



PHOTO: STAR

Supporters of Awami League (AL) rebel candidate Iqbal Mahmud Liton vandalise the house of AL-nominated candidate Goutam Roy at Laxmipur village in Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali on Tuesday night. Election results of the union were not announced due to postponement of voting at three centres.

Post-polls violence leaves 100 injured in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Over 100 people were injured in post-polls violence in different unions under four upazilas of the district yesterday and on Tuesday night.

At least eight shops were also torched during the violence, said police and local sources.

In Kalapara upazila, at least 60 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of a member-elect and a defeated candidate in Chakamoiya union yesterday.

Of them, 12 were admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital with serious injuries.

The injured include Qader Hawlader, 40, Babul Gazi, 35, Musa Mir, 32, Helal Gazi, 30, Rezaul, 25, Shafiqul Islam, 30, Jakir Negaban, 32, Dulal Farzee,

35, Jalal Sikder, 40, Russel, 25, and Shahidul Islam, 20, of Anipara village in the union.

Locals said one Rafiqul Islam was elected member of ward No-3 in the union on Tuesday. When he along with his supporters came to the village around 11:00am to meet the villagers, a gang allegedly led by defeated member candidate Rakibul attacked them with sharp weapons, triggering a clash between the two sides.

More than 60 people from both sides were injured during the clash that continued for an hour, locals said.

At Kumirmara village in Nilganj union of the same upazila, at least 23 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of two defeated member candidates -- Mohibullah

and Kabir Gazi—the same night.

Police arrested six people from adjacent Anipara village for their alleged involvement in the clash, said GM Shahnewaz, officer-in-charge of Kalapara Police Station.

Additional police have been deployed in the two areas to avert further trouble, the OC added.

In Galachipa upazila, criminals set eight shops on fire at Itbaria Bazar in Galachipa union under the upazila around 11:00pm on Tuesday.

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of a chairman-elect and the defeated chairman candidate at Adabaria village in Baufal upazila yesterday.

Of the injured, Dinobandhu Hawlader, 35, was admitted to Patuakhali

General Hospital while the rest took treatment at local clinics.

In Dashmina upazila, supporters of Awami League rebel candidate Iqbal Mahmud Liton attacked AL candidate Goutam Roy's house at Laxmipur village in the upazila on Tuesday night.

Over 100 Liton's men swooped on the house of Goutam at around 8:00pm and vandalised three motor-bikes there. The attackers also beat up the family members, alleged locals.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said OC Md Monirul Islam of Dashmina Police Station.

Election results of the union were not announced on Tuesday because of postponement of voting in three centres.



PHOTO: STAR

Fire fighters trying to douse the fire at a betel garden in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila on Tuesday evening.

Fire destroys Tk 7 cr betel on 300 bighas of land in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Fire destroyed around 700 betel leaf gardens on 300 bighas of land at Fakirabad, Baggaripur, Bahadurpur, Parankhali and Jamalpur areas in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila on Tuesday evening.

The total damage caused by the fire, affecting around 300 farmers, could be as much as Tk 7 crore.

Fires set by some farmers to burn off the remains after harvesting spread to adja-

cent betel plantations due to the wind, said betel leaf farmer Akshed Ali, who has 200 betel leaf gardens in Parankhali.

"Fire fighters from Bheramara upazila rushed to the spot, but the fire was too widespread to be doused with our limited equipment and insufficient water," said Mozaharul Islam, Station Officer of Bheramara Fire Station.

The firefighters were helped by farmers who supplied water from shal-

low and deep tube-wells.

Aminul Islam, general secretary of Bheramara Upazila Betel Leaf Farmers' Association, said most of the betel leaf farmers took loans from local branches of Krishi Bank and other sources to cultivate betel leaf.

Megha Pramanik, a farmer who lost betel leaves grown on four bighas of land, said he had started to sell the leaves recently. "Now I am ruined. I lost all my capital," he said.

A number of other farmers who leased land also

incurred huge losses.

"I leased five bighas of land with an advanced payment of Tk 24,000. I lost everything," said Kheder Ali of Jhenidah.

Farmers Shamsul Ali, Moazzem Hossain and Karim Sheikh said they are worried about repaying their loans and maintaining their families after losing their betel leaf gardens.

Aminul Islam urged the authorities concerned, including the district administration, to help the farmers.

Dinajpur patients missing their Italian doctor

Dr Piero Parolari yet to return after last year's gun attack

KONGKON KARMAKER with ANDREW EAGLE

Tuberculosis patient Shombo Sarker, 55, from Mirzapur village in Dinajpur's sadar upazila is in tears, not for the suffering caused by his illness but from missing his doctor. Sarker attends a tiny dispensary that was routinely visited by Dr Piero Parolari, the Italian citizen shot on a Dinajpur roadside on November 18 last year.

"He took such good care of his patients," Sarker says, "He was polite and well-spoken. We really miss him and want him back in Bangladesh among us."

Popularly known as Father Piero, Dr. Parolari has not returned since the attack.

"He was so kind to patients," agrees Tapash Mondal, also from Mirzapur. "His bedside manner, the way he spoke was unique. He treated patients like family members and his absence is a big blow."

According to Mondal, people of all religions are equally fond of the doctor. But in an atmosphere where fear of extremism persists, not all are willing to speak publicly.

