

Two more JMB cadres surrender to police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Two more cadres of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) surrendered to the Gangachara Police Station yesterday.

Threat to blow up RU deptts

RU CORRESPONDENT

Panic has gripped teachers and students as a militant outfit styled as 'Islamic Society Group' has threatened to blow up the management department of Rajshahi University.

The threat was made in a letter sent to department Chairman Zinnat Ara Begum on Wednesday.

The letter reads: "If the department fails to stop anti-social activities, we will blow it up. We will attack the department within one month."

Zinnat Ara told reporters, "We have informed the university authorities, proctor and the police of the threat."

Earlier on Tuesday, an unidentified man threatened to blow up the mass communication department.

The threat was made in a letter sent to Prof Khademul Islam, chairman of the department.

When contacted, the chairman said, "I have filed a general diary (GD) with Motihar Police Station."

8 shops gutted, 10 injured in Chandpur fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

At least 10 people were injured while trying to extinguish a fire that burned down eight shops and damaged three others at Pura Bazar in the town yesterday.

Eight of the injured received serious burns. They were rushed to Sadar Hospital, said hospital sources.

The fire started at a shop of fuel oil at noon and soon engulfed the other shops, the traders said.

Receiving information, Coast Guard personnel and fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after struggling for about two hours.

The traders estimated the loss at about Tk 25 lakh.

CU students vacate halls

CU CORRESPONDENT

Most of the residential students of Chittagong University (CU) left the campus on Wednesday night while few male students vacated the halls yesterday morning.

On the other hand, some of the students, who live in the cottages -- rented house on and around the campus, are staying on the campus.

CU Proctor Prof Jasim Uddin said the students, who could not leave the campus, stayed in the halls on that night taking permission from the university authorities and left the campus before 10:00am.

"Now all the halls are empty and we sealed all the rooms off," Professor Jasim said.

Acute seed crisis in Netrakona

UNB, Netrakona

Farmers of the district are facing acute scarcity of transplanted aman and vegetable seeds as seedbeds on vast tract of land were damaged due to floods.

With the recession of floodwater, farmers of the areas can not cultivate their land due to scarcity of seeds.

Department of Agricultural Extension sources said vegetable on 91 hectares worth Tk 27 crore were damaged in the flood in the district.

Seedbeds on 2,500 hectares worth Tk 4 crore were also damaged totally.

Meanwhile, under the post-flood agricultural rehabilitation programme, the government has decided to produce seedlings on 296 hectares of land for distribution among the farmers free of cost.

Road accidents kill 7

STAR REPORT

At least seven people were killed and 40 others injured in separate road accidents in Mymensingh, Narsingdi, Sirajganj and Rajshahi yesterday and on Wednesday.

Our correspondent from Mymensingh reports: Two women were killed and 25 others injured, 10 of them critically, in a road accident on Mymensingh-Haluaghat road at Kodaldhar in Phulpur upazila under Tarakanda Police Station yesterday.

The victims were identified as Firoza Begum, 40 and her sister Momena Khatun, 42.

Police and local people said the accident took place when a Mymensingh-bound passenger bus from Haluaghat skidded off the road and hit a roadside tree as the driver lost control over the steering, injuring 27 passengers.

Locals rushed 12 critically injured to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). Of them, Firoza and Momena succumbed to their injuries on the way to hospital, police said.

The bodies were sent to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

UNB from Narsingdi adds: Three people, including a woman, were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident at Nikuthi in Roppura upazila on Wednesday.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at 10:00pm when a speeding minibus collided with a pickup van, leaving the three people dead on the spot.

Two of the deceased were identified as Abdul Hamid, 70, and Majnu Mia, 30. The identity of the woman could not be known immediately. The injured were admitted to a local people.

Another report from Sirajganj

adds: A pedestrian was crushed under the wheels of a bus in Baniagati area of west link road of Jamuna Bridge in Kamarkhand upazila on Wednesday.

Witnesses said the Dhaka bound bus from Pabna ran over Jabdul, 60, while he was crossing the road at about 11:00am, leaving him dead on the spot.

RU correspondent adds: An old man was killed in a road mishap in Rajshahi yesterday.

He was identified as Tonsar Ali, 62, of Bojrok Kour village under Bagmara upazila.

Sources said Tonsar was crossing a road at Mogaipara at around 12:30pm when a Rajshahi-bound bus knocked him down.

He died on the spot, sources said.

Police recovered the body and handed it over to family members.

Voter registration begins in 2 Ctg pourashavas

BSS, Chittagong

Work on preparing a fresh voter list with photographs and national identity cards began at Raozan and Sitakunda pourashavas yesterday.

Official sources said district election office (DEO) with the cooperation of the army formally started the voter registration process by taking fingerprints and digitised photographs of the eligible voters.

Separate teams of the army with necessary expertise are directly supervising and conducting the work at registration centres already set up in the areas.

Major Mohammad Kamran has been supervising the technical support being provided by the army at Sitakunda while Major Nasruddin Khan at Raozan.

Termining the response of voters encouraging, the election officials said people are spontaneously coming to the centres for registration with digital photographs.

Sources said 82 field level data collectors and 19 supervisors have been appointed for Sitakunda pourashava and 162 data collectors and 34 supervisors for Raozan pourashava.

Earlier, the field-level staffs were

imparted a three-day training on the task.

On the other hand, 62 data entry operators were appointed for Sitakunda while 85 for Raozan pourashava with adequate number of supervisors to enroll the voters at the centres.

A total of 10 centres have been set up in both Sitakunda and Raozan pourashavas in the first phase and more would be opened later for completing the process smoothly.

Enumerators had distributed voter registration forms to every household in the areas and collected information of 8000 out of total 24,064 (as per old voter list) at Sitakunda and information of approximately 25,000 out of 49,305 voters (as per old voter list) at Raozan till date.

The data collection and registration process will continue up to September 7 at Sitakunda while up to September 14 at Raozan, the officials said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Mohiuddin Ahmed Khan and UNO of Sitakunda M Akteruzzaman visited the voter registration centres at Sitakunda in the morning.

Pirates attack fishermen in Bagerhat: 9 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Nine fishermen were injured seriously when they were attacked by a group of pirates on Wednesday morning at Swarankhola of Bagerhat district.

The injured are now undergoing treatment at Swarankhola Upazila Hospital.

The incident occurred when the victims were fishing in the Baleshwar river at Chadeshwar with an engine boat.

The pirates kidnapped a fisherman for a ransom of Tk 1 lakh.

He could not be rescued till 5:00pm yesterday.

According to station officer of Swarankhola Forest Office, forest guards arrested five pirates and recovered two firearms and nine rounds of ammunition from their possession after a gunfight.

Nine other pirates of the gang belonging to Jihad Bahini fled to the Sundarbans with looted fish and other things worth over Tk 2 lakh, said an Assistant Conservator of Forests Shoab Khan.

The five pirates caught by forest guards were identified as Ishaque, Monir Hossain, Monir Mian, Akram Gazi and Shahid Khanjaker.

They were shown arrested under Arms Act, said the OC of Swarankhola Police Station.

Bagerhat pourashava suspended for corruption

UNB, Bagerhat

The secretary of the pourashava in the district headquarters, Khelafat Hossain, has been suspended on charge of corruption.

Local government division in a letter issued the suspension order yesterday.

Pourashava chairman Khan Habibur Rahman told journalists yesterday that Khelafat was sued in a corruption case while he was secretary of Projpur pourashava in 1998.

A High Court bench stayed proceedings of the case following a petition filed by the accused.

The local government division sent the suspension order to this municipality as the writ was cancelled on August 13.

2 electrocuted in Jessore

UNB, Jessore

Two linemen of cable TV were electrocuted at Mallikpur village in Jhikargachha upazila on Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as Haroon, 20, and Jahangir, 22, of Kritipur village in the upazila.

Witnesses said Haroon and Jahangir came in contact with a live electric wire while giving new connection of cable TV to a subscriber at about 9:00am.



Rotary District Governor Rafiq Ahmed Siddique hands over a cheque for Tk 5 lakh to Industries Adviser Geeteera Safiya Choudhury in donation for the flood victims at the 32nd installation meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West recently.



A joint medical team of Care Bangladesh and Dhaka Community Hospital provides medical care for flood victims in Jamalpur recently. The team will also visit several other flood-affected districts up to August 30.

Nawaz Sharif: Pak army's friend-turned-foe

AFP, Islamabad

Nawaz Sharif entered politics a quarter of a century ago under the wing of Pakistan's powerful army -- but is now one of the biggest challengers to military rule in the Islamic republic.

After seven years in exile following his 1999 overthrow by Pervez Musharraf, the 57-year-old former prime minister won a landmark case yesterday in the Supreme Court against the General allowing him to return home.

While rival Benazir Bhutto is negotiating a deal with president Musharraf which some in her party view with disapproval, Sharif has taken an uncompromising stand against him.

"Today Nawaz Sharif is seen as the main opposition of the military rule in Pakistan while Benazir stands in no man's land," political commentator Najam Sethi told AFP. The scion of a wealthy dynasty

with interests in steel, sugar and paper, Sharif was handpicked by then-military dictator Zia ul-Haq in 1981 to become one of the youngest ever finance ministers for Punjab province.

Zia chose him because the Sharifs loathed the Pakistan People's Party of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged on Zia's orders in 1977.

