

Driven out of home by monga

Harvest delayed in Gaibandha due to late sowing: Cancellation of 1,100 MT food grains aggravates situation



Day labourers from Monga affected areas scramble on roofs of buses at Gaibandha bus stand to go to other areas for work. PHOTO: STAR

REZAUL HAQ, GAIBANDHA

Hundreds of poor day labourers are leaving homes in monga stricken Brahmaputra and Teesta basin areas in four upazilas of Gaibandha district for other areas in search of work.

Every day they are seen crowding bus stands and railway stations to travel on roof tops at less fare. It is a common scene in Gaibandha district.

The monga (pre-harvest lean period) situation will persist at least three weeks more in the area as

Amon harvest will be delayed because of late sowing, farmers and agriculture officials said.

This correspondent during a visit to Chicha Panchpir, a monga affected area in Sunderganj upazila, on Thursday saw at least 40 day labourers on roof of a bus, com-

elled to avail a risky journey.

"I borrowed Tk 500 from a money lender promising him to pay Tk 700 after two months", said Abdur Rashid of Ujan Bochagari village.

"Keeping Tk 350 with my family, I am going to Jessore with Tk 150 in search of work", he said.

Jadu Mia said, in previous years, many land owners from other districts came (to their village) for labourers. None came this year and so we are leaving for work".

The immediate past government earlier allocated 2,125 tonnes of food grains for 2,12,500 people under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme in seven upazilas of Gaibandha district for three months—August, September and October. This has been exhausted, officials said.

The earlier government at the fag end of its tenure allocated a special quota of 1,100 tonnes of food grains in favour of five lawmakers in Gaibandha.

Sufferings of poor farm labourers aggravated as the caretaker government suspended the special allocation on November 2, the officials said.

Kumudini Hospital doctors begin strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Junior doctors yesterday began an indefinite strike at Mirzapur Kumudini Hospital in Tangail to press their 3-point demand including salary hike.

The striking doctors also brought out a procession on the hospital compound in the morning.

Treatment is being hampered at the hospital due to the strike, sources said. But hospital authorities claimed that normal activities were going on as some of the doctors joined work.

Sources among the striking doctors said they went on strike as talks with the authorities failed on Friday.

They also claimed that lecturers at Kumudini Womens' Medical College have also joined the strike.

They said their demands for increase in salary were placed before the authorities six months ago but they did not take any step. When contacted over phone, Director of Kumudini Hospital Dr Dulal Poddar said, "We are holding an urgent meeting to resolve the problem".

Jhenidah DC sued for not following FF's quota in appointment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Mutijoddha Sangshad in Jhenidah has filed a case against the immediate past Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the district for not following the freedom fighters' quota in recent appointments to 11 posts of third class employees in the district administration.

According to sources, the district administration issued a circular for the appointments on May. Following this, Jhenidah Mutijoddha Sangshad leaders submitted a memorandum to the DC urging him to recruit wards and dependents of freedom fighters as per the government fixed quota. The DC had committed to abide by the quota.

The former Deputy Commissioner and two additional deputy commissioners were present at the meeting where the selection was finalised. Mutijoddha Sangshad leader claimed,

But after the selection, made

at the fag end of the BNP-led four party alliance government allegedly at the pressure of ruling party leaders, it was found that none of the applicants from among freedom fighters' wards and dependents was on the list, the sources said.

Meanwhile, DC Nurul Kabir was transferred and replaced by Abu Sayeed Fakir.

The Mutijoddha Sangshad filed a case with the court of District Judge against the then DC Nurul Kabir.

In the case, the Sangsad also accused two of the appointees—Ebadat Hossain and Sukumar Biswas for securing jobs by producing fake freedom fighters' certificates.

Court sources said the court served a showcase notice on the former DC, asking him to reply within seven days.

Sources in the district administration claimed that there was no anomaly in the appointments. They are not responsible if any applicant submits fake certificate.

BDR, BSF trade fire in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire on Baikari border in Satkhira Sadar upazila Friday night.

The BSF of Kajjuri camp in Swarnnagar police station under 24 Parganas district in West Bengal opposite to Baikari in Sadar upazila fired shots at BDR at Baikari camp, forcing BDR to reply with shots.

On contact, Maj Kamrul Hasan, second-in-command of 41 Rifles Battalion said BDR sent a letter protesting the BSF firing.

Roundtable on TB held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A roundtable on 'Tuberculosis control: Assistance from Mass-Media', jointly organised by the Health and Family Planning Ministry, Magura Press Club and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), was held at the local press club yesterday.

With press club president Dipok Roy Choudhury in the chair, it was attended by, among others, Civil Surgeon Dr. Fariduddin Ahmed, Dr. Alimuzzaman, local journalists and representatives of NGOs.

Three Pabna outlaws killed by rivals in 3 days

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Another alleged outlaw belonging to Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Lala Pataka) was killed by party rivals in Ataikula upazila in the district Friday night.

The victim was identified as Ziaur Rahman Zia, 30, son of Taher Mollah of Shrikol village in the upazila.

This was the third murder of outlaw by rivals belonging to Red Flag faction of PBCP in three consecutive nights in the area in sequel to factional feud, police said.

Two other alleged outlaws—Nizam Uddin and Afser Ali Shikder were killed by party rivals on Thursday and Wednesday respectively.

Police and the locals said PBCP Red Flag cadres kidnapped Zia Friday night from near his resi-

dence, hacked him to death near Kumargary beel (water body) and left the body there. Police recovered the body yesterday and sent it to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Three murders in three days created a panic in the area.

Several groups of outlaws belonging to the two factions of PBCP and Sharbahara Bahini are active in Paban, Ataikula, Shanthia, Faridpur and Sujanager upazilla in the district.

Pabna Police Superintendent Mirza Abdullah Hel Baki, when contacted, said they have a list of 421 outlaws and are trying to nab them.

He also blamed political leaders for sheltering outlaws and criminals.

EXTORTION

Businessman shot at; another escapes kidnap in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A businessman was shot by criminals for not paying toll while another escaped abduction by toll collectors in the district.

According to police, a gang led by Kamal of Lahinipara in the town went to the house of Abdul Mannan Thursday night to realise Tk one lakh toll, demanded earlier.

As he declined to pay, the gang dragged Mannan out of the house, shot him and escaped. Family members took him to Kushtia General Hospital, where he is being treated.

Police and Rapid Action

Battalion (Rab) members visited the spot. A case was filed with Sadar police station.

In the other incident, extortionists asked Asit Kumar of Kamar Halsha village in Mirpur upazila to pay Tk one lakh and went to his house Thursday night for the money.

The family cried for help when the gang tried to pick up Asit at gunpoint.

Hearing screams, villagers rushed to the spot and chased the criminals.

Mirpur police conformed the incident.



Sylhet Mayor and Awami League leader Badruddin Ahmed Kamran (inset) addressing a 14-party rally in Sylhet city yesterday demanding resignation of Chief Election Commissioner MA Azia and reform of the Election Commission. PHOTO: STAR

5X3

8X3

1X2

1X2

4X2

10X3