

Manikganj girl dies of dengue

She breathed her last at a private clinic in the capital's Uttara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A schoolgirl in the district died of dengue fever in Dhaka on Friday night.

Rubaiya Aktar, 11, daughter of Abdur Rashid of Koyra village in Shibalay upazila, breathed her last at a private clinic in the capital's Uttara around 8:30pm, said her maternal uncle Yunus Ali.

She was a Class VI student of Rupsha Wahed Ali High School in the upazila.

Yunus said Rubaiya was first taken to the upazila health complex on Thursday morning with fever.

Due to lack of test facilities there, they later took her to a local private clinic, he said, adding that she was then diagnosed with dengue fever at the clinic.

Around 1:10pm on Friday, Rubaiya was taken to Manikganj District Hospital where on-duty doctor referred her to Dhaka for better treatment.

She was taken to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital but they failed to admit there, said Yunus, adding that she was later rushed to a private clinic in Uttara where doctors declared her dead.

Dr Abdul Awal, superintendent of Manikganj District Hospital, said Rubaiya was taken to the hospital with dengue fever but they referred her to Dhaka for better treatment as her condition worsened.

With the schoolgirl, six people of Manikganj died of dengue fever, said doctors at different hospitals in the district. At least 1,300 dengue patients received treatment at various hospitals in the district. Meanwhile, over hundred dengue patients have been admitted to different hospitals in Manikganj yesterday.



Rubaiya Aktar



An Aman field in Narail. Inset, cracks have developed in a dried up paddy field at Badiakhali in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

PHOTOS: STAR

Lack of rain hits Aman farming in Gaibandha, Narail

Irrigation adds to cultivation cost; poor farmers give up hope for paddy growing this season

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A drought-like prevailing for the last couple of weeks hits Aman paddy farming in different areas.

In many places of Gaibandha, cracks developed in the dried up crop fields and many farmers, especially poor and marginal ones, could not transplant seedlings as they cannot afford the irrigation cost, reports our correspondent.

High prices of Aman seedlings is also discouraging many farmers to cultivate Aman while growth of freshly transplanted seedlings is hampered due to lack of water.

Solvent farmers are using own power pumps to irrigate Aman fields, but others have to pay Tk 100 to 150 per hour for irrigation, which adds to the production cost.

"I planted pricey Aman seedlings on five bighas of land, for which I had to borrow money from different sources. Now I have to count additional cost for irrigation to save the seedlings but water in field dries quickly due to scorching heat of the sun,"

said Wahedul Islam of Sonaidanga village in Gobindaganj upazila.

Sirajul, another farmer of the same village, said he cultivated Aman on three bighas of land after buying seedlings at a high price.

"Due to the high cost of Aman cultivation that includes irrigation, I have kept two bighas of land unused. It will be difficult to recover the production cost of Aman."

Many poor farmers in seven upazilas of the district have already given up hope for Aman cultivation this season.

SM Ferdous, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Gaibandha, said, "The last flood damaged seedbeds on 2,881 hectares of land and transplanted Aman seedlings on 7,520 hectares of land. And so, it is difficult to achieve the target of cultivation on 1.23 lakh and 68 hectares of land."

The department has started distribution of Aman seedlings among the flood-hit farmers free of cost for one bigha each to

increase areas of Aman cultivation this season, he added.

Our Bagerhat Correspondent reports: Aman farming in Narail faces a setback due to lack of inadequate rainfall this season.

This year farmers in the district have cultivated Aman on 37,260 hectares of land against the official target of 37,010 hectares, said sources at the DAE.

During a recent visit to Chasra Dakkhin Para of Narail Sadar upazila, this correspondent saw cracks in dried up Aman fields while many farmers are planting seedlings with irrigation from shallow pumps.

"I have cultivated Aman on 10 bighas of land. Like me, many farmers prepared their lands for cultivation with water drawn by shallow or deep power pump. I will have to spend at least Tk 15,000 for per bigha of land till the harvest as irrigation adds to the cost," said Ali Haider Litu, 45, a farmer of Chasra Dakkhin Para.

"Many others, mostly marginal farmers and sharecroppers, are still waiting for

rainwater. It would be helpful if the government provides shallow machines and pipes for the farmers," said Ali, also president of 130 farmer groups in Narail Sadar upazila.

Each group comprising 30 members is called Common Interest Group (CIG).

Raju Ahmed of the area said, "I have cultivated Aman on about two bighas of land after reaping jute in Bangla month of Bhadra. But this year the production cost will increase as we did not get enough rain. It would be helpful if we get at least a shallow machine and pipe for every group."

Chinmoy Roy, deputy director of Narail DAE, said, "This year our target of Aman cultivation area has exceeded but lack of rain hits the farm ers. The ministry concerned has taken a Tk 1000-crore mega project for buying agricultural machinery including power pumps for farmers across the country. We will distribute the items for a token money to 130 CIG units of farmers."

BAN ON FISHING IN NAF RIVER

Livelihood of Teknaf fishermen under threat

Influx of Rohingya refugees also puts 8,000 fishermen in hardship

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, back from Cox's Bazar

A ban on fishing in the Naf river and unavailability of work due to the Rohingyas influx has put the livelihoods of 8,000 fishermen in jeopardy in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila.

