



The Nabaganga river continues devouring fresh areas at Suktogram, one of the erosion-affected villages, in Narail's Kalia upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Erosion threatens two Narail villages

Around 150 homesteads, 85 acres of land in one of the erosion-affected villages have already been devoured by the river Nabaganga

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, back from Narail

Continuous erosion by the river Nabaganga is threatening the homes and livelihoods of 400 families in two villages of Narail's Kalia upazila.

Around 150 homesteads and 85 acres of arable land of Suktogram, one of the erosion-affected villages, have already been devoured by the river since last monsoon, said locals.

Babura Hachla Union Parishad Chairman Mozammel Hossain Pikul said residents of Suktogram and Hachla villages under his union are spending

their days in fear.

Seven families in Suktogram are in serious threat of losing their homes to erosion this year, he claimed.

If Suktogram disappears from the map because of erosion then Halcha would be next in line, he said with concern.

This year, Suktogram villagers are worried that erosion might wash away religious, business, educational and health establishments situated on the bank of the river.

Kuddus, 65, a resident of Kumarpara of Suktogram village, became a homeless day-labourer

after the Nabaganga river devoured three acres of his farmland and homestead, last year.

"I am now living with my family in a make-shift shelter on the bank of the river," he said.

At the beginning of last monsoon, Kumarpara and Charpara adjacent to the Suktogram bazar were devoured by the river, said Ali Molla, a resident of the area.

"Many families in the village have lost everything and became helpless. The homeless families have taken shelter in the bazar along the riverbank and at their relatives'

homes," he added.

Tobarok, 61, of Charpara has lost 35 acres of his cropland and homestead on 2.5 acres of land to erosion caused by the Nabaganga.

"I am currently living on 15 decimals of land. I don't know what to do if this land too is devoured by the river," he said.

Villagers are afraid that erosion would turn severe by the end of the rainy season when water recedes in Nabaganga.

Even the Suktogram Bazar, which Water Development Board (WDB) tried to protect by dumping sand bags on

the riverbank, might disappear, said villager Uttam Paul.

The local village market with about 150 shops is notable in the region for livestock and pottery trade, he added.

Narail Water Development Board Executive Engineer Md Shahnoyaz Talukder said, "We have already saved the bazar of Suktogram. Now a brick-field and cropland about 300 metres downstream from the bazar are under threat of erosion. We need fund to stop it."

He said, necessary steps will be taken if the situation at the village becomes too risky.

4 godowns gutted in Manikganj, Faridpur

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three cotton godowns, a jute godown and nine shops were gutted in separate fire incidents of Manikganj and Faridpur districts yesterday, report our correspondents.

Three tin-shed cotton godowns were gutted at Kamta village in Sauria upazila of Manikganj yesterday.

Halima Khatun, worker of a godown, said the fire originated from a running machine in a room beside the godown around 11:00am.

The blaze spread rapidly and gutted the adjoining tin-shed godowns, she said.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the blaze with the help of locals, said a fire official.

The extent of loss caused by the fire could not be ascertained immediately, said Station Officer of Manikganj Fire Service Unit Khandaker Jannatul Naim.

Meanwhile, a jute godown and nine shops were gutted in a fire in Magchami Mridhar Bazar area of Madhukhali upazila in Faridpur.

Locals said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at one Bachchu Mia's jute godown and soon spread to the adjacent shops at Magchami Mridhar Bazar around 2:00am.

On information, two teams of Madhukhali Fire Service and Civil Defence rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after three hours of frantic efforts, said Titob Shikdar, station officer of Madhukhali Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 3 crore, said the station officer.

Seven cases filed

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Tk 4 crore and six firearms stashed in five vaults in those houses.

According to the Rab, Enamul, vice-president of Gendaria unit Awami League, and his brother Rupon, joint general secretary of the unit, own the money, gold and firearms.

Enamul bought the gold as there was no space in the five vaults to keep the proceeds from the casino business, Rab said.

Together, the two brothers own 15 houses, and they used their firearms to terrorise people in the area, according to Rab.

Rab started the drive against illegal casinos, bars and spa centres on September 19 and arrested Dhaka City South Jubo League Organising Secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, construction mogul SM Golam Kibria Shamim and AL leader and Kalabagan Kriya Chakra President Shafiqul Alam Firoz.

