



A magistrate court in Bogra ransacked by pro-Awami League lawyers on Tuesday (left) and human right activist and journalist Jahangir Alam wearing burial dress protesting bomb blasts, violence and killing of journalist in Rajshahi city on Monday (right).



PHOTO: STAR

Violence marks hartal in dists

Court ransacked in Bogra: Trains detained in Gaibandha: First hartal in Barisal, Patuakhali since govt's takeover: 30 hurt in Netrakona

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Incidents of violence including ransacking of offices and rail-road barricade were reported from several districts on the first day yesterday of the opposition-called hartal.

Our Bogra Correspondent reports: A group of pro-hartal lawyers ransacked the court of First Class Magistrate Ahammed Ulla while trial of a case was going on yesterday morning.

As the court sat in the morning, some lawyers led by Bogra Bar Association General Secretary AHM Golam Rabbani Khan Roman requested Magistrate Ahammed Ulla to adjourn its functioning in view of the opposition-called hartal.

Court sources and witnesses said that as the Magistrate was preparing to adjourn the court, a group of layers rushed into the court and started ransacking it. They broke some chairs and a table.

The panicked Magistrate left the court.

As the news spread, all other courts were closed within a short while. The Deputy Commissioner visited the ransacked court.

According to reports available till 4 pm

yesterday, the administration was preparing to file a case accusing 16 lawyers including Khan Roman and Bar President Razzaqul Haider.

Hartal was observed in the district by and large peacefully barring some stray incidents. Abus was damaged at the central bus terminal in the town.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: As the death Awami League leader Ivy Rahman spread in the town, leaders and activists Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League poured on town streets in large numbers and brought out processions, chanting slogans demanding resignation of the government.

Angry processionists pelted stones and damaged windowpanes and glasses at Gaibandha Head Post Office.

AL men put up barricades on tracks and detained a Santahar-bound local train at Badiakhali station and the Padmarag Express at Mohimaganj station.

The Station Master at Gaibandha railway station said trains in Railway's Northern Zone were detained at different spots as communi-

cation with Lalmonirhat control room was snapped at 10 am.

In Polashbari, 11 people were injured in clashes between Awami League and Jubo Dal as their separate processions came closer.

Our Netrakona Correspondent reports: At least 30 people including former Awami League lawmaker Mosharaf Hossen, district AL president Shamsuzzoha, vice-president Islamuddin Kala Mia, and general secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru were injured in clashes with police during hartal.

Led by Shamsuzzoha, AL and its front organisations brought out a procession from the party office in the morning. Police intercepted it as it reached in the front of BNP office in the town.

As the processionists squatted on the road blocking traffic, police went into action ensuing the clash.

Police arrested 14 pickets from Satpai, Barabazar, Chalkpara and other areas of the town. Police also beat pickets at Barhatta, Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazila head quarters.

BNP also brought out an anti-hartal pro-

cession in the town.

Hundreds of riot police were on petrol in the town.

All offices and educational institutes remained shut and vehicles were off the roads.

Our Barisal Correspondent reports: Hartal was observed in Barisal city and others areas of the district for the first time yesterday since takeover by the present government. No major untoward incident was reported.

Police have beefed up security in Barisal city and in other towns and areas in the division.

Check posts have been set up at important entry and exit points around the city. Plice forces have been deployed at strategic points and establishments including bus and launch terminals, cinema halls, power supply stations, T & T office, Barisal jail area, bridges near the city and the airport.

Police Superintendent Mainur Rahman Chowdhury told this correspondent that the measures have been taken to guard against any possible "sabotage or violence" by the opposition political parties and to ensure security of people's life and property.

Vehicles and suspected people are being

checked at different points in the city.

City Corporation Mayor Majibur Rahman Sarwar MP, who is also president of Barisal BNP and minister-in-charge of the district, at a meeting with top officials at the Circuit House Sunday night reviewed the law and order and security situation, officials said.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports: Hartal was observed in Patuakhali yesterday for the first time since the takeover by the present government.

