



Like the one in photo, many tube wells under Jadimura union in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila have run dry as the ground water level in the area has gone down. Right, some labourers are seen engaged in installing a new tube well in the same area.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# Underground water in Teknaf, Ukhia receding fast

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, back from Cox's Bazar

Locals struggle to source water for daily needs as thousands of shallow tube wells installed in Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas in 2017 to meet the water demands of more than a million Rohingya refugees have been taking a toll on ground water levels.

The host community is unable to secure water from 2,000 tube wells out of around 3,000 tube wells as the water level in the areas has dipped, according to data from the local union parishad (UP).

The Rohingyas used to each collect an average of 20 litres of water a day when they first arrived. As such, demand for daily water for 11 lakh Rohingyas stands at 2.2 crore litres at the Rohingya camps in the two upazilas.

Due to the water crisis, the amount they are able to draw has now reduced to about 15 litres, according to Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC).

According to United Nations High

*Thousands of tube wells installed to meet the demand of a million of Rohingya refugees taking toll on ground water levels*

Commissioner for Refugees, at least 20,000 tube wells were installed within a short period in Kutupalong area under Rajapalong union after the Rohingya exodus began in 2017.

RRRC confirmed that at least 244 tube wells went dry as of August this year at the Kutupalong Rohingya camps.

This correspondent visited and spoke to some locals in the areas hit by the water crisis. They urged the government to take step urgently to mitigate the crisis, which they say has intensified

after the Rohingya influx.

Zamir Uddin from Rajapalong union, which hosts the world's biggest refugee camp, told The Daily Star that life was becoming difficult for a shortage of water.

"We are worried about the availability of irrigation water as well," added Zamir, a farmer by profession.

Mohammad Alam of Jadimura village in Teknaf, a technician who installs tube wells, told The Daily Star that his team used to discover aquifers by boring 60 to 70 feet under the ground.

But for the last one year, they have had to dig down to an average of 500 feet to reach the water table.

Shafi Ahmed of Mochonipara in Teknaf was installing a new tube well with the help of the technician when this correspondent visited the area.

"I have to spend Tk 1,30,000 for this new deep tube well, as the previous one in my home has dried up. I had spent around Tk 15,000 to install the

previous one."

Hundreds of tube wells at Nayapara, Mochonipara and Jadimura seemed to have dried up when this correspondent visited the three villages.

These three villages host at least 1,40,000 Rohingyas against a host community force of 14,000.

Azizul Haque Kajol, a local from Hnila union, said the areas adjacent to the Rohingya camps were facing a serious water crisis.

The shallow tube wells were sufficient to meet water demand previously. But now that thousands of tube wells have been installed, the crisis has worsened, he added.

Md Saifur Rahman, superintendent engineer at the Public Health and Engineering (ground water) Department, acknowledged that the Rohingya influx had an impact on underground water at these two upazilas.

The government has taken a decision to not install any shallow tube wells at the camps, as the rate of water

excavation is much higher than the rate of replenishment.

"We are looking at sourcing surface water as much as we can, in cooperation with the aid agencies," he said.

Mohammed Ashraful Afsar, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) in Cox's Bazar, told The Daily Star that they were aware of the fact that underground water was receding in Teknaf and Ukhia.

"We urged the department concerned to assess how far the water level has receded and asked aid agencies to look for surface water," he added.

There is no official study on the water crisis situation, but locals and public representatives said that there was a moderate flow of water in the Teknaf wells, while the underground flow of water in Ukhia was rich.

After the Rohingya influx, the tube wells in both upazilas have dried up or are running low, according to Hnila UP Chairman Rashed Mohammad Ali.

## Two fish farmers murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Unidentified criminals killed two fish farmers early yesterday allegedly due to previous enmity over taking lease of a local waterbody in Meherpur Sadar upazila.

Being informed, police recovered the throat-slit bodies of Rokonzaman, 36, son of late Idrish Ali, and Hasan Ali, 42, son of Azad Ali, of Darbeshpur village in the upazila from the bank of Shailmari Beel yesterday morning and sent those to Meherpur General Hospital for autopsy.

Lessees Rokonzaman and Hasan, who took lease of Shailmari Beel from the government about four years ago, used to guard the waterbody along with some labourers at night, locals said.

Unidentified criminals killed the duo around 1:30am by slitting their throats while they were sleeping inside a thatched hut on the bank of the waterbody. Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Shah Dara Khan said.

Sensing something wrong, two labourers entered the room and found the throat-slit bodies of the two, the OC added.

Meherpur Superintendent of Police (SP) SM Murad Ali visited the spot and said the slain duo had previous enmity with another group over taking lease of the waterbody.

