



A village in Bhola Sadar upazila gets flooded as tidal water streaming through the damaged parts of an embankment caused inundation of large areas in seven upazilas of the district, marooning around two lakh people in the last two days.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Tidal surge maroons 2 lakh in Bhola

10km of embankment not repaired for long

UNB, Bhola

About two lakh people in seven upazilas of the district were again marooned in the last two days due to tidal surge as about 10 kilometres of a flood protection embankment had been washed away.

The embankment, damaged earlier in different places of the island district, was not repaired in time by the Water Development Board (WDB). Ten kilometres of the embankment were washed away in phases following the recent cyclone 'Mahasen' that swept the area.

As a result, water from the Meghna enters through

the damaged portion of the embankment during new moon and full moon. This time, ahead of the full moon, villages in Kachia, Dhania and Ilisha unions of Bhola Sadar upazila went under several feet of water over the last two days.

The worst affected is Borhanuddin upazila where the people of Bara Manika and Paria unions are suffering the most as houses went under chest deep water at the time of tide.

There is no way to go to shelter centres. People are also suffering for lack of pure drinking water.

Idris Akon of Baro Manika said people can not have their sehri and

iftar properly during this holy month of Ramadan.

More than two lakh people in Tajumaddin and Lalmohan upazilas, in Charfashion and remote island Manpara along with Bhabanipur and Syedpur unions of Daulatkhan upazila remained marooned.

Crops on hundreds of acres of land and fishes in ponds as well as roads were destroyed in these areas.

Not only within the embankment areas hundreds of families outside were also flooded by 3-4 feet of water.

Borhanuddin Upazila Nirbahi Officer Jahangir Hossain said people in

Hakimuddin Banglabazar area were marooned for nearly 45 days due to the absence of embankment. So far 450 tons of rice under VGF have been distributed among the affected people, he said.

Bhola Water Development Board-1 executive engineer Abdul Hannan said construction of the dam has started despite various problems.

He said whatever works done are being washed away by tidal water, but efforts are continuing to take forward the work.

Hannan alleged that local people did not give land timely for the construction of the dam.



A felled *chambol* tree on Adhajhuri-Sriramkathi road in Nazirpur upazila under Pirojpur district, and another one, inset, left by tree looters after halfway through cutting, bear testimony to random occurrence of such criminal act in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Ruling party men loot 50 roadside trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

At least 50 roadside trees were cut down allegedly by a union parishad (UP) chairman in Nazirpur upazila of the district on Sunday.

Locals alleged that Sriramkathi UP Chairman MA Malek Bepari, also a leader of Nazirpur upazila unit of the ruling Awami League, felled the trees in broad daylight beside Adhajhuri-Sriramkathi Road.

They said 20-25 people led by Abu Taleb Sheikh, a member of the union parishad and also a local Jubo League leader, cut down the trees on instructions of UP Chairman Malek Bepari.

They also chopped off the

branches of some other roadside trees and took them away, locals said, adding that they didn't dare to protest, fearing harassment by the chairman and his men.

The UP chairman told us that he felled the trees to construct a bridge on a canal in the union, locals further said. Contacted, Chairman Malek Bepari refused to say anything on the issue over cellphone and asked this correspondent to go to his office.

Nazirpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mrinal Kanti Dey said on receiving a complaint from some locals, he informed the district forest officials of the matter.

Being informed, forest staff led by Harun-ur-Rashid

Majumder, assistant forest officer in Pirojpur, went to the spot on Monday and found only 13 out of 50 felled trees lying beside the road. They seized the trees.

"We could not arrest anyone of the group involved in illegal tree-felling as they fled the scene, sensing our presence," said forest officer Harun.

The forest officer filed a case with a Pirojpur court, accusing five people, who were engaged by the UP chairman to cut down the trees. UP Chairman Malek Bepari and member Abu Taleb Sheikh have not been implicated the case.

Asked, the forest officer said he excluded the names of the two from FIR under political pressure.

Two crushed under trains

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two people were crushed under running trains in Dinajpur and Feni districts yesterday and the day before.

A woman was crushed under the wheels of a train in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur on Tuesday evening, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Josna Begum 40, wife of Jobed Ali of Rajabasar in the upazila.

GRP police sources said Jyotsna, a Dinajpur-bound passenger, slipped and went under the wheels when she was getting down from the running train at Monmathapur station.

In Feni, a train hit a day labourer in Barahipur area of the town yesterday, leaving him dead on the spot, reports our correspondent.

Mokhles, 60, went under the wheels of the train at 2:00pm when he was walking on the rail tracks, said locals.

