



Flood-hit people line up for relief goods in Deputy Bazar area of Golapganj upazila of Sylhet yesterday. The relief materials were distributed by Khulna Bibhag Kalyan Samity, a welfare organisation.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Relief still scarce

FROM PAGE 16

Of the 90 monitoring stations, water was flowing over the danger mark at 16 points, said the bulletin. The water level rose at 49 points and dropped at 38 points, one point remained steady and six points remained unreported.

### INADEQUATE RELIEF IN BOGRA, SYLHET, KURIGRAM

Many flood victims sought relief in Sylhet as they remained marooned for weeks.

Rajna Begum, a middle-aged woman from Lama Gavurtik village in Osmanagar upazila, said her family had been affected weeks ago but did not get any relief yet.

"How can we survive? We do not have anything to eat, nowhere to move, no work to do," she said.

Several thousand people from Osmanagar, Fenchuganj, Beanibazar, Golapganj and Balaganj upazilas in Sylhet have been looking for relief.

Those who have received relief from the administration or other voluntary associations considered that very insufficient.

The district administration says they have distributed 277 tonnes of rice and Tk 5.5 lakh among the affected people and have plans to distribute 150 tonnes of rice and Tk 1.75 lakh more.

On relief scarcity, Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet, said they were trying their level best to reach everyone in need of relief.

In Bogra, many affected from Shariakandi, Dhunat and Sonatala upazilas also alleged of insufficient relief.

Widow Maleka Khatun, 50, of Dolhirkandi in Shariakandi upazila was forced to take shelter on the old river control embankment at Mothurapara Bazar on July 3.

"I have yet to get any relief," said Maleka, adding, she had two slices of bread with her last penny yesterday and did not know what she would have today.

Mizanur Rahamn, a member of Kutubpur Union Parishad, said he had got relief for 25 families against 200-250 families in need.

Belal Hossain Talukder, chairman of Bhandarbari UP, said he had distributed rice and dry food among 2,300 people, while 500 people were still waiting for relief when his supply finished.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Nur-e-Alam Siddique said 285 tonnes of rice, Tk 3.5 lakh and 2,000 packets of dry food were distributed among the victims.

In Kurigram, at least 1.78 lakh people of 548 villages under nine upazilas have been affected with around 1.55 lakh marooned, according to the district disaster management, relief and rehabilitation office.

Flood victim Jahanara said they had no work to do. She got 20kg rice in separate distribution which was all consumed, she added.

Jatrapur UP Chairman Kayum Ali

Sarkar said, "Around 5,800 families have been marooned in my union. But I have been given insufficient relief compared to the demand."

### FARIDPUR AFFECTED, MANIKGANJ UNDER THREAT

Flood hit different char villages in Faridpur as the Padma was flowing above the danger level.

Floodwater inundated low-lying areas of North-Chanel and Decre Char unions in Sadar upazila, Char Harirampur, Gazir Tek and Char Jhaukanda under Charvarthan upazila and Charnasirpur union of Sadarpur upazila.

Shadekuzzaman, chairman of Decre Char UP, said about 400 acres of Aman and Aus paddy field in three villages had gone under water.

In Sadarpur upazila, a government primary school at Charnasirpur union is under threat as the land is being eroded by the Arial Kha river.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Roksan Rahman has visited the school and asked the authorities to shift the institution.

In Manikganj, the water level of the Padma and Jamuna rivers was on the rise yesterday.

Executive Engineer of WDB Hasan Mahmud said the water level was increasing in all internal rivers, including the Kaliganga, Dhaleshwari, Gazikhali and Ichhamoti in the district.

Low-lying areas of the district were being inundated, he added.

## Mayor sorry

FROM PAGE 1

Annisul at a press conference on Friday blamed the mosquito population inside homes for the chikungunya outbreak saying he could not tie mosquito nets at homes, but was "sorry" for people's sufferings.

He shrugged off the criticism that the city corporation was doing very little to tackle the menace.

Aedes mosquitoes responsible for infecting people with chikungunya virus breed in clear water mostly inside homes, he said, adding the city corporation could not go inside people's homes to stop mosquitoes from spreading.

Yesterday, the mayor inaugurated an awareness rally in the city's Gulshan on controlling mosquitoes. He told journalists that he could not express himself properly the day before.

