



PHOTO: STAR

Lawmaker Farida Akhter offers juice to an enclave woman to end her hunger strike in Boda upazila of Panchagarh district yesterday.

Enclave people call off hunger strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Enclave people yesterday called off their indefinite hunger strike at the request of a lawmaker.

Lawmaker Farida Akhter reached the venue in Boda upazila of Panchagarh district in the afternoon and assured the enclave people that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would take effective steps to meet their demands as soon as possible.

"As a representative of the prime minister, I have come here to convey the assurance of the government and request you to end the hunger strike," she told the agitating enclave people.

Indian Finance minister Pranab Mukherjee is expected to arrive in Dhaka on May 5. During his visit, all pending bilateral issues, including water sharing and enclave, will be discussed, the lawmaker said.

After her speech, president of India-Bangladesh Enclave Exchange Coordination Committee Moinul Haque announced withdrawal of the hunger strike. But he also vowed to continue agitation until the demands were met.

Taslimuddin, chairman of Puthimari

Indian enclave, Mofizer Rahaman, chairman of Garati Indian enclave, and chairman of Kajoldighi Indian enclave were present.

Later, they (enclave people) ended their hunger strike by sipping juice and coconut water offered by the lawmaker.

Enclave people went on an indefinite hunger strike on March 18 to press home their three-point demand including immediate implementation of India-Bangladesh land boundary agreement of 1974, popularly known as Indira-Mujib Pact.

They also demanded a definite timeframe to implement the enclave exchange deal.

People from all 111 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh took part in the strike held beside Dhaka-Panchagarh Highway near Puthimari Indian enclave.

Bangladesh has 51 enclaves comprising around 3,000 acres of adversely possessed land inside India while India has 111 enclaves comprising 3,500 acres of land inside Bangladesh.

Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh are situated in Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Nilphamari districts while Bangladesh enclaves are in Indian Cooch Behar district.



PHOTO: STAR

A tin-roofed house blown away by nor'wester at Dhandi village in Baufal upazila of Patuakhali district and a damaged boro field in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha district on Monday.

Storms lash two districts, damage boro, houses

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Storms hit Patuakhali and Gaibandha districts, damaging several hundred houses and boro plants on vast tracts of land yesterday and the day before.

Over 300 dwelling houses, and boro plants on vast areas were damaged as a nor'wester lashed at least 15 villages under Baufal upazila of Patuakhali on Monday evening, reports our correspondent.

The three-hour-long storm from 4pm to 7pm hit Char Barret, Char Miazan, Char Roy Saheb, Dhandi, Nimdee, Nazirpur, Nurainpur, Bara Dalima, Chhoto Dalima, Keshobpur, Mominpur, Dashpara,

Khajurbaria, Kalaiya, Bogi and several other villages.

According to a primary estimate, about 900 poultry at two poultry firms, one owned by Rokeya Begum and another by Al-Alafa, were also killed during the storm.

Besides boro plants, huge watermelon, maize, chilli, pulse were also damaged as rainwater flooded the crop fields.

In Gaibandha, a nor'wester accompanied with gusty wind and heavy shower damaged boro plants on vast tracts of land in Sundarganj upazila yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The storm lashed seven unions of the upazila and

destroyed a large portion of BR-28, BR-41, China and Chandina varieties of boro paddy.

"I cultivated boro plants on two bighas on share cropping basis. I won't get anything from the landowner now as all the plants have been razed to the ground due to torrential rain and wind," said Abdur Rahim, a landless peasant of Kapasia union.

Due to storms, production may be reduced by 30 percent. However, mild storms and gusty winds will not affect the paddy plants much if the farmers use standard dose of MP fertiliser, said Aftab Hossain, upazila Agriculture Officer in Sundarganj.

Cashing in on others' woes

BCL leader builds small dams on canal to cultivate fish while 15,000 farmers suffer for want of water

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

A local leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in Char Miazan, a coastal island in Baufal upazila under the district, has built several temporary dams by putting earthen barriers on a canal to cultivate fish there.