Nonetheless Dr Parolari's high-standing professional reputation is well understood in Dinajpur. Locals are aware of his diligent habit of checking on his patients daily; how he would happily review the treatment prescribed to the patients of other doctors.

According to Md. Haris, a staff member of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, Dr Parolari even offered poor patients monetary assistance time to time, so they could access proper treatment.

"We hope he can return one day. He was a true friend to all people," says Mondal.

Born in Lecco in Italy's Milan province, 66-year-old

Parolari first arrived in Bangladesh 30 years ago after completing his education in medicine. He served the patients of Rajahshi's TB Hospital for 15 years before he came to Dinajpur in 2000.

"His daily routine involved visiting patients at Dinajpur medical college, general and St Vincent mission hospitals," says Sister Deepti who worked beside him. "After that he spent the rest of the day visiting patients of his small dispensary."

"He treated people with heartfelt sincerity," says Deepti, "His tireless efforts were always focused on serving people."

But on the morning of November 18, 2015, for Dr Parolari, his colleagues and patients, the world was turned upside down. On

that day three attackers on a motorcycle gunned down the doctor in front of the BRTC bus terminal in Mirzapur.

With bullet injuries to the back of the neck, Dr Parolari was rushed to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital and later flown by Bangladesh Air Force helicopter to the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka. He was lucky to survive.

Upon his release from hospital, Dr Parolari left Bangladesh.

"We do not know if he will return," Father Michaeli told The Daily Star by phone. "We expect that he might return, to continue caring for people as he has done for the last 30 years."

According to officer in charge of Dinajpur detective branch, Redwanur Rahim,

police have so far arrested six people in connection with the crime, including four JMB men and two Jamaat-Shibir activists. He says that the three directly involved in the shooting are among those arrested but that police are still searching for more people associated with the incident. "Charge sheets will be filed very soon," he says.

In the meantime, the only reminders of the incident are the police guards on the mission complex gates and the sadness of a community who lost a much loved doctor.

"Perhaps he was born Italian," says Mirzapur resident Swapna Mardi of the doctor, "But his heart was cent percent Bangladeshi. We really miss him."



PHOTO: STAR

Sorely missed by patients, Italian Dr Piero Parolari (left) has not returned to Bangladesh since he was shot on a Dinajpur roadside last November. This photo was taken 15 years ago when Dr Parolari first arrived in Dinajpur.

SWIFT urges

FROM PAGE 1 user-banks in the country on March 20.

Headquartered in Belgium, SWIFT is a member-owned cooperative that provides international codes to facilitate payments between banks globally.

After harvesting credentials for 10 days, on February 4 around midnight, hackers broke into the BB's SWIFT servers and generated 35 payment orders for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, stealing \$101 million.

Leibbrandt insisted that SWIFT's core messaging services were not impacted by the issue and those continue to work normally.

"There is no indication that our network has been compromised," he said.

He also said the company had been supporting the central bank of Bangladesh to help it resolve its underlying operational issues and has also been in contact with the Fed on the matter.

Leibbrandt added that SWIFT takes its security seriously and was vigilant and actively assessed risks to its users, services and systems.

"However, customers remain responsible for the setup, maintenance and monitoring of their own internal network setup and security," he said.

The BB asked SWIFT Global to review its system in Bangladesh as soon as it found out about the security breach on February 7.

But SWIFT Global said it was not possible to provide on-site support at that moment, recommending off-site support instead.

Finally, on March 17, two engineers -- one from SWIFT's office in Hong Kong and the other from Kuala Lumpur -- arrived in Bangladesh.

A BB official yesterday told The Daily Star that the two engineers examined the BB's SWIFT operation. They had already left Bangladesh.

CHAR AREAS IN BOGRA'S SARIAKANDI

Farmers beam with joy as wheat yield good

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

With the harvest of wheat in full swing, the farmers of char (landmass emerging from riverbed) areas in the Jamuna and Bangalee rivers in Sariakandi upazila under the district are happy with good yield and expected price of the crop this season.

Sources at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said 1,740 hectares of land in the upazila has been brought under wheat cultivation this season.

The farmers have cultivated Sourav, Bijoy, BARI-

25, 26, 27 and 28 varieties of hybrid wheat, DAE sources said, adding that most of the families in Jamuna and Bangalee basin areas in 12 unions of the upazila cultivated the crop as the area is suitable for the purpose.

Moklesur Rahman of Char Batia in Sadar union said he has cultivated wheat on three bighas of land and got 7-8 maunds of yield per bigha.

"Fertiliser and irrigation cost Tk 3500-3800 per bigha. I expect profit of Tk 1500-2000 per bigha as wheat is selling at around Tk

750 per maund," he said.

Porimal Roy, a farmer of Char Majhira under Bohail union of the upazila, said he has cultivated wheat on 75 decimal of land after harvesting lentil and other crops.

Wheat cultivation is more profitable than that of paddy, he said.

Increasing number of farmers are showing interest in wheat cultivation in the chars as they can cultivate jute after reaping wheat there, said Md Kamruzzaman, upazila agriculture officer of Sariakandi.



PHOTO: STAR

Wheat harvest is in full swing at Char Majhira in the Jamuna basin area in Bogra's Sariakandi upazila.