



Flood victims take shelter at a homestead built above the level of floodwater in the Teesta river bed of Lalmonirhat's Hatiabandha upazila. Left, a two-storied government primary school building collapsed after a gush of floodwater entered through the breach of flood control dyke at Ketkirhat in Gaibandha's Fulchhari upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Floods wash away 88 tonnes of fish

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Fish of 582 ponds were washed away by recent floods in Rangpur while hundreds of houses went under floodwater in char areas of Lalmonirhat.

Floods washed away around 88 tonnes of fish worth Tk 1.85 crore from the ponds in three upazilas of Rangpur, reports our Dinaipur correspondent.

Besides, structures worth Tk 23.11 lakh surrounding the ponds were washed away by the floodwater, said fisheries officials of the district.

The affected upazilas are Gangachhara, Kaunia and Pargachha. Gangachhara was the worst affected area.

In Gangachhara, fish worth Tk 1.36 crore of 495 ponds were washed away by floods. Besides, floodwater washed away structures worth Tk 22.55 lakh surrounding the ponds.

In Kaunia, 4.27 tonnes of fish of 50 ponds were flooded. The market price of the fish was around Tk 7.15 lakh.

In Pargachha, 6.66 tonnes of fish of 37 ponds in the upazila were washed away by floodwater. The market price of the fish was Tk 7.62 lakh.

Structures of Tk 1.31 lakh were damaged.

Shamiul Islam, a fish farmer of Mohna village in Gangachhara upazila, said floodwater washed away a variety of fish like pabda and rui worth Tk 15 lakh from his pond on 50 decimals of land.

Latifur Rahman, deputy director of Rangpur Fisheries Department, said fish production may decline this year as a large number of ponds have been washed away by floodwaters.

According to our Lalmonirhat correspondent, 235 out of 250 homesteads in Sindurna char in the Teesta river bed of Hatiabandha upazila.

The rest houses were not inundated. Those were built 4-5 feet height above water level so that flood victims in the area can use the homesteads as safe shelters.

Two months ago, these 15 houses were built under Integrated Communication Development Project (ICDP)-II of Eco-Social Development Organisation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), funded by

PLAN International Bangladesh. Different trees were planted surrounding the homesteads.

Like Sindurna char, there are 1500 families in 12 chars in the river bed of the district, said NGO officials.

A large number of houses in the areas went under floodwater every year.

Floodwaters started to recede in many areas from Sunday, said locals.

Farmer Shamsul Islam of the char area said their houses went under floodwaters for 10 days since July 9, but they did not go to the flood centre like previous years this time as they took shelter at the homesteads.

Rangpur Divisional Manager of PLAN International Bangladesh Asis Kumar Bakshi said they could build only 15 houses for ultra-

poor people due to insufficient funds.

They will inform the government high officials about the matter, he said.

Meanwhile, over 100 houses and a two-storied government primary school building got flooded as gushing water entered through the breach of flood control dyke at Ketkirhat in Gaibandha's Fulchhari upazila on Saturday, reports our correspondent.

Locals said as floodwater entered through the breach, a large portion of the dyke collapsed, inundating the houses and Ketkirhat Government Primary School.

Nazimuddin, a farmer of the area, said around 400 students of the institution are facing uncertainty over their education as the school went under floodwater.

Blame game leaves 500 bighas of land uncultivated

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

As many as 250 farmers in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila are paying a heavy price as bureaucratic tangles among three organisations left their irrigation solar pumps, six in total, in ruins for the last three years.

The pumps were set up at Hardebpur Garar Beel in 2014 under a project implemented by local nongovernmental organisation (NGO) AID Foundation, with assistance from government organisation Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL). The equipment for the irrigation systems was supplied by Energypac Green Solutions.

By 2016, all six pumps went out of order one after another, but their supplier refused to repair those due to non-payment.

Ever since all the pumps stopped functioning, the farmers have been incurring huge loss without any means of irrigation for Irri or Boro paddy on a vast tract of land, around 500 bighas. A handful of them have been making a meagre living by hiring shallow pumps to cultivate winter crops that require minimal irrigation.

AID Foundation Managing Director Tarikul Islam Palash, however, did not take responsibility for the situation. Rather, he said the NGO already cleared 70 percent of the payment for the project, but it was Energypac that stopped conducting maintenance of the pumps for their unpaid dues from IDCOL.

Local IDCOL official did not respond to repeated calls made by this correspondent on his cellphone, while Energypac official Mohammad Aktaruzzaman could not be reached for comments as his phone was found unreachable.

Many farmers said they were happy with the environment-friendly solar pumps for their low noise. Most importantly, the pumps greatly lowered their production cost as they no longer needed to spend any money on fuel or electricity



Hardebpur Village Farmers' Association President Uday Shankar Biswas in a recent photo shows a defective electrical device inside a pump house in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

to operate those, as opposed to conventional shallow pumps.

But unfortunately, before the solar pumps started malfunctioning, the farmers had already sold their old irrigation pumps.

Moni Kumar and Sunil Shikdar, two farmers from Hardebpur village, said they sold the old shallow pumps without anticipating such situation. But now, after the solar pumps stopped working, they could not afford to buy new pumps for irrigation again.

Uday Shankar Biswas, president of Hardebpur

Village Farmers' Association, said the farmers were immensely benefited by the solar pumps that provided a cost-effective solution to them with abundant water for irrigation.

In their effort to draw attention of the authorities concerned, they submitted memorandums to Jhenidah-4 lawmaker Anwarul Azim, Kaliganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Subarna Rani Saha and Upazila Agriculture Officer Jahid Hossain.

But as yet, nothing has happened to this effect, he added.

