

EVICION DRIVE IN DINAJPUR 10 wounded as land grabbers attack forest officials, police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 10 people, including a policeman and two women, were injured as land grabbers locked in a clash with forest officials and police during an eviction drive in the district's Nawabganj upazila yesterday.

Acting on information that some land grabbers were building concrete houses in the forest in Burimandap area after felling trees, a joint team of police and forest officials launched the drive around 12:30pm.

At one stage, the land grabbers and their hired goons, numbering around 100, attacked the law enforcers and forest officials.

The attackers were carrying bamboo sticks and sharp weapons.

Chase and counter chase took place between the land grabbers and law enforcers.

Police said Masud Rana, son of Abdur Rahim of Haripur village, was behind the grabbing of land.

Bazlur Rashid, upazila nirbahi officer of Nawabganj, and ASM Hafizur Rahman, assistant superintendent (Birampur circle) of police, reached the spot with additional policemen and brought the situation under control.

Later, forest officials demolished the illegal structures in Burimandap.

The injured are Inspector of Nawabganj Police Station Abdul Hakim, forest officials Rafiquzzaman, Anjibul Amin, Nishikanta Malakar and Golam Ali, forest guard Mozaffar Hossain, villagers Kinaram Barman, Faraz Uddin, Shilpi and Khadiza Begum.

Inspector Hakim was sent to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur while the other injured received treatment at Nawabganj Upazila Health Complex.

Dr Sirajul Islam of the upazila health complex said the inspector was badly injured.



A bike rider braves a flooded street like thousands of others. This photo was taken at the Gulistan area of the capital during the daylong rain yesterday caused by a depression in the bay. The met office recorded 112mm rain till 6pm yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

23 AAGs lose job for 'poor performance'

Govt appoints 27 new state lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has exempted 23 assistant attorneys general (AAG) from their offices due to different reasons including that of poor performance in dealing with cases on behalf of the state before the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile 27 new AAGs have been appointed in their place.

Process for exemption of some deputy attorneys general (DAG) is also underway, sources add.

According to these sources, the 23 AAGs now exempted were appointed on political consideration during the regime of last Awami League government. They were removed from office on Sunday but no reason was mentioned for this move except that their performance was not satisfactory.

The move came on recommendation from Attorney General Mahubub Alam following a government decision.

Two lawyers removed from the office of AAG, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star they don't know why they have been exempted from their duties although they believe they

have performed their duties well.

They said they were not given any prior notice before exemption.

One of the exempted AAGs said Attorney General Mahubub Alam told them few months ago that they might be exempted from their services as there was a pressure on him to this effect.

Law Minister Anisul Huq and Attorney General Mahubub Alam, both abroad at present, could not be reached for comments.

Some of the removed AAGs have been in office for seven to nine years. An AAG office source said a group of pro-AL SC lawyers have been claiming long that they could not win in the Supreme Court Bar Association elections for years as there are not enough dedicated pro-AL lawyers in DAG and AAG posts.

The removal of lawyers was a move to appoint others more dedicated to Awami League.

Acting Attorney General Murad Reza told this newspaper that he did not know why the 23 AAGs were exempted from their offices.

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Downpour plays havoc

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According to the Met office, the entire country experienced the rain due to a depression that formed over the Bay of Bengal.

Dhaka had 112mm of rainfall in 12 hours, from 6:00am yesterday.

The Met office of Patenga, Chittagong, recorded 151mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending at 9:00am yesterday.

Meteorologist Aftab Uddin of Dhaka Met office said the rain would continue today, but its intensity might drop. Southern parts of the country would have more rain today, he said.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal No 3, which means the port is threatened by squally weather.

Dhaka dwellers struggled to get to their destinations yesterday.

A major part of the city, including Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Kazipara, Nightingale intersection, parts of Gulistan, Dhanmondi Road-27, Indira Road, Rajabazar, Bhuterboli, Tallabagh, Sukrabad, Tejkunipara, Green Road, Niketon and Shantinagar areas, went under knee-to-waist-deep water.

