

Aman farming uncertain

Collapse of embankment on Buragourango river in Patuakhali worries farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Farmers are facing uncertainty over cultivation of Aman paddy as several coastal islands of the district have been submerged due to collapse of the 32km embankment at several points along the Buragourango river in the current rainy season.

Water Development Board (WDB) Executive Engineer Md Abul Khayer said two kilometres of the dyke were badly damaged at different places under Kalapara and Rangabali upazilas this year while eight kilometres collapsed over several years, especially during the onslaught of cyclone Mora.

Khayer said Charbestin in Rangabali upazila is surrounded by the Bay in the south, Buragourango river in the west, Char Kukri channel in the east and Char Anda channel in the north.

A 32-km-long dyke was built around the coastal island in 1990. Since then, it has been getting damaged during every rainy season, but repair work is not done regularly, he added.

Some repair was done in 2015-16 fiscal year at a cost of Tk 4 lakh, but that was not sufficient, Khayer said.

Acting Rangabali Upazila Agriculture

Officer Abdul Mannan said over 300 hectares of agricultural land in Charbestin have been submerged under water due to damage of the dyke. Most of seedbeds have become spoiled and farmers face uncertainty over cultivating Aman paddy, he added.

Farmer Zahir Pada, 35, of Charbestin village, said he planned to cultivate Aman paddy on 21.50 acres of land and had sowed the seeds. But it was all in vain as his land and seedbeds were destroyed by the surge of water following the collapse of a portion of the dyke.

"I am uncertain about cultivating the paddy as the seedbeds have gone under salty water," he added.

Farmer Mostafa Howlader said his land went under water when a part of the dyke collapsed recently. Some portion of the dyke collapsed during the cyclone 'Mora' while tidal surge damaged it further at different points in the last few years, he added.

Char Montaj Union Parishad Chairman Md Hanif Mia said the dyke in char areas gets damaged every year due to tidal surges from nearby rivers, but it is not repaired regularly. The dyke should be repaired soon considering that most of the people here are farmers, he added.



Vast crop fields get inundated by water surging through the breached portion of the embankment at Charbestin village in Char Montaj union of Rangabali upazila under Patuakhali.

PHOTO: STAR

Disability fund swindled

UP members pocket half of the money meant for the disabled in Naogaon's Badalgachhi

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinaipur

A staggering half of the money allocated for 26 people with disabilities has been pocketed by union parishad (UP) members in Badalgachhi upazila of Naogaon.

The matter came to the fore after Md Abu Raihan of Sohasa village under Badalgachhi union of the upazila, father of a disabled person, filed a complaint to the Department of Social Welfare office in the upazila on Sunday.

Under the updated list prepared in 2016-17 fiscal year, 30 people with disabilities in Badalgachhi union are entitled to get Tk 1800 each every year, according to the social welfare office.

Of them, 26 people get their

allowance money from the UP members while the four others are attached directly with the local social welfare office.

"The UP members concerned gave Tk 900 to each of 26 disabled people instead of Tk 1800 and pocketed the remaining half while the four people attached with local social welfare office got Tk 1800 each," Abu Raihan mentioned in the complaint.

"The UP members of nine wards recently tricked 26 disabled people into handing over the cards and drew the money from Sonali Bank. But they distributed only half of the money," he added.

Abdus Salam, chairman of Badalgachhi UP, said he heard about the misappropriation and measures will be taken against the

members concerned after a written complaint is lodged.

Asked about the misappropriation, a UP member said it was a 'mistake'.

Tariqul Islam, an official of Badalgachhi social welfare office, said they found authenticity of the allegation of the misappropriation of the disabled people's allowances.

"The office is investigating the incident. Some UP members have returned the embezzled money," he said.

Md Mizanur Rahman, manager of Sonali Bank Ltd of Badalgachhi Branch, said the said UP members collected the money from the bank last week, saying that the disabled people were ill.

'Harijans deprived of human rights'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Speakers at a human chain in the town yesterday said Harijans are being deprived of human rights status while the constitution of Bangladesh forbids discrimination towards any citizen, religion, colour and caste.

Manikganj district unit of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad organised the programme to press home their five-point demand.

The demands include permanent employment of Harijans in the city corporations and municipalities, minimum wages of Tk 10 thousand, allotment of dwelling houses and involvement of the Harijan in decision making.

Bela notice to save Ichhamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) yesterday issued a legal notice to the authorities concerned for freeing the Ichhamati flowing in Pabna town from the grabbers to restore the navigability in the river.

The legal notice also asked the authorities to remove sluice gates that hampered the flow of water in the river.

Advocate Sayed Ahmed Kabir, lawyer of the Supreme Court, served the notice to 19 government officials, including secretaries of the ministries of land, fisheries and livestock, environment and forest, water resources, and Local Government and Rural Development.

In the legal notice, the lawyer claimed that water flow of the 44-kilometre river has been hampered due to the two sluice gates at Varara and Dakhin Ramchandrapur point of Pabna Sadar.

The Ichhamati lost its navigability due to the industrial waste and garbage dumping into the river. Illegal occupiers turned the river into a narrow canal and also polluted the environment.

