



Two factions of Chitra League engage in a fierce clash yesterday under the cloud of teargas fired by the police. Story on page 12.

## Man held 'with 19kg gunpowder'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapinawabganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man with 19kg of gunpowder in the Sadar upazila of Chapinawabganj last night.

The arrestee is Mohammad Mithun, 25. Following a tip-off, a Rab-5 team went to Chapinawabganj camp west of Sundarpur village around 8:30pm and arrested Mithun with his four cattle, said ASP Enamul Karim of Chapinawabganj Rab camp.

## Unesco decisions

FROM PAGE 1  
UNESCO actually asked for all large-scale construction to be stopped until a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) was done.

Immediately after the discussions regarding the Sundarbans had ended in Poland, the foreign ministry issued a press release on July 6 claiming that the UNESO changed its stance on the Rampal project.

Some top ruling party leaders claimed that the Unesco had "approved" the Rampal power plant.

Returning from Krakow, Tawfik-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the Bangladesh minister and who led the Unesco delegation to the session, said in a press conference on July 8 that there was no bar on building the power plant.

The government would continue building the Rampal power plant and alongside do a Strategic Environment Assessment on the country's developments as per the condition of Unesco, he said.

But a number of environmentalists told The Daily Star that the WHC only extended the time for submitting a progress report on the state of the conservation of the Sundarbans by 10 months.

In the fourth point of the draft, the Unesco committee welcomed the government for agreeing to Unesco's condition for doing the SEA.

The committee requested the government "to ensure that any large-scale industrial and/or infrastructure development will not be allowed to proceed before the SEA has been completed", they said.

It also asked for the dredging to be stopped until an Environment Impact Assessment was done.

In point 10 of the draft, the committee requested the government to monitor missions, the likely impact of the Rampal plant on air and water quality, increased shipping and dredging, and removal of freshwater.

It requested Bangladesh to ensure that the SEA is properly assessed as per the SEA, and adequate technological measures were put in place to mitigate those impacts in order to avoid damage to the world heritage site.

Before the discussions in Poland, the Unesco had requested the government to submit by February 2018 a progress report on what it has done to protect the Sundarbans and also considering whether to put the Sundarbans on the List of World Heritage in Danger through the 2018 session of the committee in 2018.

Now the concerns about the SEA by December 2018 for review in the 43rd session of committee in 2019.

## Their sufferings

FROM PAGE 1  
this cow. She is like a member of my family and more importantly, an earning member," he added.

With the floodwater entering on Saturday, his house is now under waist-deep water, as the Jamuna swelled up rapidly. "My family is suffering a lot in the flood. If the water keeps on rising, I have to bring them here on the embankment," he said.

Like Altaf, at least 20 people of the same village have been staying on the embankment with their domestic animals. Milon Hossain was one of them, living there with his four cattle, for the last three days.

"My family members are virtually living on the bed to avoid the water. But these cattle cannot survive there. I need to save my cattle at any cost," he said. Without their cattle, the people here believe that they have nothing else to look forward to. Years of taking care and doing after these creatures has built an unbreakable bond that cannot be fully explained.

Some people said they sold their domestic animal due to lack of accommodation. Parting was better than causing more suffering.

"I sold 10 hens and a goat at a low cost as the water submerged my house. There is no scope here to save them," said Somar Ali.

Flood-hit people of Cuneragati village are passing days amid hardships as almost all the houses have been flooded in the last four days. Apart from living on the embankment, many took shelter at the madrasa playground.

"The madrasa playground is crammed with the affected people. It's like we're living in a slum," said Abdul Mannan.

Many people send their family members to their relative's house outside.

The Jamuna river has swelled 67 cm above the danger level since yesterday, said Fazlul Haque, sub-divisional engineer of Siraganj Water Development Board.

"Due to the onrush of water from upstream, Jamuna has surged. But the floodwater entered into the low lying areas outside the flood protection embankment," Fazlul said.

Over one lakh people in 29 unions of five upazilas in Siraganj have been affected by the flood, according to the district administration office.

