

### Blissful shower after special prayer

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

A much awaited heavy shower on Sunday came as a relief to the farmers of Bochaganj upazila under the district, especially the aman farmers badly affected by prolonged dry spell.

The rain occurred six and a half hours after the locals arranged a special prayer seeking divine blessing for rain on the ground of Taltoli Madrasa at Bhora village, around two kilometres from the Bochaganj upazila headquarters, at 10:30am on Sunday, locals said.

Paddy fields dried up as there was hardly any rain in the upazila since the aman planting season began two months ago, farmers said.

In most places water level receded and irrigation was hampered due to power disruption.

Usually farmers depend on rain after planting their aman saplings but the unusual drought-like situation during the monsoon this year worried them, said Rahmat Ali of Amtoli village in the upazila.

Overall, people were suffering for the hot and humid weather.

Lastly the people of Bhora village in Bochaganj upazila arranged a prayer for rain on the ground of Taltoli Madrasa on Sunday morning.

Several hundred people from different places of the upazila attended the prayer led by Md Waliullah, a local imam.

"After six and a half hours of the prayer, at around 5:00pm, it began raining that lasted three and a half hours," said Rafiqul Islam, a farmer of the area.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Bochaganj upazila of Dinajpur, around 40,730 hectares of land has been brought under aman cultivation this year.

Basudev Chandra Roy, an official of DAE, said the rain came as a blessing for the farmers who were struggling to irrigate their land amid lack of rain for the last two months.



Trees lie uprooted at Keundia village in Kawkhali upazila under Pirojpur district due to heavy rain accompanied by gusty wind affecting coastal districts during the last two days. Inset, a road flooded by rainwater in Patuakhali town.

PHOTO: STAR



# Rain paralyses life in 4 dists

Over 100 villages, 50 coastal islands flooded in Patuakhali and Barguna

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Heavy downpour during the last two days caused massive flooding in vast areas of different districts and disrupted daily life.

The people of coastal districts Patuakhali, Barguna and Pirojpur bore the brunt of the natural calamity as tidal surges accompanied by gusty wind made the situation all the more worse.

Our Patuakhali correspondent reports: Over 100 villages and around 50 coastal islands in Patuakhali and Barguna districts got flooded due to heavy rainfall and tidal surges from the Bay and its adjacent rivers and canals.

A large number of dwelling houses and earthen roads in these areas went under water while fishes worth several crore taka were washed away as thousands of ponds, ditches, and enclosures were over flooded.

Patuakhali Met office recorded 256.8 mm of rainfall in 36 hours from 6:00am on Sunday to 12 noon yesterday.

In Patuakhali district, around 80 villages were flooded by tidal water as flood control embankments in different areas collapsed.

Of the affected villages, 25 are in Kalapara upazila, 15 each in Galachipa and Dashmina upazilas, 10 each in Bauful and Mirzaganj upazilas and five under Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

Over two lakh people of 12 villages in Lalia union

and over 50,000 people of five villages in Mohipur union under Kalapara upazila are facing untold sufferings as most areas went under water due to tidal surges from Ramnabad and Andhamanik rivers, said chairmen of the union parishads concerned.

"Our houses remain under water in every high tide during the new moon and the full moon," said local resident Boni Amin.

Abul Khayer, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Kalapara, said a donor team from Japan has already visited different areas to see the situation of the flood control embankments.

"After end of rainy season we can start repairing the embankments to save villagers from tidal surges," he said.

Md Shahnewaz Talukder, executive engineer of Patuakhali WDB, said they visited the affected areas and planned to build alternative embankments after the rains are over.

In Barguna, at least 30 villages under Amtali, Taltali, Pathorgata, Bamna and Betagi upazilas got flooded due to heavy rainfall and tidal surges from nearby rivers Payra, Boleswar and Binshkhali.

Our Pirojpur correspondent reports: Continuous heavy rain from Saturday night has flooded different areas in seven upazilas of the district, causing damage to fish enclosures, vegetable gardens and trees.

Normal life was disturbed as people could not go out for work. Schools, colleges and

madrasas saw thin attendance of students.

Electricity connection remained mostly suspended in the district from 10:30am yesterday.

Md Shahidul Islam Sarder, district fisheries officer in Pirojpur, said fishes from different enclosures were washed away.

"We recorded 262 mm of rainfall from Saturday till today [Monday] afternoon. Rainwater has flooded vegetable gardens and paddy fields in different areas of the district," said Md Abul Hossain Talukder, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Pirojpur.

"Vegetables will be affected by floodwater. However, paddy fields are likely to remain safe as there are many canals and rivers for release of water," he said.

It was raining as of yesterday evening. A Correspondent adds from Jessore: Continuous downpour from early Sunday to 8:30am yesterday disrupted life in Jessore town.

Different area of the town including Shankarpur, Barandipara, City Collegepara, Shastitola, Shekhhati, Khorki, Karbala area, Stadiumpara and the areas on the Bhairav River went under water.

The rainfall recorded in Jessore on Sunday was 120 cm, Met office sources said. Most of the shops were shut up due to heavy downpour. Most students could not attend classes.

Some people were seen catching fish with the nets on the flooded roads and fields in the town.

### SNIPPETS

#### Tea workers get wages

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulribazar

Four hundred workers of Baikunthapur Tea Garden in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj got their wages for four weeks yesterday after a wait of 16-weeks for wages and rations. Subrata Datta Chowdhury, in charge of the tea garden, said, "We have started paying the wages. At first we paid wages for two weeks on Sunday, and the other two weeks we paid yesterday. We will pay tea workers' wages with rations soon." Monib Karmakar, general secretary of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union, Baikunthapur Tea Garden Unit, said the tea garden owner has started to pay wages after a long movement by the workers.

#### Teacher's punishment demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Guardians and locals staged a sit-in in front of Baluchar High School in Sadar upazila yesterday, demanding punishment to the headmaster who allegedly beat up four girl students and assaulted a guardian. They also submitted memorandums to the deputy commissioner, upazila nirbahi officer and district education officer in this regard. Locals alleged that headmaster Azhar Ali on Sunday beat up four girl students for not attending the school in time. On information, several guardians went to talk with the headmaster on the issue and at one stage, Azhar slapped one of the guardians. Contacted, Azhar said he beat the girls only to bring them under control.

#### Youth hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A youth was hacked to death at Chaparkona village in Sarishbari upazila on Sunday. The victim was Shipon Miah, 25, son of Abdul Motaleb of the village. Police and locals said Shipon locked in an altercation with his neighbour Imran Hossain, 25, and Imran mother Anjum Ara Begum, 48, over purchasing 15-decimal of land near their house a few days ago. As a sequel to the conflict, Imram along with his mother entered Shipon's house on Sunday night and hacked him. Critically injured Shipon later died at a hospital. Police arrested Imran's mother in this connection.

#### Rape bid, youth held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested a youth on charge of trying to rape a four-year-old girl from Chak Radhakanai village in Phulbaria upazila yesterday noon. The arrestee is Mohammad Ali, 18, of the village. Police and family sources said earlier on the day, Ali tactfully took the girl of his neighbour to his house and tried to rape her. Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. The youth was later arrested.

#### Boy strangled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A minor boy was strangled at Islampur village in Pabna Sadar upazila on Sunday. Police arrested the victim's step-mother Arzina Khatun, 24, and two other relatives in connection with the killing. The deceased was Siam Hossain, 5, son of Saiful Islam of the village. Informed by locals, police recovered the body from Arzina's room in the evening.

## For not wearing pyjamas!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A teacher of Nesariya Madrasa in Lalmonirhat town yesterday cut off trousers of eight students of the institution allegedly for attending the assembly without wearing pyjamas.

Later, the students were sent back to their homes.

Several students said the madrasa authorities told the students to attend the institution wearing grey-bluepunjabiandwhitepyjama.