Azad Ali, father of slain Hasan Ali, said a group of ruling party men of the same area had been threatening his son for dire consequences.

They were investigating the reason behind the murders, the OC said.

## Worker dies falling from building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A construction worker died after falling from the roof of an under construction seven-storey building in Sutrapur area of Bogura town yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Aminur Rashid, 55, son of Mozammel Haque of Nishindhara area of the town.

Inspector of Sadar Police Station Rezaul Karim said Aminur fell from the second floor of the seven-storey building while working there around 12:30pm.

Fellow workers and locals rescued Aminur and took him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, where the doctors declared him dead.

## Recent floods snap road communication

*Approach roads of 40 bridges and culverts in Saghata upazila washed away by surging water*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Communications have been snapped as approach roads of 40 bridges and culverts on different roads connecting 10 unions in Saghata upazila have been washed away by recent floods, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

Under the disaster management and relief ministry, the village roads, bridges and culverts are being constructed for smooth communication.

In July, the prolonged floodwater has washed away approach roads of 40 culverts and bridges, snapping the road communications, said Mithun Kundu, project implementation officer in the upazila.

Meanwhile, four bridges -- Bati bridge, Kaderdaha bridge, Anata bridge and Jumarbari bridge -- partially collapsed as the surging water hit its pillars.

Ataur Rahman, a resident of Bati village in the upazila, said the construction work

of a bridge on Trimohoni-Bonarpara road in the area was completed before the rainy season.

Soon after completion of the construction work, flood hit the area and washed away the approach roads of the bridge, snapping communication, he said.

Road communication of the area with the upazila and district headquarters still remained snapped, said Ataur.

Rafiqul Islam, a rickshaw-van puller, said he was compelled to stop pulling rickshaw-van on bumpy roads in the area.

Saidur Rahman, a petty trader of Munshirhat in the upazila, said they face immense problem to carry goods from the district headquarters as any drivers and rickshaw pullers do not want to cross the damaged roads.

Project Implementation Officer Mithun Kundu said the renovation work of damaged roads and bridges will be started soon after the water from damaged points recedes.



The approach roads of a bridge on Trimohoni-Bonarpara road in Gaibandha's Saghata upazila have been washed away by recent floods, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

PHOTO: KM REZAUL HOQUE



Carpeting of this newly constructed road at Jharbari village in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur got removed due to alleged use of substandard materials. Following allegations, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Yamin Hossain yesterday ordered suspension of the ongoing work of the 1.5-kilometre road from Jharbari to KDS Bazar in Birganj.

PHOTO: STAR

## TAKING CONTROL OF ILLEGAL SAND STATION 11 injured as two rival groups clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

At least 11 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups over taking control of an illegal sand station on the east end of Bangabandhu Bridge in Bhupur upazila yesterday.

The injured were admitted to Bhupur Upazila Health Complex. Of them, four were later referred to Tangail General Hospital for better treatment.

Quoting locals and witnesses, police said the clash took place between the supporters of Abdul Matin Sarkar, chairman of Nikrail union parishad (UP), and men of Noor Alam Mondol alias Nohu, a member of the UP, in Sirajkandi Bazar area that 11 people from both sides injured.

Being informed, police immediately went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Officer in Charge of Bhupur Police Station Rashidul Islam said there had been a longstanding rivalry between the two groups over taking control of the sand station.

Locals alleged that some influential people, having political clout, have been running the sand business centring at least 18 illegal sand stations stretching from Palshia to Jigatala on the east side of the bridge.

Although sand lifting is prohibited within six-kilometre radius of the bridge, some unscrupulous traders continue lifting sand illegally from the Jamuna river.

Recently the upazila administration launched separate mobile court drives in the two sand stations and fined two sand traders.

They also jailed one of the traders for seven days for lifting sand illegally from near the bridge.

## Man killed over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A man was killed in an attack allegedly over a disputed land in Gafargaon upazila of the district early yesterday.

The victim, Humayun Mia, 28, was son of late Matin Mia of Rauna village in the upazila.

Quoting locals, Officer in Charge (Investigation) of Gafargaon Police Station Monirul Islam said there had been a feud between Humayun and Shahar Ali of adjacent Dhopaghat Namapara village over a disputed land for long.

As a sequel, Shahar's men attacked Humayun's house around 8:00pm on Wednesday night and looted valuables when none of the family members were present at the house, said the OC.

Hearing the news, Humayun and his younger brother went to Dhopaghat Bazar but as soon they reached there some 30 people allegedly loyal to Shahar attacked them with sharp weapons, leaving the two severely injured.

Later, Humayun died while he was on his way to a hospital in the capital around 4:00am, the OC added.