

# 35 injured in Jhenidah AL feud

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

At least 35 local Awami League (AL) leaders and activists were injured yesterday in an internal feud over establishing supremacy at Shamospur village in Sadar upazila.

Locals said two factions of the party had been quarrelling over establishing supremacy in the area since the union parishad elections in 2014.

One of the groups is led by district AL member and Fursundi Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Abdul Malek and the other by Fursundi Union AL President and former UP chairman Shahid Shikder.

The supporters of the two factions locked in an altercation at a tea stall of Shamospur village about 8:00am over the last UP election. At one stage they engaged in a clash using local weapons like spears, billhooks, machetes and sticks, leaving around 35 injured.

Of the injured, 30 were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital while rest five were given first aid at different clinics in the town.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Emdadul Haque Sheikh. Additional police have been deployed in the area to avoid further clash.

When contacted, Malek and Shahid Shikder blamed each other for the clash.

Dr Apurba Kumar Saha of the hospital said the injured have been given treatment and they bore marks of injuries on their body. Of one, he has been referred to Faridpur Medical College Hospital as his condition was stated to be critical.



Mangrove forest created at the confluence of Bakkhali river and the Bay of Bengal in Cox's Bazar.

PHOTO: MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

# Five die in boat capsizes

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Five people died in separate boat capsizes in Mymensingh and Naogaon on Sunday.

Three people, including two siblings, drowned in a boat capsized in Boladair Khal at Islampur village in Gafargaon upazila, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

The dead are Sakib Al Hasan, 11, his sister Sadia Akhter, 14, and their aunt Asma Akhter, 22, of the village. Thapa Police Station Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Bahauddin Khan Bahauddin said Asma, Sakib and Sada were returning home on a small boat after visiting their relatives in Dubai village when the boat suddenly sank with six passengers, including the victims, at around 8:30pm.

Two people were killed in separate boat capsizes in Naogaon and Manda upazilas of the district, reports our correspondent. The deceased were Mahabubur Rahman, 27, son of Shukur Ali in Porsha upazila, and Swadhin Rahman, 13, son of Saiful Islam in Manda upazila.

Witnesses said Mahabubur was missing when a boat carrying him sank at Hattighochabel. Locals recovered his body, said Porsha Police Station Inspector Monzurul Karim. Away in Manda, Swadhin died when a dingy carrying him capsized in Kutarbel under the upazila.

# Little Sundarbans in Cox's Bazar

A forest haven with tourism potential

MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH, Enamul Haq and Andrew Eagle

In the back blocks of Cox's Bazar, just five kilometers by boat from Kutarghat in the town, is a little-known jungle wonderland waiting to be explored. The estuary of the Bakkhali river comprises 600 hectares of unspoiled tidal forest. The area affectionately known as the 'Little Sundarbans' has significant potential for Cox's Bazar as a new tourist attraction.

The Bakkhali, which is the second-largest river in the district, meanders from the Myanmar hills through Bandarban district and Rangpur upazila, to find the Bay of Bengal at Nazirtek. There, the attractive forest primarily of mangrove apple and grey mangrove trees, locally known as keora and bain trees respectively, is a habitat rich in biodiversity. In particular,

it is a haven for birds. "At present 200 bird species inhabit the forest," says the environment department's assistant director in Cox's Bazar, Sardar Shariful Islam. "That number includes 57 migratory species.

Many bird species that are threatened or endangered globally have been sighted there. The forest is also home to numerous types of fish, reptiles, crabs, turtles, shrimp and monkeys."

In addition to the wildlife, like its larger cousin, the Little Sundarbans exemplifies a beauty that is only enhanced as tides recede and in and out, reimagining and rejuvenating the forest. "The Little Sundarbans has added a new dimension to Cox's Bazar tourism," says the president of the local tour operators' association, Golam Kibria Khan. Other locals

believe it could be a favoured filming location for movies, too.

The forest and environment directorate is currently implementing plans to make the area more tourist-accessible. Observation towers and a natural entertainment centre have been constructed since the project's inauguration by environment and forest ministry Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed in August last year. It is hoped than rather than threaten the forest's integrity, carefully-managed tourism can promote its preservation.

