

A view of a paved road badly damaged by erosion is seen near Hilora Bazar area in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Panic grips riverside villages

Erosion hits Mirzapur after Jhenai and Bangshi swell up

Mirza Shakil

Erosion hits hard the riverside villages in Mirzapur upazila in Tangail as the water levels of Jhenai and Bangshi rivers increase due to onrush of water from upstream and non-stop heavy rains for the last few days, creating panic among the people.

Meanwhile, as authorities have yet to take any step after erosion hit the areas, the people are trying to check the erosion by dumping sand bags and fencing with bamboos for saving their homesteads.

Locals said the Postkamuri, Sawdagorpara, Baoarkumarjani Uttorpara of Mirzapur municipality and Tholpara, Fotepur, Bankata, Chakleshawar, Bailanpur-Patilapara of Fotepur union, and Gorail of Bhatgram union are known to be erosion prone areas in Mirzapur upazila. Acute erosion hit the areas if the water levels increase of the two rivers.

The Ekabbar Hossain Bridge constructed on Bangshi river at Sawdagorpara also remains in a vulnerable state as erosion hit, locals said.

Local people held different programmes last year demanding to save the bridge and also the Sawdagorpara areas from the erosion but nothing has been done in this regard so far, they said.

Moreover, earth lifters have cut earth from the near the bridge for the last few months, they

A number of dwelling houses and vast tracks of croplands were devoured by the two rivers during the last monsoon, said SM Shamsul Alam Shahid, a rights activist in Mirzapur.

Many of the local people, including the municipality.

people of Bankata and Gorail villages, lost their dwelling houses and croplands last year, he

Moreover, a part of a market at Hilora village and about 400 meters areas of a paved road and a culvert of Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) and vast tracks of croplands were devoured by the erosion of the Jhenai river, he added.

Sagar Mondol of Tholpara village said movement of vehicles-- both heavy and light one-- stopped as the road and the culvert were devoured by the river.



Local people alleged that influential syndicate of sand traders lifted sand from the areas of the river by powerful dredgers during the last dry season. As a result, the erosion has turned serious in the areas this year.

During a recent visit, it was seen that fresh erosion started damaging the paved road near Hilora Bazar area. On the other hand, erosion also hit at Postkamuri, Sawdagorpara and Baoar Kumarjani Uttorpara areas under Mirzapur

Mozibor Rahman, a resident of Postkamuri Sawdagorpara, said previously his dwelling house was on 28 decimals of land and now it stands only on two decimals due to the dreadful erosion of the Bangshi river.

"Now, I am trying to save the rest part of my house by constructing a bamboo fence," he

Not only Mozibor's, the dwelling houses of his neighbours Jamal Miah, Sharab Ali Fakir, Jafar Miah and Bablu Miah are also in serious threat of erosion

Jahir Hossain, a rice mill owner at Baoar Kumarjani area, said his rice mill stood on an area of 50 decimals which have diminished to 20 decimals due to the erosion of the river for the last few years. "Now, I am trying to save the mill by dumping sand bags on my own," he

Nondo Rajbongshi, Montu Rajbonshi and Monai Rajbongshi of Bankata village said their homesteads have already been devoured by the erosion of Jhenai river and they constructed houses to other places after buying land.

They also said some erosion-hit people in the area are so poor that they have no ability to buy lands for constructing new house. They have taken shelter to other's houses.

Habel Mridha of Chakleshwar village said dwelling houses and croplands of local people are going to the riverbed and the authorities should take immediate step to check the

Shirajul Islam, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Tangail, said they have already sent proposals to the higher authorities to take step to check erosion in the areas.

UP chairman marries, divorces underage girl

Teenage boy, with whom she eloped, tries to kill self within half hour of the marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A teenage boy attempted to take his own life on Friday when a 60-year-old union Parishad (UP) chairman illegally married a 14-year-old girl who had eloped with the boy the day before.

The incident took place in Kanakdia Union of Baufal upazila.

However, on Saturday evening, a day after keeping the girl in his house, UP chairman Shaheen Hawladar brought a marriage registrar in the house and dissolved the marriage by a divorce from the girl. He then handed the girl over to her father, a day labourer.

Shaheen Hawladar is also the general secretary of Awami League's Kanakdia union unit. He was re-elected chairman in the UP election held on June 21.

