

Police-villagers clash leaves 30 injured at Rajshahi village

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 people were injured in police-villagers clash at Darshanpara in Mohonpur upazila in Rajshahi yesterday.

Policemen allegedly charged baton on the unruly villagers who assaulted five personnel of the Anti-drug Directorate for demanding bribe amounting to Tk 10, 000 from local drug traders.

Injured Hasna Hena, 70, Taramon Bibi, 35, Selina Khatun, 25, Swapan Master, 32, Gholam Mortuza, 35, Majedur Rahman, 26, Babul Hossain, 37, and others were rushed to Mohonpur Health Complex and Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) immediately after the incident for treatment.

Villagers alleged that a five-man team of Anti-drug force led by inspector Shafiqul Islam went to the village to arrest drug traders at around 12 pm.

The team members included assistant sub inspector Abu Bakkar Siddique and constables Akbar Hossain, Motalab Hossain and Robi

Villager and drug alleged that the anti-drug personnel threatened the drug traders to pay the amount or face arrest. At this stage, both the drug traders and villagers jointly chased, caught and assaulted them.

The villagers informed the matter to Keshorhut Pourasabha chairman Shahiduzzaman Shahid. Immediately he rushed to the spot and informed Mohonpur police.

Three police men led by sub-inspector (SI) Mozahar Hossain rushed to the spot and tried to rescue the anti-drug staffers from villagers. At this stage, the villagers clashed with police.

On information, a platoon of police rushed to the spot and charged baton on villagers and rescued the anti-drug staffers from the villagers.

Police also arrested three villagers, Atiqur Rahman, Atiqur and Shahidul Islam on charge of attack on police during their duty period.

When contacted, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohonpur Police Station Afzal Hossain denied to have charged baton on villagers. But he said police had to go into action against some unruly villagers to control the situation.

On contact, Mohonpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Abul Fazal Mir also echoed the similar view. He said that police damaged some dens of drug traders and drug equipment. 'The situation is now under control,' he said.

Sources said, police have been taking preparation to file cases against the villagers.

A tense situation is prevailing in and around the village. Many peoples have reportedly left their village fearing further police attack.

ASF SURVEY REVEALS

2,526 fall victims to acid violence in eight years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

About 2,526 people fell victim to acid violence across the country during a period from May 1999 to June 2007.

This was revealed at a press conference held here on Wednesday.

The Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) organised the press conference at Hotel Lilian here. Advocate Ahasan Habib Soheli addressed the press conference on behalf of the ASF. Of the victims, 682 were under 18 years of age, he said.

As many as 1,749 incidents of acid attack were reported during the period. About 1,225 males and 612 females became acid victims due to dowry, love affair, family feud, financial matter, land and other disputes.

In Bogra, 110 people including

eight children fell victim to acid violence in last nine years. About 96 incidents happened during the period, the press conference said.

Advocate Soheli said the ASF gave financial help to 10 acid victims for survival in the district.

She said that one Joyanal Abidin under one year of age was seriously injured by acid on October 17, 2000 while Shahin, 6, and Morseda Khatun, 9, were victimised the same year in Bogra. Most of the incidents happened in Bogra Sadar, Shibganj and Sherpur upazila in the district.

The press conference further informed that Bogra unit of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services (BLAS) gave assistance to three acid victims here on behalf of the ASF after signing of an agreement between the two organisations.



PHOTO: STAR

Villagers removing silt voluntarily from the Betna river near a sluice gate at Shalley village in Sadar upazila, Satkhira.

Satkhira villagers remove silt from Betna river on self-help basis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

It was a different day for people at Shalley village in Sadar upazila when hundreds of villagers in seven adjoining villages joined hands to remove silt from the riverbed of the Betna on Thursday.

Earlier, several appeals of the villagers made to the higher authorities for removal of silt from the river went unheeded resulting in filling up of the Shalley sluice gate.

The villages are Shalley, Parshalley, Machhkhola, Harinkhola, Ahsan Nagar, Shakdah and Goalpota.

During a visit to the village, this correspondent saw that people of all walks of life were removing silt with their hands near the sluice gate constructed to drain out rainwaters of over 25 beels (water bodies) in the area.

He saw students, teachers, farmers and poor day labourers were removing silt with their hands. The atmosphere was cordial. While working, the jubilant people were singing songs to keep up their spirit.