Earlier hartal calls given by opposition Awami League could not be enforced in the district because of resistance by ruling BNP.

But it was a different scene yesterday.

Hartal was enforced in Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury's constituency as the death news of AL leader Ivy Rahman reached there in the morning.

Angry party men brought out a procession from Sadar Road and ransacked some shops, restaurants and tea stalls.

Police charged batons and dispersed the processionists when they reached Katpotti intersection.

UNLAWFUL ' PROMOTION, APPOINTMENTS

CUTA begins indefinite strike

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) began an indefinite strike yesterday as the CU Syndicate ignored its two demands.

However, scheduled examination will be held.

The CUTA took the decisions at an emergency meeting of its Executive Committee, with its president Prof Nurul Anwar in the chair.

Earlier, CUTA gave an ultimatum to the CU authorities for cancellation of "unlawful promotion" of Jamaat-e-Islami- backed Associate Professor of Geography department Dr Abu Tyeib Chowdhury and appointment of 57 teachers, allegedly done in violation of Planning Committee's recommendations.

CU authorities had however assured the CUTA leaders that their demand would be considered at the Syndicate meeting on August 21. But the meeting ignored the demands, CUTA leaders alleged.

Mentionably, the Selection Board of Geography Department had recommended promotion of Dr. Abu Tayeb to the post of Professor.

As per the existing university rules, five years' experience as Associate Professor is mandatory for promotion to the post of Professor. But Dr. Abu Tayeb has only two years' experience, including one year's service on ad-hoc basis, sources said.

Ctg Mayor threatens another hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mayor and General Secretary of the city unit of Awami League (AL) ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Monday threatened of another hartal in Chittagong unless Chittagong City Corporation (CCO) Ward Commissioner Tarek Solaiman Salim and others arrested during Sunday's hartal are not released within two days.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury was addressing at a rally organised by Sammilata Birodhi Dal (combined opposition parties) on the Shaheed Minar premises here to protest Saturday's bomb attacks on AL rally in Dhaka.

The Mayor said some 52 people nabbed during Sunday's in the port city were still detained.

Meanwhile, leaders of Chittagong Press Club and Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) in a joint press statement on Monday expressed deep concern at the grenade attack on AL rally in Dhaka, murder of journalist Kamal Hossain in Khagrachhari and the deteriorating law and order situation.

They demanded international probe into the attack on AL Chief Sheikh

Hasina's life and all other incidents of bomb attacks to identify the persons involved.

The journalist leaders condemned the murder of Kamal Hossain, correspondent of a national daily Ajker Kagoj and demanded immediate arrested and punishment to the killers.

Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian, General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, CUJ President Mostaq Ahmed and General Secretary Shahid Ul Alam were among the signatories to the statement.

'Red alert' in Jessore border

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A 'red alert' has been declared along Jessore border to stop fleeing of criminals to India amid tight security measures all over the country including Dhaka city.

BDR and police have been asked to tighten security at all the 25 border points in the district used by terrorists and criminals to cross into India, official sources said.

SNAPS

2 get life for murder
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Additional District and Session Judge Amirul Islam on Monday sentenced two persons to life term imprisonment and fined them Tk 5000 for killing one man in 1999.

The judge handed down the punishment to Bahachuddin and Nurul Islam of Dugia village in Netrakona Sadar upazila for killing Moyazuddin, 60, of same village.

The victim's son Azizur Rahman filed a case with the Sadar thana accusing 13 people. Police had submitted charge sheet against the 13. The court acquitted the rest 11.

Bus torched after man's death under wheels
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A mob torched a passenger bus at Nawhata in Paba upazila after the bus ran over a businessman on Monday.

None was injured in the arson, police said.

They also barricaded Rajshahi-Naogaon highway for two hours as the Rajshahi-bound bus from Naogaon ran over Anwar Hossain, 23, a local potato travelling on a rickshaw van.

