

36 held ahead of Narsingdi hartal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Police arrested at least 36 people in Narsingdi ahead of 48-hour hartal, beginning in the district at 6:00am today.

Supporters of Lokman Sangram Parishad on Friday called the hartal protesting police action on them in the town on the day and to foil today's programme of Labour and Employment Minister Razi Uddin Ahmed Raju at Serajnagar High School and College ground in Raipura upazila of the district.

At least 50 people, including incumbent Narsingdi municipality Mayor Kamruzzaman, were injured in a clash between the supporters of slain mayor Lokman Hossain and police in the town on Friday.

The clash ensued after police foiled a procession of

Lokman Sangram Parishad led by Mayor Kamruzzaman, also younger brother of slain mayor Lokman Hossain, in Shapla Chattar area of the town at around 3:00pm.

They took out the procession protesting Razi Uddin Ahmed Raju's visit to the district scheduled for today. Mayor Kamruzzaman said Lokman Sangram Parishad staged the protest against the minister for "providing shelter to the killers of Lokman".

Agitating people also set fire to three vehicles, including a Tripura-bound passenger bus, and barricaded Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

Earlier on November 1 last year, Narsingdi municipality mayor Lokman Hossain died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) hours after masked assailants shot him at town Awami League office.



PHOTO: STAR

Remains of trunks bear testimony to felling and looting of 62 trees that were planted five years ago under the government's social forestation programme beside Nilphamari-Saidpur road in Nilphamari Sadar upazila. A section of unscrupulous locals did the heinous act during heavy shower on Thursday noon.

Roadside trees looted in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Criminals felled and plundered 62 trees, planted under the government's social forestation five years ago, from one-kilometre area on both sides of Nilphamari-Saidpur road between Darwani pillar and Kachari points in Nilphamari Sadar upazila on Thursday noon.

After the massive plundering, police and forest department workers recovered some logs of the felled trees but none of the perpetrators was arrested.

At about 11:45pm on Thursday when it was raining heavily and busy Nilphamari-Saidpur road was almost empty, some 150-200 people of Charaikhola and Songolshi villages in Sadar upazila began to fell down roadside

trees including neem, segun, mahogany, eucalyptus, and acacia with axes, said eyewitness and locals.

Earlier on the day, Power Development Board (PDB) employees from Nilphamari office cut down some branches of the roadside trees, to clear electricity supply lines in the area, they said.

Several locals took away some of the tree branches, as the PDB men were busy in clearing bushes covering the power line.

After the PDB employees left the area, heavy shower began, making the road empty. At that time 150-200 people of the area rushed there to fell and loot the trees.

Forest department in Nilphamari planted the trees under social forestation programme in 2007-2008 fiscal year and a num-

ber of beneficiary groups were formed, mostly with poor women living on both sides of the road, to look after the trees on condition of giving lion share of the prices when the trees would mature and be sold.

The chairman of Sangolshi union parishad (UP) told this correspondent, "During the incident I was busy in a meeting with the UP members at the UP office while a village policeman informed me about illegal felling of trees. I rushed to the spot but the miscreants fled away with most of the felled trees and branches. Then I informed police about the matter."

Forester of Nilphamari forest department Sitanath Roy said, "I counted 62 trees that had been felled and stolen. Police recovered different parts of 20 trees."

Khaleda to kick off tour of dists from Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address a rally here today to elicit public opinion in favour of the caretaker government system.

Party sources said she will arrive in Dinajpur from Bogra at noon and address the rally at Gor-e-Shahid maidan at around 3:00pm.

All preparations have been completed to make the public meeting a success, the sources said, adding that senior party leaders, including Mizanur Rahman Minu and Asadul Habib Dulu, arrived here yesterday to oversee the arrangements made for the rally.

Besides, hundreds of arches have been erected on different roads to greet

Khaleda Zia, also the leader of the opposition in parliament.

Local BNP leaders said around five lakh people, including leaders, activists and supporters from eight



Khaleda Zia

northern districts, are expected to join the rally.

They said though the chairperson is starting her month-long tour of districts

from Dinajpur, the district has been facing leadership crisis since the death of her sister Khurshid Jahan Haque.

Senior leaders said her districts tour is aimed at intensifying the opposition's campaign for restoration of the provision of caretaker government in the constitution to hold the next general elections.

Dinajpur Police Superintendent Md Moinul Islam said security has been stepped up by deploying law enforcers at different points in the town.