The realities of the flood though can be seen when the homes of those affected are visited. This is where the real struggle can be understood, up close. Setting up her earthen oven on a floating banana-tree raft, Rikta Khatun was cooking rice for her five-member family yesterday noon. Her father-in-law prevented the make-shift kitchen from tipping over by using a piece of bamboo as an ear in one end of the raft as there was floodwater everywhere inside her house.

"I've been cooking food only once a day on it [the raft] as my home has remained under water for the last five days. There is no dry place left around my house," said 37-year-old mother of three.

The food to cook prepare is inadequate for my family. My children wait more," Rikta added, her voice heavy with helplessness.

Her husband started seeping into her homestead in Dholirakandi village of Sariakandi upazila in Bogra on Friday and has been increasing every day. Her husband, Solaiman Ali, has a tiny grocery shop in the village, but that too remains inundated.

Relief was yet to arrive and her husband was trying to earn money by transporting people in his small boat. Her children – all students of a govern-

ment primary school – stayed at house amid miserable conditions. With water on the ground, they raised their bed by placing bricks underneath.

"We are passing days in misery, either half-dried or under-flood. We cannot move to higher grounds in fear of losing our valuables and belongings," Rikta said.

Elsewhere, the condition of Morium Begum looked better.

With her husband Azgar Ali and eight other family members, the 56-year-old woman of Rahadaha area on Kamalpur union in the same upazila took shelter at the flood control embankment for the last one week after her house was flooded.

A few days ago, she received 20 kg rice and some dry food once from the authorities. Her husband incurred a huge loss as their crops were damaged in the flood.

"We don't know how my family would run when the water recedes from the area," she said.

About 11,220 families of 57 villages of nine unions of Sariakandi were affected by the flood as the floodwater was flowing 57cm above the danger mark in Sariakandi point yesterday noon.

The rise of water is devastating more and more places of Sariakandi upazila. Twenty-one villages in three unions of Sonatola upazila and 14 villages in two unions of Dhanat upazila of Bogra were inundated, affecting at least 70,000 people, according to the District Relief Officer.

## His words

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Investigators say they haven't come across any information that corroborate Farhad's claim that he was abducted after he came out of his residence in the morning of July 3.

The poet-writer was found in a Dhaka-bound bus in lessore's Noakhala around 11:30pm the same day, around 18 hours after what he says was his abduction.

He gave a judicial statement the next day saying some unknown people forced him into a microbus and folded him minutes after he came out of his Adabor house to buy medicines.

But a former colleague of Farhad in a judicial statement on Monday said he called her five to six times and she also called him two to three times on the day of the incident.

When she asked the writer if he was abducted, he said he was alright, the woman said in her statement.

Meanwhile, several CCTV footage, said to be taken from New Market area in Khulna city, show Farhad walking alone with a white shoulder bag and a bandana on his head.

The footage, said to be of 4:41pm, 5:17pm, 6:23pm and 6:44pm, was circulated by the police. It is not clear in the footage whether he was being watched.

The footage has caused confusions since Farhad's wife Farida Akhter told reporters over an hour before he was "found" that the writer had called her around 7:30pm and asked her to manage ransom money asked by his "abductors".

Besides, Farhad told police that the abductors gave him a ticket of the bus before releasing him around 7:30pm in Khulna.

Contradicting this claim, Nazmus Sadat Shadi, manager of the bus counter in Khulna, said Farhad bought the ticket himself under the name of Gafur around 4:00pm.

Asaduzzaman yesterday said the inspector general of police AKM Shahidul Hoque would brief reporters on the matter with "concrete information and findings" within a day or two.



PHOTO: STAR

## Whose

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was still senseless.

ICCI, they had tried to shift her to Yatu for better observation, but failed as there was no seat vacant.

Someone tried to kill her by strangling during the process, her brain did not receive enough oxygen, leading to this senseless state, said Asif.

As there is no acquaintance around, the hospital authorities are trying to provide the girl with better care on humanitarian grounds, he said.

On the other hand, till yesterday, police could not ascertain her identity.

Jamaluddin Mir, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur Police Station, said they had succeeded in collecting her fingerprint yesterday.

Now they will match the girl's fingerprint with those stored in the database of National ID to confirm her identity, he said, adding that they had tried to collect her fingerprint on Tuesday but failed.