"While going to Karwan Bazar from Farmgate, it seemed like we were crossing a river. Water was everywhere," said Palash, an employee at a firm in Segunbagicha.

Faruk Ahmed, a resident of Indira Road, said streets and alleys in his area went under knee-to-waist-deep water. Many had to wade through the water to get to work.

"The water is murky and stinky. The sewers remain clogged all the time and whenever it rains the waste surfaces," he said.

Rokeya Sarani, from Mirpur-10 to Kazipara, went under ankle-to-knee-deep water. Vehicular movement was very slow in the morning, he said.

Shamima Nasrin, a resident of Senpara Parbata of Mirpur-10, said it took her over two-and-a-half-hours to reach Farmgate as there was severe traffic jam due to waterlogging.

"Usually, it takes less than an hour," she said.

Traffic was inching forward between the footbridges at Farmgate and Shahbagh on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue during the rush at 5:00pm. In cases, it took about two hours to travel just three to four kilometres.

"I started from work in Baridhara at 4:30pm and could only get to Kuril after one and a half hours," said a journalist.

A number of people took the social media to express anger and frustration over the poor drainage system of the capital. Some just shared their helplessness.

"I usually don't go out during the

iftar time and I think no one should. Over two hours and still stuck in traffic on my way to Bashundhara from Gulshan!" said Trina.

Many rickshaw pullers and auto-rickshaw drivers charged high fares.

"I had to pay Tk 300 to go to Kazipara from Farmgate which is usually around Tk 100," said a city dweller.

CHITTAGONG

Just after 15 days of Cyclone Mora, the dwellers of the port city endured another downpour that flooded many low-lying areas, including Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Chawkbazar and Probartak intersection.

The residents had previously faced similar difficulties at the end of May, when Cyclone Mora caused heavy rain and flooding in the city.

Rowshan Ara Chowdhury, a resident of Agrabad CDA Residential area, said the ground floor of her house was under water for four days after Mora.

Water rushed in again yesterday.

"I have been living here in CDA Residential area for about 32 years. I've never seen such a situation before," she said.

Like her, thousands of people of South Agrabad and Gosaildanga and parts of North Agrabad and North Middle Halishahar suffered yesterday. It usually takes several days for the water to recede.

"We are sick and tired of the situation.

We want a solution," said Mohammad Imran, an auto-rickshaw driver.

The residents blamed the temporary dam on Moheshkhal canal, constructed by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) in September 2015, for their woes and demanded its immediate removal.

The Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), CPA and Bangladesh Water Development Board have decided on June 1 to remove it but it is still there.

"There is an equipment scarcity. We do not get any separate financial allocation to mitigate waterlogging," CCC Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin told reporters during a visit to Beparipara area yesterday.

Two lighter vessels capsized in the Bay while three others ran aground due to strong winds and rough sea.

In Rangamati, Naima Akhter, 6, daughter of Shah Jahan and Moni Akhter of Police Lines area, died after a mudslide destroyed their home, said SM Lokman, a resident of the area.

Naima was rescued around 30 minutes later and rushed to Rangamati General Hospital but she was pronounced dead there.

All water transport was suspended from Barisal river port due to adverse weather last night, reports our correspondent there.

The suspension stranded a few thousand passengers at the terminal.

BREACHING RULES BTRC suspends Dhaka Fiber Net's operations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The telecom regulator has decided to suspend operation of nationwide internet service provider (ISP) Dhaka Fiber Net Ltd (DFNL) for not keeping logs of IPs of customers, some of whom are allegedly involved in militancy or terrorist activities.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) already blocked the ISP's operation.

In a press release yesterday, the BTRC said based on information from police cyber crime unit, it directed all internet gateway providers on June 5 to block their bandwidth supply to DFNL.

The telecom watchdog also asked the DFNL to explain in seven days as to why its licence should not be cancelled for breaching conditions and ignoring the commission's directives.

