

Hindus in Lalmonirhat still struggle to rise from ashes

They take loan from local NGO to rebuild houses, shops as any official support is yet to arrive

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Many Hindus at several villages in the district are still struggling to resume their usual earnings as attackers belonging to Jamaat-Shibir and BNP destroyed their shops and houses during the last couple of months.

However, deployment of police at the affected places recently brought back a sense of security among the minority people.

"I became helpless after Jamaat-Shibir men damaged and looted my grocery shop on October 27 last year. Finally I have repaired the shop with Tk 50 thousand that I took as loan from a local NGO last week," said Ranjit Chandra Sen at Shafinagar village of Bawra union in Patgram upazila under the district.

"I have also borrowed one lakh taka from my close relatives for purchasing grocery items for the shop. I didn't get any help from the government for rehabilitation," he said.

"I have repaired my shop

with Tk 60 thousand taken as loan from a local NGO but I am yet to manage the capital to purchase goods to run my electric business

here," said Krishna Chandra Pal at the same village.

Around half of the 18 affected Hindu families at Shafinagar village are yet to

repair their damaged shops and resume business for want of money.

However, they can now move freely and sleep without

fear at night as a temporary police camp was set up there after the January 5 parliament election, they said.

"Jamaat-Shibir men even some identified BNP men and criminals went into hiding from the village after setting up of the police camp for ensuring security of the Hindus and resist any criminal activities," said Amiruzzaman, OC of Patgram Police Station.

A 10-member team led by Dr Nim Chandra Bhoomik, senior vice president of Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, visited affected Hindu houses at Shafinagar, Ghoshpara and Bawra villages of Patgram upazila and Satpatki Majhipara village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Sunday.

He encouraged the Hindus to remain united against all odds and assured them that he will appeal to the government for giving all kinds of support for rehabilitation of the affected families, said several Hindus at Shafinagar village.



PHOTO: STAR

Some of the Hindus, affected during Jamaat-Shibir men's vandalism and looting on October 27 last year, pose in front of a repaired shop at Shafinagar village in Bawra union under Patgram upazila under Lalmonirhat district on Monday. Several other victims, however, are yet to repair their shops and houses, damaged during the attack, for want of money.

24,500 BNP, Jamaat-Shibir men sued in Dinajpur

Case against 5000 filed in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 24,500 BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men have been sued on charge of carrying out destructive activities in 11 upazilas of the district during and after the January 5 national elections.

District police sources said the presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and police filed 124 cases with respective police stations in the last 15 days since January 7.

In the cases, the complainants accused the BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists of vandalising polling centres, looting ballot papers and ballot boxes, intimidating votes and attacking Hindus for casting votes.

According to police sources, 2900

opposition activists were sued in Parbatipur, 2250 in Birampur, 2050 in Phulbari, 2800 in Birganj, 2650 in Chirirbandar, 3400 in Dinajpur Sadar, 2150 in Kaharol, 1500 in Khansama, 1500 in Nawabganj, 1150 in Hakimpur, and 2150 in Ghoraghat upazilas.

Law enforcers have so far arrested 318 of the accused. Of them, 200 have been granted bail by the court. Contacted, Police Superintendent (SP) Ruhul Amin said law enforcers are raiding different areas in the upazilas to arrest the remaining accused in the cases.

Our Gaibandha correspondent adds: A case was filed with Sundarganj Police station on Sunday evening, accusing 5,000 Jamaat-Shibir men of attacking cops in the upazila in the

early hours of the day.

Police were conducting a raid at Kadamtala and Khanabari villages in Sarbananda union of the upazila at around 1:00am to capture people wanted in cases filed in connection with the violence that rocked the district in February 2013.

Jamaat-Shibir activists put up barricades at all the exit points of the villages and torched the vehicle the law enforcers went there in. They then swooped on the policemen with sticks and sharp weapons, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate with a few gunshots.

At least 55 people, including 22 cops, were injured during the nearly five-hour-long clash.

Fog disrupts ferry services

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Ferry services on the Mawa-Kewrakandi route resumes yesterday morning after a disruption of over 10 hours due to dense fog.

Sirajul Haque, general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Mawa, said five ferries with a large number of vehicles and passengers remained stranded in the mid-Madma since 11:00pm on Tuesday due to poor visibility caused by fog.

Six more ferries, four at Mawa and two at Kawrakandi terminals, remained stranded due to the situation.

About 500 vehicles got stuck at both the terminals, causing immense suffering to hundreds of people who passed their night on the ferries and at terminals amid cold and dense fog.

After the fog disappeared, ferry services resumed at 10:30am.

Jamaat hartal passes off peacefully

UNB, Meherpur

A half-day hartal, called by the local unit of Jamaat-e-Islami in the district protesting the killing of its leader Tarique Mohammad Saiful Islam, ended peacefully yesterday.

There was no picketing in support of the shutdown that ended at 12:00pm.

