

# 7 injured in AL factional clash

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari**

Seven people were injured as two factions of Awami League (AL) clashed in the district town yesterday.

The clash began when a group attacked a procession that was brought out in protest against the assault on a Sraniak League leader on Monday.

One faction is led by local lawmaker Kujendra Lal Tripura, also president of the district unit of AL, while the other faction is led by Khagrachhari Mayor Rafiqul Alam.

Supporters of Kujendra Lal Tripura, alleged that supporters of Rafiqul Alam attacked Sraniak League leader Belal Hossain at Ganjipara on Monday night. Belal is a supporter of lawmaker Kujendra Lal Tripura.

Supporters of Kujendra brought out a procession yesterday, protesting the incident. When they reached near Chitragang Hill Tracts Development Board's Khagrachhari office, the mayor's supporters suddenly attacked them.

At least seven people, including two policemen, were injured during the clash.

The attackers also vandalised a Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation bus and a truck.

Assistant Superintendent of Police in Khagrachhari Abdul Awal said police fired three rounds of blank shots to disperse the crowd and stop the clash.



A scene of the intra-party clash of Awami League activists on Court Road in Khagrachhari town yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Beggar-free Lalmonirhat scheme uncertain

**S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat**

The district administration is yet to take steps to implement the scheme for rehabilitating 3,949 listed beggars here.

A special programme for collecting funds from government and non-government employees, teachers and non-governmental organisations (NGO) was taken for the Beggar Free Lalmonirhat scheme.

Former Deputy Commissioner (DC) AFM Alamdin Hossain coordinated the plan.

Need assessment of 3,949 beggars was surveyed who were supposed to be rehabilitated in July this year. The plan was delayed following transfer of the DC.

Primary schoolteacher Afroza Siddique said she did not receive any money for the scheme. "I am very annoyed as beggars still come to our doors for alms," she added.

"I donated to the scheme but it has not been implemented yet due to reasons unknown," said Shaful Islam, a high school teacher in the town.

"We donated our one-day's salary for

implementing the beggar-free scheme after getting a letter from the district administration, but implementation of the scheme is uncertain," said Shamsuzzaman Khandaker, a staff of LGED.

"For the last few months, I have been hearing that a scheme will be taken up to rehabilitate beggars, but no steps have been taken yet," said Azgar Ali, 68, a beggar.

"I get government's old age allowance facility but it is too scanty to maintain a livelihood," said Abdur Razzak, 76, of Kalganj upazila. "I beg to earn my livelihood, and if I am given a chance to be rehabilitated I will say goodbye to begging forever," he added.

"I don't like begging. I want to do something to earn a living, but I have no alternative option," said Nur Islam, 75, a beggar in Sadar upazila.

New DC Shaful Arif said he would call a meeting in this regard soon to implement the scheme. "We will conduct need assessment of listed beggars again," he said.

# Uttara Gono Bhawan Contractor sent to Natore jail

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore**

A Natore court yesterday sent a contractor to jail in connection with a case filed for felling trees on the premises of Uttara Gono Bhawan.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Rabiul Islam gave the order when the contractor surrendered to the court.

A case was filed against contractor Sohel Faisal for felling trees illegally on the compound of historic palace Uttara Gono Bhawan in Natore.

Sohel in collusion with some Public Works Department (PWD) officials felled 25 big old trees on the palace premises during the last two months although a tender was floated for cutting the branches of dead trees only, according to an investigation.

Mamta Ali, assistant najir of the Natore DC office, filed the case with Natore Police Station on Friday night.

# 'End waterlogging in Bhabadhar' Committee submits memo to prime minister through Jessore deputy commissioner

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore**

Bhabadhar Movement Committee yesterday demanded immediate and permanent solution to the waterlogging problem in Jessor's Bhabadhar, which covers five upazilas of two districts in the country's south-eastern part.

Thousands of villagers in Bhabadhar area, including Abhoyagar, Monirampur and Keshabpur upazilas of Jessor and Khulna's Futlala and Dumuria, are suffering due to waterlogging.

Members of the committee handed over a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner in Jessor in this regard.

They also urged the government to inaugurate tidal river management programme before Maghi Purnima, ensuring food security to the affected people with subsidy and rehabilitation, removal of silts from the river Upper Bhadra and Buri Bhadra and freeing all the recognised canals from grabbers.

Iqbal Kabir Jahid, adviser of Bhabadhar Movement Committee and its coordinator Baikuntha Bihari Roy were present.

# Second-grader raped by tenth-grader

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole**

A second-grader was raped allegedly by a tenth-grader in Ghop Nosapara area of Jessor town on Monday.

The accused is Akash Ali, 16, a student of Jessor Mahmudur Rahman School, and also neighbour of the victim.

Family members said Akash raped the seven-year-old girl in the absence of her parents at the latter's house in the evening. The victim was admitted to Jessor hospital.

A case was filed in connection with the incident, said Abul Bashar, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Jessor Kotwali Police Station.

# Transport

**FROM PAGE 16**

The bus owners and workers are at a meeting on Monday night called the strike in protest against his arrest and imprisonment.

Terming roads of the district "a safe route for for smuggling," Maj Robul Islam, Rab-12 company commander, said they would continue their drive.

Kushia Transport Workers Association President Mahbab Alam claimed people working in transport sector were not involved in drugs smuggling.