Meanwhile, teachers, students, writers and rights activists at a protest rally in the capital's Shahbagh showed "red cards" to both the Dhaka city mayors for failing to control Aedes mosquitoes.

They staged the demonstration as a symbol of warning Annisul and Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon so that they become more active to kill the mosquitoes and control the disease.

They also condemned the DNCC mayor's remarks saying that a responsible person like him cannot make such comments.

"It's unfortunate that we are forced to show red cards to the elected public representatives," said Lina Parveen, a student.

"You [mayor] don't have to kill the mosquitoes inside homes. You take care of mosquito breeding grounds in open public places," she added.

The number of chikungunya cases has been on the rise with city dwellers blaming the authorities' failure to take timely and preventive actions.

The number of reported chikungunya cases rose to around 3,000 on Thursday from 2,748 and 2,700 on the previous two days, said Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

However, the actual number of cases could be higher as many go unreported.

On July 11, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim and his deputy Zahid Maleque blamed the two city corporations for the chikungunya outbreak in the capital, saying they failed to control the Aedes mosquitoes.

Chikungunya virus, which is transmitted to people by infected Aedes mosquitoes, started spreading in the city about two and a half months ago.

Symptoms of the viral disease include fever, muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, rash and these are often accompanied by a very debilitating joint pain which can last for days.

## 16 more

FROM PAGE 2

suffering from pneumonia and encephalitis," said Pranab Kumar Chowdhury, head of pediatrics department at the CMCH.

"As measles is an easily transmitted disease, the malnourished children were affected one after another. They were also not vaccinated and it means that their immune system was very poor," he said.

Pranab, however, said the reason of the disease would be confirmed once they received test reports of urine, blood and other samples collected from the children by Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research in Dhaka on Thursday.

Contacted, Faruk Ahmed Bhuyan, chief scientific officer at the IEDCR, said it would take three to four more days to get the reports.

### NEWLY AFFECTED CHILDREN

One-year-old Ajay became sick yesterday morning and was admitted to Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Disease (BITID) in Sitakunda's Fouzdarhat.

Two of his brothers had already been hospitalised with similar symptoms.

Pradip Kumar Tripura, a local who was taking Ajay to the hospital, told this correspondent that the boy's father, Dhirendra Tripura, could not come as he was taking care of the two other boys.

Somacharan Tripura's six-year-old son Uzzwal was also hospitalised yesterday. The boy had been suffering from fever for three days. He also had breathing problem.

Contacted, Chittagong Civil Surgeon Azizur Rahman Siddique claimed that the situation was under their control and that there was no need to panic.

"Doctors were taking a good care of the children," he said, adding that the condition of the 16 children admitted to hospital yesterday was not that serious.

"The children are malnourished. They are recovering as they are being provided with healthy food and treatment."

Of the 84 hospitalised children from Tripura Para, 50 were at CMCH while the rest at BITID, he said.

All the victims are between one and 12 years old and the symptoms include fever, rash, breathing problems, vomiting and blood in stool, the civil surgeon had said earlier.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing.

Once some of the books were gutted by fire, and a plan to move the books to a

## Said 'no' to Bill Clinton

FROM PAGE 16

Several US companies had invested in Bangladesh for exploration of gas and they wanted to sell gas to India who also wanted to buy it, Hasina said.

"But I didn't give opinion for selling gas. I wanted to sell gas after keeping a reserve for 50 years. I can't sell gas before this period as the people have a right to use it."

According to the PM, then US president Bill Clinton had requested her in this regard. "But I gave the same reply to him as the demand of the people would have to be met first."

She said she had received the same proposal from the USA while visiting the country and had given the same reply.

"I'm the daughter of the Father of the Nation. I'll utter the same words

what I said earlier. I can't hand over the assets of the country to others for greed of power."

The premier directed SSF members to develop it as an ideal force with regards to discipline, loyalty and professionalism and hoped the force would be more efficient in discharging its duties.

The SSF would have to understand the importance of attaining higher discipline, honesty, responsibility and human qualities, she said.

SSF Director General Maj Gen Md Shafiqur Rahman, PM's Security Adviser Maj Gen Tarique Ahmed Siddique (retd), Principal Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and chiefs of the three armed forces were present, among others.

## Rail links

FROM PAGE 16

ignored the signal and tried to cross the trap point, said Abu Hena, additional signal and telecommunications manager who rushed to the scene.

