

Rally demands
embankment
repair in
Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

People held a rally on Durgabati Cyclone Center premises in Shyamnagar upazila yesterday demanding reconstruction of the damaged Water Development Embankment of Kholpetua river before the monsoon.

Speakers at a rally said the embankment having breaches at many points will collapse into the river and cause severe flooding if it is not repaired immediately.

The meeting organised by local youths was presided over by Dinabandhu Sarkar and addressed by, among others, Burigolani Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Asim Kumar Joardar and and UP members Renuka Rani Mondal and Nilkanta Raptan.

At the rally, a 101-member body styled 'Durgabati Embankment Protection Coordination Committee' was formed.

People urged the higher authorities to take measures to protect the embankment but they did not pay heed to their demand, the rally was told.

The committee chalked out a 15-day programme to press the demand. The programme includes holding rallies, bringing out processions, views exchange meetings, mass signature campaign and submission of memorandums to Prime Minister and water resources minister.

**Party rivals loot
AL men's shops**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A group of leaders and activists of Awami Sechhasebik League on Sunday ransacked and looted 2 business establishments of 2 Awami League (AL) leaders at Assassuni.

The attack was a sequel to intra-party conflict, police said. Quoting eyewitnesses police said, attackers led by Saheb Ali, Rajab Ali, Rabiu and Mafizul belonging to a faction of district AL leader ABM Mustakim attacked the shops of Shahjahan Ali, former upazila AL general secretary and Nasir Uddin, a member of upazila AL.

Shahjahan Ali is also the elder brother of Assassuni upazila AL general secretary and Sadar Union Parishad (UP) chairman Advocate Shahidul Islam Pintu.

The attackers damaged furniture and looted goods and cash amounting to Tk 60,000 from the shops.

Sub Inspector (SI) of Assassuni Police Station said Nasir Uddin filed a case in this regard.

Wheat output likely to slide by 40 pc in 10 S-W dists

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Wheat production this year in 10 southwestern districts is likely to fall short of the target by around 40 per cent as farmers did not cultivate the crop on targeted lands.

Farmers trimmed wheat cultivation as they incurred losses due to poor yield last year, agriculture officials said.

Around 56,000 hectares were brought under wheat cultivation this year in the 10 districts against a target of 64,578 hectares, sources in Agricultural Extension Department (AED) said.

The area under cultivation was 70,330 hectares against the target of 10,690 in Jessore; 7,550 against 13,110 in Jhenidah; 10,000 against 12,195 in Magura; 2,455 in Narail against 3,388; 90 in Khulna against 135; 1,814 in Satkhira against 2,190; 68 in Bagerhat against 70; 1,180 in Kushtia against 20,620; 6,150 in Chuadanga against 1,090 and 8,790 hectares in Meherpur against 1,090.

The worst situation is in Kushtia, where the cultivation was about half of the target, the sources said.

"I cultivated rice instead of wheat this year because of loss from wheat last year," said farmer Abdul Zabbar at Khoksa upazila in Kushtia.

Abdul Zabbar at Khoksa upazila in Kushtia.

Farmers said the average yield was between one and two maunds per bigha last year, which was much below the average yield of 5 to 6 maunds earlier. This forced them not to go for wheat cultivation this year, they said.

Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) distributed about 961 tones of wheat seeds among dealers for sale to farmers this year.

But most of the dealers sold out the seeds to flour mills as farmers did not buy those, sources said.

INTRAPARTY CLASH IN JHENIDAH

8 BNP men sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Eight leaders and activists of ruling BNP including a local Zia Parishad leader have been sent to jail in Jhenidah in a case filed by a local party lawmaker after an intra-party clash on February 17.

The clash took place between supporters of BNP lawmaker from Jhenidah-4 constituency Sahiduzzaman Beltu and Jhenidah Zia Parishad President Shafiqul Islam Tutul. At least 70 people were injured in the hours-long clashes.

Those sent to jail by a court here on Monday are Jhenidah Zia Parishad Convenor Shafiqul Islam Tutul, his father former Kaliganj upazila BNP president Aynal Hasan, former general secretary Tabibur Rahman Mini, former Jubo Dal president Mizanur Rahman and BNP activists Dolar, Milon Hossain, Khokon and Tokon.

According to police and other sources, influential ruling party lawmaker from Jhenidah-4 constituency Sahiduzzaman Beltu and Zia Parishad president Shafiqul Islam Tutul had rivalry for long over supremacy in the area. Both are also aspirants for ruling party nomination for the next general election.

On February 17, followers of Shafiqul called a meeting at Kaliganj bus stand and obtained permission for this from the local administration. Lawmaker Sahiduzzaman also

called a meeting at the same venue at the same time, allegedly without permission from the administration.

Later, Shafiqul's group shifted their venue to KDC warehouse premises at Shibnagar in the upazila on request from administration, while the lawmaker remained firm to hold a meeting at the bus stand.

Clashes erupted when Sahiduzzaman's men allegedly prevented Shafiqul's supporters from attending the meeting at Shibnagar.

