

88 Moulvibazar schools under floodwater

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Classes at 88 primary schools, madrasas and high schools in the district have remained suspended from Wednesday as the institutions went under water following flash floods triggered by heavy rain and onrush of water from the hills.

The affected institutions include 54 government primary schools -- three are in Moulvibazar Sadar, three in Rajnagar, 24 in Kulaura, 17 in Barlekha and seven in Juri upazila, said sources at the district primary education office.

Twenty high schools and 14 madrasas in the district have also been submerged, forcing the authorities to suspend classes, officials said.

"We cannot attend classes as our school is waterlogged," said Josna Begum, a Class VII student of Kandigaon High School in Rajnagar upazila.

"Fifty-four primary schools suspended classes from Wednesday due to flooding. They will resume classes as soon as the water recedes," said Md Abdul Alim, district primary education officer in Moulvibazar.

"Twenty high schools and 14 madrasas in the district have been submerged by floodwater that is causing damage to the infrastructure and furniture of the institutions. We are trying to estimate the losses," said ASM Abdul Wadud, district education officer of Moulvibazar.

Bijay Indra Shankar Chakraborty, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Moulvibazar, said the Kushiara river was flowing 7cm below the danger mark at Sherpur point on Saturday.



Like many other areas of Moulvibazar, the premises of Kandigaon High School and Umarpur Jame Masjid in Rajnagar upazila, and Gouri Shankar Government Primary School in Kulaura upazila get flooded due to the recent downpour and onrush of water from the hills.



PHOTO: STAR

Bagerhat gymnasium closed for 14 years

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The only gymnasium and youth centre in the district has remained closed for the last 14 years and has been declared abandoned.

The centre was established in 1977 on the PNG field of the municipality to inspire the youths to take part in sports and gymnastics. It was inaugurated on September 24 in 1978.

From 1978 to 2003, youths could play carrom, chess and table tennis or practice boxing, weight lifting and yoga during the day time, said Sheikh Haider Ali Babu, vice-president of the District Sports Organisation as well as deputy director of Gymnasium and Juvenile Organising Committee.

The office room of the centre was demolished in 2003 during construction of the permanent stage at Swadhinata Udyan, and the roof of the main building was damaged at that time. The centre has not been used since then.

The centre was allowed to be used as a relief warehouse of Red Crescent at the request of the district administration after Sidr hit the coastal areas in 2007, Babu added.

Boxers Enayet and Parvez, and

some others who received medals at the national level, came to prominence from the centre. Closure of the centre has been a loss, Babu said, adding that many youths of the district will be benefited if the government renovates and reopens it.

Director of Gymnasium and Youth Centre Prof Bulbul Kabir said the district council demolished the office room of the youth centre during construction of the permanent stage at Swadhinata Udyan.

"Since then, I could not reopen the centre as we do not have sufficient funds. I have informed the chairman of the district council about the matter, and he asked me to submit an application for it. We will do it as soon as possible," he added.

District Sports Association General Secretary Sardar Selim Ahmed said, "We are trying to launch the gymnasium and youth centre again. I have applied for permission from the National Sports Council."

Deputy Commissioner, also President of the youth centre, Tapan Kumar Biswas said that he did not know about the matter, adding that he will take necessary steps to reopen it as soon as possible.



HABIGANJ BOAT CAPSIZE Another body found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The number of deaths after a boat capsized in Khowai river of Habiganj reached eight as one more body was found on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Rakib, 5, son of Jalal Mia of Fandrail village under Sadar upazila.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Baniachang Police Station Mozammel Haque told this correspondent that they recovered the body from Gozaria Kandi area and sent it to Habiganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Earlier, two bodies were recovered from Shahpur and Radhapur areas of the river in Baniachang upazila, one on Sunday and the other on Saturday.

85 flood-hit families on haor dyke for a month

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

At least 85 flood-affected families with their cattle have been living on an embankment in Kawadighi Haor area under Moulvibazar Sadar upazila for a month.

During a visit yesterday, this correspondent found a large number of makeshift houses with tin roofs set up on the embankment in Paguriya Bandherpara area of Chandnighat-Haldigul road in Akhailakura union of Sadar upazila.

The cattle were tied beside the rooms. Many women were seen busy collecting water and firewood or preparing to cook on wood burning stove under the open sky.

Many people there are affected with diseases including fever.

"I came here with family one month ago as water level rose," Mabrul Mia, 54, of Bandherpara village.

"Our Boro paddy in the haor area was destroyed due to sudden floods in April. Later the floodwater receded but the situation deteriorated again in mid-July. The recent heavy rain and onrush of water from the hills have added to our woes," he added.

Israel Mia, 49, head of a six-member family, said they are passing days amid sufferings due to unemployment in the peak season.

Kanai Mia, 38, said his house remained waterlogged for three months and he left home as the water level saw a sharp rise one month ago.

"Finding no way, I made a small makeshift room on the embankment to stay here. Now boats are the only means to go inside Bandherpara village.

"We are living on the embankment amid risk of accidents as there is no alternative," said one Husna Begum.

Md Al Amin, local member of Akhailakura Union Parishad, said, "All the houses at Bandherpara village went under water, forcing the 85 families to leave their home. They are living with their cattle on the embankment for nearly one month, making small makeshift houses. We're giving them small amounts of relief materials received from the authorities."

