



The photo taken last March shows the pitiable condition of the Titas River at Ujanishar in Brahmanbaria district.

PHOTO: STAR

# Massive siltation wreaks havoc on Titas River

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

The Titas River flowing through all nine upazilas in the district is heading towards virtual death due to huge siltation and lack of dredging.

Most of 120-kilometre-long Titas River, the main one of the district, sees scanty flow especially during the dry season, said locals and sources of Brahmanbaria division of Water Development Board (WDB).

That time about 12 km of the river area from Akhaura rail bridge to Naroi Noagaon almost dry up and parts of it, especially in the upstream of Ujanisher

bridge, are used by locals for grazing.

Hawra, Jinji and Lohor rivers falling into the Titas carry huge sand and mud from the Indian hills where they originated. Five large beels, vast crops lands, and several streams and tributaries also add to the siltation of the Titas, making it lose much of the capacity to contain water.

Lots of shoals and chars (sandy land) have emerged, shrinking the river. It has changed the course at several points, causing erosion.

Massive siltation in the river badly hampers navigation and irrigation. Once launches and boats plied the Titas in all of its areas but

now launches ply Banchharampur-Nabinagar-Brahmanbaria route only.

As the river can no longer provide much water to the linked canals during the dry season, farmers have to count extra cost for irrigation.

"We are to pay Tk 1800 for irrigation per 30 decimals of paddy field. At some places, farmers make temporary blocks across the river to store water for irrigation," said freedom fighter Nurul Islam, also a farmer of Gukarnaghat village.

"Now launches have to ply slowly in the Titas that has lost much of its navigability. The fish stocks see

decrease as their sanctuaries in the river are at stake," said Md Shamsuzzaman, headmaster of Shalgaon Kalishima High School situated near the river.

When contacted, engineer Md Zakir Hossain, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Brahmanbaria, said, "As per suggestion of the water resource ministry, a Tk 637-crore project proposal, including dredging of the Titas River, has been sent to the high authorities. A four-month survey of the giant project is going on to conduct further study that will determine the future of the project."



People use boats and rafts for movement as rain-fed Teesta River caused flash flood in 40 villages, including Sindurna in Hatibandha upazila under Lalmonirhat district, during the last two days.

PHOTO: STAR

# Flash flood hits 40 villages in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Flash flood caused by heavy rain in hills across the border marooned several thousand people of 40 villages in the last two days.

The flood-hit people have taken shelter high land, roads and WDB embankments in the upazilas.

The worst affected villages are Dakkhin Goddimari, Char Dowani,

Sindurna, Char Dawabari Paruliya under Hatibandha upazila, Char Votmari, Char Kakina, Rudreshewar and Jamirbari in Kaliganj upazila, Kadomtola, Balapara, Char Gobordhan in Aditmari upazila and Char Kurul, Mogholhat, Char Kulaghat, Char Bowalmari, Rajpur, Char Kalmati, Khuniya Gachh, Char Gokunda, Char Milon Bazar in Sadar upazila.

The low lying areas in Teesta and Dharla rivers

basin were flooded yesterday, said an official of Water Development Board (WDB) in the district.

The Teesta and the Dharla were flowing above the danger level at Daliya point in Hatibandha upazila and Kulaghat point in Sadar upazila in the morning.

Victim Rajob Alo Munsu, 62, of Sindurna village in Hatibandha upazila, said the flood was caused due to onrush of water from hills across the border in the last two days.

# Two jailed for stalking

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Mobile courts in Bogra and Pabna yesterday jailed two people for stalking schoolgirls. A mobile court in Bogra jailed a teenage boy for stalking a schoolgirl yesterday noon.

Convict was Rabbi, 14, son of Altaf Hossain of Belgram village under Nangram village was jailed for six months, reports our correspondent.

Police said Rabbi used to harass a class nine student of Singajani High School under Nandigram upazila. Yesterday morning when he stopped the girl on the way to school and tried to harass her, local people caught him red handed and informed law enforcers.

Later UNO Asif Ahsan handed down the verdict in the evening.

Away in Pabna, a stalker was sentenced to six months imprisonment in Rajapur village in Sadar upazila yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Officer in-charge of Pabna Sadar police station Kazi Haniful Islam said convict Rajib Hossain, 20, use to sexually harass a girl student of Pabna Jubo Unnayan Odhidopter.

Police arrested him yesterday morning when he was stalking the student.

Later he was produced before a mobile court led by executive magistrate Meherun Negar which handed down the punishment.

# BNP-enforced hartal in Mymensingh ends peacefully

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Barring a few incidents of vandalised, BNP enforced eight-hour hartal in Mymensingh district passed off peacefully yesterday.

The district unit of BNP called the shutdown, protesting imposition of the Section 144

In Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha, Trisal and Bhaluka upazilas for 12 hours from 6:00am yesterday as JCD and BCL announced to form human chains on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway on the day.

BCL announced a similar programme, protesting violent activities carried out by BNP and Jamaat across the country recently.

Pro-hartal activists vandalised three CNG-run auto-rickshaws and a tempo in the town, said Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge of Mymensingh Kotwali Police Station.

Police picked up 20 BNP men while they were picketing in different areas of the town, the OC added.

