



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Water Development Board dump sandbags to protect Sirajganj town protection embankment from erosion by the Jamuna yesterday.

Sirajganj town protection dyke under threat

Army deployed to monitor work to save the embankment from onslaught by Jamuna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Palma

The Jamuna started fresh erosion in Hard Point area of Sirajganj town protection embankment early Thursday, prompting the authorities to deploy army to help and monitor its protection work conducted by the Water Development Board (WDB).

At least 80 metres of the embankment in the district town went into the bed of the Jamuna on

Wednesday night and Thursday morning as strong current of the river washed away blocks and spars there, said Md Billal Hossain, deputy commissioner of Sirajganj.

"Earlier on August 8 this year, 110 metre stretch of the embankment in Hard Point area was washed away. Responding to our urge, the government has deputed army personal here to ensure security and monitoring the embank-

ment protection work conducted by the WDB from Thursday morning," he said.

Now the water level is receding fast, creating strong pressure of water that causes the massive erosion in the area, said Babul Chandra Sheel, executive engineer of Sirajganj WDB.

WDB started dumping sandbags at the vulnerable points and the protection work will continue until the

erosion stops, he said.

Korean company Hyundai constructed the 2.5-kilometre-long Sirajganj town protection embankment at a cost of Tk 364 crore in 2000-20001 to save Sirajganj district headquarters from erosion by the Jamuna, said WDB sources.

But the river erosion affected Hard Point area in 2009 and it has become an yearly affair since then, they said.

Mini 'food bank' serves as saviour in their hard times

K M REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

The people of Adarshapara cluster village in Gajaria union of Fulchhari upazila under the district have set up a mini 'food bank' to meet hard times like off-crop period.

The cluster village set up by the government in a char (landmass emerged from riverbed) of Jamuna basin provides shelter for 60 ultra-poor landless families comprising 750 people. They are virtually dependent on earning from work as day labourers.

Inspired by local NGO SKS Foundation and an initial grant of Tk 25,000 from donor agency Oxfam GB, 25 people including several women of the village formed a social organisation with a five-member committee to run it. Besides, two persons were selected as joint custodians to open the locks of the food bank.

The members started saving from their little earnings as the mini food bank started in late 2012.

Now they have 75 members and the saving has crossed Tk 40 thousand.

"During hard time, any member can borrow rice or pulse from here on condition to return it within a fortnight," said Amirul Islam, secretary of the 'food bank management committee'.

Visiting the food bank on September 2, this correspondent witnessed a meeting of the organisation and the committee at their office-cum bank in a tinshed house of the cluster village.

"A few days ago, our family faced problem as my husband had gone to a different place for work. I borrowed 10 kg of rice from the food bank and overcame the crisis. I returned the amount after 12 days when



PHOTO: STAR

Members deposit food at their 'food bank' at Adarshapara village in Gajaria union of Fulchhari upazila under Gaibandha district. Inset, a woman receives foodgrains as loan from the bank that serves as their saviour during hard times.

my husband returned," said Obiron Nessa, wife of day labourer Eman Ali.

The bank does not charge any interest for such services, said several beneficiaries including Kakoli Begum, Amena Begum and Sajeda Begum.

"The mini food bank is a

laudable example. Now they can solve the problem from their own resource," said Hasen Ali, local ward member of Gajaria union parishad.

The food bank so far provided rice and pulse to 37 families in crisis period and so, they did not have to borrow

money from usurers for high interest, said Earon Begum, president of committee.

Witnessing the success at Adarshapara, people of more seven villages set up similar food banks in their villages, said Osman Ghani, project manager of SKS Foundation.

Fruit cultivation brings them solvency

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Two brothers of Durgapur village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila have changed their luck through cultivating varieties of fruits including malta.

Three years ago, Anukul Chandro Roy, also a former union parishad member, and his brother Omolesh Roy began planting malta, mango and litchi plants on a three-bigha land that they earlier used for betel nut and vegetable gardens.

"Advised by a relative, we planted 350 plants of malta on 1.5 bighas of land. We got a small number of fruits next year. But the production is very well this year. We also got a good production of mangoes this year from

mango orchard and earned a lot," said Anukul Chandro Roy.

"As we had to spend a large amount of money for last two years as the cost of cultivation, we passed our days through very hardship," he said.

"Though last year we got Tk more than 1 lakh selling 'malta' at Tk 70 per kg to the wholesalers, it will increase this year. The size of the fruits is also very good. Only 4-5 'malta' makes a kg," said Anukul.

Visit the orchard a couple of days ago, this correspondent saw nice looking malta hanging in the trees of their orchard adjacent to their house.

The house premise is also adorned with 72 varieties of

fruit trees including mangoes, litchis, grapes and guavas.