Being torched, the bus fell into a roadside ditch, injuring six passengers. Two of them—Harun and Proshanto—were admitted to a local hospital and the rest were released after first aid.

Betel leaf on 2,000 acres ruined by flood in Barisal

Prices plummet in Patuakhali

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Betel leaf growers in Barisal and Patuakhali are having hard days. The recent flood damaged betel leaf plantations in Agailjhara and Gournadi, the two upazilas known for extensive cultivation of the crop in Barisal.

The growers in Patuakhali are compelled to sell betel leaf at throwaway prices due to lack of wholesale buyers.

Our Barisal Correspondent reports: "We lost everything as our betel leaf beds have been completely destroyed by the prolonged flood", said farmer Rahim Mallick in Rangta village in Agailjhara.

Rahim said his three bigha betel leaf plantation was the only source of income for his family and to meet education expenses of his children. The flood damaged all the plants, which will take another three months to be raised. "I do not know how to tide over the period".

Halim Mallick, Mannan Mallick and

Malek Mallick of neighbouring villages said their betel leaf beds were inundated by three to five feet water. Stagnant water for 5-6 hours is enough to completely destroy a bed, they said.

Hundreds of betel leaf growers in Agailjhara and Gournadi areas of the district are now worried how to survive as this was their prime source of income.

Local agriculture department sources said betel leaf on about 2000 acres have been damaged by flood in the two upazilas.

Many of the farmers this correspondent talked to said they will start fresh plantations as soon as the floodwater recedes. But plucking can not be started in the next four months.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports: Betel leaf farmers of Galachipa in upazila in the district can not realise the production cost by selling the crop as prices have fallen due to lack of buyers.

There are at least 6000 battle leaf farmers in Panpatti, Charkhali, Dauka, Atkhali, Pangashia, Sutabaria, Chiknikandi, Ulavia and Bauria villages. The crop was grown on about 7000 acres.

Cultivation of the crop spread in the areas in the last five years because it is more profitable than other crops. Betel leaf grown in Patuakhali is in good demand in other districts, farmers said.

The price has come down to around Tk 80 per pai (864 leaves) from Tk 250 to 300 this time last year, farmers said.

Abdul Mannan of Badua village said the production cost per pai is about Tk 100.

But some traders this correspondent talked to said prices have fallen due to good production and because this is the peak season

A hospital with a difference

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Haluaghat (Mymensingh)

Netrakona Aug 23: Joyramkura Hospital in Haluaghat in Mymensingh district is different from others.

Unlike other non-government hospitals in the country, it provides good treatment facilities at exceptionally cheaper rates. It is neat and tidy all around and disciplined.

Some patients this correspondent talked during a recent visit were all praise for the hospital, catering to the need of people of bordering Netrakona, Mymensingh and Sherpur districts. Even patients come from nearby areas across the border, they said.

Built on a 16-acre land surrounded by lush green hillocks and greens, it is only four kilometres from Haluaghat upazila headquarters. But the journey on the metalled road is tedious.

The 41-bed hospital with 14 cabins always remains crowded with patients. But all are well treated by its 165 staff including five doctors, six nurses and 36 trainee nurses.

Every year, foreign doctors came and stay there three to six months to train doctors and nurses.

All the doctors, nurses and other staff are very sincere and dutiful, the patients said.

"It seems they are here only to nurse patients", said Rahima Khatun, 40. She came here from Jinaigathi upazila in Sherpur for gall bladder stone operation. She had a successful operation at

a very cheap rate.

Two of the doctors—Biswa Jyoti Chakma and Tapan Rama—took training in plastic and 'reconstructive orthopedic surgery' in Japan. They said all kinds of operation except open-heart surgery and kidney operation are done here successfully.

At the outdoor, many patients coming from distant areas were waiting.

Every month, 125 to 150 major and minor operations are done here successfully. In July, 54 major operations and 73 minor operations were done. A caesarian operation costs only around Tk 3000 including those for medicine and seat rent.

The hospital's Chief Accountant Ankur Bhoumik told the correspondent that they do not earn profit from medi-

cines supplied to patients.