The ban, which was imposed on August 25, 2017 by the government to curb yaba trafficking into Bangladesh and the ferry of Rohingyas, is still in force.

The situation has aggravated over time as locals struggle to find work as rickshaw pullers or temporary workers for the availability of cheap Rohingya labourers.

Fishermen have urged the government to lift the ban and adopt strict monitoring to stop yaba trade via the Naf river.

"We will cooperate to help the government catch those fishermen who smuggle yaba or ferry Rohingyas under the umbrella of fishing," Gura Mia, president of Naitong Fishermen Association, a village adjacent to Naf River, told The Daily Star recently.

"All we want is the government to lift the ban for the sake of our

livelihoods."

At least 50,000 family members of 13,000 fishermen are in a dire situation due to the ban on the 52-kilometre-long river, he added.

"The ban could at least be lifted during the daytime and imposed at night, as that is when the unscrupulous fishermen might ply the waters," he suggested.

About 170 families of Naitong para used to live off fishing at the river prior to the Rohingyas influx. They are now living in debt, he said.

"We don't know how long we can continue to live by borrowing money," said Md Ibrahim, former president of Naitong Para Fishermen Association, told The Daily Star.

They organised a human chain thrice in the last two years and submitted memorandums to the deputy commissioner (DC) in Cox's Bazar and upazila nirbahi officer concerned to solve our crisis. But it was in vain, he added.

They received 20 kilograms of rice in the first year of the ban and 40 kilograms in the second year. "This is all that we received as assistance from

the government, which is not enough for us."

According to Teknaf Upazila Fisheries Office, there are 8,000 registered and 5,000 unregistered fishermen in Teknaf upazila.

Delwar Hossen, senior fisheries officer of Teknaf upazila, told The Daily Star they were running a project in cooperation from World Fish, a non-government organisation to ensure alternative income generation for the fishermen.

But the fishermen said they were not made involved in any income generation project.

Contacted Mohammad Ashraf Afsar, additional deputy commissioner (ADC revenue) in Cox's Bazar told The Daily Star that the ban was enforced to tackle the yaba trading and stop Rohingyas to be ferried using Naf river.

"After two years we assessed the situation and will take the hardship the fishermen of into account", he said, adding that they wrote to the high ups to find a way on how to resume the fishing to alleviate the sufferings of local fishermen.



Fishing boats lying idle along the Naf river at Natong Para in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila since a ban on fishing was imposed in August 2017.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN



Hundreds of locals formed a human chain at Dhunail in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila last week, demanding action against the contractor concerned for using substandard materials in newly renovated Bhadra-Boptior road and the upazila engineer for his alleged negligence in supervising the road repair work.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Anukul Chandra festival begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A three-day festival marking the 132th anniversary of birth of Hindu saint Thakur Anukul Chandra began at his birthplace in Pabna's Hemayetpur Satsangha Ashram on Friday.

The traditional festival is arranged to highlight the great man's lessons to establish fraternity among all, organizers said.

Lawmaker from Pabna-5 Golam Faruk Khandaker Prince inaugurated the festival on Friday night.

President of Satsangha Ashram Dr Rabindranath Sarkar presided over the programme while Additional Secretary Ranajit Das, Pabna Deputy Commissioner Kabir Mahamud and Superintendent of Police Rafikul Islam, spoke among others.

A large number of devotees from across the country and abroad joined the holy festival.

The devotees offer special prayers, listen to Thakur's messages and render spiritual songs during the festival.

Nurse's death sparks protest in Pabna

Demanding justice, nurses of different hospitals formed human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The 'mysterious' death of a nurse of a local clinic sparked protests in the district town yesterday.

Nurses of different hospitals and clinics, students of Pabna Nursing Training Institute and relatives of the deceased formed a human chain, demanding justice over the death of the nurse in front of Pabna Press Club in the town.

The deceased was Sumi Khatun, 22, daughter of Saikat Ali of Laxmipur village in Atghoria upazila, and a nurse of Sunrise Clinic in the town.

She was found dead in the clinic on Wednesday. Speakers at the programme said Sumi might have been killed at his work place.

They also urged the authorities concerned to find out the culprits.

The deceased's father at the human chain also demanded justice over his daughter's death.

"I want justice for my daughter so that nobody faces the same situation," said the father.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Pabna Sadar Police Station Obaidul Haque said the victim might have committed suicide.

An unnatural death case was filed in connection with the incident, said the OC.

Whether Sumi's death was suicide or murder will be known only after getting the postmortem report, he said.

They were investigating the incident, said the police official.

TRAWLER CAPSIZE

3 fishermen missing in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Three fishermen went missing in the Bay of Bengal as a fishing trawler capsized in the sea in Sonarchar area under Rangabali upazila on Friday.

The victims are Md Nayeem, 20, son of Nur Islam, Md Kabir Hossain, 35, son of Saju Bepari and Farhad, 30, son of Ijol Poddar of Gongapur village in Bhola's Borhanuddin upazila.

Md Seraj Poddar, owner of the trawler, said 12 fishermen on the trawler went to the Bay for fishing four days ago.

Around 12:30am on Friday, the trawler capsized in the area due to rough weather.

A trawler rescued nine fishermen from the water yesterday while the rest are still missing, said Seraj.

Ali Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Rangabali Police Station, confirmed the incident.