

Chalanbeel farmers in despair

Rainwater floods vast tract of farmland

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Rainwater has flooded vast tracts of cropland in Chalanbeel areas of Sirajganj and Natore, causing immense sufferings to farmers.

Rain and onrush of water from upstream flooded about 2000 hectares of cropland in Chalanbeel area under five upazilas of Sirajganj, reports our Pabna correspondent.

Md Abdus Salam, an officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said 1680 hectares of Boro fields, 210 hectares of jute fields and 109 hectares of vegetable fields went under water due to flashflood triggered by rain in the last few days.

About 1.4 lakh hectares of land have been brought under Boro cultivation in Sirajganj this year, he said.

Meanwhile, about 2100 hectares of farmland in Singra and Gurudaspur upazilas have gone under water as heavy downpour inundated fresh areas during the last few days, reports our Natore correspondent.

The flashflood was triggered due to heavy rain and rise in the water level of the Atrai river, said farmers.

Deputy Commissioner Shahina Khatun said Boro paddy on about 400 hectares of land in Singra were damaged completely and 1500 hectares partly.

Farmer Mobarak Hossain of Satpukuria village said he was undone as his Boro paddy on 10 bighas of land went under floodwater.

Another grower Hasan Imam of Dahia village said he got only 10 maunds of paddy from 2 bighas of land while his production cost was around Tk 40 thousand.

"How will I repay the money borrowed from two NGOs for cultivation?" he asked.



Natore farmers reap paddy that was damaged by rainwater in Chalanbeel area of the district. Inset, vast tract of cropland in Chalanbeel area has gone under water due to heavy rain during the last few days. The photo was taken from Rupkhara village in Raiganj upazila of Sirajganj on Saturday. PHOTO: STAR

Murder case accused gunned down

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A man, accused in a murder case, was shot dead at Pariali in Jessore's Monirampur upazila on Monday night.

The deceased was Ataur Rahman, 30, son of Abul Kashem of Bagdanga village, and also a police source.

He was accused in construction worker Monwar killing case.

A gang of four on two motorbikes opened fire when Ataur along with Shahidul was returning home after meeting with a local UP chairman, said Mokarram Hossain, officer-in-charge of Monirampur Police Station.

Police picked up Shahidul, son of Rajab Ali, for interrogation, said the OC.

The body was sent to Jessore General Hospital morgue for autopsy, he said.

Jamuna erosion makes 300 families homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Erosion by the Jamuna river has taken a serious turn before the monsoon, devouring over 300 houses in Sirajganj Sadar upazila during the last three weeks.

The river erosion began due to surge of water from upstream.

Around 300 families in 10 villages from Bahuka to Khudbandi point were rendered homeless, said the officials of local administration and Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB).

WDB Executive Engineer Hasan Imam said they have started dumping sand-filled bags to stop erosion and permanent protection

work will start after allocation of funds.

"An eight-kilometre embankment will be constructed here for preventing erosion in the affected areas permanently. A project plan worth Tk 466 crore has been submitted to the ministry concerned for approval," Hasan told this reporter.

Due to onslaught of water from upstream, erosion has taken a serious turn at Tutuler More point, Char Bahuka and Shuvogasa point in Ratanakandi union, rendering hundreds of families homeless during the last three weeks, he added.

Villagers said they have shifted

"I migrated to Tutuler More point a couple of years ago to escape from erosion. Now I may have to shift again."

their houses but are still worried about more erosion. "Erosion is a common problem for us. I migrated to Tutuler More point a couple of years ago to escape from erosion. I may have to shift

again this year as the river has devoured many houses here in the last few days," said farmer Akbar Ali.

Sirajganj Sadar UNO Prenjon Chambugong said they are monitoring the erosion-hit areas. Although the erosion hit three weeks ago, the situation is stable now while the water in the river is increasing, the UNO added.

Former Ratanakandi union parishad chairman Rezaul Karim said erosion took place when the flood water receded the previous years, but this year erosion has started before the monsoon, so the people face threat of massive erosion in the rainy season.



The swelling Jamuna river continues devouring areas in Sirajganj Sadar upazila. The photo was taken from Tutuler More a couple of days ago. PHOTO: STAR

Abducted Barguna college girl still traceless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An eighteen-year-old college girl, who was abducted from Arpangachhia village in Barguna's Amtali upazila on April 19, is yet to be rescued.

The victim's father Nizam Uddin filed a case with Amtali Police Station accusing nine people including Rusel Talukdar of the village, on April 21.

The victim is a BA first-year student of Amtali Government Degree College.

Earlier, victim's family members, relatives and local people took out a number of protest processions and formed human chains at Arpangachhia demanding arrest of the culprits and rescue of the girl.

