

Rain triggers flash flood in Netrakona, Kurigram

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Flash flood triggered by heavy rains in hills across the border in the last three days inundated seven unions in bordering Kalmakanda and Durgapur upazilas in Netrakona district.

In Kurigram, low lying areas in at least 10 villages in Rourmari and Chilmari upazilas reeled under water as 16 rivers in the district

swelled due to rain and onrush of water from the upstream.

In Netrakona, about 300 thatched houses were washed away and 80 per cent of newly transplanted Aman seedlings went under water that also swamped several thousand acres of vegetables fields, our correspondent reported quoting officials.

Netrakona district fishery officials said fishes worth around Tk 5

crore were washed away as flood waters overflowed about 500 ponds.

The seven affected unions out of 15 in the two upazilas are Birishiri, Gaokandia, Kakorora, Bakoljura in Durgapur upazila; and Kamai, Rangchati and Langura unions in Kalmakanda upazila.

Officials said the Shomeshwari, Mogra, Kongsha and Dhanu rivers in the district marked sharp rise in last two days, inundating areas in adjoining Khalajuri and Madan upazilas also.

Nobody from the district administration visited the flood affected areas, local people told this correspondent during a visit.

When contacted, Netrakona Water Development Board (WDB) Executive Engineer Mohammad Alauddin said the flood situation may deteriorate as waters are rolling down the rivers from hills across the border.

A correspondent reported from Kurigram that all the rivers in the district swelled due to rain in last two days.

Local Water Development Board sources said the Dhrila was swelled by 50 cms at ferry ghat point, Brahmaputra by 27 cms at Chilmari, Teesta by 37 cms in Kaunia point and Dud Kumar by 43 cms at Nunkhawa point in last 24 hours ending Saturday morning.

The rainfall recorded was 164 mm in Dhrila river basin and 117 mm in Brahmaputra basin areas, WDB officials said.

The affected villages are Jhauban, Dublabari, Bakbandha, Khechar Char, Algan Char, Bayra, Batashu Kajdanga, Kheruar Char, Gharia Char and Gayner Potol Char.



PHOTO: STAR

Flash flood inundated seven unions in Kalmakanda and Durgapur upazilas in Netrakona district.

Twenty Altaf loyalists in Patuakhali on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 20 leaders of BNP and its front organisations loyal to former minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury in Patuakhali are on the run to evade arrest or harassment by law enforcers.

They include a former lawmaker and public representatives of municipality and Union Parishads, according to law enforcers and administration officials.

Houses of some of them were raided since promulgation of emergency, the sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner AGM Mir Moshirul Alam said, "We sent a list of hiding public representatives to higher authorities for necessary action".

Former BNP lawmaker from Patuakhali-2 (Baufal) Shahidul Alam Talukder is evading arrest in connection with two cases including an arms case. Joint forces raided his Baufal residence on January 16 and recovered two magazines of a pistol and some relief goods.

A court in Patuakhali asked Shahidul to surrender before it but he is yet to be appear before it. Charges will be framed in the case against Shahidul on June 11, Public Prosecutor (PP) Yunus Ali Mollah told this correspondent.

Joint forces have meanwhile arrested district Judo Dal president Moshirul Rahman; Angaria UP chairman and BNP leader Golam Mortuza Sukkur; Altaf's former PS (personal secretary) and Mirzaganj BNP leader Khandaker Monirul Alam, Sadar BNP organisational secretary and Kamalpur Union Parishad chairman Monir Rahman and Baufal upazila Judo Dal secretary Gious Uddin.

Of them, Moshirul Rahman and

Monir Rahman are facing two cases each. Sukkur and Monirul Alam are facing one case each. Sukkur, Monir Rahman and Monirul Alam are on bail.

Altaf's younger brothers and BNP leaders Babul Chowdhury and Shahin Chowdhury face two cases each.

Patuakhali municipality chairman and district BNP leader Mostaq Ahmed Pinu faces three cases including two for corruption.

Dumki upazila Judo Dal president Saiful Alim Mridha, another former PS to Altaf Hossain Khalilur Rahman, district Krishak Dal president ASM Rab, Patuakhali pourasabha commissioners Mostafizur Rahman Rumi and Akhteruzzaman Nobel and Judo Dal cadres Maksudur Rahman and Jibon face one case each, police sources said.

Patuakhali district BNP secretary Snehangsu Sarkar Kutti is on law enforcers' list of 'godfathers', they said.

There are allegations of toll collection, tender scam and other irregularities against them, the sources claimed.