They alleged that their physical education teacher Abul Kalam Azad cut off the trousers of eight students during the madrasa assembly for not wearing pyjamas.

Sazzad Pramanik Ratul, 12, a Class VI student of the institu-

tion, said he went to the madrasa wearing trouser as his pyjama was sent for cleaning.

Another student Shanto Pramanik, 15, said as his pyjama was dirty he came to the madrasa wearing a trouser, but their teacher cut it. Due to the incident he felt very insulted, the added.

Contacted, Abul Kalam Azad said taking permission from madrasa principal he cut off the students' trousers as they were not wearing pyjamas even after serving several notices.

Moslem Uddin, principal of the madrasa, said they cut off the trousers for giving them a lesson for violating madrasa rules.

The madrasa houses around 935 students, 25 teachers and four staff.

## REVENGE ON RIVAL Father kills baby

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man stabbed his seven-month old baby girl Nipa to death and injured another daughter, four-year-old Ripa, at Jarulia village under Chunarughat upazila of Habiganj yesterday.

Ripa was admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital where she said her father stabbed them.

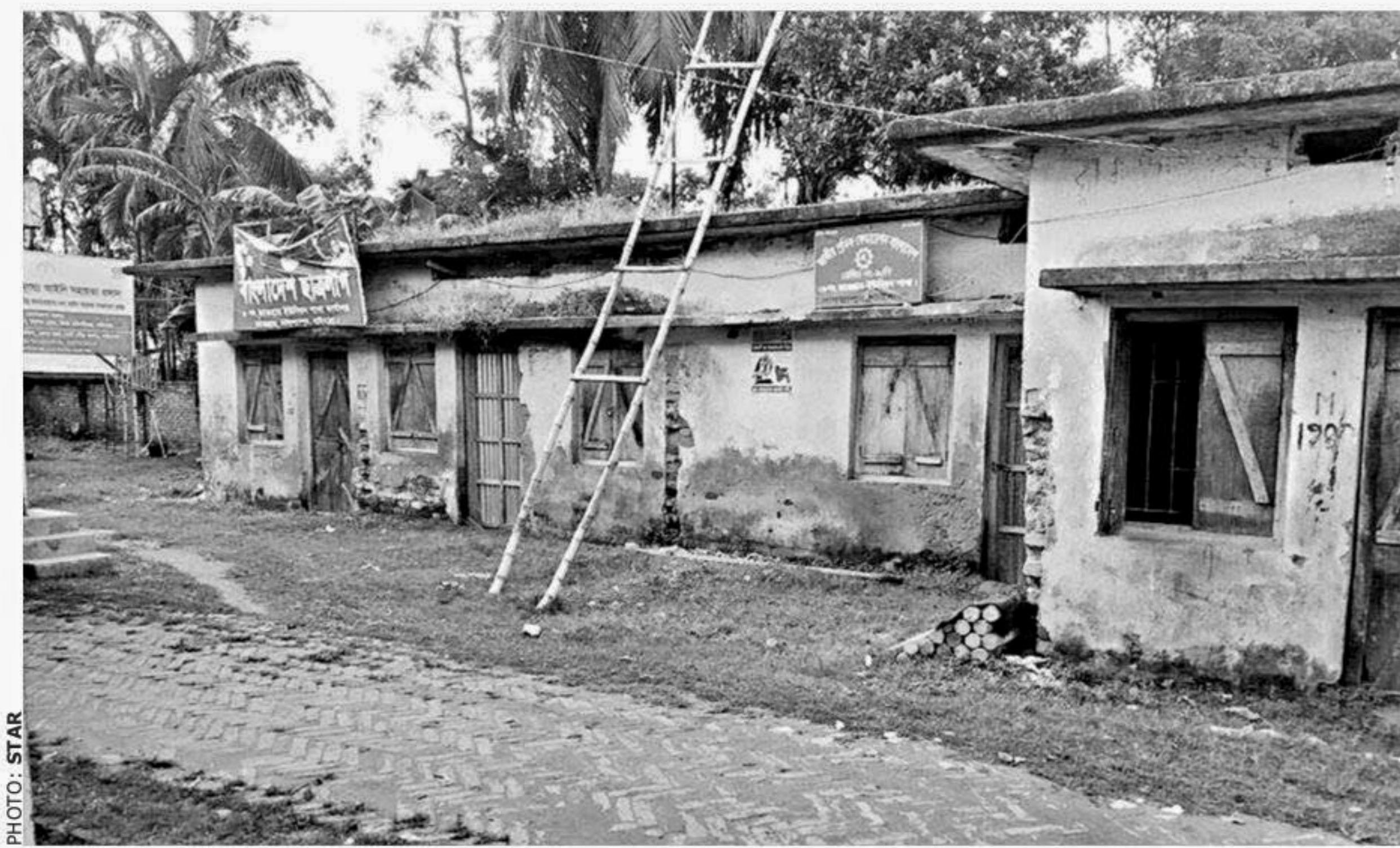
The girls' father Liton Mia, 35, went into hiding after the incident.