Hospital sources said patients have to pay Tk 50 per day for a bed and Tk 160 for a cabin. At times many patients have to stay on floors because of the rush.

All kinds of investigation including X-ray, ECG, Ultrasonograph are done at the hospital at cheaper rates.

The Australian Baptist Missionary Society set up the hospital in 1964 only for indigenous people, but all classes of people come here for treatment.

This correspondent talked to about 20 patients who came from different bordering areas of Mymensingh, Sherpur and Netrakona.

Rajat Barai, Executive Director of the hospital, said 40 per cent of its expenditure is met from donations from the Society and the rest 60 from its income.



PHOTO: STAR

The female word at Joyramkura Hospital, snapped recently

16 N dists facing drought

Aman output likely to fall short of target

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Aman cultivation has been facing setback due to drought in 16 districts in Rajshahi division. The situation may lead to shortage in paddy production target in the entire division.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Rajshahi: Aman fields have already dried up in Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) is distributing leaflets, holding meetings and campaigning through loud speakers to make farmers aware about different methods of combating drought in the 16 districts.

Most of the farmers are deprived of irrigation facilities because musclemen control water bodies in Pabna, Bogra, Naogaon and Chapainawabganj districts, according to Union Parishad chairmen in the affected areas.

DAE urged the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority to start operation of all deep and shallow tubewells for irrigation.

Although Aman has been cultivated on over 90 per cent of targeted land in 16 districts, still the production may fall short of target by 40 lakh tons.

Special prayers have been held for rain in Natore, Naogaon and Rangpur districts.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports: Tender aman seedlings are dying due to continued drought here since the Bangla month of Srabon

(mid-July to mid-August).

Most ponds and canals have dried up developing cracks on lands in different places.

Because of lack of water, farmers here are compelled to keep their stalk of jute stockpiled on high land instead of rotting in water.

Early flood in Ashar (mid-June to mid-July) gave a big blow to local farmers. Flood caused water logging in many parts here delaying aman plantation. Flood has damaged Aman seed beds on a vast tract of land.

After recession of floodwaters, farmers made new seed beds and planted aman seedlings with renewed hope.

About 1,14,248 hectares of land in the six upazilas had been targeted for aman cultivation, according to DAE. Meantime, 95 per cent of the target has been achieved.

But the prospect of paddy cultivation has become bleak due to absence of rainfall and irrigation facilities.

DAE recorded only 237 mm of rainfall in stead of required 600 mm of rainfall here in a month.

While visiting Tapamari, Charaikhola, Sindoi, Tangonmari, Putimani, Chaoradangi, Chuto Ranta and other villages, this correspondent saw rich farmers irrigating their paddy fields with shallow machines while marginal farmers remained idle.

Kalimuddin, an elderly farmer at Sindoi village, told this correspondent if the situation continues for more 10 days, it will be a debacle for farmers.

During his visit he found tender

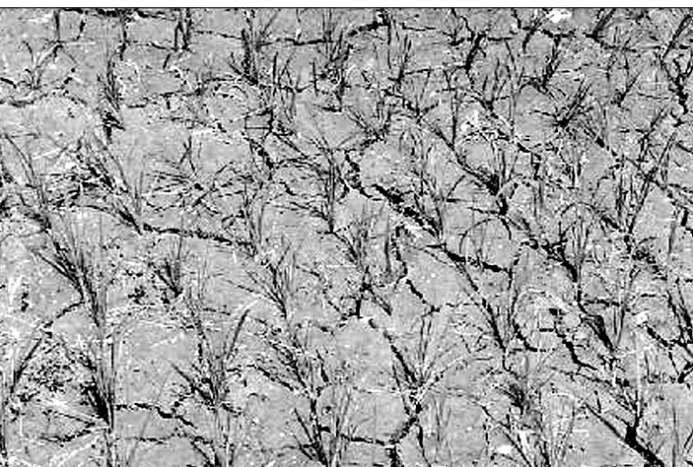


PHOTO: STAR

A parched aman field in Nilphamari.

aman crops being infected with insects. The attack is severe because of drought, farmers informed this correspondent.

