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Many Aila-hit Areas Still Under Water

Diarrhoea takes alarming turn, cry for food, water

Star Report

Diarrhoea spreads fast in some upazilas of Satkhira, Khulna and Barisal districts as thousands of cyclone-affected people there are forced to drink contaminated and salty water.

With almost all tube-wells, ponds and other waterbodies under saline water, people of Shyamnagar and Assasuni upazilas in Satkhira and Dakop and Koira in Khulna are left with no sources of safe drinking water.

Meanwhile, thousands of people marooned in remote char areas have been starving even five days into Cyclone Aila that ripped through the south-western coast on Monday.

As of yesterday evening, the death toll from the storm was 183. Official sources however put it at 155.

“Supply of clean water cannot even meet one-fourth of the need,” said a diarrhoea victim.

In Shyamnagar of Satkhira, around 600 people are down with diarrhoea every day, Dr Mohammad Ebadullah, district's civil surgeon, told The Daily Star.

The locals, however, said the number is much higher than what the civil surgeon claims.

Our correspondent from Khulna reports: Over 4,000 people marooned by floodwater at Kamarkhola, Sutarkhali, Tildanga, and Banishanta unions have got diarrhoea in the last four days, said Kazi Atiur Rahman, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Dakop upazila in Khulna.

Union chairmen said the water-borne diseases like diarrhoea are taking an alarming turn because of scant supply of medicines and water purification tablets.

Around 2,000 people stranded in five unions of Koira upazila have contracted diarrhoea, said locals.

Arif Pasha, UNO of Koira, disputed the number. He claimed only six persons have been admitted to the upazila health complex with diarrhoea, and of them, only one is in critical condition.

He however admitted that medical teams are struggling to reach many areas, as road communications there remain snapped.

In Shyamnagar, yet-to-be-buried bodies of livestock have started rotting and spreading sickening stench. Moreover, a huge amount of dead fish, snakes and other animals were floating on the water, making the air fetid.

People queuing in front of Atulia Union Parishad Health Complex for medicine said scarcity of drinking water has left them no alternative but to drink contaminated water.

Mujibur Morol said he needs medicine for his mother suffering severe stomach pain and vomiting for the last two days.

Those in the inaccessible areas are suffering most as they have to walk a long way for water and food distributed at the upazila headquarters.

Jarina Khatun said, “I had to wade waist-deep through floodwater to come here for some rice and medicine for my four-year-old girl down with diarrhoea.”

Lokman Ahmed, a medical officer in Atulia Health Complex, said he distributed medicines to 400 diarrhoea patients throughout the day Thursday and 200 in only one and a half hours yesterday.

“The number of patients is rising, and the medicines we have are not enough to meet the demand,” he said.

Nazrul Islam, health assistant of the upazila health complex, said, “We urgently need oral saline and medicines to cope with the rising cases of diarrhoea and dysentery.”

On the main road in Atulia, many were seen waiting for water for hours. They alleged they were not getting basic relief like drinking water and food.

The diarrhoea situation is getting worse at Padmapukur, Gabura, Burigowalini, Munshiganj, Bhetkhali, Pratapnagar, Assasuni Sadar, Khajra, Anulia,



Clockwise: People of Padmapukur union under Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira queue up on an embankment yesterday for relief. A man in quest of drinking water at Atulia union. Women suffering from diarrhoea take refuge at the staircase of a shelter home at the same union. Fish washed away from ponds by tidal surge lay dead near an embankment in Assasuni upazila. An elderly man collects relief materials at Atulia. Saline water rushes into Pakhimara of Padmapukur union through a breach in the embankment of the Kholpetua River. Photo: Anisur Rahman

Borodal unions under Shyamnagar and Assasuni upazilas.

District Civil Surgeon Ebadullah said as many as 25 medical teams were giving health care services in these two upazilas.

Our correspondent from Barisal reports: Most of the people in remote villages under Amtali upazila of Barguna have not yet seen any relief from government or non-government aid agencies.

Barisal district administration and relief and rehabilitation department sources said so far they have distributed Tk 2.10 lakh in cash and 210 tonnes of rice. And now they have only 10 tonnes of rice and no cash at all.

Health Minister ABM Ruhul Haque who visited the cyclone-hit areas in Shyamnagar upazila told The Daily Star that his ministry is supplying sufficient medicines to contain spread of diarrhoea.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday visited Hatia upazila of Noakhali and distributed relief materials among the survivors. He said the government has adequate relief to tackle the situation.

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