

Marooned people looking for shelters, relief



Staff Reporter

Hit hard by flood onslaughts, thousands of people in several districts were desperately looking for shelters and relief materials as the overall flood situation remained grim on Sunday.

The flashflood, triggered by heavy downpour and onrush of water from upstream, have inundated several hundred villages in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Sunamganj and Netrakona districts, leaving thousands of people marooned.

The flood-affected people have been passing their days amid sufferings due to the shortage of food and pure drinking water as they cannot cook and get safe water with most tube-wells going under water.

Affected by various water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery, the flood victims have been facing serious difficulties also with their children and animals as they are unable to quickly move to safer places.

The flood is also taking a heavy toll on students as they cannot go to school and college wading floodwater.

Fish in many farms have been washed away with the onrush of water while crops on vast tracks of land got damaged, causing heavy loss to farmers.

Meanwhile, Disaster Management and Relief Secretary Mesbaul Alam on Sunday said an amount of Tk 3 crore cash and some 8,000 tonnes of rice (GR) have already been allocated as general relief for the flood-affected people across the country.

In Lalmonirhat, five villages in Kaliganj upazila were submerged by water as a flood protection embankment broke down at Modanpur under Tuhbandar union on Sunday morning, leaving some 7,000 families displaced.

Locals said a 20-foot portion of the embankment collapsed around 8:30am due to a rise in the water level of the Teesta River.

Many animals and valuables were also washed away by the floodwater. Besides, the two-storey building of Char Bairati Govt Primary School tilted due to heavy pressure of water.

Assistant engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board Hafizur Rahman said the Teesta River was flowing 15cm above the danger level at Teesta Barrage.

In Kurigram, the flood situation remained static for the last eight days with about 2 lakh people of 236 villages under 53 unions still stranded amid shortage of food and pure drinking water. The government was providing the flood-hit people with relief materials, which was said to be too inadequate.

Executive engineer Abu Taher of local WDB said the Teesta water marked a rise by 24cm in the last 24 hours as of Sunday morning.

District relief official Mizanur Rahman said about 9.92 lakh people were affected by the water in the district. Besides, some 2311 families fell victim to river erosion. "Some 2189 houses were damaged by flood while 3006 others by river erosion."

In Netrakona, heavy downpour triggered flashflood in low-lying areas of seven upazilas, leaving thousands of people marooned. The flood-hit upazilas are Durgapur, Kalmakanda, Mohanganj, Madan, Purbadhala, Barhatta and Atpara.

The water level of the Kangsha River was flowing over the danger mark at Takurakonna point. Besides, the water of the Mogra, Sumeshwari, Ubdakhali, Golamkhali, Goneshwari, Saiduli and Dhanu rivers have been on spate due to incessant rains and onrush of water from hills.

In Nilphamari, the residents of 15 villages in Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas have been passing their days amid difficulties and Teesta water submerged their houses.

The Teesta has already devoured the homesteads of 15 families in the two upazilas.

In Sirajganj, over 100 houses in Belkuchi upazila have gone under water due to heavy rain and onrush of water from the upstream.

In Sunamganj, the Surma River was flowing above the danger level, inundating over 100 villages and damaging crops.

Meanwhile, the Disaster Management and Relief Secretary said the relief assistance allocated by the government has already been sent to the administrations of the flood affected districts, and the deputy commissioners concerned are taking care of the distribution.

Floods and river erosions, triggered by incessant rains, were reported from 12 districts, Mesbaul Alam said, adding that the ministry has adequate reliefs at its disposal to tackle any exigency.

The 12 districts are Jamalpur, Dhaka, Nilphamari, Netrakona, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Sunamganj, Noakhali, Rangpur, Sirajganj and Bogra.