To combat the menace, DAE advised farmers to spray insecticide. DAE also advised to apply additional fertiliser.

Losing everything in the deluge, poor farmers won't be able to buy additional fertiliser and pesticide.

However, irrigation facilities will be provided to farmers who are association (samity) members, according to a source in Teesta Irrigation Project of the Water Development Board. But a large number of farmers will be deprived of irrigation facilities because they are not association members.

"Now we only pray to Allah to get

rid of this situation," lamented Sirajul Islam, a marginal farmer at Goyabari village in Dimla upazila.

Farmers are offering special prayers for immediate rainfall.

BSS reports from Thakurgaon: Aman crops have been damaged partially due to drought.

The crop is likely to be damaged completely if there is no rainfall within a week.

Md Mohsin Ali, Deputy Director, DAE, Thakurgaon said about 4,000 shallow tube wells and 167 deep tube wells of BMDA started irrigation on aman fields.

For irrigation purpose, DAE is supplying plastic tape pipes to farmers.

Ctg arms haul: Tribesman held in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Sunday arrested a member of a Rakhain community on charge of his involvement in an arms haul incident in Chittagong.

The arrested person is Ping Eu, a staff of Medicine Sans Frontier, an international organisation in Bandarban, police sources said. Two temporary clinics are being run by Medicine Sans Frontier for ethnic and other people in the remote Bandarban area. Different detective agencies are monitoring the organisation's activities.

Ping Eu was taken to Chittagong by police. Ping Eu is the younger brother of Chittagong City College Principal Hla Ree. His sister-in-law A Thin was a member of parliament (MP) under Women's Reserved Seat during Awami League regime.

An incident of arms haul from 10 trucks was detected in Chittagong on April 2 last.

Move to conserve biodiversity with local community help

Orientation courses held at 5 sites

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A series of orientation courses aiming at conservation of biodiversity concluded at five protected pilot sites in four districts on Monday.

The courses were organised by the Nishorgo Support Project, a protected area management programme of the Forest Department, says a press release.

The five protected pilot sites are Lawachara National Park in Moulvibazar and Habiganj, Rema-Kelanga Wildlife Sanctuary and Satchuri Reserve Forest in Srimangol, Moulvibazar and Teknaf Game Reserve and Chunut Wildlife Sanctuary situated

in between Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

A two-day session was held each at Chunut Wildlife Sanctuary and Teknaf Game Reserve from August 8 to 11 and at Rema-Kelanga, Lawachara and Satchuri on August 15 and 23.

Local administrations, municipality chairman, police, journalists, senior Forest Department officials and USAID representatives discussed prevailing issues that contribute to forest degradation.

The Nishorgo team briefed the modality of the programme, how it can help alleviate the constraints of partners and why the participation from the local

community is crucial. There were group discussions and many suggestions came from the participants on the programme's implementation mechanism.

National parks, wildlife sanctuaries and game reserves are collectively referred to as protected areas. The areas are abodes of boundless natural beauty and thousands of flora and fauna including many endangered species. If properly managed, the areas can act as a pole for economic contributions to the locality. At present there are 17 such protected areas in Bangladesh.

Tk 5 lakh timber seized by BDR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkhira

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized Tk five lakh timber yesterday from near Choddarashi on the Kabodak river while those were being smuggled from the Sundarbans on board nine mechanised boats and arrested 17 people.

The arrestees people are Nuruzzaman Sazi, Nurul, Shahanoor, Aznur Rahman, Abul Kashem Sardar, Shariful Islam, Jalal Uddin, Kohinor Alam, Abul Hasan, Hafizur Rahman, Abu Taleb, Shahidullah Sardar, Israil Sardar, Noor Ali, Alamgir Sardar, Abdus Samad and Anwarul Islam, all handed over to police. A case has been filed with Shyamnagar thana.