Passengers strongly blamed the transport owners for the strike and their sufferings.

"They [transport operators] could resolve the problem through discussion," said Saikat Khanam, who wanted to travel to Jessor from Kushia to see her daughter undergoing treatment at a hospital there.

Japan Kanti Sharma was boarding a three-wheeler after falling to find a Rajshahi-bound bus. He was desperate to go out of Kushia anyhow to get a bus from another district.

"This is double burden for us. We have to suffer and also count extra bucks to reach our destinations," he told The Daily Star in an angry voice.

Zahir Raihan, deputy commissioner of Kushia, said they were trying to sit with the transport owners and workers to solve the crisis.

# Rainstorm takes toll on paddy

Farmers sell flattened Aman plants as fodder

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari**

The Aman paddy that was flattened due to heavy rain and strong wind in the district last week is being used as cattle fodder by farmers.

Farmer Johor Ali, 50, of Sardarpara village in Sadar upazila brought bundles of green Aman plants with immature paddy to sell as fodder at Kochukata bazar.

"My paddy plants on one bigha of land were ruined by heavy rain and strong wind on Friday and Saturday last, although I had somehow managed to save them from flood and pest attack during the last couple of months," he added.

The flattened paddy plants are now under stagnant rainwater and there is no hope for their recovery, he said, adding that it would be better to sell them as fodder before they rot.

Like Johor, Afzal Hossain, Sayed Ali, Rashid and others have brought green Aman plants in bundles to the bazar for selling as fodder for the same reason.

This is the third time that the Aman growers here have been victimised by natural calamity, including the recent flood and pest attack, said Sadar Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Mazedul Islam.

District Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer Anwarul Islam said around 2,500 hectares of Aman paddy fields, out of 1.13 lakh hectares, were flattened in the recent



Mazedul Islam. downpour and wind, although farmers said the affected area is many times larger than the agriculture officer's claim.

of Tk 164 crore.

He said his office supplied Aman saplings to 600 farmers free of cost. Other farmers brought saplings from nearby districts at high cost for re-transplanting, he said.

Farmer Shyam Charan Roy said, "Re-transplanted Aman plants grew rapidly as we took great care, making us optimistic about making up the loss caused by flood."

"But, just after that, the pest attack of early October again upset us, compelling us to bear additional cost for buying pesticides," he added.

The latest calamity flattened a vast tract of paddy plants from which sheaf had just come out or attained milk stage, leaving no scope of getting rice grains from them, said many farmers of Saidpur and Dimla upazilas.

"My two bighas of Aman paddy has been flattened, leaving me helpless as paddy cultivation is my only source of income," Atiqur Rahman of Angarpara village in Sadar upazila said.

"Most of the flattened paddy will survive as they have developed grains, so farmers will incur very little loss," said DEA Deputy Director KM Idris.

# Pro-Jamaat Nawabganj UZ chairman suspended

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur**

Local government suspended the chairman of Nawabganj Upazila Parishad for his alleged link with sabotage in the area in 2013.

The suspended chairman is Nure Alam Siddiqui, 57, former Ameer of Nawabganj upazila Jamaat. He was elected with Jamaat ticket in 2014.

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives suspended the chairman on October 29, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer Moshtur Rahman.

According to the case, Nure Alam was an accused for carrying out sabotage activities in the upazila in 2013.

Police later filed the charge sheet against him.

Contacted, Nure Alam said he would go to higher court on the issue.

# Teen runs

**FROM PAGE 16**

The two girls, the mother and the child managed to flee and rushed to UNO's home.

"Earlier, I went to the school and I wanted the students about the adverse effects of an underage marriage. I told them to come to me if anyone faces such a situation. The girl remembered my words and came to me for help," she said the UNO.

"I have taken the responsibility over education," said UNO Shamshad Begum.

Both Fajar and Racha went into hiding following the incident.

# Who cares? Rangamati villagers cry for a bridge for 20 years

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati**

For the last two decades, no steps have been taken to build a concrete bridge to replace a risky wooden one in Rangamati municipality, much to the suffering of residents of four villages in Sadar upazila.

The villages are Biharpur, Narikelvide, Oringpara and Notunpara.

The wooden bridge over a canal is about 250 feet long and four feet wide. The villagers voluntarily repair it three times every year as the wood often rots especially in the monsoon and becomes too weak to walk on, said Priyo Jibon Chakma, vice president of Biharpur Seba Sangha.

Visiting the spot on Monday, this correspondent found that at least 50 people were working to repair the bridge with wood and bamboo.

Despite repeated pleas, the municipality authorities are yet to take any steps to repair the bridge, Jibon said, adding that finding no other way, they repair the risky bridge to make it somehow usable.

Hundreds of people, especially school and college going students, are the worst sufferers due to the situation, he said.

Bipin Chakma, headmaster of Biharpur Government Primary School, said students cross the vulnerable bridge at risk of accident.

Fifth grade Prasenjit Chakma said they go to school on the risky bridge every day. They want a new concrete bridge there to mitigate the longstanding suffering.

Muhammad Bilal Hossain Titu, councillor of Ward No 9 in the municipality, said they have written to the higher authorities for fund for a new bridge but no response has come yet.



Villagers cross the vulnerable wooden bridge over a canal in Rangamati municipality at risk of accident.

PHOTO: STAR