

Grabbers muscle in on land of 9 families

Confine them to their houses for weeks

EAM ASADUZZAMAN,
Nilphamari

Nine families at Uttar Ambari Paisafela village of Gomnati union in Domar upazila under the district have remained virtually confined to their houses for over one and a half months as influential neighbours blocked the road that served as their link to other places.

Ramjan Ali, 60, of Uttar Ambari Paisafela village owns several acres of paternal land but he has a land dispute with neighbour Umar Ali, 55, said locals.

On July 22, Umar and his men came to Ramjan and claimed that he (Ramjan) was illegally occupying their two acres of land. Umar demanded handing over possession of the land.

As Ramjan and his relatives protested, a bloody clash occurred on the spot and 14-15 people of the two groups were injured.

Both groups filed separate cases in a Nilphamari court regarding the incident.

"After the incident, the influential opponent group used to chase us regularly, hurled abuses and threw stones at our houses. On the day after the Eid-ul-Fitr (August 22), they put a strong bamboo fence, obstructing our movement through the only road in front of our house," Ramjan said.

"I could not take my ailing father to hospital as the opponents guard the fence on the road with lethal weapons," said Obaidul Islam, 36, guardian of a victim family.

Visiting the area on October 1, this correspondent saw that over 40 members of the affected families are leading a miserable life, as they cannot sell agricultural products in the market and buy necessary things. Seven children of the families had to stop going to school and madrasa.

Ramjan on behalf of the victim families lodged a case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Nilphamari a few days ago seeking steps to ensure their

free movement. For this he had to leave house at dead of night, walk through a muddy paddy field and pass night at a relative's house.

As per directive of the court, sub inspector (SI) Md Ruhani of Domar police station investigated the matter and submitted a report to the court a couple of days ago.

Ramjan alleged that SI Ruhani behaved harshly with them during investigation while the police officer said both the parties are responsible for the deadlock.

Ramjan and his relatives Alimuddin, Md Ali, Hossain Mia, Nazrul and Shahidul alleged that they had complained to the local union parishad (UP) chairman but

he did nothing for them.

Gomnati UP Chairman Younus Ali said, "I sat with the two parties to settle the dispute but both the parties were uncompromising. I shall sit again within a few days to solve the problem."

"It is obviously a human rights violation if anybody puts obstruction on a road, hindering free movement of people," said advocate Abdul Wahab, former president of district lawyers' association.

Contacted, Ramjan's opponent Umar Ali said, "The road is not recorded in the mouja land map. Ramjan's late father had sold his land to us long ago and now he (Ramjan) has no right on it."



PHOTO: STAR

These people among over 40 members belonging to nine families at Uttar Ambari Paisafela village in Gomnati union of Domar upazila under Nilphamari district cannot go outside their house compound as influential neighbours blocked their movement through the road that serves as the only link with other places.

Locals attack police camp to protest arrest of traders

20 including 3 policemen hurt in Hatiya

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Noakhali

Local people attacked a police camp in Hatiya upazila on Monday night protesting arrest of three traders.

Locals said, police at Janata Bazar camp detained three traders -- Deen Mohammad, Belayet Hossain and Mohammad Siddique -- of the market at about 9:00pm allegedly as they conducted an election of the market

committee without consulting the policemen.

As the news spread, local traders aided by others of the area attacked the police camp.

They threw brickbats, leaving three policemen injured.

The attack prompted police to retaliate. They fired 35 gunshots to disperse the protesters which left nine people injured.

Locals said at least 20 people, including police, pedestrians and protesters

were hurt during the incident.

Janata Bazaar police camp in-charge SI Anobik Chakma told UNB that the three traders held a secret meeting with local robbers on Monday noon in a bid to take control of the business at Janata Bazaar and cropland at Char Bashar, a remote area of the upazila.

He alleged that the traders were also supporters of the ring leader of notorious Nizam Bahini.

Local traders, however,

refuted the allegation, saying that police arrested the traders and tortured them on false allegation.

Shops and business establishments in the bazar remained shut since Monday night in fear of reprisal and arrests.

Locals told this correspondent yesterday that the policemen at the camp used to take away rice and fishes from the traders for free. They torture the traders when they try to protest it.



PHOTO: STAR

With erosion by the Padma River taking a serious turn during the last few days, shopkeepers near Mawa ferry terminal in Munshiganj district try to shift whatever they can to safer places. The massive erosion also forced the authorities to suspend ferry services at No 2 terminal at the important ferry station.



PHOTO: STAR

Transplanted aman seedlings on a vast tract of land at Charnadangi village in Balijuri union under Madarganj upazila of Jamalpur district get damaged by the recent flood.

SEVEN UPAZILAS OF JAMALPUR DISTRICT

Farmers to count heavy losses as crops damaged by floods

A CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Crops on vast tract of lands in all seven upazilas of the district have been completely damaged by the recent floods.