Siddiqui Rahman, president of Char Miazan unit of BCL, who did the callous act two years ago, also closed a sluice gate that let water from the river to the canal.

Consequently, local farmers are suffering from want of irrigation water for their agricultural fields.

Most of around 15,000 residents in the char, about 20 km away from Baufal upazila headquarters, are dependent on agriculture, and Water Development Board (WDB) built 14-km-long flood control embankment around the island several years ago to protect the residents and 10,000 acres of agricultural land from tidal surge and saline water, said sources of local Najirpur union parishad.

WDB also dug a 12-km long canal from Char Roy Saheb to Char Kachua in the island to ensure smooth supply of water from the river considering interest of agricultural activities. Moreover WDB built a sluice gate on the canal near Roy Saheb Bazar to control water flow there 10 years ago.



PHOTO: STAR

A local Chhatra League leader has put several earthen barriers like this one across the 12-kilometre-long irrigation canal in Char Miazan of Baufal upazila under Patuakhali district, depriving thousands of farmers of the irrigation facilities. The influential political activist, who did the callous acts for fish farming, also closed the sluice gate that let water from the adjacent river into the canal.



But now local farmers are not getting benefit from the sluice gate or the lone canal in the island as BCL leader Siddiqui Rahman closed

the sluice gate and built over 10 dams illegally on the canal to cultivate fish there.

"Over 5,000 acres of land has been brought under

crop cultivation here this season but the crop fields are drying due to irrigation crisis as the BCL leader has closed the lone sluice gate," said Abdul Mannan, a local

farmer.

"Now we cannot get water from the river and the canal. All our crops will be destroyed if the sluice gate is not opened soon," he said.

Irrigation is badly hampered as the BCL leader and his accomplices built several dams on the canal and divided it into a few sections to cultivate fish two years ago, several farmers told this correspondent during his recent visit to the area.

However, they sought anonymity in fear of reprisal from the perpetrator.

Siddiqui Rahman, the BCL leader, said, "Nobody even MP or minister can cut my dams. I built those on my own land."

But he did not explain how the land under canal water could be his.

Ibrahim Faruq, chairman of Najirpur union parishad, said, "Local farmers are greatly suffering due to the dams on the canal. Nobody should not build such dams as it is the lone canal in the area and it is very useful to local farmers."

When contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, upazila nirbahi officer of Baufal, said, "After hearing the matter, I asked the upazila assistant commissioner of land to submit report over the matter after proper investigation within seven days from Sunday last."

SNIPPETS

Bus strike in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Faridpur*

Bus workers yesterday observed strike on all routes of 21 southwestern districts following a clash with passengers. Zubayer Zakir, president of Faridpur Motor Workers Union said, Babul Mridah of Mollickpur in Modhukhali upazila locked in an altercation over bus fare with Zahangir Hossain, a conductor of Shahriar Paribahan. At one stage, Babul along with others swooped on Zahangir and other workers of the bus. Following the incident the bus drivers and workers went on strike demanding the punishment of the attackers.

Man held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Rapid Action Battalion arrested a man with firearm at Char Sujanagar village of Sujanagar upazila Monday night. The arrestee is Md Munnaf Pramanik, 35, son of Jahir Uddin of the village and accused in a number of criminal cases. Rab-12 caught him from his residence and recovered a foreign made pistol, two bullets and a magazine.

Four bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Law enforcers recovered four bombs from a house in Kharod village in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga district on Monday night. On a secret information, a joint team of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided the village around 9:30pm. They found the bombs wrapped in a polythene bag in an abandoned house.

Woman's body found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Police recovered the body of a young woman from a suitcase in Sadar upazila yesterday morning. Informed by locals, law enforcers found the suitcase in a ditch near China intersection around 7:30am. The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately. "The body bore no injury marks," said Golam Sarwar, officer in-charge (OC) of Mymensingh Kotwali police station.