Local BNP leaders said the party will win all parliamentary seats in the district if the national election is held under caretaker government system.

Fire kills two children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Two children were burnt death in a fire in Jaldhaka upazila on Friday night.

The victims were identified as 3-year-old Sumaiya, and 3-month-old Sathi both daughters of Shididul Islam, 40, of Bagulagari Bridgepara village.

Locals and police said, Arifa Begum, 30, went to the house of a neighbour at 8:00pm masher daughters fell asleep.

Suddenly, the hurricane which was burning at a corner of their bed fell on their mosquito net, causing fire.

Seeing the fire, locals rushed to the spot, brought the fire under control and rescued the three children in a critical condition. But both died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in the early morning.

PABNA PROTEST

36 more Jamaat, Shibir men held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police detained 36 more Jamaat and Shibir activists from Shalgaria and Traffic More intersection of the district town yesterday afternoon while they were preparing to bring out a procession in support of today's half day hartal.

Officer in-charge (Investigation) of Pabna police station Md. Nure Alam Siddiquee said police rounded up 30 Jamaat and Shibir activists from Shalgaria area at about 5:30pm. Later the Jamaat men regrouped at AR Corner at the heart of town to bring out a procession. Police detained 6 Shibir activists

from there, the OC said.

Earlier Bangladesh Chhatra League men chased Shibir activists with sticks and iron rods when they were gathering to bring out procession at Abdul Hamid Road in the district town.

Secretary of BCL, Pabna district unit Rofikul Islam Rumon said, they chased Shibir men after they hurled brickbats at them at AR Corner market.

Earlier Jamaat yesterday called a half day hartal today, protesting the arrest of Moulana Abdus Subhan, Nayabe Ameer of their party.

Police so far arrested 64 Jamaat and Shibir activists in the district in last three days while they were protesting Subhan's arrest.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

A house destroyed by storm at Islampur village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur early yesterday.

Storm lashes Rangpur village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

At least 20 people were injured and over 100 thatched and tin-roofed houses damaged as a storm lashed Islampur Belbari village under Payrabandh union in Mithapukur upazila early yesterday. Police and locals said, more than 500 trees were also uprooted and crops on 50 acres of land were destroyed. Electricity supply remained snapped as the uprooted trees fell on power lines. Harun-Ar-Rashid, UNO of Mithapukur, told this correspondent that a 5-minute storm wrecked havoc in the village. Victims Rasheda Begum, Rafiqul Islam, Nazrul Islam and Jahangir Mian of the area told this correspondent that they were living under the open sky. We need help to rebuild our houses, they said.

Jubo Dal factions clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two rival factions of BNP backed Jubo Dal locked in a clash yesterday afternoon at Noymail Bazar in Shahjahanpur upazila. Locals and police said that district BNP president VP Saiful backed upazila vice president Bashar group swooped on former MP Helaluzzaman Lalu backed Atol group as they (Atol group) brought down three banners from the area which were hung there demanding new district committee in Bogra. The incident took place on the eve of BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to the district.

Sit-in for Khulna dev

A CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Leaders of Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee (GKDACC) observed a two-hour sit-in from 10am yesterday at Picture Palace intersection to press home their 13-point demand. The demands include construction of a modern railway station and double train line from Khulna to Dhaka, gas supply through pipeline in the region, establishment of Padma Bridge at Mawa, Shilpakala Academy, deep sea port at Akram point, modernisation of Mongla Port, completion of the on-going airport project at Foyla, reopening of the closed Daulatpur jute mill and newsprint mill, reconstruction of Khulna district stadium and turning Bhomra land port into an international port. Chaired by its president advocate SM Daud Ali, KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque addressed it as chief guest while Nazrul Islam Monju, lawmaker of Khulna-2 constituency spoke as special guest.

Robbers held from Meghna

UNB, Chandpur

Police arrested seven robbers from the Meghna river near Ekhlaspur in North Matlab upazila on Friday afternoon. Police said a gang of robbers, coming in a trawler, swooped on a rice-laden cargo in the river and looted the rice at gunpoint in the afternoon while the cargo was coming to Chandpur from Narayanganj. When the gang was fleeing with the looted rice, their trawler capsized due to strong current in the river. Later local fishermen caught them with the help of river police.

