

Tk 1150 crore projects to save erosion-hit areas in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Water Development Board (WDB) has taken six projects worth around Tk 1150 crore to protect 50 km areas affected due to erosion by the rivers in the district.

Severe erosion by the rivers in the district has affected around 50 km of land in five upazilas in the last one month.

Farmlands, thousands of houses, bazars, and educational institutions have been damaged by the continuing river erosion.

The worst affected is Mehendiganj upazila, where the Meghna, Tetulia and Kalabadar rivers have already eroded the whole bazar in Sreepur union, a part of Ullania bandar and bazar, and Patarhat launch terminal.

A project to protect a two km area from erosion, costing Tk 395.94 crore, has been sent to the Water Development Board (WDB), Executive Engineer of the district WDB Abu Saeed told this correspondent.

The Kirtonkhola river eroded 4.5 km area at Charbaria point; Arial Kha and Sugandha rivers eroded four km area at Barisal airport, Mirganj bazar and Abul Kalam Degree College points; Kaylakhal river in Muladi upazila eroded 3.2 km at Bahadurabad village point; Sugandha river eroded one km area at Bir Srestho Captain Mahiuddin Zahangir bridge point; Sandhya river eroded one km area at Baherchar Bazar point; Meghna river eroded half km at Harinathpur Union Complex under Hijla upazila; and Joyanti river eroded half km area at Nazirpur union point.

WDB has sent six projects, costing Tk 1,150 crore, to the authorities for protection of these areas.

"The project for protection of Charbaria area from erosion by the Kirtonkhola river is now with the planning ministry, and the other five projects are in the WDB head office for priority fixing. Most of the problems created by river erosion will be solved if all the projects are approved," Abu Saeed said.



Vast Aman fields remain under water from the overflowing Jamuna river at Char Bhabla in Kalihati upazila of Tangail. *Bottom left*, a farmer shows flood-damaged paddy plants at his field of Durgapur village in Gaibandha's Saghata upazila, and *right*, Aman saplings lie unsold at Elenga in Kalihati upazila of Tangail as paddy fields are still under floodwater.



PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL / KM REZAUL HOQUE

Flood takes toll on crops

Crops on 22,000 hectares of land in Tangail, T-Aman worth Tk 14 crore in Gaibandha damaged

STAR COUNTRY DESK

The recent floods have caused extensive damage to crops, especially Aman paddy, in Tangail and Gaibandha districts.

Our Tangail Correspondent reports: Different crops on around 22,000 hectares of land, including Aman on over 20,000 hectares, were damaged due to floods in eight upazilas of Tangail district.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Tangail, Aman was cultivated on 1,14,000 hectares (transplanted Aman on around 82,000 hectares and broadcast around 32,000) of land in 12 upazilas under the district this season. Of it, transplanted Aman on around 15,000 hectares and broadcast on around 5,000 hectares of land were damaged by flood in eight upazilas.

"Ropa Aman paddy of my three bighas of land were fully damaged after the onrush of water from nearby Jamuna river two weeks

ago," said Abul Kashem of Pathailkandi village under Kalihati upazila.

Aman paddy on two bighas of land of farmer Nazrul Islam, four bighas of land of Shah Alam and three bighas of land of Asmat Ali of the same village were also damaged in the flood.

Different vegetables on over 1,000 hectares out of total 9,000 hectares of land and lemon on 250 hectares out of total 850 hectares of land in the upazilas were also damaged in the flood, said officials of the agriculture department.

Agriculturist Abu Adnan, deputy director of DAE in Tangail, said the Aman paddy production target in the district may not be achieved this season due to the huge damage by the flood.

The vegetable growers and lemon orchard owners also face huge losses due to the flooding, he added.

The local Aman seedling traders incurred huge losses as their saplings

remained unsold due to lack of buyers in the last two weeks.

"However, prices of seedlings are now increasing due to short supply for the last few days. A hundred bundles of seedlings were sold at Tk 300 only two weeks ago but now it is selling at Tk 500," said Mohammad Dulal Hossain, a seedling trader at Elenga Bazar in Kalihati upazila.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: Transplanted Aman crops worth about Tk 14 crore have been damaged by prolonged floodwater in ten unions of Saghata upazila.

Acute crisis of Aman seedlings is prevailing in flood affected areas, as seedbeds were washed away by the surging water, said local farmers.

Poor and marginal farmers cannot procure new seedlings due to its high prices and there is no time for preparing fresh seedbeds.

According to upazila agriculture depart-

ment, floodwater washed away transplanted Aman seedlings on 2,300 hectare of land. This time target was fixed for Aman cultivation on 11,700 hectare of land.

"Aman seedlings on my 50 decimal of lands was completely damaged by floodwater and there is still time to replant late variety seedlings, but I could not procure seedlings as the prices are high," said Kamaluddin, a poor farmer of Durgapur village in Saghata upazila.

Amjad Hossain, a landless peasant of the same village, said he cultivated Aman on two bighas of land as a sharecropper on condition of getting half of the harvested crop, but all the seedlings were washed away by the surging floodwater.

The damage of crops might be worth about Tk 14 crore although the total assessment is yet to be made, said AKM Mobinuzzaman Chowdhury, upazila agriculture officer in Saghata.

Two JMB suspects held from Tangail den

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Members of Rapid Action Battalion arrested two suspected members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh from a house in Elenga municipality under Kalihati upazila of the district early yesterday.

They also recovered a drone, bomb making materials and several machetes and Chinese axes from the house.

The detainees are Syed Nurul Huda, alias Masum, 30, and Syed Mazharul Islam, alias Khokon, 25, sons of late Syed Abul Hossain Chistee of the municipality.

Although the militants had been carrying out their activities at the house for long, locals did not know anything about it.

