

Tidal water floods 10 Patuakhali villages

Dyke lies damaged for year; locals face crisis of drinking water; uncertainty in crop farming

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

People of 10 villages on the bank of the Ramnabad River near the Bay in Kalapara upazila under the district are passing their days amid sufferings due to flooding by saline water during the tides.

The flood control embankment on the river got damaged at four points last year, causing saline water to enter Charipara, Dhanjupara, Banatipara, Poshurbunia, Chowdhurypara, Munshipara, Nayakata, Nawapara, Majher Howla and Boropachnon villages in Kalapara upazila, especially during the full moon

and new moon.

The situation remains tolerable during the dry season from November to mid-April but flooding by saline water turns serious in other times of the year, locals said.

"For the last four days, tidal surges have continued entering the villages through four damaged points of the flood control embankment. Agricultural lands, village roads, ponds, and in some cases houses have gone under water," said Md Tariqul Islam, a local resident.

Haesa Begum, 45, a housewife of Charipara village, said they have to wait for water to recede

during the low tide to start cooking.

Local people are also facing crisis of drinking water.

Salinity hampers farming while cattle are facing fodder shortage as grazing land also went under water, said Abul Kalam, a local farmer.

Presence of students is now thin as roads have gone under water, said Abdul Aziz, assistant teacher for Charipara Government Primary School.

Thousands of people of these villagers formed a human chain in the upazila town demanding repair of the damaged embankment last year but the authorities

concerned did not take any step in this regard, said Mir Tariquzzaman Tara, chairman for Lalia union parishad.

"Salinity due to entrance of tidal water through these damaged parts badly affects the agriculture. We sent letters several times to Water Development Board (WDB) to take necessary step to repair the embankment but in vain," he said.

Md Shahidul Islam, executive engineer of WDB in Kalapara, said they sent letters to the higher authorities seeking fund allocation to repair the embankment but no allocation has been made yet.



PHOTO: STAR

Tidal water from the Ramnabad River floods several villages in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district as four breached portions of the protection embankment in the area have remained without any repair for over a year.

PROTESTING ALLEGED EXTORTION, HARASSMENT

Truckers stop carrying goods from Sonamasjid land port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Truckers suspended transport of goods from Sonamasjid land port in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj from yesterday morning, protesting alleged extortion and harassment of truckers by port Sramik Samanaya Committee and middlemen.

Because of the stoppage, called by the Truck Owners Association and Zila Motor Sramik Union, more than 300 trucks are lying idle at Chapainawabganj Central

Truck Terminal.

Aminul Islam Sentu, president of Chapainawabganj Truck Owners Association, alleged that the port Sramik Samanaya Committee and a section of middlemen have been extorting toll of Tk 1,600 to Tk 12,000 from every truck loaded with imported goods, including fruits and onions, for the last two years.

Truckers are physically harassed if they refuse to pay the extortion money. The extortionists are also compelling them to carry excess

goods on the trucks, he alleged.

Puspa Narayan Barman, acting president of district sramik union, said the members of the Sramik Samanaya Committee and the middlemen are local people. They physically assault truckers if they refuse to pay toll, he added.

Monsur Rahman, a truck driver from Jessore, and Mohammad Alam, a driver from Tejgaon in the capital, said they often come to Sonamasjid land port and carry imported goods. But a section of labourers harass

them regularly.

If the extortion and harassment are not stopped, they will continue to stop carrying goods, the leaders said.

Contacted, Sadekur Rahman, president of Sonamasjid Land Port Sramik Samanaya Committee, said the allegations were baseless and false.

Export and import activities are normal at the port, but the loading and unloading of trucks are hampered due to absence of Bangladeshi trucks in the port yard, port sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of loaded trucks, carrying goods from Sonamasjid land port in Shibganj upazila under Chapainawabganj district, lie stranded at Chapainawabganj Central Truck Terminal yesterday as truck owners and workers stopped transport of goods from the land port in protest against alleged extortion and harassment by Port Sramik Samanaya Committee and a section of middlemen.

Jubo Dal leader stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An identified criminal stabbed a Jubo Dal leader to death in Joypurhat Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Afzal Hossain, 46, son of Shamsuddin Mondol of Mondolpara village in the town, was an assistant general secretary of the district unit of Jubo Dal.