The Water Development Board (WDB) constructed the sluice gate in the early 70s on the bank of the Betna for the purpose.

But the sluice gate became inoperative after deposition of silt

of the river during the last five years.

Over 25,000 people of the aforesaid villages including the adjoining villages remained marooned and crops on thousand of acres of land were damaged due to water logging in the rainy season every year. This is because of failure to pass rainwater of the beels through the sluice gate following deposition of silt in and around the gate.

Rainwaters of over 25 beels drained out to the river through the sluice gate.

Over 25,000 people of the aforementioned villages were suffering a lot during the rainy season for years together as rainwater remained stagnant creating water logging for a long time.

The villagers said their repeated appeals to the WDB authorities, Union Parishad (UP) chairman and former parliament members went unheeded in the past.

None came forward to our aid, said Advocate Nurul Islam at Shalley village. Finally, we sat at a meeting and decided to do the job on self-help basis, he said.

The meeting divided all the villagers into several groups, Union Parishad (UP) member Shib Prasad Mondal said.

The groups worked alternately.

The work completed on Thursday, he said.

Other villagers said political leaders came to them before every election to seek vote. They promised to remove silt from the sluice gate area. But after the elections, they forgot their promises.

'No one can change their condition if we do not help ourselves', they said.

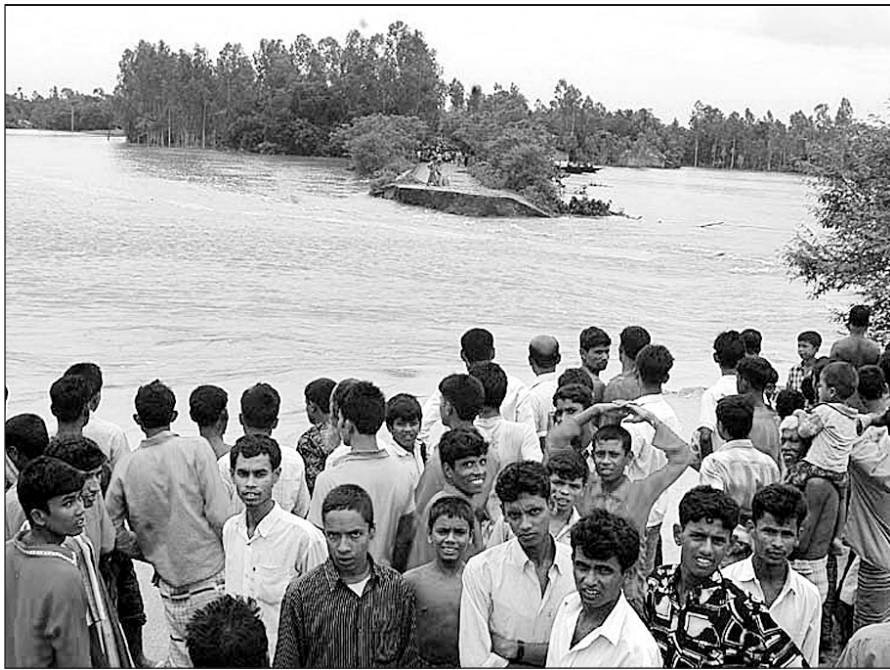
Reception to GPA-5 achievers

BSS, Jhenidah

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Conscious Citizens Committee gave a reception to 50 students of Jhenidah sadar upazila on Wednesday for getting GPA-5 in the SSC examinations.

Acting Vice Chancellor of Islamic University Prof Dr ASM Anwarul Karim was present at the function as the chief guest with Advocate Sheikh Selim in the chair.

Later, crests and certificates were distributed among the students.



(Left-right) A pucca road was washed away by floodwater at Bhara Kunkunia on the Sirajganj-Kazipur Road while a village in Sirajganj was completely submerged by floodwater. The pictures were taken yesterday.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Job opportunities to be created for youths

BSS, GAIBANDHA

Joint forces have taken up a training programme for unemployed youths of the district on urgent basis aimed at eliminating 'monga' (poverty like situation) through creation of job opportunities.

To implement the programme, a coordination meeting was held in the conference room of the deputy commissioner on Wednesday.

Local people highly appreciated the steps taken by the joint forces for working opportunities for the unemployed youths of the district.

