

100 Patuakhali, Barguna villages flooded as dykes collapse

Twenty more villages inundated in Bhola

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Flood control embankments collapsed at different points in Patuakhali and Barguna in the last two days, inundating over 100 villages of the two coastal districts.

In Patuakhali, the dyke collapsed during high tide under the impact of full moon in Nizampur, Lalua and Choto Bighai areas in Kalapara upazila, flooding over 12 villages. At least 18

thousand villagers and 3,500 acres of cropland have been affected by the flood, reports our correspondent.

The worst affected villages are Nizampur, Sudhirpur, Mohipur, Yousufpur, Phultala, Matibhanga, Tushkhali, Vutumia, and Kumerkhaliu.

Local sources said water also entered the villages through some other dyke's points that got damaged during cyclone Mahasen on

May 16.

In Barguna, more than 100 villages under Sadar, Betagi, Taltali, Pathorghata and Bamna upazilas have been flooded following collapse of the flood control dyke in several areas.

Around two-kilometre area of the dyke collapsed in Sadar upazila, submerging at least 40 villages under Baliatali, Dhalua and Noltona unions. Dyke collapse in Betagi and Bamna

upazilas upazila inundated 25 villages, affecting over 30,000 people.

Flood hit over 15,000 people of 30 villages under Taltali upazila as flood control embankment collapsed at Nishanbaria and Sonakata areas.

In Pathorghata upazila, At least 10,000 people of 20 villages under Sadar, Kalmegha, Kathaltali, Charduan unions have been badly affected due to dyke

collapse during high tide.

Contacted, Abdul Maleq, executive engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Barguna said they will start repair of the damaged parts of the flood control dyke very soon.

Our correspondent from Bhola reported that the embankment of the Megna River collapsed in Lalmohan and Tazumuddin upazilas on last Friday flooded over 20 villages.

At least 25, 000 people in the two upazilas were affected by the flood. Crops and betel-leaf gardens were damaged while fish enclosures washed away.

In Lalmohan upazila, twelve villages under Lord Harding and Dholigournagar unions were inundated as 800 metres of the embankment collapsed near Kalambullah and Kunderhawla village on Friday.

The worst affected villages are Kalambullah, Kunderhawla, Kumar Khali, Chaltali under Dholigournagar union; and Char Udaykhali, Latur Char, and Lord Harding villages under Lord Harding union.

In Tazumuddin upazila, around half a kilometre area of the river dyke collapsed in Dorichandpur area under Chadpur unionat on same day, flooding at least 10 villages.

The affected people took shelter to nearby cyclone shelters. Crops on around 100 hectares of land were badly damaged while 20 fish enclosures washed away.

Awami Leauge leader Tofail Ahmed, also a lawmaker from Bhola-2 constituency visited the flood affected areas on Monday.



PHOTO: STAR

Water enters Baliatali village under BARGUNA Sadar upazila as two kilometres of the flood control dyke collapsed in the area during high tide on Monday, inset, a submerged house at Kalambullah village in Lalmohan upazila of Bhola district.

Shibir men gave money to put up posters

Say arrested madrasa boys

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Local leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir allegedly gave a teenage madrasa student Tk 5000 for putting up 30 posters, containing anti-government statement in the name of Hefajat-e-Islam, in Bhuapur upazila under the district.

Bhuapur police detained Imrul Hasan Oli, 15, student of local Kostapara Fazil Madrasa, and his three companions when they were setting the posters at Barkatpur intersection in Bhuapur upazila early Monday.

During interrogation, Oli told police that two top leaders of Bhuapur upazila unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir, gave him 30 posters for setting those at different places in the upazila and also gave Tk 5000 in cash for the work a few days ago, said Abu Obaida, officer in charge (Investigation) of Bhuapur Police Station.

"Oli also said he later took Rezaul Karim, 14, and Nahid Hasan, 16, students of Govindasi Nurani Hafizia Madrasa, and Tanvir

Ahmed, 15, student of Govindasi High School in the area, with him for putting up the posters," he added.

Bhuapur police produced the four youths before a court in Tangail yesterday afternoon after filing of a case under Special Powers Act against them on charge of anti-state activities.