A large number of badly hit farmers in Islampur, Dewanganj, Madarganj, Melandah, Bakshiganj, Sarishabari and Jamalpur Sadar upazila became frustrated as they incurred severe financial loss.

Sources at Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Jamalpur said, transplanted aman, vegetables, chilli and black gram were cultivated on at least 124273 hectares in the district. Of them, 38655 crops on hectares were completely damaged by the floodwaters.

The damaged crops include aman paddy on 30085 hectares, vegetables on 3740 hectares, chilly on

3144 hectares and black gram on 1686 hectares, DAE sources said.

More than 2.40 lakh farmers were affected as their crops in low-lying areas of Jamuna and Brahmaputra river basin went under water, said Abul Kashem, deputy director of DAE.

During a recent visit to several unions, including Balijuri and Jurkhali of Madarganj upazila, this correspondent found crops on vast low-lying areas were lying damaged in floodwater.

Jurkhali UP chairman Md. Alamgir said the union saw more areas of chilli cultivation this year. But most of the chilly fields got damaged as the crop remained inundated for 10-12 days. The chilly growers of the union have become frustrated as they could not earn a single furthing this

year, he said.

"I myself cultivated chilli on 14 bighas of land and spent Tk 3500-4000 per bigha for the purpose. If the crop were not damaged, the yield would have been 50-60 maunds per bigha and I could earn Tk 25,000-30,000 at a price of Tk 500 per maund from each bigha," the chairman added.

Chilli growers Moyna, Suruj Ali and Jaglu of Kaladah village, Foyez Uddin, Amzad Mandol of Kukurhari village of Jurkhali union of the upazila echoed the same, adding that they have to count heavy loss as aman and chilli on their croplands were totally washed away.

Another farmer Abdur Rashid of Kaladah village told this correspondent that he had cultivated BRRI-29 on 20 bighas of land at a cost of Tk 3,000-3,500 per bigha.

"But it has been totally damaged by floodwater," he lamented.

"The paddy started growing well and I hoped that 15-20 maunds of paddy could be harvested per bigha, bringing a good profit to the farmers", Rashid said.

Meanwhile, additional secretary of agriculture ministry Md. Zahir Uddin and director general of Department of Agriculture Extension Md. Abdul Latif along with local officials and UP chairmen visited the damaged croplands in Sadar, Madarganj, Melandah and Sarishabari upazilas.

They directed the local agriculture officials to take appropriate steps so that the farmers can get necessary advice and supports from the office concerned, said DAE deputy director Abul Kashem.

18-party unit Gaibandha enforces hartal

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

A half-day hartal, called by the local unit of BNP-led 18-party alliance, was observed in the district town yesterday.

The alliance enforced the 8-hour hartal to protest police attack on their procession and for release of their detained leaders and activists.

During the hartal hours, shops, offices and educational institutions remained shut while traffic movement came to a halt.

Only trains left the town as usual, said locals, adding that pickets ransacked three coaches of Al-Hamra, BRTC, and SR Paribahan during the shutdown.

Earlier, at least 32 people including nine policemen were injured in a clash between police and the activists of the alliance in the town on Monday.

The clash ensued as police obstructed a procession, brought out by the activists, while it was proceeding toward Station Road from municipal area at noon.

Police also fired 19 rubber bullets, lobbed several tear-gas shells and arrested 16 activists during the clash.

Officer in-charge of Sadar PS Gopal Chakraborty was among the injured while the arrestees include Shibir activist Abu Raihan.

Police filed two separate cases against 150 people with Gaibandha police station.



PHOTO: STAR

Traders in Gaibandha town keep their shutters down during yesterday's eight-hour hartal enforced by the local unit of BNP-led 18-party alliance in protest against police attack on their procession and arrest of 16 activists on Monday.

Burdened with loans, he kills children, injures wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barisal

A man stabbed his son and daughter to death and injured wife, another son and brother at Nalkata village in Bhandaria upazila of Pirojpur district yesterday, said police.

The law enforcers arrested Zakir Hossain, 35, of the village who was severely beaten up by villagers after the incident.

The deceased were identified as Sultana, 6, and Imran, 8, said Matiur Rahman, officer in-charge at Bhandaria police station.

Injured Lipi Aktar, 29, wife of Zakir and his

brother Abul Hossain, 42, were admitted to the upazila health complex.

Meanwhile, Sohag, 13, injured son of the arrestee was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital in critical condition.

Police quoting injured family members said, Zakir borrowed money from different sources to maintain his family about five years ago and left home to avoid the lenders after he became defaulter.

He recently returned home and became mentally imbalanced as the lenders created pressure on

him to clear the dues, they said.

Yesterday noon, Zakir suddenly became furious and started stabbing his family members, leaving the duo dead on the spot and three others injured.

Hearing the hue and cry, locals rushed in, caught Zakir and handed him over to police after giving him a good beating.

The bodies were sent to Pirojpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the OC.

Navroz Hossain, additional superintendent of police, visited the spot in the evening.