Shaheen has a son and a daughter with his first wife. His wife lives in Patuakhali town and their son is married.

On Friday around 9:00am, the UP chairman called parents and guardians along with the girl -- an eighth grader at a local school -- and the boy in a meeting at his UP office to attempt resolution through mediation over complaints made against the boy by the girl's father.

At one stage of the meeting, Shaheen asked everyone but the girl to leave his office, as "he needed to interrogate the girl further". But he later took the girl in his empty house.

Around 9:00pm, Shaheen brought Kazi Abu Sadeq, the marriage registrar of the union, in the house and married the underage girl. A false date of birth (April 11, 2003) of the girl was recorded in the marriage register, mentioning Tk 5 lakh as dowry (Mohrana) to be given to the bride.

But according to the girl's birth certificate and PEC (Primary Education Completion) examination certificate, her date of birth is April 11, 2007.

In the meantime, when the news of the marriage reached the girl's love interest, he tried to kill himself by hanging. The boy was rushed to Baufal Upazila Health Complex around 9:30pm that night. After his condition

improved, he was brought home by his

family the next day. His family members said the boy was still crying for the girl, wishing to

His elder brother claimed that before asking everyone to leave the UP office on Friday morning, the UP chairman issued threats on both the parties and took his signature on a blank piece of

Acknowledging the marriage and the divorce, the girl's father refused to make any comment or complaint against the UP chairman.

Kazi Abu Sadeq, the marriage registrar, claimed that he administered the marriage after making sure that the girl was of legal age according to the "birth certificate that was presented" before him.

Asked, UP Chairman Shahin Hawlader said, "The girl's father during the arbitration insisted on not approving a marriage between the boy and his daughter. That's why I called the Kazi and married her.

"I did not influence them or force them. But since she was not in full agreement, I handed her over to her father after she divorced me with the help of the same Kazi on Saturday evening.

When this correspondent reached Baufal Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Zakir Hossain and asked whether the upazila administration has any responsibility in taking action against the child marriage, he said they were aware of the incident in Kanakdia union.

They would first collect necessary documentation of the underage marriage of the UP chairman and write to higher authorities for directives.

Based on investigation and directives from the higher authorities, they would take necessary action, he also said.

Contacted, Baufal Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Al Mamun said no one filed any formal complaint in this connection yet and they would take due action soon after receiving a complaint in this regard.

Barguna's healthcare crisis

SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Barguna finds itself in a unique position regarding its healthcare services. While the technology and facilities in the local hospitals are regularly updated, the lack of awareness about available healthcare services, as well as an absence of adequate human resources, have created a vacuum.

Equipment gathering dust

The only mother and child welfare centre in Barguna was provided with the necessary equipment for caesarean deliveries four to five vears back. Although there is an operation theatre with modern facilities, it is not in use due to the lack of an anaesthesiologist.

The Medical Officer in charge of the organisation, Shahnaz Begum, said, "Only general operations are done here. In the absence of an anaesthesiologist, no C-sections can take place. Mothers are forced to take the risk of having their caesarean deliveries at Barguna General Hospital, which is about four kilometres away, or in Barisal, another 80 kilometres away."

A human resource crisis

In a public meeting at the Circuit House grounds in Barguna on May 6, 2010, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced that an additional 150 beds would be added to the Barguna General Hospital's existing 100 beds. On October 27, 2018 she inaugurated the building. However, the hospital is yet to get adequate human resources and fund to run its extended operation.

The current 100-bed facility is also understaffed, with only six staff members filling in for a total requirement of 43 first-class officers.

"This severe lack of human resources has resulted in the hospital's activities facing constant disruptions," said Dr Sohrab Uddin, superintendent of the hospital. "We only have 91 staff members against the requirement of 218. Often, we don't have the space for patients. About 150 to 180 patients are regularly admitted indoors, while another 400 to 500 patients have to be treated outdoors," he added.

Barguna also has four Upazila health complexes, a 20-bed, and 10-bed hospital, eight sub-health



The new building of Barguna General Hospital. The construction of the building was completed in 2016. However, it is yet to be handed over to the hospital authority. PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

centres, 123 community clinics, and 25 union health and family welfare centres. There are 120 posts in these institutions with 54 vacancies at present. There are vacancies in 117 out of the 202 posts of nurses.

Besides, health service providers are also found absent in health facilities.