Ex- Jhenidah lawmaker faces 2 more extortion cases

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Two more extortion cases have been filed against former lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master, elected from Jhenidah-3 constituency and his 21 close associates.

Abu Taleb, former secretary of Chapatala Baor (water body) Association and Kartik Halder, former secretary of Solaimanpur Baor Association lodged the two cases with a court here on Thursday.

The accused are former lawmaker Shahidul Islam Master, his brother-in-law Shahidul Islam Master, Dabir Hossain, Moznul Mollah, Khoda Box, Abu Taleb, Anwarul Islam, Hafizur Rahman, Izzat Ali, Nazrul Islam, Harun-or-Rashid, Shafiuddin, Zulfikar Ali, Ruhul Kuddus, Rafiqul Islam, Bazlur Rahman, Shahidul Islam, Amjad Ali, Abul Hossain, Habibur Rahman and Enamul Haque. Abu Taleb alleged that the

lawmaker along with his associates demanded Tk 5 lakh from him at the baor office sometime in 2002. He instantly paid them Tk 1 lakh 50 thousand from the office. On receipt of the money, they asked him not to catch fish of the water body until payment of the rest amount.

On failure to pay the rest amount, the lawmaker and his men looted fish worth about Tk 13 lakh 92 thousand from the water body, Abu Taleb said. But he could not file any case with the court fearing reprisal as the lawmaker was a BNP leader.

Meanwhile, Kartik Halder, former Secretary of Solaimur Baur Association alleged that the former lawmaker and his men looted fish worth Tk.8 lakh 58 thousand 140 from his leased water body because he failed to pay their extortion money, they demanded earlier. Kartik filed the case with Jhenidah court on Thursday.

The accused are Shahidul Islam Master, his brother-in-law master Shahidul Islam, Praddut Holder, Jafar Ali, Madon Holder, Kumar Holder, Bashu Holder, Rafiqul Islam, Ismail Hossain, Babul Mia, Ashadul Islam, Nazrul Islam, Ali Akbar & Kamruzzaman Babu.

Earlier two extortion cases of Tk 5 lakh and Tk 20 lakh each were filed against the former lawmaker with Moheshpur Police Station in the current month.

At present he is absconding.

FUND CRISIS

1,400 LGED project staff not getting salaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Over 1,400 staff of the Rural Infrastructure Development Project -26 under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) are not getting salaries for about one and a half years due to fund constraint, officials said.

Project Director (PD) Tobarak Hossain admitted the fact and said the government decided to terminate all the temporary staff of the World Bank (WB) funded project.

Earlier, 400 employees under the project were terminated from job. The project started at a cost of US 190 dollars.

Mohammed Asaduzzaman, a temporary staff under the project, addressed a press conference at Bogra Reporters' Forum auditorium here recently on behalf of 1,500 staff of the project in 21 districts. He said to local journalists that all sorts of financial benefit including their salaries were stopped without any notice since December 5.

Samana, a cleaner of the LGED here revealed at the press conference that she had borrowed Tk 35,000 to meet up her family expenses in last 18 months. Another cleaner, Hamida said she had borrowed Tk 30,000 from her relatives for survival but he could not refund the money as yet.

BDR, BSF trade gunshots on Dinajpur, Satkhira borders

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday traded heavy gunshots on Dinajpur and Satkhira borders.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Border guards of the two neighbouring countries exchanged gunshots at Mohanpur border outpost under Phulbari upazila, BDR sources said.

They said, BSF troops at 72 Samjhia camp in India opposite of Mohanpur border fired at least five gunshots towards BDR without any provocation in the early morning, forcing BDR troops to retaliate by firing at least three gunshots.

However, no causality was reported.

On contact, BDR officials confirmed the report saying they pro-

tested the incident promptly.

A tense situation has been prevailing along the border.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: BSF and BDR traded heavy gunfire on Kakdanga border in Kalaroa upazila early in the morning.

BSF at Tarali camp in Swarnnagar Police Station under 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, India, opposite Kakdanga border fired two gunshots aiming at BDR of Kakdanga camp at about 4-30 am, forcing BDR to retaliate by firing six gunshots. But no casualty is reported.

On contact, Major Kamrul Hasan, Operations Officer of 41 Rifles Battalion confirmed the report saying the BSF men fired four unprovoked gunshots towards BDR.

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