer was stolen at Lakkipur village on April 21, adding to the situation. On April 15, a nor'wester swept over the upazila, damaging scores of thatched

houses and uprooting five electricity poles, according to Power Development Board (PDB) men and locals. The authorities repaired all the snapped wires in different areas of the upazila but Lakkipur, Rangichara and Kaliti Tea-Garden. "We are not getting power supply since the storm lashed the area. Officials of PDB came to inspect the situation but they said nothing. In the meantime, a transformer was stolen, adding to our

woes," said Md Aslam, a subscriber of Lakkipur village. On April 23, locals submitted a complaint to the executive engineer at the zonal office of PDB, demanding restoration of power supply. Contacted, executive engineer Swagoto Sharkar said they had informed the higher authorities about the matter. A case was filed with Lakkipur police station in connection with the stealing of the transformer, he said.

ZAHID MURDER IN KHULNA

10 held, outlaw groups claim responsibility

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police arrested 10 people from different villages in Rupsha upazila on Saturday night in connection with the killing of Fakirhat Sadar union parishad chairman Khan Zahid Hasan. The arrestees are Bashir Sheikh, 30, Babul Howlader, 30, Shahajalal, 28, Sirajul Islam, 35, Rana Howlader, 27, Akteruzzaman, 33, Firoz Howlader, 25, Amin, 25, Sumon Molla, 30 and Saiful Sheikh, 28. Meanwhile, a case was filed with Rupsha police station accusing nine of killing Zahid. Shirin Akter, wife of the deceased, filed the case yesterday afternoon. On the other hand, two outlaw groups -- Purba Banglar Communist Party (ML) and

Purba Banglar Communist Party (Janajuddha) -- in mail messages sent to local newsmen claimed the responsibility of killing Zahid. Khan Zahid Hasan, also general secretary of Fakirhat upazila Awami League, and his motorbike driver Munna were shot dead on Saturday in Rupsha upazila. Our Bagerhat correspondent adds: Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists yesterday blocked roads felling trees and burning tyres at Attaki intersection on Bagerhat-Dhaka Highway and Katakali intersection on Bagerhat-Khulna Highway, protesting the killing. Fakirhat Awami League and Jubo League took out mourning processions, demanding arrest of the killers of Zahid.

Hindus in Lalmonirhat protest land grabbing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Several hundred Hindus of bordering Mogholhat Sahapara village under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila formed a human chain at Mogholhat Bazar yesterday, demanding return of a Hindu family's land allegedly grabbed by three people of the village three days ago. The protesters said Monir Hossain and his brothers Gulzar Hossain and Mostafa Miah captured 17 decimals of land belonging to Uttam

Kumar Saha at the village on Thursday and then took away boro paddy from the land. They demanded that the local administration take immediate steps to recover the land from illegal occupation of Monir and his brothers and bring them to book for grabbing the land. Uttam Kumar Saha said he purchased the land from Monir's father Nuruzzaman Miah 38 years ago. Since his death in 2011, his sons Monir, Gulzar and Mostafa

have been claiming the ownership of land without showing legal documents, Uttam added. Monir said they are the real owners of the land and they will produce necessary documents in support of their claim before the court. Contacted, Sub-Inspector Ziaul Islam of Sadar Police Station said they have completed investigation into the case filed by Uttam last year and will press charges against the accused soon.