"We set up automated mechanical traps on railway tracks to force a train to stop for averting major accidents," he said, adding that the train's engine, power car and a portion of a passenger coach went off the rail.

"We call it a 'train overshoot' when a train moves ahead of the trap point," said Hena.

A relief train from Ishwardi was sent to the scene at 3:00pm.

Moitri Express, which was coming to Dhaka from Kolkata, had to stand still for about seven hours in Ishwardi. Silk City left for Dhaka at 2:30pm but could not cross Muladuli and remained stranded at Ullapara of Sirajganj.

Our correspondents from Rajshahi and Pabna reported that passengers

had suffered for hours. Some got off the trains and took alternative ways to reach their destinations.

"I am waiting for Padma express at Chatmohor station in Pabna since 4:00pm," Risul Islam told our Pabna correspondent at 8:30pm.

Rangpur Express and intercity trains Drutojan, Lalmoni and Ekota remained stuck on either side of Muladuli station.

Probir Saha, a government official coming from Dinajpur by Drutojan, was stranded at Ishwardi bypass. Sharing his ordeal with The Daily Star yesterday evening, he said, "I boarded the train around 9:30am from Chinir Bondor station and have been stuck here since 2:00pm."

Walid Bin Habib, who was supposed to go to Khulna from Kamalapur by Chitra Express at 7:00pm, had to cancel his ticket and opt to go by bus.