The four arrested boys and the two Shibir leaders of Bhuapur upazila unit were made accused in the case, police said.

This correspondent could not contact the Shibir leaders for their version about the allegation against them as their mobile phones were found switched off.

On the other hand, Maulana Abdur Rahman, member secretary of Tangail district unit of Hefajat-e-Islam, said, "Although the posters were put up at different places in the district in the name of Hefajat-e-Islam, those do not belong to my party. We had informed the district police and civil administrations of the matter several days ago."

UP member assaulted for protesting land grabbing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A union parishad (UP) member was assaulted allegedly by a group of local AL men for protesting land grabbing in Hatibandha upazila on Monday.

Seriously injured, the UP member was first taken to Hatibandha upazila health complex and later referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital at night.

He was Rafiqul Islam, 45, member of No. 9 ward of Barokhata union parishad.

Victim's family members said, a group of local ruling party men went to construct shops by grabbing a passenger shed at Milon Bazar on Lalmonirhat-Burimari road on Monday night.

When the local UP member protested it,

the grabber gang attacked him.

The AL men were sent by Abu Bakkor Siddique, an influential AL leader, to grab the shed, alleged Barokhata UP chairman Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal.

"I submitted a written allegation regarding the matter to Hatibandha UNO at noon yesterday and UNO assured me of taking necessary steps," he said.

Hatibandha UNO Golam Sarowar said, he will take necessary action regarding the matter after investigating it properly as soon as possible.

However, Abu Bakkor Siddique said that he was not aware about the matter.

"So question of my involvement in the land grabbing does not arise," he said.

Body of Rana Plaza victim exhumed for DNA test

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Body of a Rana Plaza tragedy victim was exhumed on Monday noon to collect sample for DNA test.

Police removed the body from grave a month after its burial at Dilalpur-Sutarpara village under Radhanagar union at Badarganj upazila of the district.

Led by Shariful Islam, executive magistrate of Rangpur, police exhumed the body in presence of Dr Reazul Islam, civil surgeon of Rangpur, Dr Sunil Chandra Roy, upazila health and family planning officer of Badarganj, Nuruzzaman Chowdhury, officer in-charge of Badarganj and others.

Nasim Uddin, 30, son of Mozaffar Hossain of Dilalpur-Sutarpara village was working at a garment unit at Rana Plaza in Savar and died along with others when the building collapsed on April 24.

On April 30, family members received a body identified as Nasim's and buried it at a local graveyard.

Later, the rescuers found Nasim's mobile phone set and his identity card with a body. They told his family members about their mistake and handed over the body to them.

Mozaffar Hossain, father of Nasim said they had identified the previous body by seeing the dresses and brought it to the village for burial.

Hartals enforced in 8 districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Opposition BNP and its allies yesterday enforced hartals in eight districts.

The hartal was observed to protest a court warrant for the arrest of BNP vice-chairman Tarique Rahman in a money-laundering case.

Main opposition BNP on Monday called for daylong hartals in Chittagong, Laxmipur, Comilla, Tangail, Feni and Kishoreganj districts while half-day hartal in Joypurhat and Faridpur districts.

Roadblock, burning of tyres and bomb explosions and damaging of vehicles marked hartal in several districts including Comilla,

Laxmipur, Feni and Kishoreganj, report our correspondents.

In Laxmipur, a group of JCD workers brought out a procession from north Temuhani in the district town in the morning. As police obstructed the procession, pro-hartal pickets blasted several crude bombs.

Hartal supporters blocked several roads in the town by placing logs and burning old tyres in the morning.

In Comilla, opposition activists brought out separate processions in different areas of the district. Pro-hartal pickets blocked roads near the Government Women College in the city by burning used tyres.

In Joypurhat, a procession was brought out by BNP and its associate bodies in the district town. Later, they held a rally at zero point of the town where BNP district president Mojahar Ali Pradhan spoke, among others.

In Feni, pickets damaged 8-10 covered vans and trucks at Mahipal and Rampur points of Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

They also blasted at least 15 cocktails at different points of the district town.