"From very childhood, I have fondness for fruit trees and so, I plant different kinds of fruit trees," said Anukul.

Omolesh, who resides in Pirojpur town, and serves as a private tutor there, frequently goes to the village 11 kilometres away for helping his brother in gardening. He also arranges selling the fruits to wholesalers in Pirojpur town.

"I always inspire the unemployed youths to become solvent through cultivation of fruits like malta," he said.

Anukul, who has also started produce malta plants for sale, said he has

got order of supplying over 1,000 malta plants from locals.

Several villagers including Debashis Das said they are astonished to see the two brothers' success in fruit cultivation.

Anukul and Omolesh said they need support including interest free loan to make the garden land high to save it from stagnant water in the rainy season and arrange proper irrigation during dry season.

Talking to this correspondent, Md Aftab Uddin, crop production specialist of agriculture department in Pirojpur, said, "We visited the garden of Anukul and Omolesh and gave them suggestion about ways to improve the garden."

Man jailed for torturing wife, daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A mobile court sentenced a man to six months' imprisonment for torturing his wife and daughter at Modhupur village in Dhunat upazila on Wednesday evening.

The convict is Golam Rabbani, 38, son of Ijzot Ali of the village, said Shajahan Pasha, officer in-charge of Dhunat Police Station.

Police and family sources said Rabbani used to torture the duo as his daughter wanted to continue education and didn't agree to get married at early age.

Following a complaint filed by the wife, police attested Rabbani in the afternoon and produced him before the court, led by Executive Magistrate Hafizur Rahman, which handed down the punishment, said the OC.

In Tangail, a housewife of Madhupur upazila, who was attacked allegedly by her husband following a family feud on Wednesday, succumbed to her injuries at a hospital in the capital yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Shahanaj Parvin, 35, wife of Azhar Ali of the village. She was mother of three daughters.

The critically injured housewife Shahanaj Parvin, 35, was succumbed to her injuries at a private hospital in Dhaka yesterday (Thursday) morning.

Deceased's father Nurul Amin said Azhar used to torture Shahanaj as she could not give birth to a son. On the fateful day, Azhar attacked Shahanaj with a sharp weapon, leaving her critically injured following an altercation over marriage of their elder daughter. The injured was admitted to the hospital where she died yesterday morning.

A case was filed with Madhupur Police Station in connection with the incident, said OC Mazibor Rahman.

Mother, girl, among three murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A woman and her three-month-old daughter and an old man were murdered in two incidents in Babuganj and Agoiljhara upazilas under the district yesterday.

"Police recovered bodies of Sukhi Begum, 26, and her three-month-old daughter from Pangsha village under Babuganj upazila. Sukhi's throat had been slit and the baby was hacked to death," said Md Shahidullah, officer in charge (OC) of Barisal Airport police station.

Sukhi's husband Khokon Howladar, 31, who went into absconding after the incident, is the suspected killer, he said.

"Khokon's stepmother Delwara Begum said Khokon, a rickshaw puller, is a drug addict. He lives in a rented house at Goriapar in Barisal city. He came with

his third wife Sukhi and daughter to visit Pangsha village home on Wednesday evening and quarrelled at night.

"On Thursday morning Khokon left home after telling his stepmother not to awaken Sukhi because she was sick. Later Delwara went to awaken Sukhi from sleep at 10:00am and seeing the two dead bodies, she informed police," OC Shahidullah said, referring to Delwara.

Police sent the two bodies to Barisal Sher E Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) for post mortem, he said.

Rivals beat dead Amulya Ratan Sarkar, 80, son of late Shashibhushan Sarkar, during a clash over land dispute at Baropaikka village under Ratnapur union of Agoiljhara upazila yesterday morning, said Sajjad Hossain, OC of Agoiljhara police station.

A group of people led by Swapon Ballav of the area tried to erect a shop on the land owned by Amulya Sarkar beside Mahilara-Baropaikka-Poisarhut road yesterday morning.

As Amulya's family members tried to resist the trespassers, they beat him dead on the spot. Locals rushed to the spot, drove away the miscreants and informed police.

Police sent the body to Barisal SBMCH for post mortem and seized a motorcycle left by the attackers.

The victim's son Adhir Sarkar lodged a murder case accusing eight people - Swapon Ballav, Poritosh Baroi, Noren Baroi, Sukhlal Sarkar, Kushai Sarkar, Robin Pandey, Lalchand Baroi of Baropaikka and Rana of Chakribari village, said sub inspector Akkas Ali, investigation officer of the case.



PHOTO: STAR

Malta (tangerine) hangs in the profusely yielding trees at the orchard of siblings Amulya Chandra Roy and Omolesh Chandra Roy at Durgapur village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Family members and locals form a human chain at Nirala intersection in Tangail town yesterday demanding punishment for the killers of housewife Monti Ghosh.