Earlier on Tuesday, Azizul Haque, sub-inspector (SI) of the police station, said they took photograph of the girl and sent it to different police stations.

On Saturday evening, the authorities of Tazil hotel heard a groaning sound from inside a room and informed Mohammadpur police. On information, a team of police led by SI Azizul rescued the girl with swellings and scar marks in the face and around the neck, and took her to nearby Shahed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

As her condition remained unchanged, she was shifted to DMCH Sunday early hours.

Quoting the hotel authorities, OC Jamaluddin said a young – enlisted as Ashraf – along with the girl had checked in the hotel on Saturday morning, identifying themselves as husband and wife.

Hotel authorities could only say that the youth had left the hotel on that evening, Jamal said, adding that it might be a murder attempt.

## Inu downplays

FROM PAGE 1  
Rahman's supplementary question.

Fazlur asked the information minister what steps the government took so that journalists were not suppressed by the ICT act.

According to The Daily Star tally, at least 23 journalists were sued under section 57 of the ICT act since March.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on several occasions said the section would be scrapped.

On Monday, he said the government would decide on the section next month while finalising the draft of the Digital Security Act.

## Workers

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from the federation in November 2009. One of them died later.

The federation demanded the immediate release of the arrested men and called for reviewing the accident to bring all responsible persons under accountability.

The other demands include issuance of appointment letter, identity card and service book for all workers by the owners, end to the harassment by employers by filing cases against them for accidents, overloading of boats and other charges, and prevention of extortion and robbery on waterways.

## SL president

FROM PAGE 16

key areas of agriculture, coastal shipping, information and communication technology, and cooperation between the media of the two countries, foreign services and central banks.

"We expect that the visit will expand ties between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and create new avenues of cooperation," State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam told journalists at a press conference at the foreign ministry yesterday.

A Sri Lankan Airlines flight carrying President Sirisena and his 73-member entourage comprising ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers and business community members will land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 11:30am.

President Abdul Hamid will receive his Lankan counterpart at the airport. A 21-gun salute will be fired in the air to welcome the Sri Lankan dignitaries.

During his visit, Sirisena will hold talks with the prime minister and the president. The foreign minister, health minister, the Speaker and the Opposition leader will also call on the Sri Lankan president.

This is Sirisena's first official visit to Bangladesh since he was elected president in January 2015. He, however, visited Bangladesh in 2013 and 2014 as the minister of health of Sri Lanka.

Diplomatic sources in Colombo told The Daily Star that the Sri Lankan

president would hold extensive bilateral discussions regarding ways to strengthen cooperation in the fields of maritime, education, tourism, fisheries and health as well as ways to promote investment between the two countries.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold official talks with President Sirisena at the Prime Minister's Office tomorrow morning, which will be followed by signing of agreements and MoUs.

President Hamid will host a state banquet in honour of the Sri Lankan president at the Bangabhaban tomorrow evening.

As per the programme schedule, the Lankan president will be taken to Pan Pacific Sonargang Hotel where he will be staying. In the afternoon, he will visit the National Martyrs' Monument in Savar to pay respect to the martyrs of War against the Liberation War.

From Savar, he will visit the Bangladesh Memorial Museum at Dhammond Road 32 to pay homage to the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

President Sirisena will address an economic dialogue Saturday morning to be attended by Bangladesh and Sri Lankan business and industry representatives.

He is scheduled to leave Dhaka on Saturday at 1:00pm by a Sri Lankan Airlines flight. Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali will see him off at the airport.

## US-Qatar terror

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and allying with the Gulf Arab states' arch-foes, the Doha states those accusations. The four states and Qatar are all US allies.

Tillerson met the ministers in Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah in pursuit of an end to the worst dispute among Gulf Arab states since the 1990s. The United Arab Emirates' Council regional body in 1981. Kuwait, which is mediating in the dispute and not boycotting Qatar, also sent an envoy.

Tillerson also met separately with King Salman in talks focused on combating terrorism and its financing. The Saudi state news agency SPA said.

