

BREACH IN KALAPARA EMBANKMENT

Saline water damaging watermelons on 2sqkm

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Watermelons on about two square kilometers in Kalapara upazila are getting damaged as saline water continues to enter the land through a breached portion of Ramnabad river embankment.

Over 200 metres of the 35km long dyke at Dakkhin (south) Depur village under Champapur union of the upazila collapsed on Sunday due to heavy pressure of water caused by high tide.

Meanwhile, watermelon

fields, covering over 300 hectares of land have been flooded by saline water in Rangabali upazila of the district as some owners of shrimp enclosures opened sluice gates yesterday morning.

In Kalapara upazila, at least 1,000 farmers cultivated watermelon on the vast tract of land, expecting good earnings. But they are becoming frustrated as saline water is causing damage to the juicy fruit.

While visiting the village yesterday, Jamal Gazi, Sekendar Mollah, Rahim

Mollah, Delwar Mia and Kuddus Mia told this correspondent that they expected to earn Tk 65 to 70 thousand by selling watermelon produced on per bigha of land, but sudden collapse of the dyke has shattered their dreams.

Shau Mia of the village said he cultivated watermelon on eight bighas of land and expected to get at least Tk 6 lakh by selling the fruit within the next seven days. But saline water has caused extensive damage to watermelon on his four

bighas of land.

Uzzal Mollah, another farmer of the village, said he has to incur huge loss this year as watermelon on his four bighas of land got rotten.

Badiur Rahman, administrator of Champapur Union Parishad, said: "Since soil erosion on the slope of the embankment began last week, I brought the matter to the notices of the local Water Development Board officials. But they did not take any measures to protect the dyke".

Contacted, Executive Engineer Md Shafi Uddin said they, after being informed by the administrator of the union, issued a work order to a contractor to repair the eroded portion of the slope, but he did not do the job in time.

We will repair the damaged portion of the dyke immediately, he added.

In Rangabali upazila, locals alleged that watermelons on 300 hectares of land Chalitabunia union went gone under water yesterday as some influential people led by one Jahidul Islam in the area opened three sluice gates to supply saline water to their shrimp enclosures from a canal.

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahr Officer (UNO) Md Liakat Ali said he was not aware of the matter as nobody filed any complaint to his office.

If anybody files complaint in this regard, I will investigate the matter and take necessary actions against the persons involved," the UNO added.

PHOTO: STAR
Growers collect watermelons from a field that gets flooded with saline water at Chalitabunia union in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali yesterday, inset, saline water enters the watermelon field through a damaged portion of the embankment of Ramnabad River in Kalapara upazila.



Shibir called hartal in Rajshahi goes almost unheeded

Clashes with policemen in C'nawabganj

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The daylong hartal enforced by Islami Chhatra Shibir went almost unheeded in the district yesterday.

Tight security measures were taken in the city with deployment of a huge number of policemen and Rapid Action Battalion at different points, said SM Moniruzzaman, commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, reports our staff correspondent.

Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, on Sunday called the hartal (shutdown) in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts demanding release of its leader Anwarul Islam Masum who, according to Shibir, was picked up by Rab members from his residence at Darikharkhana in Rajshahi city on April 4.

Rab, however, refuted that they detained Masum, office secretary of Shibir Rajshahi city unit.

All kinds of vehicles including trains and inter-district buses operated smoothly while government offices including courts were held normally.

All shops and markets remained open and classes

and examinations were held at educational institutions.

In Chapainawabganj, stray incidents of clashes marked the hartal.

Police and witnesses said, the Jamaat-Shibir activists staged demonstration by burning tyres on Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi highway and Chapainawabganj land port road at Upor Rajarampur and Shibtala in the town.

They brought out a procession welding bamboo sticks from different areas of the town at around 6:30am, reports our correspondent.

A chase and counter chase took place between police and Jamaat-Shibir activists when they hurled brick chips on policemen at Upor Rajarampur at around 7:30am. They also exploded a few crackers.

Police fired at least eight bullets from short guns to disperse the activists.

Buses remained off the roads in the town.

On Sunday evening, Shibir men torched a passenger bus in Toll Plaza area of Mohananda Bridge in the town to create panic among the people.

All shops and markets remained open and classes



PHOTO: STAR
Jamaat-Shibir men set this bus afire near Mohananda Bridge in Chapainawabganj on Sunday on the eve of yesterday's daylong shutdown.

JHENIDAH FEB 28-APR 11

Jamaat-Shibir men felled over 2235 roadside trees

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
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district, creating a blockade for a couple of days, zila parishad sources said.

Around 300 roadside trees were felled on March 4-5, around 200 trees on March 18-19 and 200 more on April 4.

Of the felled trees, 1400 were along the highways in Kaliganj and Kotchandpur upazilas, 300 in Sadar upazila, 200 in Harinakundo upazila, 150 in Shaikupura upazila, and 150 in Mohesphur upazila, officials said.

The unruly agitators also vandalised two idols, damaged 10 vehicles and torched two trucks.

INTRAPARTY CLASH IN BAUFAL

BCL, Jubo League leaders injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Morshed from the attackers. Locals brought both the injured to Barisal for treatment.

Later police arrested Mehesi, secretary of a BCL faction and Sohag, organising secretary of upazila Jubo League in connection with the clash.

In Laxmipur district, eight people were injured in a clash between the activists of local Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Ramganj upazila bus terminal on Saturday afternoon.

The infighting took place over establishing their supremacy in the area, reports UNB.

Several business houses, including the office of upazila Jubo League president Emran Hossain, were vandalised at Nandanpur and Satarpara during the clash.



A FEW JOYFUL MOMENTS ACROSS THE MAN-MADE BARRIER

the Bangla New Year on about four kilometers on both sides of the barbed wire fence they exchanged greetings and talked heart-

ily from 10:30am to 1:30pm. A large number of these people are those who cannot afford financially to visit their relatives on the other side of the man-made barrier. They eagerly wait for this special day to take the unique opportunity.



Colours of Pahela Baishakh

1) Rangpur unit of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote brings out a colourful procession in the town, marking an auspicious start to Bangla new year, 2) artistes of Nikkan Sangeet Bidyaloy render songs on Thakurgaon Judge's Court premises, 3) Pabna Drama Circle takes out a colourful procession, 4) people wait in a queue to ride a merry-go-round at a fair in Tangail town, 5) A girl paints the face of a kid to welcome Bangla year 1420 in Manikganj, 6) Different types of items are brought to a fair in Dinajpur town, and 7) locals participate in a tug-of-war at Uttoli village under Faridganj upazila of Chandpur in celebrations of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

