

Boro on 7,500 acres reel under flood water in Kishoreganj

Several breaches in 32km Bijoy dam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Ready-for-harvest *Boro* paddy on about 7,500 acres have reeled under water in Itna and Mithamoin upazilas and Joysiddhi and Alongjori union in Itna went under water, according to Abdul Baten, Deputy Director (DD) of Kishoreganj district Agriculture Extension Department (AED). The Bijoy dam breached at several points, he added.

Officials said the 32 km crop protection dam was damaged at Nischintapur and Pushaw points in Joysiddhi union in Itna and in Hakimpur and Paglar Dhair areas in Katkhali union in Mithamoin due to rush of water in last three days.

Boro paddy on about 7500 acres

in Katkhali, Kewarjore, Dhaki and Boirati union in Mithamoin upazila and Joysiddhi and Alongjori union in Itna went under water, according to Abdul Baten, Deputy Director (DD) of Kishoreganj district Agriculture Extension Department (AED). The Bijoy dam breached at several points, he added.

Former chairman of Gopdighi Union Parishad Ashraful Alam said a portion of the dam was damaged at Hakimpur in Mithamoin upazila, inundating *Boro* paddy fields in Gopdighi and Katkhali unions.

Jashim Uddin of Joysiddhi

village in Joysiddhi union in Itna upazila said as flash flood inundated paddy fields at night, most farmers in Joysiddhi and Alongjori could not do anything to harvest the crop. The whole *haor* (water body) area is now a vast sheet of water, he said.

Sujon of Charigram village in Dhaki union in Mithamoin upazila lamented saying, "We suffered a lot for urea and diesel crises and spent extra money to produce the crop. Now flood has taken away our crop".

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Tapin Kumar Biswas and AED officials visited the flooded areas

yesterday.

The officials said more croplands may go under water in *haor* (water body) areas in Kishoreganj because water is still rolling down from hills across the border.

Sadar Union Parishad chairman in Mithamoin upazila Achia Alam said the Bijoy dam breached at several points as it was not repaired since it was built.

The 32 km dam was built in 2004 by a non-government organisation to protect crops in four unions in Itna and Mithamoin upazilas. It was not repaired since then.

2 Jubo Dal leaders held in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Rangpur Juba Dal senior vice-president Najmul Alam Naju and party activist Kutub Uddin Tuesday night from the town.

They also recovered a pistol from Kutub's house at Lalkutti and a gun from Naju's house at Gupatpara.

Rab sources said, the two Juba Dal men were accused in several criminal cases but had been absconding.

Cattle trader tortured by BSF dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A Bangladeshi cattle trader who was tortured by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on April 18 succumbed to his injuries at Khulna-250-bed Hospital Tuesday night, police said.

The victim is Abdul Hamid, 28, son of Abdul Aziz of village Haroddah in Sadar upazila.

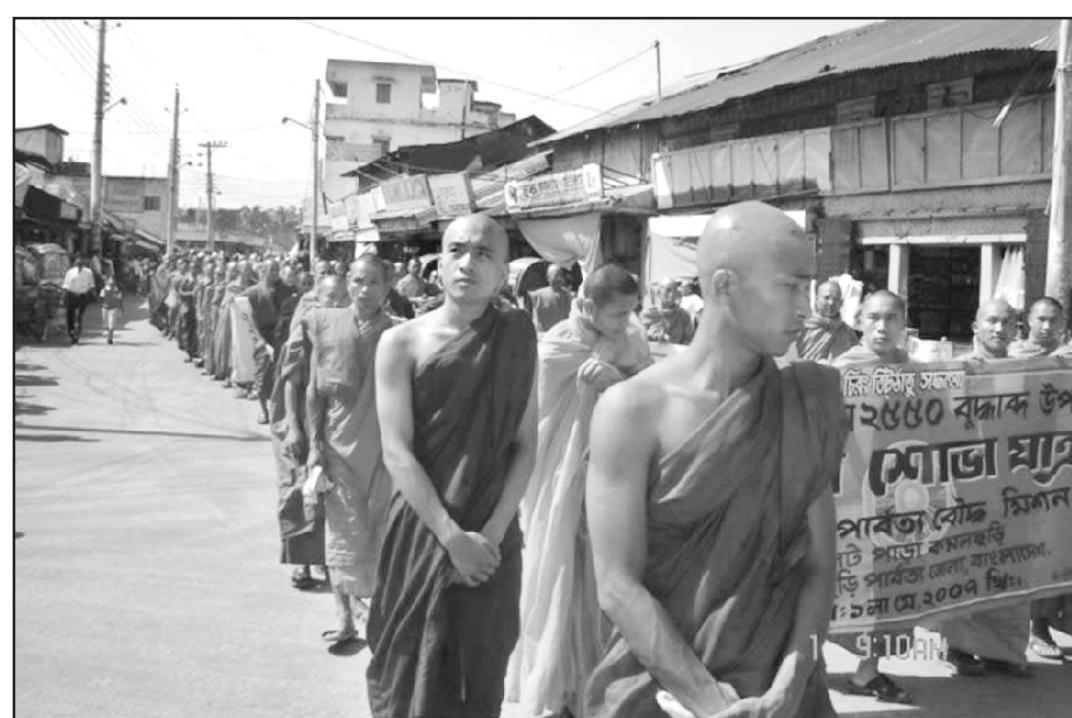
BDR and police said a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders went to India to buy cattle on April 17.