Allegations have it that the lawmaker's supporters also swooped on Shafiqul's meeting, triggering clashes that lasted for hours. Followers of Sahiduzzaman also assaulted local journalist Mahir Foysal as he was taking photos of clashes.

Later Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rushed the spot and brought the situation under control.

Anwar Hossain, a supporter of the lawmaker, filed a case against 20 men including Shafiqul and his father Aynal. Police declined to record any case by Shafiqul, the sources alleged.

Shafiqul then moved High Court, which ordered him and the accused to appear before a lower court.

On Monday, Shafiqul, his father and their supporters appeared before Jhenidah Judge Court, which sent them to jail, rejecting their bail petitions.

A tense situation is prevailing in the district over the incident. Additional police have been deployed in Kaliganj.



PHOTO: STAR

ASA, an NGO, handing over a rickshaw to Sohel Ahmed at Habiganj town recently under its soft loan programme for the poor.

Memo to DC, SP to save school from 'land grabbers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Teachers and students of Shahrupatti Government Primary School on Monday submitted memorandums to Mymensingh Deputy Commissioner and Police Superintendent to protect their school from 'land grabbers'.

Established in 1945, the school was run by local municipality till it was nationalised in 1973.

Teachers and members of the school managing committee also held a press conference at Mymensingh Press Club, seeking immediate steps by the administration to save the school.

They alleged that a gang of hired goons in an attack on March 17 damaged a wall of a latrine at the school and took away the tubewell. Attacks were made on several occasions earlier since 2001, they alleged.

The school authorities filed general diaries after the March 17 attack and also on four occasions earlier but police did not take any action, they alleged.

There are about 180 students in the school, most of them are from low income groups.

School managing committee members Mahbubul Islam, Kamal Pasha, Anwar Hossain and headmaster Monira Habib spoke at the press conference.

4 PCJSS men held, firearms recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Army personnel yesterday arrested four alleged activists of Parbatta Chhattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and recovered firearms and bombs from their possession in hilly Pakuakhali area of Longud upazila.

The arrested are Bir Bhodra Chakma, 30, Sujoy Chakma, 20, Bipur Chakma, 27, and Ashwini Barua, 47, belonging to a gang of criminals locally known as 'town group'.

The recovered items included three guns (LGs), one knife, 12 cocktails and some combat materials, according to army sources.

Token strike in Rajshahi for gas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Gas Movement Council yesterday called a token strike for 15 minutes from 11am on March 27 demanding pipeline supply of gas to households and industrial uses in Rajshahi city within the tenure of this government.

"We want gas supply, we will not vote BNP without gas", the council's convenor Mahtab Uddin said while announcing the programme at a press conference.

Kushtia police said a gang



PHOTO: STAR

Sequence of a drama-Pratibad--staged at Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park in Satkhira town yesterday to create awareness among men to resist violence against women. It was organised by Satkhira Unnayan Network, a local NGO.

ALLEGED BID TO GRAB LAND IN MYMENSINGH

Families of three slain Hindu farmers face death threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Families of the three slain Hindu farmers in Churer Vita village in Dhubaura upazila have alleged that the killers are now threatening them to leave the area or die.

Neyoti Rani, widow of Haridas Sutradhar, said her husband was the only earning member of her family. "I am passing days with great hardships with four minor children but the killers, who are influential in the area, are threatening us to withdraw the case or die", she said.

Shayamol Sutradhar, younger brother of Haridas Sutradhar, said the killers are moving freely in the area and threatening them with eviction if the cases are not withdrawn.

Gouranga Sutradhar, father of Bimol, also made similar allegations.

Niranjan's widow Minoti Rani was also present at the press conference.

Local political parties led by Awami League brought out a procession and held a rally at Dhubaura

upazila headquarters on March 14 demanding punishment to the killers.

It was addressed by AL leader Waresat Hossain Belal, local Union Parishad Chairman Monzurul Haque, former UP chairman Abdur Rahman, Zinnat Ali Biswas, Noor Hossain and principal Helal Uddin.

On contact, Officer-in-Charge of Dhubaura police station Akshya Kumar Barua said the victims' families on Saturday filed a GD seeking security of their life and property.

He said one of the accused Abdur Rahim was arrested recently in Dhaka.

Sources in Churer Vita village allege that Omar Ali grabbed about 100 decimal land of Hindu families in the last three years.

sons if they go to police.

As many as 17 people were abducted in the district in the last two and half months. The abductors killed two of them. Four are still missing and the rest bought their freedom.

Kumarkhali police yesterday recovered the body of 4 year-old missing girl, Rokhsana Khatun, from an under-construction rice mill at Bhaluka village.

2 kidnapped for ransom in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals Monday night abducted a school student and a young man from their house in the Sadar upazila and demanded Tk 4 lakh ransom.

In another incident, police yesterday recovered the body of a girl who went missing two days ago from Kumarkhali upazila.

Kushtia police said a gang

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