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'Plot to kill Islamic scholar' foiled

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Police did not disclose the name of the scholar amid concerns about his security.

The four other arrestees are Mohammadullah Adnan, 19, Mehedi Hasan Emon alias Abu Hamza, 21, Khalid Saifullah alias Abu Musab, 19, and Shamsuddin Al Amin alias Abu Ahmad, 20.

"They gathered in New Market area to discuss their plan to kill the scholar and carry out other subversive activities," Monirul said.

Officials say it was the "Neo JMB" militants who killed 20 hostages, mostly foreigners, and two police officials in the deadly attack on Holey Artisan Bakery, an upscale eatery in Gulshan, on July 1 last year during Ramadan.

Asked whether foreigners were targeted by the arrestees, Monirul said they have no such information yet. However, police will further interrogate them.

A Dhaka court placed the six on a

three-day remand yesterday.

A counterterrorism official told The Daily Star that all the suspected militants studied in Qawmi madrasas and they used to meet regularly in New Market area.

Of them, Jahidul used to collect money from sympathisers to raise fund for the JMB offshoot, "Neo JMB" as law enforcers call it, he said.

DEMARA ARRESTS

The Rapid Action Battalion-11 claimed to have arrested Shaykh Mamunur Rashid alias Mamun, 34, vice principal of Markajul Hikma Qawmi Madrasa in Demra, around 7:30am yesterday.

According to Rab officials, Mamun joined JMB through two other operatives, Towhid and Imam, in 2014. He joined "Sarwar-Tamim faction" in 2015.

A year later, he was given the charge of Shariah (Islamic law) Board considering his educational background.

Mamun completed Dawra-e-Hadith and took higher studies in

Darul Uloom Deoband madrasa in India, said Rab's Director (Legal and Media) Mufti Mahmud Khan at a briefing at its Karwan Bazar media centre in the afternoon.

Rab also said that Mamun used to translate provocative militancy-related articles from Arabic into Bangla.

RAJSHAH RAID

Three suspected militants of "Neo JMB" were arrested by counterterrorism personnel during a raid at a "militant den" in Dangapara village of Tanore upazila on Sunday midnight, reports our staff correspondent from Rajshahi.

Five family members of the three surrendered with four children during the operation.

"We had intelligence that the house was being used for sheltering militants and preserving explosives," said Md Asaduzzaman, the SP of Bogra.

The three arrestees are Ibrahim Hossain, 35, his brother Israfil Alam, 26, and brother-in-law Rabiul Islam, 25.

Ibrahim's father and house owner Ramjan Ali, 60, his wife Ayesha Begum, his daughter and Rabiul's wife Hawa Khatun, 20, Ibrahim's wife Morzina Khatun and Israfil's wife Haresa Khatun were detained after they surrendered with Ibrahim's daughters Tamanna, 8, Taskira, 4, seven-month-old Tanshira and Rabiul's three-month-old baby girl.

Ibrahim, a fertiliser and pesticide seller, Israfil, a homeopath practitioner, and Rabiul, a carpenter, had trainings in suicide attacks. Ibrahim was involved in militancy since 2011-12 year, claimed the Bogra SP.

"Other family members are needed to be interrogated to know if they had links to militancy," he said.

Ramjan Ali is a teacher of Gourangapur Government Primary School.

"He [Ramjan] is a polite man and a philanthropist. We can't believe he is involved in JMB," said Kamruzzaman, a neighbour.

Month-old

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their K-9 division.

The police station is expanding its canine force and welcomed the furry recruits to the team on Saturday.

The future police officers will assist their human colleagues in sniffing out drugs, searching evidence at crime scenes and finding missing people all while being absolutely adorable.

The puppies are only a month old and will begin training in a few months to be ferocious K-9 officers. But for now, they are busy being cute and spend most of their time sleeping.

One day they will also grow into those tiny jackets.

The police doggos are already melting hearts on the internet with their cuteness.

"When you're new to the job but have a huge responsibility to bear," joked Karl Radaza.