According to the case statement, Rusel, also nephew of local UP Chairman Nurul Haq Talukdar, and his eight to nine associates picked up the girl while she was returning home from Payra riverside area along with her sister and sister's husband on April 19.

"I tried to compromise and settle the matter with Rusel's family members but they did not pay heed to my appeal", Nizam Uddin said.

He also alleged that although 13 days have already gone the police are still reluctant to arrest any of the accused in connection with the case yet.

Refuting the allegation, Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Sahid Ullah of Amtali Police Station said they were trying hard to arrest the accused as they went into hiding soon after the incident.

Brother kills UP member

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A former union parishad member was stabbed to death allegedly by his brother over a land dispute in Trishal upazila of the district yesterday.

The victim is Mobarak Hossain, 45, of village Shakua and former member of Shakua Union Parishad.

Quoting family members and neighbours, Trishal Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Moniruzzaman said Mobarak, father of three children, had a longstanding dispute over a piece of land with his brother Abdul Hye.

There was an altercation with Abdul Hye yesterday as Mobarak went to harvest boro paddy on the disputed land, the OC said. At one stage of altercation, Hye started stabbing Mobarak indiscriminately, injuring him critically, he added.

Locals rushed him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Journos protest death threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Journalists in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila on Monday protested the recent death threat to one of their fellows by a local drug trader and demanded immediate arrest of the culprit.

District correspondent of Daily Manabkantha SM Ershad Alam, also general secretary of Mirzapur Press Club, lodged a general diary (GD) with Mirzapur Police Station in this connection on Sunday.

Earlier in the day, local drug trader Shahidul Islam Dolon, who recently came out of jail on bail, waylaid Ershad at Mirzapur Bazar and threatened to kill him allegedly for writing news following his arrest last month in the Bangla daily.

Couple commit suicide in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A couple committed suicide on Monday in Mirzapur upazila of Tangail.

The deceased are Rasedul Islam Khan, 24, son of Babul Khan of Hatubhanga village, and his wife Sumi Begum, 20, daughter of Almas Mia of Chiteshwari village.

Rashed and Sumi got married about four months ago after a love affair and there was no dispute in their conjugal life, neighbours said.

Family members found their room locked from inside till Monday noon. They later entered the room after breaking the door and found them hanging from the ceiling, locals said.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to the Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Sumi had been seeking money from her parents since the marriage for her husband Rashed, a driver by profession, to start a business, but her parents refused, neighbours said.

Officer-in-Charge of Mirzapur Police Station Mohammad Main Uddin said the reason behind the suicide of the couple could not be known immediately.

An unnatural death case was filed with the police station in this regard, he added.

BLAST AFFECTS BORO IN PANCHAGARH Farmers block road for compensation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Demanding compensation, Boro farmers in Boda upazila of Panchagarh, whose crop fields were badly affected by blast disease attack, blocked Panchagarh-Dhaka highway at Moidandighi Bazar yesterday.

They spread affected paddy plants on the road and chanted slogans in favour of their demand. Many vehicles were stranded during the hour-long demonstration, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

The farmers withdrew barricade after the local administration gave them assurance that they would take steps for realising compensation.

Farmers said the blast disease attacked their paddy fields at the final stage of Boro cultivation.

The disease is spreading rapidly as the antidotes prescribed by agriculture officials in Boda and Debiganj upazilas of Panchagarh are ineffective, they said.

Many farmers, especially those who took loans from non-governmental organisations or local money lenders, are worried about how they will meet their deficit.

They urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to order payment of compensation considering their miseries.

About 30,650 hectares of land have been brought under Boro cultivation against the target of 30,690 hectares, with production target of 1,37,938 tonnes this season, according to the officials of Department of Agricultural Extension in Panchagarh.

PM inaugurates Guchchho Gram today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate a Guchchho Gram (cluster village) on the embankment of the Saniyazan river in Patgram upazila today through a video conference.

Forty landless families, who get their houses at the village, will exchange views with the PM during the conference, said district Awami League President Motahar Hossain, also MP from Lalmonirhat-1 (Patgram and Hatibandha upazila) constituency.

The prime minister will hear the views of the landless people and then she will give them direction on how the landless people will upgrade their living style, he said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Rezaul Alam Sarker said there are 45 cluster villages in five upazilas where 4,505 landless families got their houses.

The government has been implementing the Guchchho Gram Project for giving shelter to the landless people with the slogan "Keu Thakbe Na Ashrayhin", he said.



A cluster village on the embankment of the Saniyazan river in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila wears a new look as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate it through a video conference today. PHOTO: STAR