Landslide kills youth

UNB, *Khagrachhari*

A youth was killed in a landslide in Dighinala upazila on Monday evening. The victim was identified as Sabinoy Chakma, 18, son of Nabarun Chakma of Durga Karbaripara of the upazila. Witnesses said, a heavy chunk of mud collapsed on Sabinoy near his house, leaving him seriously injured. He was rushed to upazila hospital where the doctor declared him dead.

10 houses gutted in Rangpur

A CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

At least 10 houses of two families here gutted at Nishchintapur village of Mithapukur upazila on Monday. Locals and fire service sources said the fire originated from Abul Master's cowshed where a mosquito coil was burning and engulfed his brother's houses. Victim families claimed that the damage caused by the fire would be around Tk20 lakh.

4 'suicides' in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Four people, including a college student, allegedly committed suicide at different places in the district yesterday and the day before.

The victims are Fazlul Haque, 55, son of late Bashiruddin of Nasipur village under Sadar upazila, Ansar Ali, 60, son of Hossain Ali of Dinajpur municipality, Morjina Begum, 37, wife of Mojibur Rahman of Rajbari under the district town and Forhad Hossain, 22, son of Janab Ali of Belpukur area in Khansama upazila.

Quoting family members, police said Fazlul took poison on Monday midnight at his home following a family feud. He died at hospital yesterday morning.

Ansar Ali hanged himself from a mango tree beside his residence at midnight over a family dispute.

Morjina killed herself by hanging from the ceiling at her living room on Monday night following a quarrel with her husband.

Farhad, a BA student of Dinajpur Government College, took his life by hanging himself from a tree as his family members allegedly forced him to marry against his will, said police.

Deer skin seized from forest guard's house

Venison recovered, 3 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bagerhat*

Coastguard and police in a joint drive seized a deer skin from a forest guard's house at Uttar Kadamtala village under Sharonkhola upazila yesterday.

On secret information, the law enforcers raided the house of Abdul Jalil at Dubla patrol outpost of Sundarbans east zone, said Abul Kalam Azad, acting officer in-charge (OC) of Sharonkhola police station.

None was arrested in this incident, the OC said, adding they are investigating the matter.

Sources said, the forest patrol guard was recently honoured for his active role in detaining poachers, rescuing tigers and seizing deer and crocodile skins.

Divisional Forest Officer of the Sundarbans, East Zone, Mihir Kumar Do, told this correspondent that they were investigating the matter whether anyone was trying to implicate Abdul Jalil in the incident.

In a separate incident in the same district, forest officials seized 40 kilograms of venison and arrested three poachers from Nandabala camp area under Chandpai range of the Sundarbans yesterday afternoon.

The arrestees are Bazlur Rahman Gazi, 25 and his brother Ayub Gazi, 23, sons of Abdur Rab Gazi of Moukhali village in Dakope upazila of Khulna and Shariful Sardar, 30, son of Arjan Ali of the same village.

The salt mixed venison kept in two containers, four traps for catching deer and a boat were seized from their possession.

Mihir Kumar Do said the three entered the Sundarbans a few days ago for catching crabs with permission from forest department.

Instead of catching crabs, they hunted deer and sold venison to people of nearest localities, he said.

A case was filed in this regard. The three detainees were sent to jail.



Mr. Sheikh Hafizur Rahman

Election of ICSA Office-Bearers 2012-2014

International Container Shipping Association (ICSA), a trade body representing major container shipping agents of Bangladesh, in a meeting held on Sunday, 01 April 2012 elected Mr Sheikh Hafizur Rahman as Chairman to the Executive Committee for the term 2012-2014. The rest of the members of the Committee are as follows:

Mr Shamim Ul Huq (Maersk) - Vice Chairman
Mr Pallab Chakrabarti (APL) - Vice Chairman
Mr M Nurul Alam (SW Shipping/Hapag Lloyd) - General Secretary
Mr Rashed Ahmed Ali (NYK Line) - Treasurer
Mr Faruber Anwar (Trident Shipping/ Gold Star Line & Seth Shipping)-Member
Capt. Md. Rafiqul Islam (PL) - Member
Mr Mizanur Rahman (SW Shipping/Hapag Lloyd) - Honorary Advisor



International Container Shipping Association