Tuhin, a BCL leader of Mirzaganj was killed allegedly by the former minister's cadres, according to a written complaint submitted to the joint forces by Mirzaganj upazila body in Shanthia upazila.

Over 20,000 landless people clashed with land grabbers to establish their rights on khas lands. Two landless, Intaz Ali and Lalmohon were killed by land grabbers.

It is widely alleged that Babul and Shahin distributed all development works among party men.

Some BNP cadres stopped construction work of the World Bank (WB) assisted Patuakhali central bus terminal on February 20, 2004 as the firm did not pay them Tk 25 lakh toll. The cadres also demanded Tk two crore from the contractor of Patuakhali-Kuakata road rehabilitation project involving a cost of Tk 45

crore.

The firm stopped work and left the area on June 30 last year leaving 22 km of the 72 km Kalapara-Kuakata road project unfinished in view of demands for toll, sources claimed.

A four-member ACC (Anti Corruption Commission) team visited Patuakhali on May 30 and 31 to probe alleged corruption and irregularities by Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and his men.

The team led by ACC Deputy Director Fanafillah videoed all movable and immovable property of Altaf in Patuakhali town and his Kathaltali village home in Mirzaganj upazila, according to law enforcers.

The team measured Altaf's Patuakhali residence at Circuit House Road and estimated the value of it and other property there.

"We will file case against all who were involved in corruption," an official of ACC said seeking anonymity.

Earlier on the night of May 28, joint forces raided Altaf's houses in Patuakhali town and at Kathaltali and seized two firearms, 99 bullets and some relief goods.

The district council built a guesthouse on the compound of Altaf's Kathaltali village home at a cost about Tk 67 lakh in 2003-2004 financial year when he was commerce minister. As per rule such a district council guesthouse has to be built at district or upazila headquarters, sources said.

Air Vice-marshal (Rtd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was elected from Patuakhali-1 (Sadar, Mirzaganj and Dumki) constituency in 2001.

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Two BNP leaders held in Kulaura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Joint forces arrested two top BNP leaders from Kulaura upazila.

Badruzzaman Sajal, former general secretary of Kulaura upazila BNP was arrested from Uttar Bazar and Abdul Mannan, former Joint Convenor of Kulaura upazila Jatiyatobadi Judo Dal was arrested from his Kasimnagar residence on Friday night, sources in joint forces said.

They were arrested on charges of creating instability in the locality, extortion and plundering forest resources. Later they were handed over to Kulaura police on Saturday, sources in joint forces said. They were produced before court and sent to jail afterwards.

Land Rights Day today in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Today is historic Land Rights Day.

On this day in 1985, landless people established their rights by shedding blood on government khas lands of Ghughudaha Beel (water body) in Shanthia upazila.

Over 20,000 landless people clashed with land grabbers to establish their rights on khas lands. Two landless, Intaz Ali and Lalmohon were killed by land grabbers.

Samata, an NGO, has demanded of the government to officially declare June 10 as Land Rights Day.

BDR, BSF trade gunshots on two Satkhira borders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) traded gunshots on two borders in Kalaroa upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

BSF of Atshikari camp in Swarupnagar Police Station under 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India, opened three gunshots aiming at BDR members at Madra camp in Kalaroa upazila. BDR members promptly retaliated by firing six gunshots.

In another incident, BSF of Tetulabati camp in Bongaon Police Station in 24 Parganas fired five gunshots targeting BDR members at Rudrapur camp in Kalaroa upazila. In return, BDR fired three gunshots.

On contact, 41, Rifles Battalion Operation Officer Major Kamrul Hasan confirmed the report.

JCD man, 2 outlaws held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Joint forces, in two separate raids conducted in Banaripara and Uzirpur upazilas, have arrested a notorious Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadre, also chief of 'Nixon Bahini' his aunt and two cadres of the outlawed Sarbabora Party.

On a tip-off, joint forces raided the house of Banaripara upazila BNP vice president Syed Aftab Hossain Mofakher and a closed aide of former whip Shahidul Huq Jamal in the early hours of Saturday. He could not be traced at the house. But his son Ariful Rahman Nixon, 22, a notorious JCD cadre and chief of so-called Nixon Bahini was arrested from there.

On the basis of his confession, a short (kata) rifle and four rounds of ammunition including gun belt, parts of fire arms and sharp weapons were recovered from the ponds of his grand mother at Labonshara village in Banaripara upazila in the morning. Joint forces also arrested

Banaripara Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Abdul Hye Sarkar said Nixon is an accused in many criminal cases including toll collection, terrorism and violence against women.

Earlier, Nixon was arrested with arms during Operation Clean Heart of army, but he was released under political pressure, he said.

