

Flash flood turns them pauper

Forced to leave home after Teesta embankment collapse, victims are now living on relief

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

"The flood had turned me a street beggar overnight," said Iliasuddin, 64, as he was sitting on a piece of wood on the embankment of the Teesta river at Dakkhin Kharibari village of Dimla upazila under the district.

He took shelter with family in a makeshift polythene tent there, as the overflowing Teesta following an embankment collapse washed away their homestead including all household belongings, 70 maunds of stored paddy and cattle early Sunday.

Like him, 500 families of the village have taken shelter on the embankment empty-handed as 5-6 feet high water is still flowing in their house yards.

"On Saturday night, it was raining from the evening and all of my family members went to sleep after taking dinner," Iliasuddin said as this correspondent met him on Wednesday.

"At about 2:30am, I heard a loudspeaker announcement from our mosque, asking villagers to go to safer places as the flood protection embankment around our locality collapsed due to strong upsurge of water from the Teesta river," he recalled the horrific scene.

Sitting beside him, his wife Monowara Begum, 55, said, "After hearing the announcement, I at once took two of my grandchildren in my arms and ran to a safer place as roaring water of the Teesta was approaching towards our house at great speed."

"Within minutes, a 6-7 feet high tide with circular current struck our brick built house

sweeping it away with all belongings," she said in tearful eyes.

Standing in a line, Iliasuddin's family got a bowl of *khichuri* on Wednesday noon as Dimla upazila administration made the arrangement.

"Now I am thinking what my two grandchildren will eat at night," he said with a tone of frustration.

"We are suffering from want of food and pure drinking water. It is embarrassing that we have to respond to the call of nature on the embankment's slope," said victim Shamsher Ali.

Many others including Azizul, Ziarul, Jahangir, Hazra Bewa, Zaheda, Nurunnahar echoed the same.

The flood victims have urged quick repair of the flood protection embankment around their villages so that they can return home.

One km portion of three-km-long flood protection embankment and about 2000 hectares of Aman fields in the area have been damaged, said Rabiul Islam, chairman of Tepa Kharibari Union Parishad.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Md Aktaruzzaman said 160 tonnes of rice and Tk 7 lakh have been allocated for the flood victims to ease their sufferings.

Dimla Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Rezaul Karim said, "We've requested the Water Development Board authorities to start repairing the flood protection embankment very shortly."



Iliasuddin, 64, with his family members took shelter on the Teesta embankment in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari, as a flash flood washed away the solvent family's house at Dakkhin Kharibari village early Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

One lakh trees planted in one minute

The saplings were planted marking the National Mourning Day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

One lakh trees were planted at Borhanuddin upazila of Bhola between 12:00 noon and 12.01pm (one minute) on August 14 on the eve of the National Mourning Day.

The upazila administration arranged such an extraordinary programme to commemorate the day when Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were brutally killed on August 15 in 1975, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Abdul Kuddus.

"I requested all the planters to pray for the departed soul of Bangabandhu after planting a tree. I arranged the programme to inspire people to plant more trees to maintain the natural balance," the UNO added.

"I and some local youths took the decision to plant one lakh trees in the upazila about four

months ago," Kuddus said.

Kuddus and the youths arranged about 100 discussion meetings at different places in the upazila, including educational institutions and other establishments, to inspire the people.

They started collecting plants from two weeks before planting of the trees and stored them in a big field from where those were distributed on August 13.

"The deputy commissioner of Bhola helped us arrange the money while some local donors also contributed to buy the plants," Kuddus said, adding that many people also personally donated some money within their limited capacity.

Twenty one varieties of trees, including fruit, flower and medicinal trees, were collected from horticultural markets and 25 nurseries, and the forest department arranged 40,000 plants, the UNO said.

The saplings were planted in 507 spots under all

the schools, colleges, madrasas, mosques and temples, and along the roadsides of the upazila, he added.

"Every student planted a tree, and it will be cared for by the student who planted it," Kuddus said.

"What they have done is praiseworthy and noteworthy. Humans, animals and birds will be directly benefited by it," said Md Ferdous, a banker.

"We were very excited when we planted the trees in our school premises and our students enjoyed it," said schoolteacher Moni Aktar.

"My name will be carried by this tree that I planted in my school," said a student of Borhanuddin College.

"I appreciate such an activity in which all classes of people took part. It is a social movement that should be followed by all. If the movement takes place in all the parts of the country, there will be 25 percent more forest areas within a short time," said Bhola Department of Agriculture Extension Deputy Director Prasanta Kumar Saha.



People take part in a programme to plant one lakh trees beside roads as Borhanuddin upazila administration in Bhola organised the event at 12:00 noon on August 14, on the eve of the National Mourning Day. The photo was taken near Kachia Madrasa in the upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

2 brothers confess to killing two sisters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Two accused in a case for killing two sisters on Wednesday gave confessional statement before a court here.

The accused are Wares, 50, and his elder brother Tansen, 60. They are sons of late Ramzan Mondol of Baluata in Sadar upazila of the district.

