

# Erosion plagues Aila-hit villages

abhisek roychowdhury

KOLKATA, 25 OCT: Villages lashed by Cyclone Aila a year ago are facing an acute problem of soil erosion. People living in Iswaripur and Narayanpur of Namkhana in South 24-Parganas are haunted by the fear of being deprived of their shelter. A vast area has already been submerged by river water.

A visit to the village gives one the impression of non-performance of the irrigation department of the zilla parishad and the helplessness of the people. Both the villages are situated on the bank of the Hasania-Duyania, a tributary of Muriganga, which flows between the two islands of Bakkhali and Namkhana. When Cyclone Aila lashed river water flowed into the villages. Later, when the water started to recede erosion started. Swapan Halder, a villager, said at least 300 huts went under water due to erosion. The villagers alleged negligence of the

irrigation department as well as the zilla parishad. "We wanted a dam to be constructed as a permanent wall to protect us. However, only boulders and sandbags were placed," Dilip Naskar, another villager, said. The next monsoons will be nightmarish for the hapless people as they live in constant anxiety.

Mrs Aruna Roy, the sabhadhipati of Narayanpur panchayet samiti, said that the area is a CPI-M bastion. This explains the reluctance of the TMC-led Zilla Parishad to undertake construction of the dam. Political rivalry has caused the sufferings of the village folk. The situation has come to such a pass that the people have to leave the village due to erosion.

The top brass of the administration have, however, admitted the problem. Mrs Samima Shek, the sabhadhipati of the zilla parishad, denied the allegation and said she had allotted funds for the construction of embankments in the villages to prevent erosion.



At Narayanpur, Iswaripur in South 24-Parganas  
Swapan Halder