

RIVAL VILLAGERS CLASH IN C'NAWABGANJ

Man killed, 20 hurt, 50 houses set on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Chapainawabganj

A man was killed and 20 others were injured in fierce clashes between the local supporters of ruling Awami League and BNP at four villages in Shibganj and Sadar upazilas yesterday.

Both groups vandalised, looted and set more than 50 houses on fire. They also exploded handmade bombs during the clashes.

The deceased was identified as, Nairul Islam, 45, son of late Khoka Biswas of

Miratuli village under Nyalavanga union in Shibganj upazila.

Three seriously injured are Sakib, 35, son of Shish Mohammad, Mohammad Manik, 30, and his father Mohammad Faku, 60, of Miratuli village. They were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Police and Rab were deployed at the villages to bring the situation under control.

Police and villagers said, there had been a long-standing conflict between the

supporters Ashraf Haque, Chairman of Nyalavanga Union Parishad, also a local BNP leader and Moshtaqul Alam Pintu, local AL leader over establishing supremacy in the area.

Yesterday's clashes were a sequel to Friday's skirmish between the two rival groups following an altercation over a trivial issue at Nyalabanga village in Shibganj upazila.

Supporters of Ashraf yesterday attacked the houses of Pintu supporters of Babupur in Shibganj

upazila and adjacent Sonapur village in Sadar upazila with handmade bombs, sharp weapons and sticks at around 9:00am.

They also vandalised a few houses and injured Nairul seriously.

Nairul succumbed to his injuries on the way to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital at around 1:00pm. Police recovered the body and sent it to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hearing the news, agitated supporters of Pintu rushed to Sundarpur, Miratuli, Birhampur and Sonapur villages and attacked the houses of Ashraf supporters with sharp weapons, sticks and handmade bombs.

They also vandalised, looted and then set at least 50 houses on fire.

During the clash, at least 20 people were injured.

Villagers said, both the groups are supporters of two influential men who have strong backing from the two major political parties.

On information, police and Rab rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Contacted, AZM Sharzil Hasan, upazila nirbahi officer of Shibganj and Shakiluzzaman, ASP of Sadar Circle, said that additional forces were deployed in the area to tackle the situation.



PHOTO: STAR

Over 50 houses at four villages under two upazilas of Chapainawabganj district were damaged, looted and set on fire during clashes between the supporters of Awami League and BNP yesterday. Photo shows a torched house at Birampur village in Shibpur upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Fertiliser-laden cargo vessels get anchored on the Jamuna River only a few kilometres from Baghabari as they cannot reach the river port due to lack of adequate navigability during the ongoing dry season.

POOR NAVIGABILITY ON ROUTE TO BAGHABARI PORT

22 fertiliser-laden vessels stuck in Jamuna River

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

At least 22 cargo vessels loaded with chemical fertilisers are now stranded at different points of Jamuna River due to poor navigability on the route leading to Baghabari port under Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), port sources said.

The navigability problem hampers movement of vessels at Char Shibaloy, Char Safuria, Char Rafsha, New-Bhatiapara, Koitola, Awalandh, Nakalia, Panchakola, Char Panchakola, Maladapara, Mohonganj, Andharmanik, Dhulchar, Mollar Char and

Ramkrishnapur points of the river for over a week.

"Twenty-two fertiliser laden vessels, each carrying more than 10 feet draft load, have remained stranded at Andharmanik and Dhulchari points for the last three days. The fertilisers are being taken to Baghabari port with the help of lighters," Md Abdur Razzak, in-charge of Baghabari port.

Md Abdus Salam, leaseholder of Baghabari port, said failure to conduct timely dredging by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has led to the situation.

Asked about the matter, BIWTA deputy director (Dredging) Md Shahjal

Haque said, "We started dredging at Mollar Char and Ramkrishnapur on Saturday as the two points are vulnerable for movement of vessels due to poor navigability. The problem will be gone within one or two days."

"We asked the vessel operators to carry 6.5 to 7 feet draft load during this time of poor navigability. But most of the vessels carried 10 to 11 feet draft load and so, they could not reach Baghabari port," he said.

Meanwhile, a BIWTC official seeking anonymity said, "BIWTC sent a letter to BIWTA in June last year, urging steps to conduct dredging in the most vulnerable areas before the crisis

period begins. But the BIWTA has taken step only after several vessels stuck on the riverbed due to the navigability problem during the last one week."

Port lease-holder Abdus Salam said, "Each stranded cargo vessel has to count additional Tk 30 to 40 thousand to carry fertiliser to Baghabari port with the help of lighters. There is no alternative to ensure navigability through proper dredging for solving the problem."

If continues for long, the navigability problem will eventually affect supply of fertilisers during the Irriboro season, adding to the production cost of the crops, said stakeholders.



Father sells baby, mother rescues

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

A cruel father in Mithapukur upazila under the district went into hiding after selling his two-month-old baby for Tk 5,000 around a month ago, allegedly following his extra-marital affairs.

Fortunately, the baby's mother Momena Begum got her back by giving the same amount of money to the purchaser on Friday, 27 days after the incident.

Momena, daughter of Mobar Ali of Shaltipara village under Mithapukur upazila, married Angur Mian, a brick kiln worker of Foteipur village in the same upazila, around 10 years ago, locals and family sources said.

They have now two children -- three-year-old Majharul and three-month-old Angura.

"A few years ago Angur Mian involved in an extra-marital affair with a local woman. As I protested the matter, he often tortured me," Momena said.

"In mid-December last year, Angur Mian went out from the house along with our baby Angura.

Searching every possible place I and my family members failed to trace them. Then we sought help from the villagers who caught Angur Mian's nephew (sister's son) Azhar and quizzed him about the incident.