In another raid at Datteswar village in Shokol union in Uzirpur on Friday night, joint forces arrested two notorious outlaws Anis and Hemayet of Sarbabora Party.

Police said there are many criminal cases against them.

ALLEGATION OF BRIBERY AGAINST SI IN SATKHIRA Accused assaults CID men, snatches case documents

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The accused who bribed SI Sarwar are former Helatala UP chairman Abu Taleb, Abdul Kader, Abdul Hamid and Zahurul Islam of Digong village, the sources said.

Journalist Belal murder case was transferred to CID for investigation in April. The four accused who bribed SI Sarwar then demanded the money back.

As the SI did not return their money, they submitted an allegation to the CID authorities against him.

After getting the allegation against SI Sarwar, CID authorities formed a one-member committee comprising Inspector Lutfur Rahman of CID security cell to probe the matter.

CID Inspector Lutfur Rahman came to Satkhira to probe the matter and asked the complainants to appear before him at CID office with witnesses and documents supporting their allegation at 10 am yesterday, the sources said.

As per directive of the CID probe committee, the complainants came to the CID office and the probe committee recorded separate statements signed by the complainants, the sources said.

While probe was going on, SI Sarwar entered the CID office at about 12:30 pm, threatened and assaulted probe committee member Inspector Lutfur Rahman and local CID Inspector Hari Pada

Biswas, snatched away written statements from the complainants and tore those into pieces. He left the scene threatening them with dire consequences, CID office sources said.

Two separate general diaries were filed by Inspector Lutfur Rahman of probe committee and local CID Inspector Hari Pada Biswas with Sadar thana against SI Sarwar soon after the incident. The incident was narrated in the GDS, the sources said.

SI Sarwar could not be contacted for comment despite repeated attempts over cell phones.

On contact, CID Inspector Lutfur Rahman local CID Inspector Hari Pada Biswas confirmed the incident and said they informed higher authorities and Satkhira Police Superintendent about the incident, seeking action.

"We have nothing more to do," said CID Inspector Lutfur Rahman when contacted.

On contact, Additional Police Superintendent Zakir Hossain Khan confirmed the incident and said action will be taken against him (SI Sarwar) if found guilty.



Rainwater entered into many shops in Mymensingh town following heavy shower yesterday.

ACC keeps watch on wealth of Sylhet's Ragib Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Transactions of at least seven bank accounts of different institutions of businessman Ragib Ali have been stopped.

Besides, investigation into some other accounts of his family members is going on, official sources said.

Allegations of corruption against Ragib Ali and activities of his institutions are also being probed by Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), a Deputy Director of ACC in Sylhet told The Daily Star yesterday.

The ACC official however declined to give details.

Sources in Bangladesh Bank in Sylhet said investigation into bank accounts of Ragib Ali and his family members and their institutions is going on. All his accounts in Sylhet have been marked as Non Resident Transaction Account (NRTA) and all kinds of transaction are stopped, the source added.

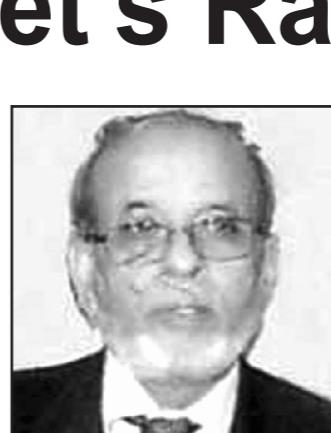
Ali and his family members are involved in institutions like Jalalabad Ragib-Rabeya Medical College and Hospital, Leading University, Ragib Offset Printing Press, daily Sylheti Dak, Malinichhara Tea Garden, Tarapur Tea Garden, Malinichhara Rubber Garden, Ragib Ali Foundation etc.

The institutions and business concerns Ragib Ali owns include seven tea gardens and a big shopping mall in Sylhet city. He is also a partner in another private university in Dhaka.

Ali owns a printing press Ragib Computers--and chief editor and publisher of Sylheti Dak, a widely circulated daily. Ali and his family members are also involved with the South East Bank.

Last year, a case was lodged protesting unauthorised sale of 200 trees from Malinichhara Rubber Garden in Sylhet city suburbs. The rubber garden was raised on lands leased from government.

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Deputy Commissioner, three persons were arrested. Some local newspapers carried stories on the matter but it was hushed up with the help of some political leaders, sources claimed.

The lands were sold through fake

Cases are still pending in connection with illegal sale of about 40 acres of land of Tarapur Tea Estate to about 200 individuals by Ali's family. The tea estate covers over 100 acres.

The lands were sold allegedly by preparing fake documents, land officials said.