Vehicular movement on the town streets was normal. Besides, the business establishments remained partly open.

'Rohingyas robbed bridal party in Cox's Bazar'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Robbers, who swooped on the vehicles carrying members of a bridal party and looted gold ornaments in Panerchhara area under Ramu upazila on Tuesday, were Rohingyas, said the OC of Ramu PS yesterday.

According to Ashish Sharma, brother of bridegroom Shyamol Sharma, a gang of five intercepted three buses and a car by felling logs at Panerchhara point on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway at around 5:00am.

He said they were returning home at Jhumchhari village in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila after

the wedding ceremony held at Palong Garden Community Centre in Ukhia upazila of the district.

During an hour-long raid, the gang injured at least 15 members of bridal party, looted around 15 tolas of gold ornaments from the bride and others.

OC of Ramu PS Appela Naha yesterday said they arrested three Rohingyas on charge of committing robbery on the day raiding an illegal Rohingya slum adjacent to Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp in Ukhia upazila on Tuesday night.

During primary interrogation they have confessed to their involvement in the robbery, the OC added.



PHOTO: STAR

Although winter is on the wane, quilt makers in Gonokpara area of Rajshahi city still remain busy as orders for quilts continue due to last moment cold spell across the county.



PHOTO: STAR

Mango sprouts at a garden at Katakali in Rajshahi city herald the advent of spring and last days of winter.

Cold coupled with dense fog damaging seedbeds

PONUEL S BOSE, Narail

Persistent cold spell and dense fog is causing damage to boro seedbeds in vast areas of the district, much to the worry of farmers in the peak cultivation season.

So far, around half of the targeted 41,501 hectares of land in three upazilas under the district has been brought under boro cultivation that will continue till mid-February, said sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Narail.

But many farmers have to sow the seeds again to cultivate boro as the seedlings on many beds have

turned yellowish due to cold and dense fog, the growers said during this correspondent's visit to different areas.

Amid the situation, a good number of many farmers, already frustrated due to present low prices of their earlier harvested aman paddy, are thinking of refraining from boro cultivation, they said.

"I have to incur huge loss as three-week-old seedlings on my 30 decimals of land got damaged due to severe cold coupled with dense fog," said Razzak Mollah, a farmer at Boro Kalia village of Kalia

upazila in Narail.

"Boro seedlings on many seedbeds are turning yellowish in absence of sunlight. It will not be possible for me to cultivate boro this season if seedlings on my 10 decimals of land are fully damaged," said Binoy Krishno of Echorbaha village under Narail Sadar upazila.

Admitting possible setback in boro cultivation due to 'cold injuries' in seedbeds this season, Ahsok Halder, Narail district training officer of DAE, said agriculture officials are visiting the fields and giving farmers advice how to minimise the effect.



PHOTO: STAR

The persistent cold wave coupled with dense fog is causing serious damage to boro seedbeds in vast areas of Narail district. The photo was taken from Karar Beel in Narail Sadar upazila a couple of days ago.

LAND AND OTHER DISPUTES

Man killed, 82 hurt in clashes in 4 districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A man was killed and at least 82 people have been injured in separate incidents of clashes in Mymensingh, Kushtia, Netrakona and Gopalganj districts.

Five people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers in Gazaria upazila of Mymensingh on Tuesday morning.

Locals said, Ripon, president of Jubo Dal Hesendi union unit, and Sohel, president of the same unit Bangladesh Chhatra League, had long been at loggerheads over establishing supremacy in the neighbourhood.

As a sequel to the enmity, men of Sohel attacked Fahim, brother of Ripon, at Yeamina Char when he was going to Dhaka in the morning.

At one stage, the two groups, equipped with lethal weapons, attacked each other, leaving five people injured.

In Kushtia, a man was killed and 12 people injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over establishing domi-

nance in the area at Char Chapra village in Kumarkhali upazila on Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Ainal Haque, 45, a resident of the village, reports UNB.

Quoting locals, police said supporters of local Akbar Ali Member and Nehar Ali-Bodi Hossain groups had long been at loggerheads over establishing their dominance in the area.

An altercation ensued between the two groups on Sunday and later it led to a fierce clash.

A chase and counter-chase took place during the melee that left Ainal dead on the spot and 12 people injured.

In Netrakona, at least 40 people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers at Jalalpur village in Kendua upazila on Monday, reports our corre-

spondent.

Police and local people said, there had been a conflict between Abdul Mannan and Aslamuddin over a piece of land.

On Monday morning, when Mannan went to the disputed land, Aslamuddin group attacked him with sharp and lethal weapons. On hearing this, Mannan group launched a counter attack which left at least 40 people from both group injured.

In Gopalganj, Sekandar Bhuiyan and Ashraf Bhuiyan of Batikamari in Maksudpur upazila had a dispute over a piece of land for long, reports our correspondent.

On Monday morning, the supporters of the two claimants locked in a clash over the land, leaving 25, including women and children, injured.

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