Dr Satykam Chakraborty, civil surgeon of Moulvibazar, said a medical team has been sent to help the people of Bandherpara.

BNP leader dies in Jessore jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A local BNP leader died at Jessore Central Jail on Monday night.

The deceased was Badiur Rahman, 46, vice-president of Bagharpara municipality unit BNP and son of late Abdul Gani Shikder.

District unit General Secretary Syed Saberul Haque Sabu at a press conference in Jessore Press Club yesterday said the BNP leader died due to negligence of the jail authorities.

Jailor Abu Taleb said the BNP leader died due to heart failure while undergoing treatment at Jessore General Hospital. He rejected the allegation of negligence.

Jessore General Hospital Medical Officer Dr Kajol Mallik told journalists that Badiur was brought dead to the hospital.

Elderly woman murdered by son

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

An elderly woman was killed by her son allegedly over family feud in Mathbaria upazila of the district on Monday.

The deceased, Sajeda Begum, 59, wife of Abdul Jabbar, was a resident of Bholmara village in the upazila.

Baro Machhua Union Parishad Chairman Mohammad Nasir Ahmed said Sajeda's son Abdur Rahim, 30, got locked in a quarrel with her over different family issues.

At one stage, Rahim hacked his mother with a spade, leaving her dead on the spot.

Rahim later dumped the body in a pond adjacent to their house and went into hiding, the UIP chairman said.

Later in the evening, Rahim phoned his brother-in-law Faruk Hawlader of neighbouring Ulubaria village and told him when and how he committed the gruesome murder.

Police sent the body to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Mathbaria Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) KM Tarikul Islam.

The deceased's husband Abdul Jabbar filed a murder case with the police station against Rahim yesterday, the OC said.

Nationalise century-old school

Demand Gaibandha people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Locals, guardians and students of Sadullapur Pilot Model High School, a non-government institution in Sadullapur upazila, yesterday demanded immediate nationalisation of the century-old school.

They demanded this at a human chain programme, organised by the school authority in the upazila headquarters, and chanted slogans to press home their demand.

Speakers at the rally said, the school, established in 1918 on 6.66 acres of land, has been achieving brilliant results in all public examinations for years.

Although many less qualified schools across the country were nationalised recently, Sadullapur Pilot Model High School is yet to be nationalised due to unknown reasons, they said.

The speakers said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at a public meeting at the school premises in 2001, assured locals of nationalising the institution if her party was re-elected, but it was not listed for the government enrolment yet.

Sadullapur Upazila Chairman Saidur Rahman Munshi, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal upazila president Anser Ali Sarker, and Headmaster Ensad Ali, spoke at the programme.

Schoolboy killed by classmate in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A schoolboy was hacked to death by his classmate in front of their school under Kashiani upazila in Gopalganj yesterday.

The deceased is Barkat Ullah Prince, 13, son of Hanif Mollah of Jotkura village and a Class VII student of Ramdia SK High School.

Quoting students and teachers of the school, Ramdia police outpost Sub-Inspector Md Hadi Abdullah said Barkat was locked in an altercation with his classmate Shaha Alam at a coaching centre over seat arrangement in the morning.

Shaha Alam got angry as Barkat tore off his shirt at one stage of altercation, he said. Later, Shaha Alam called Barkat out of their classroom and stabbed him in front of their school around 10:00am, he added.

Assistant Headmaster Sajal Kanti Biswas said teachers and students rushed Barkat to Gopalganj General Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Malta cultivation gets popular in Khagrachhari

SAIKAT DEWAN, Khagrachhari

Farmers in the district have been cultivating malta for the last few years as they have found it to be a profitable crop.

Trishul Chakma, a government employee, started a malta orchard beside his house four years ago. The trees have yielded fruit for the last two years, and he earned good profit by selling those. Many other farmers have also benefited from malta gardens in the district.

They are getting help and advice from the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) as maintaining a malta garden needs regular and timely use of fertilizers and pesticides.

This correspondent recently visited three malta gardens, two at Gargajachhari in Sadar upazila and one at Jagantoli area in Mahalchhari upazila. Most of the trees in these gardens yield an average of 70-80 fruits per tree.

Trishul has eighty two trees next to his house at Gargajachhari village. He

earned Tk 90,000 last year and Tk 1.10 lakh this year.

Jebon Dewan, a youth of the same area, told this correspondent that he started a garden four years ago to get rid of the curse of unemployment. He has 120 malta trees in his garden and has been getting the fruit for the last two years. He expects to earn Tk 1 lakh this year.

Time passes quickly when he is working in the garden, Jebon said. He said he wants to make a bigger garden with the help of DAE.

Kalababu Chakma, a gardener of Jagantoali village, said he planted 350 malta trees four years ago. This year, he got yield from 140 of them and earned a profit of Tk 2.5 lakh.

Assistant Director of Khagrachhari DAE Tarun Bhattacharya said malta is being cultivated on 230 hectares of land in the district. Bari-1 and local varieties of malta are being cultivated in these gardens. However, cultivation of Bari-1 malta is the highest.



Trishul Chakma and his wife taking care of malta at their garden in Gargajachhari village under Sadar upazila of Khagrachhari. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: STAR