Bhutto had nationalised the industries of Nawaz Sharif's father.

As chief minister of the populous Punjab from 1988-90, Sharif gave a tough time to Bhutto's daughter Benazir, who became prime minister after Zia's death in an airplane explosion.

Sharif won elections for prime minister after Benazir's dismissal in 1990 -- with the military's blessing -- but after three years he was sacked on corruption charges following differences with the then-president, Ghulam Ishaq Khan. That marked a turning point in

his political career. Instead of accepting the ouster, Sharif launched a scathing attack on president Khan, considered his former mentor and top representative of the military-led establishment.

Sharif bounced back to the premiership in 1996 after the dismissal of Benazir's second government on corruption charges.

He then won a massive two-thirds majority in 1997 elections which emboldened him to take on the army, the institution which has ruled Pakistan for more than half its existence since independence 60 years ago.

Sharif also made other moves to become Pakistan's most powerful, ever premier, such as reversing a constitutional amendment which removed the president's powers to dismiss the prime minister.

Then he had a spectacular falling out with the then chief justice, Sajjad Ali Shah, whom he believed to be putting curbs on his ambi-



1. Two women and their children travel in a rickshaw to reach their destination in the city after the curfew was relaxed yesterday. They came to Dhaka from Barisal by a launch but had to wait for several hours at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal. 2. Photojournalist Babul Talukder of the daily Dinkal who was man-handled by law enforcers during the curfew period is being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. 3. A policeman checks the passport of a person near the GPO in the city as he was going home after arriving at Zia International Airport from abroad yesterday. 4. Agrabad area in Chittagong city during the curfew period yesterday.



Mad dash for home as curfew relaxed

FROM PAGE 1

7,000 for journeys to nearby districts, alleged one of those who were stranded.

Most of the passengers were unhappy with the way the airport authorities gave them the cold shoulder, adding to their sufferings.

Without finding an alternative, those bound for relatively nearby places walked home.

Meanwhile, many who came to the city from across the country, alleged that the law enforcers gave them beating for nothing. They were already drained because of walking a long distance with luggage on their back.

Thousands who reached the Sadarghat launch terminal in the morning hours from different southern districts suffered terribly for want of food and water as most of the restaurants and shops were closed for fear of harassment by the law enforcers.

"With my mother and sister, I got here at 7:00 in the morning. We didn't know anything about the curfew. It was a painful experience as there was no vehicle and all shops were closed," said Abdus Sattar of Bhola.

Many passengers alleged that the law enforcers beat up the young ones while swore at the women and girls.

"I was beaten up thrice on my way from Sadarghat to Gulistan. They did not even give me a chance to show my ID," Sumon Mohammad, 25, told The Daily Star.

The ones trying to leave the capital had to face similar troubles in reaching Sadarghat even when the curfew was loosened yesterday evening.

People who were trapped in the capital since the curfew was clamped at short notice Wednesday night began rushing to the Gabtoli Bus Terminal after 4:00pm yesterday. But few could have tickets as most of those were already sold.

No buses left for any divisional town as the curfew is in place there as well.

"After searching frantically for over half an hour we could not get any taxi or a CNG [run three-wheeler]. So we had to hire a rickshaw-van at Tk 120 to take us to Gabtoli from Mohammadpur Town Hall," said a student who toiled to the terminal along with his two friends to start for Gaibandha.

Passengers alleged that taking advantage of the extraordinary situation, many bus operators

were charging higher than usual.

Due to the curfew, the passenger buses had to cancel most of their scheduled trips.

RAJSHAHI

After relaxation of the curfew, hundreds of stranded students of educational institutions in Rajshahi yesterday rushed to bus terminal and railway station, reports our Rajshahi University correspondent.

They were seen leaving the city by buses jam-packed inside and on the roof.

They also travelled on trucks, tempos, minibuses and other modes of transport.

Taking advantage of the situation, transport owners were charging 2/3 times higher fare. Rickshaws and vans also charged double fare, students said.

Many people were seen walking on the streets at several locations of the city till filing of this report late in the evening.

After 4:00pm, two trains -- north and south bound -- left Rajshahi, railway sources said.

Earlier, on Wednesday night, police raided all private male and female student hostels and messes, asking them to vacate by Thursday.

Students of public educational institutions including Rajshahi University, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet), Rajshahi Medical College and Rajshahi Government College had to take shelter in private hostels since the institutions were declared closed.

Yesterday morning, many domestic workers and day labourers headed for their workplaces were beaten up by law enforcement agency personnel, sources said.

A class five student of Rajshahi Collegiate School was beaten up in the presence of his father. The student fainted from the beating.

Newspaper hawkers were also beaten up early in the morning while preparing for distribution of newspapers, sources added.