Arvind Kumar wrote, "This guy's ready to solve bad pupper crimes."

"On duty of cuteness," said Lara Ems Mina.

The ticket heat is on

FROM PAGE 1

braving the incessant rain and saw, to their surprise, that the lines had already become too long to take several curls before the counters.

According to an earlier announcement, the authorities started selling advance tickets yesterday morning.

Every year, tens of thousands of people leave the capital to celebrate Eid with near and dear ones living in their village homes. But their journey often turns into a bitter experience, largely due to traffic jam, overpricing of tickets and delays in bus and train schedules.

Bangladesh Railway yesterday sold advance tickets for June 21 while bus tickets for June 22, 23 and 24 were available.

BUS TICKETS FOR JUNE 22, 23 DEARER

Many complained of overpricing of tickets. People, who wished to travel by bus on June 22, said tickets for the day when the Eid rush was expected to begin were dearer.

Most of the leading bus companies, including Hanif Paribahan, Shyamoli Paribahan, SR Paribahan and Sohag Paribahan, started selling advance tickets for Eid holidaymakers.

This year Eid-ul-Fitr may be celebrated on June 26 or 27, a day or two after the weekends would end, and so the demand for tickets for June 22, 23 and 24 was high since many wished to have an extended holiday.

Md Hakim, who went to Balurmath of Gabtoli to buy tickets from Hanif Paribahan around 7:15am, said he had expected fewer people at the counter than what it was.

"It took me about four and a half hours to get to the counter," said Hakim, who was happy finally with four tickets to Dinajpur for June 22. He paid Tk 650 for each ticket.

Kaisar Hossain, who also bought tickets to the same destination, said the usual fair was Tk 550, but the bus operator was charging Eid travellers more.

According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, the fare for the Dhaka to Dinajpur route is Tk 565.

Reshma Begum, an employee of a private company, went all the way from Bakshibazar to Gabtoli to buy tickets to Rajshahi for June 23.

"When I got to the beginning of the line, people at the counter told me tickets were already sold out." She then bought tickets for June 21.

As the demand for tickets for June 22 and 23 was high, many people had to

change their travel schedules for not getting tickets, transport operators said.

However, many passengers alleged that the bus operators reserved tickets for VIPs and influential people and that was why they were saying tickets had been sold out.

Mosharaf Hossain, manager of Hanif Paribahan, refuted the allegation of overcharging Eid travellers.

He said all tickets to northern districts for June 22, 23 and 24 had been sold out.

GM Shaheed, vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, said they also saw a huge demand for tickets for June 22 and 23.

"Throughout the year, we charge passengers less than the rates set by the BRTA as we earn from up and down trips. But, during the Eid season, we sell tickets at the fixed fare since there is

only one-way trip."

DEMAND FOR TRAIN TICKETS

Advance train tickets for June 22, 23, 24, and 25 would be sold today, tomorrow, on June 15 and 16 respectively.

Md Yasin, who works at a private firm, went to the station around 6:00am yesterday to buy a ticket to Dinajpur. He was five men behind the counter around 10:40am.

"The demand for tickets is not so high today...I think the computer system is working slowly," he said.

As many as 22,122 advance tickets of 31 trains from Kamalapur Railway Station were available yesterday, said station manager Sitangshu Chakraborty.

Sixty-five percent of the tickets were sold at Kamalapur and 25 percent online. Five percent were reserved for

VIPs and another five percent for rail-way employees, he added.

Besides, 25,000 tickets of mail, express and local trains are being sold on daily basis, Sitangshu said. "There was crowd in the morning. However, everybody got tickets."

The rail authority was expecting higher demand for tickets for June 22, 23, 24.

Some 70,000 to 80,000 passengers leave Dhaka through Kamalapur Railway Station during Eid vacation.

Talking to The Daily Star, several passengers demanded that the authorities increase the sale of online tickets to reduce people's suffering.

Asked about the matter, the station manager said many people were yet to be tech savvy. "They still believe ticket counter is the place to buy tickets."