Abdul Mia, a resident of the area, said he had known the brothers, Masum and Khokon, as very polite people.

He said Masum has a medicine shop at Masinda bazar while Khokon has a computer and mobile servicing shop in Capsule Market on Victoria Road in the town.

Masum was in Malaysia for about nine years and returned to Bangladesh three years ago and started poultry and medicine business, he added.

Their father Syed Abul Hossain Chistee, who died about two and a half years ago, was known as a pir in the area, he added.

Masum married a girl near his maternal grandfather's house at Chatail upazila, while Khokon married the daughter of one of his father's admirers in Meherpur.

"The pir saheb was a very good man, and we are surprised to hear about the involvement of his two sons in militancy," said Rahima Begum, a resident of Masinda village.

"Masum and Khokon hardly talked with local people," said Habibur Rahman, a local fruit trader and also a neighbour of the family.

Several locals said Masum and Khokon said their prayers regularly, and zikir and religious meetings used to be held at their house.



Mobile ship hospital Impact Jibobtori serves treatment seekers in remote areas, especially in regions criss-crossed by rivers. *Inset*, an eye patient is being checked at the hospital, now stationed in Patuakhali.

Hospital ship brings quality to healthcare to remote areas

Sohrab Hossain with Andrew Eagle

In Patuakhali's riverside communities accessing modern healthcare can be quite a challenge, particularly if specialist consultation is required. The 'Impact Jibontari' is a forty-foot long, three-storied ship that functions as a hospital. It specialises in eye treatment, along with ear-nose-and-throat and disability services. In delivering much-needed medical care to remote communities at minimal patient cost, the floating hospital is indeed having an impact, improving many lives.

From 8 May 2017 until early August the Impact Jibontari was anchored on the Shreemonto River at the well-known shrine of Earuddin Khalifa in Mirzaganj upazila.

More than 8,000 patients attended

the ship for consultation and treatment during its stay. "I came to the shrine with my daughter who had severe ear pain," says Hasina Begum of Patuakhali town. "We went to the floating hospital and the on-duty doctor was able to offer treatment on the spot. It only cost Tk 40."

"My mother was suffering an eye disease," says Amena Begum from Amragachi village in Mirzaganj. "It would've been too costly to take her to hospital in Patuakhali so we brought her to the ship. She had an operation done on her right eye."

According to the floating hospital's administrator Md Alauddin, around 162 operations were performed aboard the ship in Mirzaganj. "We also provided health awareness training to students, midwives, primary school

teachers, imams and community leaders," he says.

Constructed in 1999, the Impact Jibontari houses a modern operating theatre, fourteen beds and a dispensary. It has two speedboats and an ambulance available for patient transport. A cataract operation requiring a three-day stay at the hospital costs a very reasonable Tk 3,000, with food, medicine and all services included.

"Many people from our remote villages take advantage of the ship's services," says the upazila nirbahi officer in Mirzaganj, Shah Mohammad Rafiqul Islam. "It's very helpful.

And the treatment they get onboard the ship is even better than they could expect at a district-level hospital."

Lightning kills teenager

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A teenage boy was killed by lightning in Katiadi upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased, Tanjil Hossain, 15, was son of Lotu Mia of Panchlipara village under Korgaon union in the upazila.

Korgaon Union Parishad Chairman Sharafat Loshkar Parvez said Tanjil was struck by a thunderbolt while he was fishing in a nearby water body around 11:00am.

Locals took him to Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital where the doctor declared him dead.

'Nationalise 129-year-old school'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

People of Panchagarh formed a two-kilometre-long human chain yesterday, demanding nationalisation of the 129-year-old Boda Pilot Model School and College.

The programme was held under the banner of Bidyaloy Jatyakaran Sangram Committee.

It was followed by a meeting presided over by Convener of the committee Wahiduzzaman Suja.

The speakers said they are shocked that the 129-year-old school was not included in the list for nationalisation.

Fund constraints the obstacle

Rima gets scholarship for higher study in China

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Struggling with family poverty from childhood, Syeda Jannatul Ferdous Rima had a dream to shine in life through technical education.

Finally she has got a scholarship to study in China but her poor parents cannot afford even the initial processing cost.

"After completing my HSC in 2012 from Pirojpur Government Technical School and College, I wanted to complete diploma course. But due to my father's inability to bear the cost, I got myself admitted to general degree pass course," said Rima, 22.

She is daughter of Syed Md Kamruzzaman Swapon, a battery-run three-wheeler driver, and Syeda Nusrat Jahan Rani from Purbo Shikarpur village under Pirojpur municipality.

Lately, inspired by her teachers, she applied through online for study in China in May this year.

After attending the test examinations in Dhaka in July, she got scholarship to study at Changde Vocational and Technical College in China where she will have to spend one year for learning Chinese language and three years for completing a diploma course.

She will have to spend over Tk 80,000 for accommodation, visa processing, insurance, application fee, and health report fee, besides bearing the plane fare.

She will also need Tk 10,000 per month, in addition to the scholarship money, to cover the expenses in China.

Her father Swapon, who can hardly earn around Tk 500 daily, is not in a position to send her money on a regular basis.

"I have already spent over Tk 50,000 to manage all the documents and had to borrow money for the purpose," he said.

Rima is the eldest among four siblings. The three others study at local schools.

Md Saiful Islam, instructor of English at Pirojpur Government Technical School and College, said that 32 students from the college applied for studying in China and six of them



Syeda Jannatul Ferdous Rima

have got chance to study there.

Rima is the only girl among them and she is a very brilliant student, he said.

Rima's parents have sought help from the kind hearted solvent people of the country for their daughter's study abroad. They can be contacted through mobile No 01710504702.