Through the legal notice, BELA demanded removal of the sluice gates, eviction of illegal occupiers and dredging of the river for bringing back flow of water.

Missing woman found dead in septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Decomposed body of a pregnant woman was recovered from a septic tank in Santhia upazila of the district yesterday, 12 days after she went missing.

The victim, Kulsum Begum, 30, wife of Nazir Ali of Kabarikola village, went missing on June 29, said family sources.

As the body decomposed and stench spread in the area, locals informed police yesterday morning.

The victim's mother Sajeda Khatun filed a case against five people including two stepsons of Kulsum.

The accused went into hiding.



Sixty-eight-year-old Chhayamon Bewa of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila wears a hapless look as her homestead was washed away by the river Dharla on Saturday. Inset, the river Jamuna devours homesteads and croplands in Tangail's Bhuapur.

PHOTO: STAR

Cop lands in jail for torturing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A Dinaipur court yesterday sent an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police to jail for torturing his wife.

The accused is Md Mostafizur Rahman, ASI of Gulshan Police Station in Dhaka, and son of Mokshed Ali of Mornoipur village in Parbatipur upazila.

Judge Md Israil Hossain of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal sent him to jail after he surrendered before it yesterday.

According to the prosecution, Nazmoon Nahar, daughter of Nur Islam of Pashchim Shamsheernagar village, filed a case with Phulbari Police Station on August 28 last year, accusing Mostafizur of torturing her.

The court issued an arrest warrant against the ASI on March 23.

Tortured for refusal to sign divorce paper

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A woman was brutally tortured by her husband on Sunday as she refused to sign a divorce paper over dowry issue in Nawabganj upazila of the district.

She is now undergoing treatment at Nawabganj Upazila Health Complex.

The victim is Sayeda Zakia, 22, daughter of Harun Ur Rashid of Motihara village in the upazila, and mother of a four-month-old girl.

Zakia was married to Abdur Rouf, son of Mokshed Ali Dulal of the village, on February in 2015. After their marriage, Rouf often tortured his wife for dowry. He family met the demand for dowry several times since then.

As Zakia declined to give any more money, her husband and his sisters tried to force her to sign a divorce paper. They allegedly tortured her brutally when she refused to sign the paper.

Being informed about the matter by a local person, a police team went to Zakia's house. They rescued her and sent her to Nawabganj Upazila Health Complex.

She is under treatment there, Zakia's father said over phone.

Officer-in-Charge of Nawabganj Police Station Subrata Kumar Sarker confirmed the matter.

A case will be filed on Tuesday (today), said Zakia's father.

River erosion takes serious turn

Teesta and Dharla make 250 families homeless in Lalmonirhat, Jamuna also renders 350 families homeless in Tangail

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Erosion by Teesta and Dharla rivers in Lalmonirhat and Jamuna in Tangail has rendered several hundred families homeless in five upazilas of the two districts.

Erosion of the banks of Teesta and Dharla has taken a serious turn as the floodwater engulfed fresh areas in four upazilas of Lalmonirhat in the last few days.

Lalmonirhat Water Development Board (WDB) sources said at least 250 families have been rendered homeless while 20 fruit orchards and over 300 bighas of arable lands were devoured by the two rivers in 13 villages of four upazilas till Sunday.

Several hundred families in Sadar, Aditmari, Hatibandha and

Patgram upazilas have taken shelter on government roads due to the severe erosion.

Idris Ali, chairman of Kulaghat Union Parishad (UP) in Sadar upazila, said the affected people of four villages in his union have taken shelter on government roads after losing their homesteads, arable lands and fruit orchards.

"About 40 metres of the flood control embankment have been badly affected by the erosion, causing serious sufferings to the people of Dharla river basin villages," said Idris, adding, "Officials of WDB are working to repair the damaged embankment."

Sixty-eight-year-old Chhayamon Bewa of Shiberkuti village in Sadar

upazila said she along with her four daughters have taken shelter on a government road after her homestead was eroded by the Dharla on Saturday morning.

"Our two bighas of arable land and a bamboo cluster on additional two bighas went into the womb of Dharla," she added.

Sub-Divisional Engineer Mohammad Al-Mamun of Lalmonirhat WDB said officials are working to check the erosion at six most vulnerable points.

Onrush of water from upstream and increasing water level in the Jamuna hit three unions in Bhuapur upazila of Tangail.

Nearly 350 families of different villages under Arjuna, Gabsara and

Govindasi unions have taken shelter on the nearby flood control embankments, locals said.

Several hundred families have shifted their houses due to severe erosion by Jamuna.

"We have sent a list of 250 affected families to the district administration for their necessary support," said Bhuapur Upazila Chairman Abdul Halim.

"A Tk 291 crore project has been submitted to the Planning Commission to save the area from erosion permanently," said Executive Engineer Shajahan Siraj of Tangail WDB.

Our Lalmonirhat and Tangail correspondents contributed to the report.



Chapainawabganj district non-government teachers-employees' coordination body forms a human chain in the town yesterday demanding cancellation of deducting additional four percent from their salary in the name of pension facility and welfare trust.

PHOTO: STAR