Man murdered in Bogra

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

President of a school managing committee was brutally murdered at Nisindhara village in Nandigram upazila on Friday night. The deceased was identified as Jamal Uddin, 40, son of late Abdur Razzak of the village and president of Boro Changoir High School's managing committee. Locals said that Jamal might have been killed due to a feud over his parental property. Witness said that the body of the victim was cut into pieces and thrown at different places.



People of Gangachhara upazila in Rangpur, badly affected by river erosion, are shifting to other places with their household belongings, right, Dharla River eating away cropland and homesteads at Mogholhat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Erosion takes serious turn in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat

Rangpur city dyke under threat

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Rain-fed Teesta and Dharla rivers in Rangpur and Lalmonirhat districts took an alarming turn in the last one week, devouring a vast tract of lands and leaving thousands of people marooned.

Flash flood due to heavy rainfall in the last nine days left about 30,000 people marooned in eight unions of Gangachhara upazila in Rangpur, reports our correspondent.

Besides, around 400 homesteads in Bagdogra of Nohali union of the upazila were devoured by Teesta River in the last five days.

Communication between Gangachhara and Mohipur came to a halt as around 300 feet of the road linking the two areas have been washed away.

The river is now threatening the Rangpur city protec-

tion embankment as it is too close to the road.

The Water Development Board (WDB) tried to protect the Gangachhara-Mohipur road by putting bamboo poles and dumping sand bags but failed.

Around 30,000 families of Motukpara, Binbinia, Kholear Char, Bagdogra, Char Ichli, Char Nohali and Manush Khaoar Char area of the upazila are living amid flood water.

The most affected unions in Gangachhara upazila are Nohali, Kolkond, Alambiditar, Shollmari, Hajipara, Paikan, Mohipur and Morneya.

Eight villages of Nohali, Kolkond, Alambiditar and Morneya unions may disappear in the river soon, locals feared.

The erosion victims who took shelter on the city protection dyke are now passing

their days in misery under the open sky without drinking water and foods as the local administration is yet to arrange any relief for them.

In Lalmonirhat, river erosion hit the flood affected areas in the last two days, reports our correspondent.

The Teesta and Dharla devoured homesteads, croplands, orchards and important establishments since Friday morning.

At least 230 homesteads, 20 orchards and 300 bighas of croplands of 15 villages went into the rivers in Sadar, Aditmari and Hatibandha upazilas, said Lalmonirhat WDB officials.

The erosion-hit villages are Mogholhat, Kurul, Bumka, Char Gulaghat, Khuniyagachh, Teesta in Sadar upazila, Balapara, Gobordhon, Majher Char villages in Aditmari upazila

and Sindurna, Goddimari, Dhubni, Dawabari, Saniyazan and Paruliya villages in Hatibandha upazila.

Erosion by the rivers took an alarming turn following heavy rain for the last several days.

In Kurigram, at least 10,000 people of five villages in Nageshwari upazila have been marooned as a portion of an embankment along Noonkhaowa Bazar collapsed due to strong current in the Brahmaputra river on Friday, reports UNB.

Shah Jamal, Chairman of Noonkhaowa union parishad under the upazila said, Dakkhin Sarisuri, Uttar Sarisuri, Uddamari, Shantigram and Noonkhaowa villages were flooded following the collapse of 150 meters of the WDB embankment.



STAR: STAR

FIRE DAMAGES TRANSFORMER

People of 2 Rangpur city areas suffer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

People of east and west Khasbagh areas in Rangpur city were without electricity for over 72 hours till yesterday as a transformer went out of order on Wednesday.

People of the two areas sought help of the local Power Development Board (PDB). But the officials concerned at Rangpur PDB demand Tk 50,000 for replacement of the transformer, locals alleged.

Agitated locals put up barricade on a city road for two hours from 8:00am yesterday. As movement of hundreds of vehicles from Rangpur city to Satmatha came to a halt, police rushed to the spot.

Police assured the agitating people of arranging

a new transformer within 5:00 on the day to ensure smooth power supply.

Locals alleged that on Wednesday night, a transformer of the area caught fire and went out of order due to heavy rain. Being informed, PDB men visited the spot, checked the transformer and left the area.

When the locals went to the Rangpur PDB office for replacement of the transformer, the PDB officials demanded Tk 50,000 from them.

Contacted, Obaidul Islam, chief engineer of the Power Development Board (PDB) of Rangpur Distribution Zone refuted the allegation of demanding Tk 50,000 as bribe for a new transformer.

"We will set up a transformer this evening, he added.