"Modelled after practices in the Sundarbans, tourism can foster the forest's protection," says Shafiqur Rahman, coordinator of nature conservation management, the organisation implementing the project.

"Several animal species have become extinct in the Cox's

Bazar area over the last few years due to climate change and habitat destruction," observes the organisation's communications officer, Biswajit Sen. "The Little Sundarbans initiative has been undertaken with this in mind. Not only will the forest be protected but the planting of more trees which will take about three years to grow to a sizeable height, will add to its sustainability."

Indeed, according to Mohammad Alam, the president of the Nuniachara ecologically critical area cooperative society which is a project stakeholder, environmental protection action has already been undertaken. "The authorities, along with our organisation, fought against local land grabbers to save this forest," he says. "From that, I am listed as an accused person in three court

cases."

He says the observation towers have been funded with money drawn from the Climate Trust Fund. "From the towers, tourists can view birdlife and take in the forest's natural beauty," he says. "They can also help researchers and students to identify bird and wildlife species."

"It's a project that needs careful management," says Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, district president of the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, an environmental organisation. "If huge numbers of tourists go there, the area's biodiversity will be at risk. The movement of mechanised boats in particular needs to be limited." He suggests a reasonable entry fee for tourists might be worthwhile to cover the costs of maintaining the tourist facilities and protecting the forest.

# They are denied Eid joy

STAR COUNTRY DESK

The Eid-ul-Azha brought hardly any joy for a large number of people in flood-hit areas of Nilphamari and Kurigram districts.

"How can we celebrate Eid! We are passing our days half starving, we look shelter at an earthen killa (a high place made for sheltering flood victims) after floodwater was washed away our house," Akram Ali, 65, of Kishan Satnai village, an isolated char (land-mass emerging from a riverbed) of the Eid-ul-Azha this year.

The recent flood washed away my dwelling house and cropland. Now I and my seven-member family have taken shelter in North Char Sharodob village," said Matar Rahman, 50, of Char Sharodob village in Halokhanna union under Kurigram Sadar upazila.

"Before this Eid I received Tk 500 from people and some dry food from the government. I could not buy new dresses for my family members. Let alone sacrifice animal. We could not eat meat in this Eid as none has sacrificed cattle here," he said.

Another flood victim Anwarul Islam, 28, of Char Shitajeyhar village of Moglabhanga union under Kurigram Sadar upazila said they were ravaged by flood.

river to sell agricultural products or work as day labourers for earning," said local union parishad member Azizul Islam.

Our Kurigram Correspondent reports: Most of the flood affected people in the flood affected areas of the district could not celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha this year.

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# BNP office ransacked in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men allegedly vandalised the Kawkhali upazila BNP office on Friday night.

Kawkhali Upazila BNP President SM Ashraf Kabir said they arranged a discussion in their office at a rented house on the occasion of founding anniversary of the party.

Kabir said the BCL men entered their office as they came out of the office after the meeting. "They vandalised our office, including furniture and television," he said.

Denying the allegation, Upazila BCL President Mridul Ahmed Sumon said the BNP office was ransacked due to internal conflict of the opposition party men.

Kawkhali Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Maniruzzaman said they don't know who vandalised the office.

# Joy turns to pain

Three of a family electrocuted, six injured during boat journey in Chalanbeel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

It was a joyful moment for the family of college teacher Anwar Hossain as 11 members of the family went to Chalanbeel by boat on Sunday, but the joy turned to tears when three of them died and six others were injured by electrocution at Charkazpur Jholgari point in Chatohar upazila of the district.

The deceased were Anwar Hossain, 40, son of late Afzar Ali, also assistant professor at Tebunia Shamsul Huda Degree College. His 11-year-old son Sohan Hossain and his elder brother Afzal Hossain, 45, of Ranigam village in Sadar upazila.

Hossain along with his family members went to Chalanbeel on a rented boat. When the boat reached Jholgari point the victims were electrocuted, coming in contact with a long-hanging electric wire of the Rural Electrification Board (REB). Three of them died on the spot and six others were injured. "Principal of Tebunia College Enamul Haque Torgor said.

Locals and family members blamed the negligence of the REB authorities for the accident.

"The electric wire on the Chalanbeel hangs very low, which resulted in this tragedy," Torgor, also a family friend of the victims, said, and demanded proper investigation into the matter.