"At one stage Azhar admitted that Angur Mian sold his daughter Angura to Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Narirhat area under Rangpur Sadar upazila," she said.

Desperate to get back her kid, Momena managed Tk 5,000 by selling everything she could. Then she went to Rafiqul Islam's house at Narirhat area and rescued her baby after paying back the money to Rafiqul on Friday.

"As my husband, also the only earning member of the family, went into hiding, I have taken shelter at a relative's house at Koikuri village under Pirgachha upazila in Rangpur district. Now I am passing a miserable life," Momena said.

Nishat Nahar, a human rights activist of the area, said, "I demand exemplary punishment of Angur Mian for his inhuman act."

Farmers at 8 villages opt for chemical free veg

S DILIP ROY, LALMONIRHAT

Over a hundred farmer families at eight villages of Sadar upazila have grown chemical free vegetables by using earthworm compost fertiliser in their lands.

Farmers are happy as they are getting expected yields and prices. They sell the chemical free produce in the local market after meeting their family demands.

According to Firoz Babul, an agriculturist of RDRS (Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service), an NGO, at least 15 acres of land were cultivated to grow chemical free vegetables using earthworm compost fertiliser at the eight villages.

The villages are Panchagram, Sindurmoti, Fokirertokeya, Horidev, Shakertari, Radha Bollov, Modhutari and Purantari under Sadar upazila.

Basonti Rani, wife of Harish Chandro Roy of Horidev village said, she was supplied 200 pieces of earthworms by RDRS to make

compost in June this year.

"I produced 56 kgs of compost fertiliser with the help of the earthworm and cultivated bottle gourd, cucumber and coriander on 16 decimals of land beside our homestead."

"Although I didn't use any chemical fertiliser and insecticides in the vegetable field, I am getting expected production," she said.

Basonti said she sells vegetables in the local market after meeting her family demand.

Bijo Rani, 45, wife of Krishno Kanto Roy at the same village said that with the help of 430 pieces of earthworms in August she produced 32 kgs compost.

"I cultivated bean, spinach and other vegetables on 10 decimals and got a good output. Many local people now purchase vegetables from me," she said.

Babul Chandra Roy of Panchagram village, who cultivated several items on his 22 decimals, said chemical free vegetables are in

high demand at the village.

"I have already sold vegetables worth Tk 6000/- after fulfilling family need and I hope to earn Tk 5000/- more," he said.

Firoz Bulbul said that farmers can get bumper vegetable production by using just earthworm compost fertiliser.

Development Programme Manager of RDRS Ziaul Islam told this correspondent that they will soon launch fresh programmes at more villages in Lalmonirhat district.

Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila agriculture officer Mohammad Nuruzzaman said, farmers were lately inclining towards use of earthworm compost fertiliser in many areas.

"They do not need huge money to produce earthworm compost fertiliser except for some earthworms and cow dung," he said.

We always encourage the farmers to grow chemical free vegetables, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

A woman harvests chemical free vegetables from her farmland for sale at Horidev village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. Over 100 farmer families at eight villages of the upazila have grown such vegetables by using earthworm compost fertiliser in their lands.

2 housewives murdered

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two housewives were murdered allegedly by their husbands in Manikganj and Pabna districts yesterday and on Friday.

A woman was killed allegedly by husband at Baira village under Singair upazila in Manikganj yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Family sources said Mukul Hossain, 40, son of Ferdaus Master of the village hacked his wife Nargis Akter, 30, to death as she refused to give money to buy drugs.

Mukul also injured the victim's cousin Sathi Akter with a billhook when she tried to rescue Nargis. Sathi had come to the house to visit her cousin.

Nargis died on the spot while Sathi was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after her condition deteriorated at Singair upazila health complex.

Mukul and Nargis had a 4-year-old son. Mukul had to return home from Italy recently for his alleged drug addiction.

Officer-in-charge (OC) at Singair police station Md. Liaqat Ali said they arrested Mukul on charge of the killing.

In Pabna, a housewife was killed allegedly by her husband in Kashipur area in the town on Friday morning, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Alpana Khatun, 19, wife of Abdul Kader and daughter of Afaz Uddin -- both residents of Kashipur area.

Being informed, police visited the spot and recovered the body and arrested Abdul Kader.

Police said, an altercation ensued between Alpana and Abdul Kader over a family feud in the early hours of Friday and at one stage Kader killed his wife using a scarf.

After murder, Kader dumped the body beside a pond near his residence.

Police sent the body to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

'FRUITFUL' TALKS WITH OFFICIALS Benapole land port users call off strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole, Jessore

Five port user organisations called off their indefinite strike at Benapole land port yesterday, a day after enforcing the shutdown. Leaders of the organisations said they called off the strike at noon following a 'fruitful' meeting with local officials at Jessore DC Office.

Earlier C&F Agent Association, Transport Owners' Association, Benapole Land Port Importers and Exporters Association, C&F Agent Employees' Union and Jhikorgacha-Navaran-Benapole Truck Owners' Association called the strike on Saturday, demanding an end to what they said harassment by the members of Border Guard Bangladesh

(BGB) at the port.

Shamsur Rahman, president of Benapole C&F Agent Association, said that they decided to withdraw the strike as law-maker Sheikh Afiluddin and Jessore deputy commissioner Mustafizur Rahman assured them of meeting their demand for stopping harassment at the port.

Port sources said, the strike followed an incident when members of 26 BGB Battalion seized a fish-laden truck on way to India, from the bonded area of the port, on January 9, despite showing valid documents by the exporter.

Export and import activities between Bangladesh and India through the port came to a halt since Saturday morning due to the strike.

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