Police produced the accused before the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Niskriti Hagidak on Wednesday afternoon where Wares and Tansen gave statement under Section 164 that they first strangled Bhabna, 14, and her sister Lubna, 9, at Dewliabari village in the upazila.

The duo later slit their throats with a scissor at the victims' house at midnight, said Delwar Hossain, superintendent of police, at a press conference yesterday.

They also revealed that they killed the two sisters over a longstanding land dispute with their parents-- Malaysia expatriate Shamim Hossain and Taslima Begum of Dewliabari village. The two accused are paternal uncles of Shamim.

Bhabna, Class IX student of a local girls' high school, and Lubna, a fourth grader of a local kindergarten, were found murdered inside their house on August 2.

After recording the statement, the court sent the two brothers to jail.

Indian boy found dead in Joypurhat river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The body of a teenage boy was recovered from a river in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat yesterday.

Police said the boy was Mohidul Haque, 18, son of Younus Ali of Laskarpur village under Hili Police Station in South Dinajpur of Paschimbaranga.

Locals found the body and informed BGB, who recovered it along with police.

Officer-in-Charge of Panchbibi Police Station Ahsraful Islam, quoting officials of Joypurhat Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 20 Battalion, said the body floated into Bangladesh on the Choto Jamuna river.

Mahananda water to be purified

C'nawabganj water treatment plant inaugurated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A water treatment plant was inaugurated yesterday in Chapainawabganj town to purify Mahananda river water and supply safe drinking water for the townspeople and its adjacent areas.

Abdul Odud, lawmaker from Chapainawabganj-3 constituency, inaugurated the plant as the chief guest at a function.

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has implemented the project in Hujrapur area near the bank of Mahananda river at a cost of Tk 10 crore.

Under the project, DPHE has set up nearly 34 kilometres pipeline and a number of water tanks in the area.

The newly constructed plant will treat 3.5 lakh litres of water per hour and add to water supply network daily and would meet 60 percent water demand of the town.

Chapainawabganj Municipality Mayor Nazrul Islam presided over the function where Chapainawabganj Superintendent of Police TM Mojahidul Islam and Sadar Upazila Parishad's acting Vice Chairman Mohsin Ali were present as special guests.

Missing college boy found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A missing college student was found murdered in Jhalakathi's Nalchity on Tuesday.

The deceased was Sajedul Islam Shariar, 17, son of Md Nazrul Islam of Barisal city, and a student of Class XI at Amrita Lal De College in Barisal.

Sajedul went out of home to go to his coaching centre on Sunday morning and went missing, said his mother Khusi Akter.

Later, a general diary was filed with Kotwali Police Station in this regard, she said.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from the river Sugandha in Nachity launch ghat area on Tuesday afternoon.

The body was sent to Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Md Sultan Mahamud, officer-in-charge of Nalchity Police Station.

Police suspected that Sajedul's body was dumped into the river after he was killed.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately, they said.

Trader drowns with Indian cattle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The body of a Bangladeshi cattle trader was found floating in Giridhari river near Durgapur border in Aditmari upazila yesterday, after he failed to swim ashore due to heavy tide.

The deceased, Sazu Mia, 22, son of Zahurul Haque, was a resident of Durgapur village in the upazila.

Zahurul said his son went missing and drowned while swimming across the river with two Indian cattle in the early hours of yesterday.

Shrine caretaker stabbed to death in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Criminals hacked to death the khadem (caretaker) of a shrine in Sonaimuri upazila under the district on Wednesday evening.

The deceased, Sona Mia, 65, hailed from Shariatpur Sadar upazila, had been living with his wife Nilufa Begum on the premises Afzal Patwari's Mazar (shrine) at Char Hatgati village of Nadona union in Sonaimuri for the last seven years.

"Three youths entered the shrine in the name of lighting candles there around 8:30pm and reportedly took Sona Mia outside the shrine premises under the pretext of talking with him," said late Afzal Patwari's grandson Shamsuzzoha Maznu, also a member of the shrine management committee.

"At one stage, they stabbed Sona Mia

indiscriminately and severed his head from the body. Seeing Sona Mia lying in a pool of blood, his wife Nilufa raised a hue and cry. Then locals rushed in, captured Elias, 22, and Sujon, 24, from the spot, and handed them over to the police after beating," he said.

Under interrogation, the two arrestees have admitted to killing the shrine caretaker, said Md Ismail, officer-in-charge of Sonaimuri Police Station.

The arrestees will be interrogated further to know the motive behind the murder, Md Ilias Sharif, superintendent of police in Noakhali, said after visiting the spot.

The body has been sent to Noakhali General Hospital for autopsy.

Nilufa Begum filed a murder case against Elias and Sujon with Sonaimuri Police Station yesterday.



Local lawmaker Abdul Odud inaugurates the water treatment plant at Hujrapur in Chapainawabganj town yesterday as the chief guest.

PHOTO: STAR