During the drive, over 200 others were arrested while some of the casinos were sealed off.

Losing habitat, jackals attacking villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Several hundred inhabitants in a village in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila have been guarding their village with sticks after at least 30 of them were injured in attacks of a pack of golden jackals since Wednesday evening.

The jackals started attacking residents of Betgari village after some of the villagers started clearing surrounding bamboo groves and jungles that are home to many jackals.

The villagers clearing the bushes said they needed land for building new houses.

Since Wednesday night, 24 people from the village were given rabies vaccines, confirmed Safiq Amin Kazal, resident medical officer of Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogura.

The injured had deep gashes in their limbs, the doctor also said. Villager Osima Begum, 36, said, "A golden jackal attacked me suddenly while I was working in my house on Wednesday evening. It bit me in the legs and hands. I took vaccine that night from Mohammad Ali Hospital."

"At least 25 to 30 jackals entered the village and started biting the villagers. Since Wednesday evening, people chased down and killed one jackal. Panicked villagers are now guarding the village with sticks in hands," said another villager Monju Mia Babu.

Contacted, Prof SM Iqbal of zoology department at Government MM Ali College in Tangail said, "Usually jackals don't attack humans, but they might attack if they carry rabies virus."



People form a human chain in front of a vulnerable cyclone shelter on the Ramnabad river in Chalitabunia union under Rangabali upazila on Wednesday demanding steps for protection against erosion to save their dwellings, agricultural lands and different set-ups in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Save dwellings, farmlands from erosion

Demand speakers at human chain marking 'climate strike week'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

People formed a human chain in front of a vulnerable cyclone shelter on the Ramnabad river bank in Chalitabunia union under Rangabali upazila on Wednesday demanding immediate steps to save their dwellings, agricultural lands and different set-ups in the area.

Patuakhali Youth Forum arranged the programme with the cooperation of UNICEF marking the 'climate strike week', being observed in over 150 countries across the globe from September 20 to 27 to step up support for young climate strikers demanding an end to the age of fossil fuels.

Chalitabunia is an isolated union, surrounded by the Agunmukha river in the North and East and the Ramnabad river in the South and West, and the locals are under fear as the Agunmukha has caused serious erosion since 2013, speakers said at the human chain.

"Over 200 homesteads and about 300 acres of land went into

the river in last five years. The river recently devoured two mosques and a madrasa and the only cyclone shelter for Chalitabunia, Bibirhawla, Gorurdanga and Golbunia villages is about to collapse," said Zahidur Rahman, chairman of Chalitabunia union parishad.

At least 6,000 people living beside the river are passing days amid fear as their dwellings and farmlands are under threat, he said.

Saline water with tidal surges easily enters into agricultural lands through damaged portions of flood control embankment on the river, said local farmers.

Md Jahirul Islam, president of Patuakhali Youth Forum, Khalid Bin Walid Talukder, vice chairman of Rangabali upazila parishad, Jahangir Alam, headmaster of Mamotajuddin High School, Lipi Akhter, union parishad member, addressed the gathering, among others.

They demanded effective steps to save dwelling houses, farmlands, cyclone shelter and other establishments from erosion.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent found the cyclone shelter set up by Red Crescent at risk due to removal of earth from near its pillars.

During the high tide, the structure seems to be standing inside the river. Md Mohsin Hawlader, 60, a local fisherman, said his house at Chalitabunia village went into the river one and a half years ago.

Delwar Biswas, a farmer of the same village, said he cannot grow crops well as saline water enters through the damaged portion of flood control embankment.

Khan Md Waliuzzaman, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Kalapara Circle, said there are 27 kilometres of flood control embankment around Chalitabunia union and of it at least four km area has been eroded by the river.

"We are making an estimate to repair the damaged dyke for sending to the higher authorities. We hope the repair work will start in the upcoming dry season," he said.



PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

People of nine villages under Nagarkanda municipality in Faridpur are badly suffering as the locally made bamboo bridge on the Kumar river at Choumokka, which collapsed one and a half years ago, is yet to be reconstructed.