"Most commonly, this happens in the case of the Community Health Care Providers (CHCPs). The poor quality of roads in these areas prevents them from visiting their office regularly. We must first ensure that the CHCP and other healthcare workers have proper communication facilities so they can attend work regularly," shared Towfigul Islam Khan, Senior Research Fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Lack of awareness

Some people in remote areas in Barguna still rely on spiritual remedies when they fall ill due to the lack of awareness of available formal healthcare. There is a general trend of people living in these communities being unaware of common diseases, general health practices and the locally available

Delwara Begum, 50, from Uttar Lakurtala village of Sadar Upazila, Barguna, said, "We only go to the community clinic if we need medication for fevers. I don't know what other diseases are treated

When made aware of available

healthcare, she felt that it should be the authorities' responsibility to let them know how and when to use such medical facilities.

Even with adequate facility and human resource allocation, more steps should be taken to ensure that the locals are using the healthcare facilities. It is of utmost importance to establish community forums that enable community members to work with the government bodies on various pressing issues including health.

The health issue needs to be addressed adequately as healthy lives and well beings are closely connected with the achievement of other SDGs including SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 5 (gender equality).

Oxfam, in partnership with CPD, is implementing a project titled 'Enhancing the Participation of Community-Based Organisations (CBO) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Democratic Governance in Bangladesh' in thirteen districts of the country, including Barguna, with support from the European Union. The project strengthens the knowledge and leadership capacities of grassroots CBOs and CSOs regarding social accountability tools such as citizenled social audit. Going forward, such a social audit system, if implemented at the community level, can help alleviate the current healthcare woes that the people of Barguna are facing.

5 fertiliser dealers jailed for black marketeering

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court on Saturday sent five fertiliser dealers of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) to jail for black marketeering subsidised fertiliser.

The dealers -- Ruhum Amin, from Nandigram upazila, and Mohammad Nawshad, Emdadul Haque, Fazlul Haque and Ahsanul Karim, from Adamdighi upazila of Bogura -- were arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-12) after 350 sacks (totalling 17,500 kilograms) of subsidised fertiliser were seized from a

truck at a check post. Acting on a tip off, Rab-12 set up the check post on Durgapur road in Kahaloo upazila and seized the truck -- loaded with Muriate of Potash (MOP) and Triple superphosphate (TSP) fertilisers -- around

3:30am on Friday. Rab later arrested the five criminals after conducting drives at different locations. They later filed a case against the arrestees with Kahaloo Police Station and handed them over to the police.

Lieutenant Commander Abdullah Al Mamun, company commander of Rab-12, said that the government subsidised fertilisers were allocated for some dealers in Bogura's Adamdighi upazila, but the accused dealers got the fertilizers out of BADC's Shantahar warehouse in Bogura and sold it to other dealers in Nandigram upazila for personal gains.

Kahaloo Police Station Officer-in-Charge Amber Hossain said after Rab-12 filed the case and handed the accused over to police, the latter sent them to the court on Saturday, when the court ordered to send the accused to jail.

Schoolboy swept away by waves at Cox's Bazar beach

Our Correspondent, Cox,s Bazar

A school student was swept away by waves at Cox's Bazar sea beach.

Ishrar Hasnain (16), a class X student of Cox's Bazar Government High School, was the son of Md Aman Ullah of Cox's Bazar Hospital. town. According to the victim's family, Ishrar, along with his classmate Kamrul

Hasan, went to Kabita Chattar point of the beach around 9:30am.

At one stage, the two were washed away vesterday morning after he went for a bath by the currents while taking bath. Seeing this, the lifeguards managed to save Kamrul but not Ishrar.

Kamrul was taken to Cox's Bazar General

The lifeguards said a rescue operation is ongoing to find Ishrar.

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এতদারা সংশ্রিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে. দেশে করোনাভাইরাসের সংক্রমন বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায় কোভিড-১৯ পরিস্থিতিতে বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস) এর জুলাই-২০২১ সেশনের সকল পরীক্ষা (এফসিপিএস ১ম পর্ব, এফসিপিএস ২য় পর্ব (শেষ পর্ব). এফসিপিএস মিডটার্ম. প্রিলিমিনারী এফসিপিএস ২য় পর্ব. এফসিপিএস (সাব-স্পেশালিটি) এবং এমসিপিএস) আপাততঃ স্থূগিত করা হলো।

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অনারারি সচিব

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