In a joint statement issued after Tillerson and his Qatari counterpart signed a memorandum of understanding setting out provisions to combat terrorism, financing the four countries issued a statement calling the accord inadequate.

They also reinstated 13 wide-ranging demands they had earlier submitted to Qatar, the world's biggest producer of liquefied natural gas, in a condition for removing sanctions but later said they would.

The demands include closing Qatar's relations with Iran, curbing the Al Jazeera TV channel, shutting a Turkish military base in Qatar and handing over all designated "terrorists" on its territory.

Speaking to reporters in Bratislava, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan said Tillerson's visit was not likely to resolve the dispute.

"I think it will take tensions but it's just postponing the problem, which will grow in the future," he said.

The crisis goes beyond the financing of terrorism, said Jean-Marc Rickard, a risk analyst at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, pointing to Gulf fears about the role of Iran, internal instability and the regional influence of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as competition for regional leadership.

"Whatever the outcome is, one of the two sides will lose face and losing face in the Arab world is something important. The consequences for the future will be negative for at least one camp or the other."

France said its foreign minister would visit the Gulf, including Qatar and Saudi Arabia, on July 15-16 as part of its own efforts to overcome the rift.

In their statement on Tuesday, the four boycotting states said they appreciated Tillerson's efforts in fighting terrorism but said they were not enough and they will closely monitor the seriousness of Qatar in combating all terrorism.

## EC sends

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level-playing field for all political parties during the polls by amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO), holding dialogue with political parties, demarcation of parliamentary constituencies, updating the voter list, registration of new political parties, setting up polling centres and training of ECI officials.

ATM Shamsul Huda-led commission had initiated talks with the registered political parties ahead of the 2008 national polls, with all the parties responding positively.

However, the BNP boycotted the dialogue organised by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmmed-led commission ahead of the January 5, 2014 national election demanding parliamentary polls and non-partisan caretaker administration.

The next Jatiya Sangsad polls are due between late December next year and early January 2019.

forms of funding, supporting and fostering of terrorism," the statement said, warning the UAE state news agency WAM.

The United States worries the crisis could lead to a new wave of terrorism, terrorism operations and increase the regional influence of Iran, which has been supporting Qatar by allowing it to use air and sea links through its territory.

Qatar hosts Udaid Air Base, the largest US military facility in the Middle East, with which US-led coalition aircraft stage sorties against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Some Gulf Arab media took a critical stance towards Tillerson ahead of his visit to Jeddah. "What makes Wednesday's meeting in Jeddah difficult is that Tillerson has, since the beginning of the crisis, appeared to be taking the Qatari side," a commentary published in Saudi-owned Asharq al-Awsat and Arab News newspapers said yesterday.

## Chikungunya

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According to World Health Organisation (WHO), there is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms.

Meanwhile, Brac launched an awareness campaign to contain the disease as chikungunya continues to spread.

Based on recent experiences and available information, Brac has been disseminating information on the symptoms, preventive measures and treatment. It handed leaflets among its one lakh employees and their families, said a press release.

Brac employees are being distributed among students and their parents in 45,498 Brac schools across the country.

Social media sites are also being used to spread the message. The message reached thousands on Facebook and Twitter.

In addition to this, preventive measures are being strengthened in all Brac offices across the country. It also started collecting data on chikungunya infected patients.

According to epidemiologists, Brac has been witnessing a rapid rise in the number of dengue cases in recent years. For example, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) received reports of 3,162 dengue cases in 2015 and 6,020 last year.

From May 14 this year, at least 194 dengue cases were reported alongside chikungunya, DGHS said.

Female Aedes mosquitoes breed all year round but require stagnant pools of clean water. Early and frequent rains this year and stagnant water on dug-up roads are the primary factors behind the spread of dengue and chikungunya, health experts said.

"We suspect that many people have developed immunity to dengue... some of them are being infected with chikungunya," said Prof Saifullah of Bangladesh University of Health Sciences.

Though many people come to the hospital with chikungunya symptoms, not all are diagnosed with the disease, he said.

"This may be because they show up two or three days after they have fever. Usually, it takes five days for the chikungunya virus to develop in the body and only then can it be successfully diagnosed," Saifullah said.