A nuisance in heart of Dinajpur town

Hide market poses serious health hazards to 3,500 families

KANGKON KARMAKAR, Dinajpur

A more than half century-old hide market in a densely populated area in the district town has been spreading stench and filth, posing serious health hazards to some 3,500 families.

Local residents said waste from the hide market at Ramnagar, around 2.5km away from Deputy Commissioner Office, have polluted drinking water sources as saline water used to wash hide drains out to ponds and canals.

Living in the area has become next to impossible as stink from the market hovers in the air in the localities.

People, especially the children, are suffering from skin and gastro-intestinal problems while fish traders say they cannot sell their catches from polluted sources.

Repeated appeals to the authorities to relocate the hide market to a suitable place went in vain, locals

alleged.

They said the market was shifted to its present site from near a riverbank in Lalbagh area back in 1950, and since then the market gradually expanded allowing hide traders from 13 upazilas of the district to buy and sell raw animal skins here.

At last 30 warehouses have been built in the market to store the hides, which continuously spread bad smell often causing breathing difficulties.

"It is tough to breathe here, but we have been forced to live in this way," said Md. Shamsul Haque, a shopkeeper of the area.

The salinity in underground water in the market's surroundings has also increased alarmingly as traders mix huge salts with the hides to prevent rotting, said the locals.

"We are compelled to drink water with high salinity," said Md. Ahmed Ali, a resident of the area, adding that many locals have given up using tube

wells because of lack of fresh water.

Besides, due to unplanned waste management, the Girjanath Canal has been virtually choked by dumping of hide wastes.

Md. Helal Islam, a local said high pollution is also causing death of fishes in ponds, forcing people to stop fish farming.

Mizanur Rahman Mizu, another local, said they have been agitating since 2010 urging authorities to relocate the hide market.

Former deputy commissioner Jamal Uddin Ahmed took an initiative to relocate it but the process slowed down after he was transferred from Dinajpur, Mizu said.

Contacted, present DC Md. Ahmed Shamim Al Razi admitted that the people of the area have been suffering a lot for the hide market. He said he was looking into the matter seriously. "I hope that people of the area will get a good news as soon as possible," he added.

PCJSS man shot in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

An activist of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanhati Samity (PCJSS) Santu Larma faction was shot and injured in Dullatali area of Laxmichhari upazila yesterday.

The injured was identified as Sujal Chakma, 22, son of Jaldhar Chakma of Magpara area under Kawkhali upazila in Rangamati district.

Two criminals came in a motorbike and opened fire on Sujal, leaving him seriously injured while he was chatting at a tea stall in the area around 11:30am, said sub-inspector of Laxmichhari police station Hamidul Haque.

Sujal was rushed to the upazila health complex and then shifted to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital as his condition deteriorated, said the SI.

Convener of PCJSS Laxmichhari unit Dhiman Chakma blamed the cadres of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) for the gun attack.

The press and information secretary of UPDF refuted the allegation.



PHOTO: STAR

A hide market operating for years in densely populated Ramnagar area of Dinajpur town troubles the locals with stink and filth and poses health hazards.

Waterlogging spoils seedbeds as sluice gates kept shut

Same old tale of illegal shrimp cultivation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Aman seedbeds on about 1,800 hectares of land in Char Lata, a remote coastal island in Chalitabunia union of Rangabali upazila under the district, rotted due to waterlogging as unscrupulous people have closed six sluice gates on a canal to cultivate shrimp there.

Local farmers fear setback

in aman cultivation this season due to the situation.

Heavy rainfall following cyclone Mahasen on May 16 and tidal surges create water logging on the agricultural land in the Char Lata but stagnant water cannot recede as Zahid Hossain and his men keep the sluice gates closed for shrimp cultivation, local farmers said.

"We went to local leaders demanding step to open the

sluice gates but in vain," said Zafor Mridha, a farmer.

"Aman cultivation this season has become uncertain as seedlings have already rotted due to waterlogging for long," said Feroz Chowkider, a farmer of the char.

Several other farmers including Delwar Hossain, Fazlur Rahman, Babul Mridha, Moni Chowkider and Akkas Boyatee

expressed similar concern.

When contacted, Zahid Hossain claimed that the allegations against him are false.

He declined to make further comment.

Md Liakot Ali, UNO for Rangabali, said, "Local farmers informed me of the matter. I am taking step after investigating the matter as soon as possible."



PHOTO: STAR

Persistent waterlogging damaged aman seedlings on vast areas of land as influential shrimp farmers closed six sluice gates on a canal at Char Lata in Rangabali upazila under Patuakhali district, preventing roll out of floodwater after tidal surges and heavy rainfall.