Police quoted victim's family members as saying that Afzal went to his farm-land near the Municipal Community Centre around 11:30am.

On his way back, he locked in an altercation with Mohan Mia, 19, son of Shahjahan Ali of adjacent Muslimnagar village. At one stage, Mohan stabbed Afzal, leaving him critically injured.

Locals rushed to the spot, rescued Afzal and took him to Joypurhat Modern Hospital where he died around 12:15pm, police said.

Locals caught Mohan after a chase and later handed him over to the police, said Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Mohan is an absconding accused in a murder case filed with the police station, the OC added.

Shibir man held with books on jihad

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police arrested an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir with books on jihad and leaflets in Chatail upazila yesterday.

The detainee is Mujahidul Islam, 22, of Kasil village in Basail upazila of the district.

Maksudul Alam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Chatail Police Station, said, law enforcers, acting on a tip-off, went to Khandaker Adarsa Bidyaloy at Jogihati village where Jamaat upazila unit secretary Kazi Abdur Rahim was holding a meeting with Shibir men.

Police arrested Mujahid while others managed to escape. They also recovered jihadi books, leaflets and diaries from there. A case was filed with the police station.

Abducted man found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police recovered the body of an abducted man from the River Dhaleswari in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Idris Ali, 45, son of Inam Ali of Khordo Jugni village in the upazila.

Police and family sources said criminals abducted Idris from his house on Saturday night.

Locals found his body floating on the river in the morning and informed the police who sent it to a hospital morgue for autopsy.

The gang might have strangled Idris and dumped the body in the river, said Ashrafuzzaman, sub-inspector of Tangail Model Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

A stone-laden truck gets stuck on the Swarnamati Bridge in Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district as steel deck of the vulnerable structure collapsed under the pressure of the overloaded vehicle on Saturday night.

LALMONIRHAT-BURIMARI ROAD

Bridge deck collapse halts vehicular movement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The steel deck of the bridge over the Swarnamati River on Lalmonirhat-Burimari Highway at Sarpukur village of Aditmari upazila under the district collapsed under the pressure of a stone-loaded truck on Saturday night, causing suspension of vehicular movement on the road.

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in

Lalmonirhat is trying to repair the collapsed steel deck to restore road communication on the important route, officials said yesterday afternoon.

Defying caution notices on both sides of the bridge not to run vehicles with five tonnes of load there due to its vulnerable condition, drivers often run overloaded vehicles, even trucks carrying 50 tonnes of stones, on the bridge, resulting in repeated collapse of the steel deck of the bridge, RHD officials

said. Talking with this correspondent, several truck drivers in the town said they have to use the vulnerable bridge amid life risk as it is the lone road to communicate with Burimari land port.

Executive Engineer of RHD in Lalmonirhat Suruj Miah said a project for constructing a new bridge to replace the vulnerable Swarnamati Bridge is under process, and the work would start this year.

ILLEGAL FISHING IN BAY

Indian boat seized, 13 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police arrested two Indian fishermen among 13 people on charge of illegal fishing in the Bay in Char Montaj area under Rangabali upazila yesterday.

They also seized an Indian fishing boat from their possession, said Md Monir Hossain, officer-in-

charge of Rangabali Police Station.

The arrestees are Nironjon, 35, and Dilip Das of Kagodi Police Station in Pashchimbanga of India; Pankaj Das, 30, Swapan Das, 32, Shah Jalal Khan, 40, Abdur Rob, 42, Nirob, 28, Harun, 36, Ismail Hossain, 37, Alamgir, 40, Sadek, 36, Hossain Ali, 40, and Jasim, 32, of Gojaria

village in Lalmonirhat upazila of Bhola district.

Local fishermen found the 13 people illegally fishing in the Bay in an Indian boat at around 11:00am and informed the police.

The law enforcers arrested the fishermen with the boat named 'FB Shitaram', said the OC.



PHOTO: STAR

Sammilito Sanskritik Jote brings out a procession with black flags at Patgram upazila town in Lalmonirhat district yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of the perpetrators of the sexual assault on several women during the Pahela Baishakh celebrations near TSC on Dhaka University campus on April 14.

VACANCY NOTICE



United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the Post of District Facilitator under Service Contract modality with Union Parishad Governance Project.

The duration of the service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/operations/jobs/>. Applications should be received no later than 14 May 2015.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.