Hundreds of people were beaten up and chased away while some were arrested in the city throughout the whole period of curfew as many came out on the streets without paying due importance to the curfew.

BARISAL

Our Barisal correspondent reports, hundreds of people rushed out of their homes to buy foods and other essential commodities after the curfew was relaxed for three hours in the city yesterday afternoon.

At 4:00pm, students and passengers stranded at different points and stations of the city and on the outskirts also resumed their journey toward their destination.

However, very few transport vehicles were available on city roads to accommodate the rush of passengers. A large number of shops and super markets remained closed.

College authorities said male students already vacated their dormitories and took shelters in houses of their local guardians while female students had to wait for the break of curfew to go to their destinations.

Law enforcers arrested four people on charge of breaking the curfew.

Short distance water and road transportations started to ply after relaxation of curfew.

However, long distance water and river transportations, especially the ones going to other metropolitan cities including Dhaka, did not ply as curfew resumed after 7:00pm.

SYLHET

Our staff correspondent in Sylhet reports, a small number of people came out onto the streets to meet their urgent needs during the curfew in the morning yesterday, but they were chased away by contingents of law enforcers and the roads turned empty.

The law enforcers also made announcements over loudspeakers asking the people to go back home. At a few places, the law enforcers beat up pedestrians. Police picked up nine people from different areas of the city for violating the curfew.

After the curfew was imposed on Wednesday night, almost all students of Shahjalal University and Sylhet Agricultural University left their dormitories. However, a good number of them failed to avail any transport and were compelled to stay outside the campus.

Female students of both the universities suffered the most.

BELTA confce postponed

BSS, Dhaka

An international conference of the Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA), scheduled to be held on August 24-26 at the Biam, has been postponed due to unavoidable reasons, says a press release yesterday.

Five Chuadanga AL, BNP leaders arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police arrested five top leaders of Awami League (AL) and BNP of Chuadanga district in the early hours of yesterday.

The leaders are AL Chuadanga District Unit President Solaiman Haq Joardar alias Selun Joardar, Joint Secretary Asadul Haq Biswas, district acting president of BNP Sardar Ali Hossain, Sadar upazila BNP President and former public prosecutor of Chuadanga judge court Advocate Abdul Wahab Mallik, Organising Secretary of district Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Firoj Sarwar Roman and BNP leader Nazmul Haq Swapan.

According to Chuadanga police, the leaders were arrested from their houses at different parts of the town in separate raids between 3:00am to 5:00am.

Police said all were arrested under Emergency Act.

According to police sources, the arrested leaders allegedly provoked the students loyal to their parties to bring out procession at Chuadanga Government College on Wednesday over Dhaka University incident that took place on Tuesday.

Sources said being provoked by the leaders, students tried to bring out a procession from the college but police prevented them.

The arrested leaders were produced before a first class magistrate who sent them to jail.

Carmichael College closed sine die

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Authorities of Rangpur Carmichael College have suspended academic activities sine die and asked all residential students to vacate the college hostels by 8:00am yesterday.

The decisions came from an emergency academic council meeting on Wednesday night after few students demonstrated at Lalbagh rail crossing area in the evening.

Witnesses said a number of unidentified youths ransacked Nurani Hotel and a branch of Janata Bank at Lalbagh area.

Sirajganj-Rajshahi rail link restored

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Rail communications between Sirajganj and Rajshahi was restored yesterday 23 days after it snugged due to floods, which caused a huge damage to railway tracks at Raipur.

A local train started running from Sirajganj Bazar Station in the afternoon, bringing a great relief to the people.

According to railway department sources, devastating floods washed away lands under the rail tracks at Raipur on July 31, 2007, halting the rail communications.

After the recession of floodwater, railway workers started repair work, which was completed in the morning.

About 2000 people, including traders, officials and other professionals, use this route everyday, said Azhar Ali, station-in-charge of Sirajganj Bazar.

Right to information a must for advancement of edn

Speakers tell seminar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said education and information are related closely and without necessary information, education has to face problems in its smooth advancement.

If the information is not made available, education would not reach its goal in rural areas, they said, adding that for the overall development of a country, education is needed and availability of information is also needed at the same time.

The regional seminar on 'Right to information in education sector' was held at the auditorium of the local press club.

Mymensingh Press Club and

Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC), a non-government organisation working for mass media, jointly organised the daylong seminar.

Anwara Begum, deputy director (in-charge) of secondary and higher secondary directorate, Mymensingh Region, addressed the seminar as chief guest while Prof Amir Ahmed Chowdhury Ratan, Principal Reazul Islam, Headmaster of Mukul Niketan High School and Md Nawab Ali, convener of local press club, were the special guests.

Earlier, Zillur Rahman Khan, MMC co-ordinator of Mymensingh, delivered the welcome address at the seminar.