Diarrhoea claims 2 lives in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Diarrhoea claimed at least two lives and infected 9 others in Basanta Pangkhao Para, a village in Balukhali union under Rangamati Sadar upazila, in the last ten days.

The deceased are Vanrokimi Pangkhao, 38, and Lal Lom Pangkhao, 20. Both of them died on way to hospital -- Vanrokimi on July 10 and Lal Lom on July 20, said locals.

Panic-stricken villagers have been staying away from the village and taking refuge at nearby jhum houses, said Chiyal Jowl Pangkhao, headman of the para.

Shahid Talukdar, civil surgeon in Rangamati, said a medical team has been sent to Basanta Pangkhao Para on July 11 and it has been providing necessary treatment to patients there. The team has already distributed water purifying tablets and oral saline to 28 families that live in the village.

"Consumption of dirty water might have spread this waterborne disease... We have been advising the villagers to boil water and use water purifying tablets [in it] before drinking," he said, adding that at least 3,035 people were infected with diarrhoea in the last six months in the district.

Bijoy Giri Chakma, chairman of Balukhali union parishad, said the village has around 150 inhabitants, who usually collect water from small creeks in the hills and do not boil or purify it before consumption.

They might have been infected with diarrhoea due to the practice and poor roads in the remote village might have been the reason for the deaths on way to hospital, he also said.

Woman 'killed'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A woman was killed allegedly by her husband over the latter's extramarital affair at College para in Nandigram upazila headquarters on Sunday.

The deceased is Mouyuri Begum, 28, wife of Masud Rana of the area.

The victim's father alleged that an altercation took place between Mouyuri and Masud over the latter's extramarital affair with a woman on Saturday night.

"After the incident, Masud phoned me and asked to take my daughter, otherwise she will be killed," said the father.

On information, police recovered the hanging body from a tree near the house in the morning.

Masud and his father Osman Fakir went into hiding soon after the incident, said police.

It would be clear whether it was murder or suicide after getting the autopsy report, said Shawkat Kabir, officer-in-charge of Nandigram Police Station.

Netrakona schoolgirl yet to be rescued

A case was filed accusing 3 people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A schoolgirl, who went missing on way to her school from home in Netrakona's Kendua upazila about six days ago, is yet to be rescued.

The victim was identified as Dipti Rani Biswasharma, 14, daughter of Shirish Biswasharma of Bhatargati Parashurapur village in the upazila and a Class IX student at Ashujia JNC High School.

On July 17, Dipti's father lodged a case with Kendua Police Station accusing one of her classmates Moni Rani Bormon and her two elder brothers--Sujit Bormon, 25, and Pradip Bormon, 28.

Quoting the case statement, Sub Inspector (SI) of Kendua Police Station Mohammad Ahadul Islam said Dipti went out of her house for school on July 16 and did not return home.

Family members searched for her in every possible places, but failed to know about her whereabouts.

Recently, Dipti had a quarrel with her classmate Moni of adjacent Ashujia village over a trifling matter.

After the incident, Moni's family members threatened Dipti and after getting the threat Dipti had stopped her schooling for the last couple of days, said the SI, also the investigation officer of the case.

After filing of the case, police arrested one of the accused Sujit for his alleged involvement in abducting the girl and produced him before a Netrakona court on Friday that sent him to jail, he said, adding that Moni and Pradip went into hiding since filing of the case.

Police drives are on to rescue the girl and arrest the other accused in the case soon, said the SI.

Three kids drown

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three children drowned in Patuakhali and Joypurhat yesterday.

Two kids drowned in a pond at Debpur village in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, reports our correspondent.

The deceased are Mim, 5, daughter of Jalal Shikder, and her cousin Tamim, 2, son of Kamal Shikder.

Quoting family members, Md Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kalapara Police Station, said the two accidentally fell into the pond near their home while playing on its bank and drowned.

Family members later recovered the bodies from the pond, said the OC.

According to our Dinaipur correspondent, a five-year-old girl drowned in a river of Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila yesterday noon.

The victim is Tasfia, daughter of Jahidul Islam of Shimultoli village in the upazila.

Five get life term for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday sentenced five people, including a former Jubo Dal leader, to life term imprisonment for killing a man in Saltha upazila on June 2 in 2006.

The convicts are Siraj Mollah, 36, former organising secretary of Char Joshordi union unit of Jubo Dal, and his four associates Naya Mollah, 60, Imarat Mollah, 32, Kalam Mollah, 38, and Siddik Mollah, 36, of Char Joshordi village in the upazila, Public Prosecutor (PP) of Faridpur Special Judge's Court Golam Rabanni Babu Mridha said.

Judge Mohammad Motiar Rahman of Faridpur Special Judge's Court delivered the verdict in presence of the convicts. The court also fined them Tk 50, 000 each, in default, they are to suffer six months more in jail, the PP added.

According to the case statement, Siraj and his supporters formed a gang and used to extort people in Char Joshordi area.

In June, 2006, Siraj picked up Chonchala Sikdar, daughter of Kartik Sikdar, and forcibly married her.

After the marriage, demanded a handsome amount as toll from Kartik and when Kartik failed to fulfil his demand Siraj and his men beat him mercilessly on June 1, leaving him injured.

He also threatened Kartik's family members not to disclose their involvement in the murder to anyone else.

Later, critically injured Kartik succumbed to his injuries on way to a hospital early June 2.

Later, Kartik's wife Molini Sikder filed a case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court accusing six people on March 13 in 2007.

After investigation, police pressed charges against five people the same year and arrested them.



Academic activities at Town Model Government Girls' Primary School in Habiganj Sadar upazila has been suspended for an indefinite period after three students of the institution sustained injuries when chunks of ceiling plaster of one of the classrooms fell on them on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR