

FLOOD AFTERMATH

Relief that has yet to arrive

Without govt assistance, flood victims in remote Laxmipur villages endure days of starvation

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, back from Laxmipur

Nearly 5,000 flood-affected residents in Kolakopa village of Laxmipur have been completely cut off by water in the ongoing flood.

Despite this, even as water levels begin to recede, government assistance and relief have yet to reach the village.

Since the fall of the AL regime, the local chairman and members have all gone into hiding. Lambakhali Government Primary School is the sole government-designated disaster shelter in the area.

Around 200 people have sought refuge there, but not a single government aid package has arrived. Instead, the little food they have received has come from volunteers, mostly student organisations and members of political parties.

Belal Hossain, a farmer from Char Badam



village who has taken shelter here, yesterday said he last ate at 8:00pm on Thursday.

He has been without food ever since till we last spoke to him yesterday evening.

This has been the case for him and his family for the past 11 days.

"It's not just me; my wife, my two sons aged 2 and 5, and my 8-year-old daughter are all hungry," he said.

In the last month, Belal and others at the shelter have only received khichuri once. On three occasions, they were given puffed rice and biscuits as relief.

"I have no money. We need food. Who

should I tell this to? There's no one to listen to our suffering," Belal said.

All the people in the shelter we talked to share the same hardship, they are waiting for aid that has yet to arrive.

Their desperation is growing with each passing day.

Dilruba Begum, tearfully expressing her frustration, said, "No one has provided us with proper food. No one has even helped us with cash assistance."

She added, "It's been over 12 hours since we haven't eaten anything."

Shelafi Akhter, 60, echoed her.

The situation is particularly dire for mothers like Fahima, who broke down in tears, saying, "Even if I go without food, it's not a problem, but my three young children are crying in hunger. How can I comfort them with just words?"

Some, understandably so, reacted angrily when we approached them for comments.

Parvin Akhter said, "Give us food. We don't want blabbering from you."

This dire situation is not limited to Kolakopa alone. Villages like Purba Swarasita, Char Badam, Poragacha,

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Displaced, thousands seek rehabilitation in Moulvibazar

MINTU DESHWARA

Whenever a flood takes place, the full extent of its damage cannot be mostly understood until the water recedes.

As such, now that the floodwater has completely receded in Moulvibazar, the aftermath of the flood has started to take shape.

In the Tillagaon union of Kulaura upazila in the district, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced from their homes and are now enduring severe living conditions.

A visit to the flood-affected Mirerpara and Hajipur villages in the union on Thursday revealed the extent of their distress.

In both villages, flood victims expressed deep concern as paddy and vegetable seedlings have been submerged.

In Mirerpara village, 30 houses have been completely destroyed, while 25 have been partially damaged. The residents of those houses were forced to leave and take shelter elsewhere, mostly in neighbouring houses.

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Over 2m children at risk

Says Unicef

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over two million children in eastern Bangladesh are at risk as floods sweep through homes, schools and villages, Unicef said yesterday.

These floods, the worst in eastern Bangladesh in 34 years, have affected 5.6 million people, said a press release of the UN agency.

Unicef said millions of children and families are stranded without food and emergency relief supplies. The government personnel and volunteers are conducting rescue operations, although access remains difficult in some areas.

"The devastating floods in the eastern parts of Bangladesh are a tragic reminder of the relentless impact of extreme weather events and the climate crisis on children. Far too many children have lost loved ones, their homes, schools, and now are completely destitute," said Emma Brigham, Deputy Representative of Unicef Bangladesh.

"Unicef is on the frontlines providing water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts and other essential supplies, but more funds are needed to reach these children and prevent an even more devastating impact on their futures."

Mentioning its efforts in the flood since its onset, the UN agency said having joined an initial assessment mission with the local government adviser AF Hassan Ariff, Unicef with its partners has reached over 3,38,000 people, including 1,30,000 children, with life-saving supplies such as 3.6 million water purification tablets, 25,000 jerry-cans to store water and over 2,50,000 oral rehydration salt sachets.

"But much more is needed," the release reads.

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From homes to hopes, everything washed away

Feni flood-hit people stare at a bleak future

SIFAYET ULLAH

His house collapsed in a flash in the floodwater. Mohammed Shahjahan, a 55-year-old, lost everything in his residence and took shelter in a relative's house.

"Everything turned upside down in a few hours. Now, I have no house, no furniture," said Shahjahan while cleaning his damaged house on Thursday from Champaknagar village of Feni.

The teary-eyed man, father of the two children, said he doesn't know how he will reconstruct the house as he spent savings of a lifetime to treat himself in 2022.

"I was an expatriate and forced to return from Saudi Arabia due to spinal



disease in 2022. Now I don't know what I will do," he said.

Grocery shop owner Sayedul Hoque was moving account books of his shop that were damaged by floodwater.

Sayedul said he fed his five-member family by running the grocery store. But most of the goods in his shop were destroyed due to the flood.

"I don't understand how to collect



the dues," he said from Shuvopur union under Chhagalnaiya upazila.

Like them, thousands of flood victims in the district are staring at an uncertain future as the devastating flood has destroyed their houses, crops, and livelihoods.

According to the Feni district administration, at least 10.5 lakh people have been affected in the district due to recent floods under six upazilas. 1.5 lakh people have been forced to take shelter.

The flood began in the border district on August 20. The situation worsened gradually and affected Parshuram, Fulgazi, and Chhagalnaiya upazilas in the first phase.

Later, floodwater spread to Feni Sadar, Sonagazi, and Dagonbhuiyan, creating a severe crisis across the district.

During a visit to different upazilas

of the districts on Wednesday and Thursday, this correspondent found that victims were trying to move things from their submerged residences.

59-year-old farmer Abdul Malek was nurturing his damaged paddy on a road near his residence at Fazilpur union under Sadar upazila on Thursday.

"I stored 800 kg of paddy at home as future food. But everything was destroyed in the flood water," he said.

"With the help of relief, I will be able to pass the time of disaster. But how to gather food for my family in the future?" the farmer said.

Hasina Begum, a housewife from Chanua union under Sadar upazila, said she could recover only steel-made furniture from his house.

"Wooden chairs, tables, and carpets were damaged by water. I threw away a lot and have to buy new things to survive," she said.

Next polls most challenging in history: Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman termed the next national election one of the most challenging in the nation's history.

He made the remarks yesterday during a virtual discussion with BNP leaders and activists from the Rajshahi division.

Speaking as chief guest on the second day of a series of meetings with grassroots leaders, Tarique said, "BNP has always relied on public support for election results. The way BNP has maintained the trust of the people for the past 17 years, enduring immense oppression and persecution, must be continued."

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Withdraw murder charges against journalists

DUJ urges interim govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Union of Journalists yesterday raised concerns over the recent implication of journalists in murder cases across various districts, including Dhaka, following recent political shifts.

In a statement, the DUJ called on the interim government, particularly Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and relevant ministry advisers, to exempt journalists from these accusations.

DUJ President Sohel Haider Chowdhury and General Secretary Akhter Hossain voiced their apprehension and formally requested government intervention.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Due to heavy dust, the air in the Gabtoli area of the capital turns into a murky haze. Although pedestrians cover their faces with their hands, it is not of much help to save themselves from the pollution. It can also be risky to cross the road in such a manner, with vehicles rushing towards them. The photo was taken yesterday.

PADMA BRIDGE Project cost reduced by Tk 1,835cr Says adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said last night that the construction cost of the Padma Bridge has been reduced "due to the adoption of a contractionary policy."

"We are pleased to announce that the last estimated cost of the Padma Bridge project was Tk 32,605.52 crore. Now, with the adoption of the contractionary policy, the final cost stands at

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Rita Khan
(1943 - 2022)

In loving memory

Sharbi, Nobel, Adeeb, Shirley, Mariha, Tahseen, Sara, Fardeen, Saania and Tahzeeb