# Train derails

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Rail communications on four routes connecting mainly Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet restored three hours after six compartments of a train derailed in Kashba upazila yesterday.

Train movement on Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Noakhali, Dhaka-Chandpur and Sylhet-Chittagong came to a halt around at 12:45pm after a Sylhet-bound intercity train from Chittagong veered off the tracks at Kashba Railway Station, said Akhaura Railway Junction Superintendent Abdul Motolib.

The rail communication resumed at 3:45pm after a relief train from Akhaura Railway Junction rescued the compartments.

# TRANSPORT WORKERS GO ON RAMPAGE

# Vandalise Tangail polytechnic, beat up teachers and students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The transport (bus-minibus) workers vandalised Tangail Polytechnic Institute, and beat up 12 teachers including engineer Mozahar Hossain, principal of the institute, leaving them injured.

They also vandalised several student dormitories and threw brickbats to the teachers' quarters. They later attacked several adjacent student messes and beat the residents, leaving five students injured.

"The workers attacked the institute and beat the teachers and students in a pre-planned way. The insti-

10:45am, sources said.

They damaged the windowpanes and other things at the campus and beat 12 teachers including engineer Mozahar Hossain, principal of the institute, leaving them injured.

They also vandalised several student dormitories and threw brickbats to the teachers' quarters. They later attacked several adjacent student messes and beat the residents, leaving five students injured.

"The workers attacked the institute and beat the teachers and students in a pre-planned way. The insti-

tute and the dormitories were almost empty during the incident as it was a holiday on the occasion of Shob-e-Meraj. We are not aware about any incident of beating any worker by students," said Emdadul Haque, head of the electrical department of the institute, who received injuries by the workers.

On the other hand, Aminul Islam, joint secretary of the district transport workers union, said, "We do not know who beat the polytechnic teachers but the students beat a transport worker in presence of sev-

eral teachers."

Mozahar Hossain, principal of the institute, said, "After the incidents, we declared the institute closed for the next three workdays and sent letters to the local police and civil administrations as well as the ministry concerned regarding the matter."

Chittaranjan Das, president of the district transport workers union, said they withdrew their transport strike following the local administration's assurance of security of the workers and steps against the 'culprit' students.



PHOTO: STAR

Windowpanes of Tangail Polytechnic Institute lie damaged after yesterday's attack by transport workers, who also beat up several teachers and students of the institute.

# Lightning kills four in three districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Four people were killed and five others injured by lightning in Netrakona, Sunamganj and Thakurgaon districts yesterday.

A youth was killed and three others were injured by lightning at Kismotbaranga village in Purbadhola upazila of Netrakona district yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

Deceased Imran Hossain, 26, was son of Mofizuddin of Kismotbaranga village, reports our correspondent.

Injured Santu, 8, Mita Akther, 16, and Saguna Begum of the upazila were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital.

Police said the victims were struck by lightning in the area at around 9:00am. Of them, Imran died on the spot.

In Sunamganj, two people were killed and another was injured by lightning at Mandiacha village in

Tahirpur upazila yesterday, reports UNB.

The deceased were identified as Alkuma Begum, 33, wife of Abdul Hannan and Ripa Akter, 15, daughter of Mannar Mia of the village.

Locals said Alkuma and Ripa died on the spot and Toffazzal Haque, 10, son of Sazu Haque, was injured as a thunderbolt struck them when they went to Tanguar Haor for catching fish during rain in the morning.

Away in Thakurgaon, a schoolgirl was killed and her grandmother injured by lightning at Razagaon village under Sadar upazila early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Deceased Champa Rani, 12, was daughter of Jogesh Chandra of the village. The injured was identified as Lal Moni, 60.

Locals said the victims were struck by lightning during a heavy rain at 1:30am while they were asleep at their house, leaving Champa died on the spot.

# CASES FOR ATTACKS ON COPS

# 24 Jamaat-Shibir, BNP men arrested in Jhenidah, Sirajganj

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Law enforcers arrested 24 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men on various charges, including attacks on cops, in Jhenidah and Sirajganj districts yesterday and the day before.

In Jhenidah, police arrested 10 activists of Jamaat and its student wing Islami chhatra Shibir from a students' mess in the town and Moheshpur and Harinakundu upazilas early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Police raided a students' mess in Hamdah area in the town at around 5:00am and arrested five Jamaat and Shibir activists from there. Leaflets and books on jihad were seized from their possession, police said.

In separate drives, police arrested three jammatt activists from Moheshpur

upazila and two from Harinakundu upazila during the time.

They were wanted in cases for assaulting policemen and participating in anti-state activities during the past hartal days, police said.

In Sirajganj, police arrested 14 BNP and Jamaat activists from Chandidasgati village under Sadar upazila on Wednesday, reports.

The arrestees are Suman, Salam, Lokman Ali, Felu, Rafiqul, Shoishob Sarker, Abu Bakar Siddique, Salam, Babu, Lablu, Raihan, Sabuj, Ruhul Amin and Rabbi. They all hail from the village.

Additional Superintendent of Police Muktar Hossain said law enforcers arrested the accused in the cases, raiding different houses at the village in the afternoon.



PHOTO: STAR

The pontoon of Baliatali launch terminal in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district is yet to be made functional after its sinking during the onslaught of cyclone Mahasen accompanied by tidal surges on May 16.