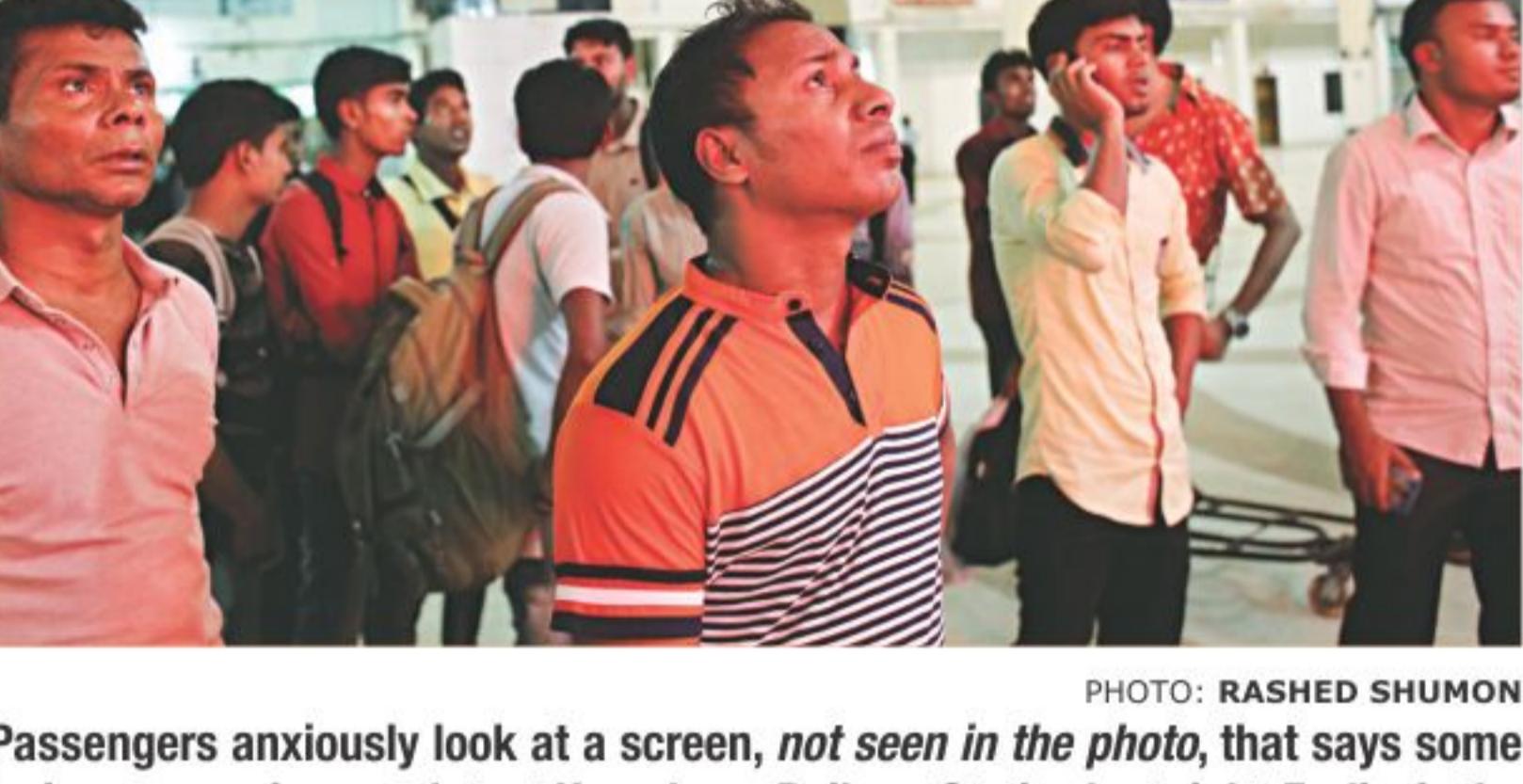


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Passengers anxiously look at a screen, not seen in the photo, that says some trains are running very late at Kamalapur Railway Station last night. Earlier in the day, an express train derailed in Pabna's Ishwardi, snapping the capital's links with the northern and southern districts for about seven and a half hours.

## The joy of reading

FROM PAGE 16

me to visit the library."

Ruhul Amin, 28, a Master's student of mathematics at Government Azizul Haque College, finds a quiet place to concentrate. "I visit the library every day," he says, "to prepare for job applications and exams. The library has been a huge support."

For Shukumar Roy from Seujigari in Bogra Town the library has more personal meaning. "I used to visit the library with my grandfather," he recalls. "He died last year. Nowadays I come here not only to read books but to remember his encouragement."

In 1850, as a result of Britain's library movement, the British parliament passed a bill recognising the importance of public libraries. Four years later, as the private initiative of district magistrate C.S. Larkin, district collector J.N. Gupta and one Briton, a Mr. Royal, Bogra's institution named in honour of the then British Lieutenant Governor of Bengal Sir John Woodburn, was founded.

Over the years the library has attracted renowned figures such as national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, the former head of Calcutta University's English department Dr Mohinimohan Bhattacharjee, noted historian Dr Romesh Chandra Dutta, philosopher Kishorelal Roy, poet Kiron Shankar Das and mathematician Brijendralal Shirooy, to name a few.

Woodburn, which in 2012 was merged with Bogra district public library, currently boasts around 215 members, with up to 500 daily visitors wishing to read books on the premises.

"I consider the library as my third son," says librarian Rokonuzzaman who has revived the collection of rare books, rescuing ancient tomes from garbage and landfill. The library's historical book collection includes manuscripts such as "Padma Puran, Gobinda Kothamrito", which is 350-years-old. "Greek and Roman Antiquity"; "History of the French Revolution"; and "Manual Thesis on the Languages and Manners of Eastern Nations", are all century-old texts held by the library. According to the librarian, there are more than 50,000 books in English and Bangla in total, including many thousands of pages of rare handwritten text in the precious book collection, which by itself accounts for several thousand volumes.

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On April 12, the girl's mother filed a case with a Sylhet court accusing Sanjibon, Mahmudul, Sajjad and 5 others for the harassment.

On May 21, the court asked for a judicial inquiry of the incident. Later, it issued an arrest warrant for Sanjibon though no one has been arrested yet.

The uncommon manuscripts found here must be preserved for reference by the next generation," says a former teacher of Bogra Zila School, Shyamol Bhattacharjee. "They can serve as important reference works."

Indeed, the most numerous category of library patrons are the very ones might most suspect of getting lost in computer and smart phone screens: the current generation of students of the various educational institutions around Bogra town and beyond.

SUST suspends

FROM PAGE 2

probe body's report on the incidents that was submitted on June 4.

On April 8 this year, a school girl from Sylhet went to the university campus for sightseeing when some BCL activists teased and harassed her.

Two campus journalists protested the matter.

The girl filed a complaint with the proctor of the university in this regard.

Later that day, the BCL activists attacked the two journalists, leaving Syed Nabiul Alam Dipu, vice president of Sust Press Club, and Sardar Abbas, general secretary of Sust Press Club, critically injured.