Officer-in-Charge of Chatohar Police Station Md Ashraf Hossain said the victims were travelling on the roof of the boat and did not see the electric wire when they were crossing the point.

This correspondent tried to contact the general manager of REB-1 over phone, but he did not receive the calls.

# 15 hurt in clash over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pataukhali

At least 15 people, including two women, were injured as two rival groups clashed over a disputed land at Shankarpur village in Pataukhali Sadar upazila on Sunday.

Of the injured, Lutfunnesa Begum, 70, Nizam Chowdhury, 60, Bacchu Chowdhury, 28, Yousof Chowdhury, 32, Zakir Hossain, 30, Miraj Khan, 35, and Shahmur Begum, 50, were admitted at Pataukhali General Hospital while one Liton Chowdhury, 35, was referred to Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The rest of the injured took treatment at different private clinics in the town. Police detained four villagers—Abdul Halim, Halim Gazi, Wafullah and Anif-in connection with the clash, said Officer-in-Charge of Pataukhali Police Station Mostafizur Rahman.

Quoting villagers, police said there has been a longstanding rivalry between one Shahjahan Chowdhari and Hossain Sardar of the village over the ownership of a disputed land.

As a sequel, a group of 40 to 45 led by Hossain attacked Shahjahan's house, triggering a clash that left at least 15 people injured.

Following a case filed by Shahjahan, police detained the four, the OC added.

# DU pro-VC Prof Akhtaruzzaman

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as 27th VC on temporary appointment.

Prof Akhtaruzzaman joined the university as lecturer in the Department of Islamic History and Culture in 1990 and became professor in 2004. He was the chairman of the department from 2008 to 2011.

He also became chairman of the Department of Arabic in 2015 and was elected dean of the Faculty of Arts for 2014-2016.

He was elected general secretary in 2004, 2005 and 2006 while vice president in 2009 and 2010 of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

Prof Akhtaruzzaman completed his BA and MA with 1st position in Islamic History and Culture from Dhaka University and post-graduate diploma in Persian language at the university. He did his PhD in history from Aligarh Muslim University. He was also a Fulbright Scholar in Boston College USA and British Council Visiting Scholar from the University of Birmingham, UK.

He was awarded the Jucedo

Ibrahim Gold Medal for extraordinary research in 2008.

The appointment of DU VC came in discussion following the formation of a three-member VC panel at a senate meeting, three days before the ending of Prof Siddique's tenure. Siddique's panel was on the top of the name formed on July 29 and he was supposed to be re-elected.

However, a writ petition was filed with the High Court challenging the legality of the special meeting. The HC on July 24 stayed the process of holding 29 to elect the VC panel and forwarded the matter to its full bench.

The university authorities appealed against the stay order with the Appellate Division.

The SC stayed the functioning of the VC panel and allowed Prof Siddique to continue his duties as the VC until the disposal of the HC rule issued over legality of the senate meeting that formed the VC panel.

The hearing on the SC rule is scheduled for October 3.



People under the banner of 'Sacheton Nagorik Somaj' form a human chain at Nirala Intersection in Tangail town yesterday, demanding capital punishment of Rupa's killers.

PHOTO: STAR

# Death for Rupa's killers demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Speakers at a rally yesterday condemned the barbaric death of Rupa Khatun, who was killed after gang-rape in a running bus on August 25.

The demanded capital punishment of all the five culprits so that no one suffers such brutal death in future. Several hundred people, including rights activists and representatives of different social organisations, under the banner of 'Sacheton Nagorik Somaj' joined the human chain programme at Nirala Intersection in Tangail town.

On August 25, police recovered an unidentified body from Tangail-Mymensingh road near Madhupur upazila of Tangail and after conducting autopsy buried it at Central Graveyard in Tangail.

Seeing the news and photo in different media, family members identified Rupa's body on August 28.

On August 29, law enforcers detained five staff of a passenger bus from Madhupur, who later admitted their involvement in the crime during interrogation.

After recording their confessional statements on August 29 and 30 under Section 164, Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail sent them to jail.

Following a court order, police exhumed Rupa's body on August 31 and handed it over to her family for burial at their Asanbari village home in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila.