

Students cross an inundated area near their house by a raft to go to their school in Jatrapur union of Kurigram Sadar upazila yesterday as fresh areas got flooded due to heavy downpour and onrush of water from upstream. *right*, a scene of inundated ashrayan project, meant for sheltering poor people, in Chirirbandar upazila under Dinajpur district.



PHOTO: STAR

# Flood worsens in 5 N dists as rivers continue to swell

STAR COUNTRY DESK

The flood situation in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Gaibandha and Kurigram districts has worsened as the rivers flowing through the districts further swelled due to downpour and onrush of water from the upstream.

Our Thakurgaon Correspondent reports: Fifty villages in five upazilas under the district and several areas of Thakurgaon municipality have been flooded due to heavy rain on Tuesday night and Wednesday and overflowing of the rivers including Tangon, Kulic, Nagor, said the district administration sources.

Over 1,500 badly affected families have taken shelter at safer places at eighteen different centres of five upazilas and the upazila administrations with the help of local public representatives are preparing lists of other flood affected families, DC said.

The Ministry of Relief and

Disaster Management has provided 100 tonnes of rice and Tk 10 lakh in cash as relief for the flood-hit people. Different social and cultural organisations have also come forward to help the victims.

In Panchagarh, over hundreds of families have taken shelter at 11 different centres of Atwari, Boda and Debiganj upazilas.

Over 1000 houses and many culverts in Atwari and Boda upazilas have been damaged by flood, upazila administration sources said.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports: Fresh areas of Biral, Bochaganj and Sadar upazilas of Dinajpur district went under water in last 24 hours.

Thousands of people in Biral, Bochaganj, Birganj, Chirirbandar, Dinajpur Sadar, Khansama and Ghoraghat upazilas of Dinajpur affected as the water of Punarbhaba, Atrai and Ichhamati rivers rose, said sources of Dinajpur

Deputy Commissioner's office.

The fish farmers, brick fields and cropland of the affected damaged badly.

The people of affected area took shelter at nearby school, road and river bank with their belongings and alleged that they yet to get any help.

Dinajpur deputy commissioner Ahmed Shamim Al Razi visited Dinajpur Sadar, Bochaganj and Biral upazilas yesterday.

Cash and food item already sent to the flood affected areas in the district. We are distributing rice among the affected people today he added.

Md Anwar Hossain, executive engineer of Dinajpur Water Development Board (WDB), said the water level of Punorbhaba rose by two feet on Tuesday and further four inches on Wednesday, worsening the situation.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: With sharp rise of water level in

Teesta and Jamuna basin areas, at least 35 villages in four upazilas went under water yesterday.

According to WDB, the Jamuna River is flowing 17 centimetres above the danger mark at Balashi ghat point and the Teesta River might cross the red mark any time. All the rivers in Gaibandha district continued to swell engulfing fresh areas including croplands and dwelling houses.

Four primary schools in Fulchhari upazila are facing erosion threat.

At least ten thousand people in different char lands of Teesta basin marooned due to onrush of water from the upstream, said Ahsan Habib, upazila nirbahi officer of Sundarganj.

In Saghata upazila at least 2000 families have remained marooned.

With the increase of water level, erosion by Teesta and Jamuna rivers took alarming turn at Choyghoria in Sundarganj

upazila, Ratanpur in Fulchhari upazila, Hasilkandi and Chinirpotol in Saghata upazila, said Rezaul Mostafa Asafuddowla, executive engineer of WDB.

The authority could not take initiative to control erosion due to fund constraint, he added.

UNB adds from Kurigram: Rains and onrush of water from hills in the last 24 hours made all rivers including Brahmaputra, Dharala, Teesta and Dudhkumar swell further, worsening flood situation in seven upazilas of the district.

Around 25,000 people have been marooned in the low-lying areas of Nageshwari, Bhurungamari, Ullipur, Chilmari, Roumari, Rajibpur and Sadar upazilas.

The Dharala, the Brahmaputra and the Teesta were flowing 39, 28 and 16 centimetres above the danger level yesterday, WDB sources said.

## Metalled road or muddy path?

### Over one kilometre portion of Fulchhari-Teestamukh Ghat road in sorry state due to lack of renovation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Over one kilometre portion of the road from Fulchhari upazila headquarters to old Teestamukh Ghat has become a nuisance for commuters due to lack of renovation for long.

Often vehicles have to struggle hard while plying the road in Gajaria union, especially during the rainy season, as the road remains virtually covered with thick mud.

After a heavy shower, water gets stagnant due to lack of adequate drainage system.

A large number of people

of three unions daily move on the road that also connects Fulchhari market, Fulchhari Degree College and Fulchhari Senior Madrasa.

But they have to face untold sufferings to reach the destination due to deplorable condition of the road.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) authorities in Fulchhari upazila constructed three drains, including one in the now damaged part of the road in Gajaria upazila, spending Tk 3.5 lakh in 2009-10 fiscal year. But the drains, already stuck with soil and garbage,

hardly work as outlet for stagnant water.

Besides, a good number of shops and other structures have occupied sides of the road, making it narrow.

Local people appealed for the renovation of run-down road, but no step has been taken yet, said Monotosh Roy Mintu, chairman of Gajaria union parishad in Fulchhari upazila.

Roads and Highways Department has undertaken a scheme for the renovation of the run-down road and the work will start as soon as the fund is available, said Mehdi-ul-Shaheed, upazila nirbahi officer of Fulchhari.



PHOTO: STAR

PICTURE TELLS THE TALE: A large portion of Fulchhari-old Teestamukh Ghat road in Fulchhari upazila under Gaibandha district remains in a deplorable condition for long, making vehicular movement a tough task.

## Five get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal court on Wednesday sentenced five people to life imprisonment for killing a boy in Agoiljhara upazila in 2009.

The lifers are Alauddin Hawlader, Mithu Hawlader, Mizan Hawlader, Tutul Hawlader, and Tarikul Islam Shiplu. Of them, Tutul has been absconding since the murder.

The court also fined the convicts Tk 5,000 each in default they are to suffer in jail for three more months.

District and Sessions

Judge Habibur Rahman pronounced the verdict. As many as 10 witnesses gave their statements before the court during the trial.

According to case statement, Liton and his brother Tipu of Budhar village under Agoiljhara upazila picked up a quarrel with their aunt Jahanara Begum over planting a papaya plant on a land belonging to both families at their homestead on June 6, 2009.

At one stage, Liton's uncle Mithu Hawlader and his four sons swooped on him. They beat up Liton and hit him with a sharp weapon,

resulting in his death on the spot.

Anisur Rahman Bachchu, elder brother of Liton, lodged a murder case with Agoiljhara Police Station the same day, accusing six people, including his aunt Jahanara.

The judge acquitted Jahanara Begum as her involvement in the killing could not be proved.

After investigation, Sub-Inspector Shihab, also the investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against the six on September 8, 2009.

## Traditional muri makers struggle for survival

AKM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Traditional muri (puffed rice) producers of Boiragipara village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila are facing a tough time, as the item produced with the help of machines have flooded the market.

The village is locally known as 'murir gram' (village of puffed rice), as over 200 families there are engaged in producing the item manually for decades.

Supplying puffed rice to different districts, the families earlier earned money enough to lead a moderate life, but now cheaper machine-made puffed rice packed under different brand names and attractive covers is fast occupying the market.

The female members of the families do the most of the work for producing muri, including collection of special paddy, sand and firewood and preparing the item while the male members are engaged in selling the popular item in different areas.

"Now the prices of inputs for puffed rice have increased. And so, our profit margin has come down," said Minoti Rani, a housewife engaged in muri making at Boiragipara village.

Many of the male members of the muri producing families have to ferry the item door to door to add a little to the profit, said Bashanti Rani.

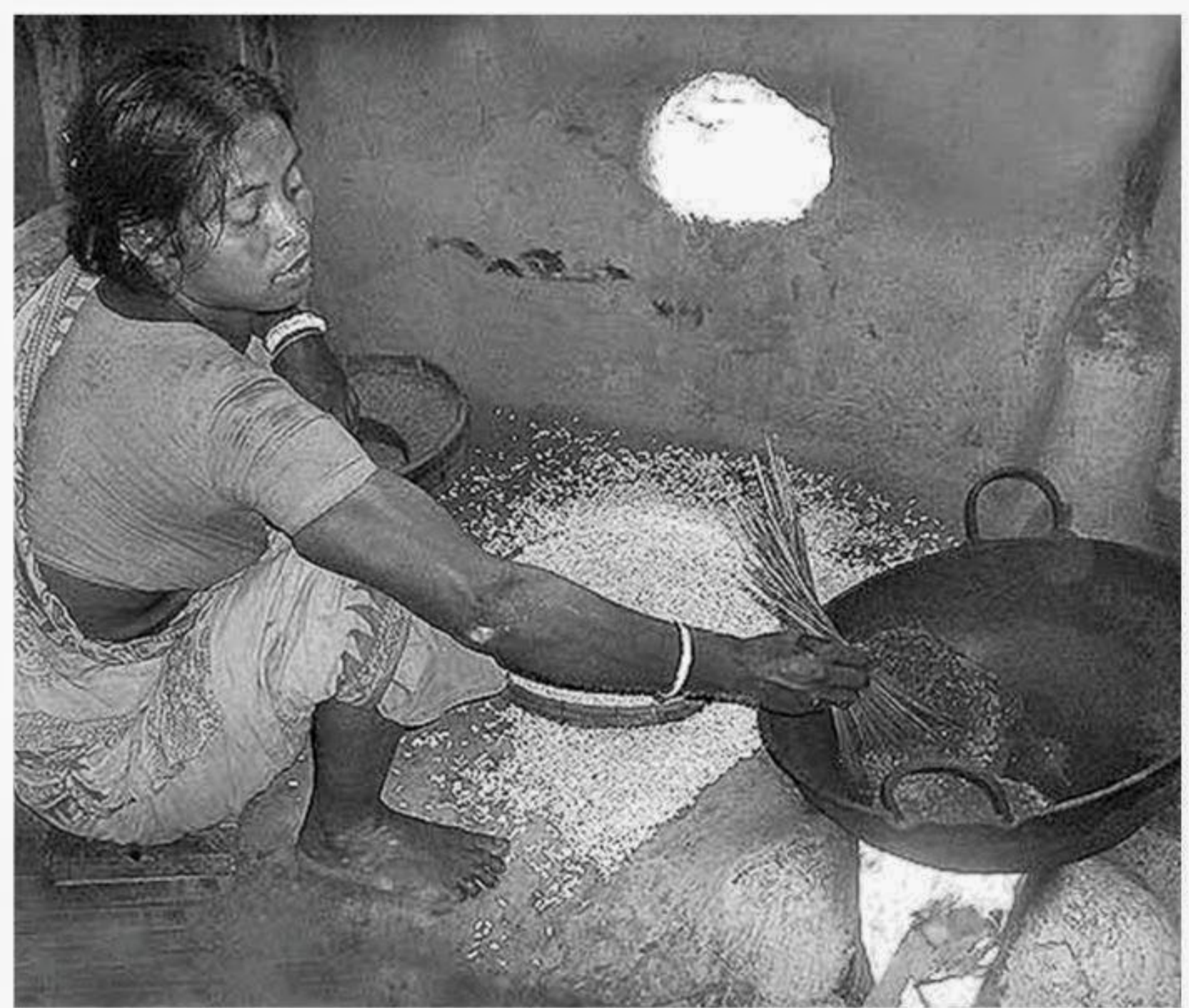


PHOTO: STAR

Manual preparation of muri (puffed rice) is still a common practice at Boiragipara village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila as the item, having better taste than that produced by machines, has demand among a section of people.

"It needs three days to produce two maunds of puffed rice but it is sold to wholesalers with a meagre profit of Tk 300. If we could sell it directly to retailers, the profit would be around Tk 500," said Mrinal Das, a muri producer of the village.

As most of people of the village are poor, often they borrow money from local lenders for high interest to manage the minimum capital to run the business,

said Mizanur, another muri maker.

"Machine-made muri looks attractive, but the taste of manually processed muri is much better and its still has demand to a section of consumers. Manually produced muri sells at Tk 60 per kg, whereas the item made with machines is sold for Tk 35 to 50," he added.

Manually prepared puffed rice faces the challenge for survival as

machine produced items, packed under different brand names, have flooded the markets, including those in rural areas, said Rafiqul Islam, chairman Ramchandrapur union.

Puffed rice producers using the manual method need financial support for sustenance in the profession, said Hedayetul Islam Babu, a social worker of Ramchandrapur union.

## Burglary at Kishoreganj Polytechnic

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Criminals looted about Tk 63 thousand and vandalised furniture of the offices of the principal and the vice-principal and a few classrooms of Kishoreganj Polytechnic Institute on Wednesday night.

"Some 15-20 armed criminals entered the institute and beat me and Omar Faruq, another night guard last night [Wednesday]. Tying our hands from behind, they broke locks and vandalised furniture of different rooms," said Shihab Uddin, a night guard.

Engineer Abul Kalam Azad, acting principal of Kishoreganj Polytechnic Institute, said, "I cannot understand it. They took away 63 thousand and five hundred taka although there are many valuable instruments."

Finding the two night guards injured and tied with rope yesterday morning, a few students took them to Karimganj health complex immediately.

## SI closed

UNB, Comilla

A sub-inspector of Barura Police Station was closed to the district Police Lines yesterday on charge of taking bribe from a drug trader.

The police superintendent ordered the action against SI Sakhwat Hossain for taking bribe from Sharif of Sushunda village in the Barura municipality area, said AKM Kawsar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of the police station.

## 1 killed, 15 injured as AL factions clash in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A man was killed and 15 others were injured in a clash between two factions of Awami League at Shadukhali village in Shaikupa upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Fazer Ali, 35, son of Wased Ali of the village.

Of the injured, Shariful

was admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital while the rest given first aid.

Police and locals said there was a longstanding conflict between ward AL president Abdus Sattar and ward general secretary Moshtaque Hossain over taking control of the area.

As a sequel to the conflict, the supporters of Moshtaque and Sattar

attacked each other with lethal weapons, leaving 16 from both sides injured.

The injured were rushed to the hospital where Fazer died after sometime, said Anwar Hossain, officer in-charge of Shaikupa Police Station.

Contacted, the two AL leaders blamed each other for the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

Landless people, evicted from government land in Rajendrapur area of the city, form a human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club yesterday demanding their rehabilitation.