In Tangail, police detained district unit general secretary of Shramik Dal AKM Monirul Haque, town unit convener of Swechchhasebak Dal Taibur

Rahman Aslam, and Shramik Dal activists Sabuj Ahmed and Sanwar Hossain when they were picketing at Aminbazar area in the town.

In Kishoreganj, opposition activists blasted two cocktails behind Kishoreganj police station.

Pro-hartal men also vandalised at least 20 vehicles on Dhaka-Kishoreganj road and at Bonlai and Ghaital.

Issuing an arrest warrant, a Dhaka court on Sunday asked the government to take necessary steps to bring back BNP senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman, elder son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, from Britain with the help of Interpol.



PHOTO: STAR

A betel garden that was badly damaged by tropical cyclone Mahasen on May 16 at Atkhali village in Galachipa upazila of Patuakhali.

Cyclone Mahasen hits betel plantations

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Betel plantations on 1173.25 acres of land, out of a total 2305.50 acres in Patuakhali and Barguna districts, were destroyed during the onslaught of cyclone Mahasen accompanied by tidal surges in the coastal region on May 16.

The damaged plantations include those on 864.50 acres of land out of a total 1605.50 acres in Patuakhali and 308.75 acres out of about 700 acres in Barguna, said deputy directors of the Department of Agriculture

Extension in the districts.

About 25,000 people are engaged in betel farming in the two coastal districts as the climate and soil there are very suitable and the plant sells for good profit, said DAE sources.

Most of the betel farmers take loan from the local NGOs for the purpose.

"Betel worth over Tk 2 lakh was damaged as the storm destroyed my betel garden on 0.40 acres of land," said Motaleb Gazi, a farmer of Panpatti village under Galachipa upazila that sees largest areas of

betel plantations.

Bikas Roy, a farmer of the same village, said his betel farm covering 0.25 acres of land served as the only source of income for his six-member family but the cyclone destroyed it.

Sahabuddin of Atkhali village under the same upazila said he cultivated betel on 0.50 acres of land with the money borrowed from a local NGO but his whole plantation got damaged.

Many others including Hasem Biswas have similar tales to tell.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Cocktails recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police recovered five cocktails in Dhaka coach stand area at Kamarpara in the city on Monday afternoon. Police said locals saw the cocktail like materials lying beside the road and immediately informed the police. Md. Shahabuddin Khalifa, officer in charge of Rangpur Kotwali police station, said they recovered the cocktails and defused them. Criminals might have kept the cocktails for carrying out sabotage, he said.

Lightning kills schoolboy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A schoolboy was killed while five other schoolboys were injured by lightning in Ghatail upazila on Monday evening. The deceased and injured are students of different classes at Choithotra Gono Uchha Biddaloy in the upazila. According to family members, the incident happened when the boys were playing football at a field at Choithotra village in the afternoon during rain. The deceased was identified as Mohammad Sohag, 15, a class nine student at the school.

2 get life for killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Additional district and session judge Mohammad Abdul Hamid yesterday sentenced two people to life term imprisonment and fined Tk. 10 thousand each, in default to suffer six months more in jail for killing an elderly woman. The convicts are Dhon Mia and Kobad Mia of Kutubpur village under Atpara upazila. According to the case in brief, on August 28 in 1995, the two killed one Jahan Akther, 75, of the same village with sharp weapons over a land dispute. The judge after examining the witnesses and evidence found them guilty and pronounced the verdict.



PHOTO: STAR

Villagers of Khaga Khoribari Char protesting lifting of stones from Teesa River making the nearby under-construction dyke vulnerable to collapse.

Save dyke to save villages

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

People of Char Khaga Khoribari village in Hatibandha upazila on Monday formed a human chain, demanding protection of the under construction Bangladesh-India international dyke. The dyke in the area is now under threat of collapse as an organised gang has been illegally lifting stones there by dredger machines from the River Teesta, said villagers participating in the human chain. The dyke is being constructed at a cost of Tk 7 crore to protect more than 25,000 families at 30 villages in the upazila from erosion by the river. If the work of lifting stones goes on, the dyke may collapse anytime, they said. Despite repeated pleas, the authorities are yet to take any step in this regard, they alleged.