On way back home with cattle-head, the traders including the victim were chased and caught by BSF men at Ghojadanga border in 24 Parganas of West Bengal, India, opposite Bhomra port in Satkhira.

After beating, BSF men kept them at zero point near Bhomra the same night. Local people rescued them next morning and shifted critically injured Abdul Hamid, Jalil Sardar and Manirul Islam to Sadar hospital. As Hamid's condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Khulna hospital on April 20 where he succumbed later on.

On contact, both Major Kamrul Hasan, operation officer of 41, Rifles Battalion and Sadar Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Safiqur Rahman confirmed the incident.

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People of Buddhist community led by monks brought out a procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday marking Buddha Purnima, their greatest religious festival.



Farmers trying to retrieve *Boro* paddy from flooded croplands in Mithamoin upazila in Kishoreganj district.

PHOTO: STAR

Top outlaw held, SMG recovered in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a front ranking leader of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-red flag) Kafil Mostafa, 52, from the capital on Monday.

Kafil was arrested from Mirpur Section-1 and brought to Pabna Rab camp for interrogation. He was handed over to police, who produced him before a court yesterday. The court placed him on five days remand, police said.

Kafil is the son of Sheikh Nazir Uddin Ahmed of Char Balarampur village in Pabna Sadar upazila.

Kafil is a central leader of PBCP and contemporary of Kamrul Islam Master, founder of outlawed party, police said.

Acting on his confession, the elite force recovered some firearms including an SLR, an SMG and 17 bullets by digging earth at Pipur Primary School ground early morning Tuesday.

Rab sources said more such arms might be under the possession of PBCP outlaws.

Police said law enforcers in the district, joined by joint forces, have launched a vigorous drive in different areas of the district to arrest outlaws and recover firearms.

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Cancel lease of govt water body

Villagers demand in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A group of musclemen allegedly led by Satkhira district BNP general secretary Rahmatullah Palash are trying to evict about 400 people from their homesteads in Baintala village in Assasuni upazila to occupy the 94.33-acre Cheutia canal (water body), the victims alleged at a press conference here yesterday.

They claimed that the water body was leased to the BNP in 2006 by violating government's Jal Mahal and Chingri Mahal (water body) rules.

Failing to occupy the canal in the face of resistance, he is now threatening and harassing the innocent villagers by implicating them in false cases, Abdul Hakim Mollah of Baintala village told the press conference held at Satkhira Reporters Club. Some other people of the area were also present at the press conference.

In a written statement, Hakim Mollah said the Cheutia canal was declared a government property in 1984. The local administration leased the water body to Rahmatullah Palash in 2006.

The local people then filed a writ petition with the High Court praying for cancellation of the lease order. The High Court stayed the lease order for two months. The case is yet to be disposed of, Hakim Mollah told the press conference.

The Cheutia canal is an open water body and is the lone outlet to drain out water from several thousand acres of land in Bardal and Khajra unions in the upazila. The

Water Development Board (WDB) constructed a sluice gate in the canal to drain out water, he said.

But using his political influence during the BNP-Jamaat rule, Palash leased the canal for ten years by showing it a closed water body, he said.

Following allegations by local people, Assasuni Upazila Nirabhi Officer Khan Md Nurul Amin conducted an investigation and submitted a report to the Deputy Commissioner on February 15 this year.

In the report the UNO said the lease violated government rules on water body management and caused loss of revenue. He suggested that the lease should be cancelled in the interest of local people, Hakim Mollah said.

Muslemen allegedly engaged by Palash are now threatening the villagers to leave the area, he alleged.

He urged the authorities to take steps to protect interest of the villagers and ensure their security.

On contact, Rahmatullah Palash said he leased the water body as per law and deposited the lease money to the government. He also refuted the allegations of threatening the villagers.

"It is a conspiracy against me to tarnish my image", he added.

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