Locals said there was a longstanding dispute between Rafiq Mia and Liton Mia over the ownership of a water body.

The clash ensued when the two groups went to the water body for fishing on Sunday and Liton's group beat up Rafiq. Rafiq was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

As a sequel to the clash, Rafiq's group attacked Liton's house yesterday.

Nirmolendu Chakrabarty, officer-in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, said Liton might have killed his daughters for taking revenge on his rival Rafiq Mia.



Bangladesh Chhatra League put up a signboard before a room of block supervisor's quarters of agriculture department by occupying it illegally at Bhatgram in Sadullapur upazila of Gaibandha. The photo was taken recently.

## Principal confined for failure to nationalise college

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Angry students of Kalai Upazila Degree College in Joypurhat confined the principal to the administrative building for about an hour yesterday for his alleged failure to nationalise the college.

On information, police rescued Principal Dajendranath Das of the college from the building around 1:00pm.

Locals said, boycotting their classes, HSC first and second year students equipped with iron rods brought out a procession on the campus in the morning.

Later, they confined the principal to the administrative building as there was a rumour that he failed to nationalise their college.

The agitating student gave a 4-day ultimatum to the authority to nationalise the college.

First year student Hridoy said the education ministry recently nationalised Women Degree College in the upazila but not their college.

Meanwhile, students and teachers of Joynand Degree College in Dinajpur formed a human chain, demanding immediate step to nationalise the college.

## Agri officers' quarters occupied in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Two ruling party front organisations along with a section of local influential people illegally occupied block supervisor (BS) quarters of agriculture department in Sadullapur upazila.

The agriculture block supervisor (BS) now re-designated as sub-assistant agriculture officer's quarters (resident-cum-store) was built for the preservation of agriculture equipment, seeds and fertiliser for rendering services to farmers' doorstep.

But the quarters remained unused for long and subsequently turned ramshackle due to lack of proper repairing and renovation.

During a recent visit to the quarters, it was found that the entire building was under illegal occupation.

Meanwhile, two rooms of the quarters have been occupied allegedly by ruling Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and labour front Sramik League. They put up sign-

boards and are conducting organisational activities there. They even rented other rooms for business purposes.

Two rooms were occupied allegedly by one local influential trader Asadur Rahman, who set up a power generating unit and a fire-wood shop. A few days ago, another local influential tried to grab the whole area by erecting surrounding walls, but the attempt was foiled duly intervention of the local people.

Admitting placing of signboard in the building, Abu Taher, convener of Bhatgram union unit of BCL, said they did not occupy the building just put up a signboard there.

Asadur said as the building remains abandoned, he had started business and he would leave the place if the authority asks him to quit.

Adequate measures would be taken immediately to evict illegal occupants from the quarters, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ahsan Habib.



Local people under the banner of Jago Magura form the human chain with the slogan 'Save Nabaganga, save Magura' at Chourangi intersection in Magura town yesterday, demanding steps to stop polluting the River Nabaganga.

PHOTO: STAR