



PHOTO: STAR

Dwelling houses lie mangled at storm-hit Kalati village in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar district. Nor'wester lashed the upazila town and three unions yesterday and the day before, damaging over 200 houses.

Storm injures 15, damages 200 houses in Kulaura

8 hurt, 21 houses damaged in B'baria

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 23 people were injured and over 220 houses damaged as nor'westers lashed Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar and Nabinagar upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday and the day before.

In Kulaura, violent storms swept over the upazila town and three unions, injuring at least 15 people and damaging over 200 houses Monday afternoon and yesterday, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The first storm on Monday, accompanied with hails, uprooted scores of trees, electricity poles and damaged standing boro paddy on vast tracts of land.

Two hundred houses in 30 villages under Jaichandi, Brahmanbaria, Rangtong and municipal areas were razed to the ground, locals said.

All the 15 injured of Rangtong, Kabiraj and Ekadattapur villages have been admitted to local health complex.

A second storm hit the same areas next morning, causing further damages to crops and trees.

In Brahmanbaria, at least

eight people were injured and 21 houses damaged as a nor'wester swept over Khagatua village under Ratanpur union of Nabinagar upazila on Monday night.

The storm that started at 7:30pm lashed the area for over 15 minutes, reports our correspondent.

Contacted, Noor Muhammad Mazumder, the deputy commissioner of Brahmanbaria, said that a team started relief work yesterday morning.

Two people were killed as lightning struck them Kasba upazila at 9:30pm.

The deceased were identified as Md. Rana Mia, 16, son of Jahirul Islam of Rampur village and Aklima Akter, 8, daughter of Salim Mia of Kashipur village under the upazila.

Lightning also killed a man at Saphur village under Kalmakanda upazila yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Latif, 58.

Family sources said Latif went to work at a field adjacent to his house in the evening.

As he did not return home, the family members went to the field and recovered his body around 9:00pm.

In Netrakona, a boy was killed and seven others were injured by lightning at Shidli-Chorpara village under Kalmakanda upazila yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

The deceased were identified as Sohel Mia, 12, son of Jahangir Hossen of village Shidli-Chorpara under Kalmakanda upazila.

Police and local people said, lightning struck Sohel Mia when he was going to a paddy field along with his



PHOTO: STAR

Dead birds litter a place at the same village as the violent storm also affects the wildlife in the upazila.

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In Cox's Bazar, five people including two women were killed by lightning in four different upazilas of the district yesterday reports our correspondent.

The deceased were identified as Ershad Ullah, 22, of Moheshkhali upazila, Jamal Uddin, 45, of Chokoria, Shamsunnahar, 55, of Kutubdia and Shahena Akhtar, 24, and Liton, 18, of Sadar upazila.

father and six other neighbours. Sohel died on the spot.

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Watermelons lie in fields as hartals deter buyers

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Watermelon growers in the district are selling the popular summer fruit for throwaway prices due to transport problem amid frequent hartal enforced by different political parties.

Tourism in picturesque sea beach Kuakata is also affected due to the situation.

During a visit to different areas of Kalapara upazila on Thursday, this correspondent saw huge quantity of ripe watermelon lying in fields as farmers cannot sell it due to lack of buyers.

Watermelon weighing over one kg is selling at Tk 5,000 to 10,000 per thousand in the wholesale markets.

"I cultivated watermelon on 40 acres of land this year and expected to get Tk 60 lakh to 70 lakh by selling it as buyers from different areas including Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi come here to buy the fruit in this season. But now the picture is different due to frequent hartal in the peak marketing time," said Gazi Asafuddowla Sohel, a farmer of Dhankhali village under Kalapara upazila.

Nur Mohammad of

Gongamoti under the same upazila spent Tk 60,000 to cultivate watermelon on 1.5 acres of land this year and expected to earn over Tk 1.5 lakh by selling it but now he is worried about recovery of the production cost.

"Watermelon is rotting in the field as we can't send it to

Dhaka and Chittagong by truck for sale due to hartal," he added.

Monir Hossain, a farmer of the same village, said, "Rent of truck also doubled due to the unrest. We paid Tk 15,000 to Tk 18,000 as rent per trip to Dhaka in last year but presently they are demanding Tk 35,000 to Tk 40,000. Now we are thinking to send watermelon by cargo or launch."

Many trucks were found lying idle at different spots on Patuakhali-Kalapara road.

"It now takes much longer time to reach Dhaka as we often have to keep vehicles at safer places in fear of arson by hartal supporters. And so, the rent has almost doubled.

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