

# 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, Matibanga, Tushkhali, Vutumia, and Kumerkhali.

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 Baliaitali, 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, Charduani 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 Hardinge 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, Chhatla under Dholigournagar union; and Char Udaykhali, Latur Char, and Lord Hardinge villages under Lord Hardinge union.

In Tazumuddin upazila, around half a kilometre area of the river dyke collapsed in Dorichandpur area under Chadpur union 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 League leader Tofail Ahmed, also a lawmaker from Bhola-2 constituency visited the flood affected areas on Monday.



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 Kamarpura 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.

Leaders of PBCP, a platform of Bangalee settlers, announced the programme at a press conference in the town yesterday.

The proposal to amend the act with planned changes will go against the Bangalees in the hill areas, they said.

The leaders further said that following the amendment, the commission became one-sided as the Bangalees were being deprived of their fundamental rights.

They also threatened to go for tougher movements if the demand was not met immediately.

### 2 remanded in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A court here yesterday placed two accused on a two-day remand in two Jubo League men killing case.

Abu Zafor Siddiki Ripon, Shajahanpur upazila unit Swecchhasebok League president, and Mahabubur Rahman Babu alias Totla Babu were placed before the court of Senior Chief Judicial Magistrate Ahmed Shahariar Tareq, seeking seven days remand, said investigation officer (IO) of the case Arif Ahmed, sub-inspector of Detective Branch of police.

On Sunday, Majnu Pramanik, 43, member of district unit Jubo League and son of late Sukur Ali of Phultola area in Bogra town and his nephew Nahid, 24, son of Dulu Mia of the area and activist of the unit, were murdered by criminals in Gondagram area of the upazila.

A case was filed against 17 people in connection with the killings on Monday, said the IO.

Meanwhile, relatives of the deceased and local traders of Phultola Bazar yesterday formed a human chain in the area, demanding immediate arrest and punishment to the killers.

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 Bangladeshi-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.

# Hartals enforced in 8 districts

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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 Temuhami 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 Mojahid 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 convenor of Swecchhasebok Dal Taibur Interpol.

Rahman Aslam, and Shramik Dal activists Sabuj Ahmed and Sanwar Hossain when they were picketing at Aminibazar 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 Ghatal.

Issuing a 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.