



Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority conducts a drive to demolish illegal structures at Mirkadim on the Dhaleshwari yesterday as part of their plan to remove around 200 structures to free the riverbank between Mirkadim and Munshiganj launch terminals. PHOTO: FARHANA MIRZA

Tension at Barapukuria Power Plant as locals, jobseekers face off

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A tense situation is prevailing around the Barapukuria 525MW Coal-Fired Power Plant in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur as agitating jobseekers assaulted three persons including brother of the local lawmaker during a demonstration yesterday.

Train movement on Dinajpur-Parbatipur route remained suspended for two hours from 4:00pm as locals demonstrated in the area in protest at the assault.

Moinuddin Khaza, 44, son of late Mabrak Hossain Shah, of Paschim Gouripara under Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur, also younger brother of Dinajpur-5 (Phulbari and Parbatipur) lawmaker Mostafizar Rahman, and his companions Md Sumon, 32, and Munna, 35, faced the wrath of the agitating jobseekers around 1:30pm.

According to police, around 154 jobseekers, who earlier worked at the third unit of the plant, gathered in front of the power plant and blocked the entrance to press home their demand for jobs there around 10:30am.

As Moinuddin Khaza along with Sumon and Munna went to the spot and asked the jobseekers what they were doing, an altercation followed and the

angry workers beat them up.

Police rescued them and took them to Phulbari Upazila Health Complex.

Protesting the assault, a large number of locals carrying sharp weapons gathered in front of the plant area.

"A large number of policemen have been deployed in the area and the situation is under control," said Mokhlesur Rahman, officer in charge of Parbatipur Police Station.

Agitating jobseekers alleged that local Awami League men control recruitment at the power plant.

"During the development work of the third unit [a 275MW power plant], the authorities promised to the temporary workers that they would be employed as 'operational employees' after completion of the development work. But they were deprived during recruitment of manpower after the end of development work in 2017," said Habibur Rahman, president of Barapukuria Shramik Adhikar Andolon, a committee that organised the movement.

Abdul Hakim, chief engineer of Barapukuria Power Plant, said they have a plan to provide jobs to the people who earlier worked for the third unit.

614 operatives of outlawed parties to surrender today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A total of 614 operatives belonging to different outlawed parties will surrender in Pabna stadium today.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal will conduct the programme, confirmed Advocate Samsul Haque Tuku, lawmaker of Pabna-2 constituency.

The government wants to ensure normal life for all its citizens so they can take part in the ongoing development works of the country, said Tuku, also the president of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Home Affairs.

"Forest robbers in the Sundarbans and drug peddlers in Cox's Bazar have already responded to the government's initiative and surrendered. Now members of outlawed parties are going to follow them," he added.

Most of the operatives, to surrender today, belong to factions of outlawed parties

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Lal Pataka), New Purbo Banglar Communist Party, Nakshal, Purbo Banglar Sarbahara, and north Bengal-based Kadamati.

The parties were active mostly in Pabna, Natore, Sirajganj, Bogura, Naogaon, Joypurhat, Rangpur, Kushtia, Jashore, Jhenidah, Rajbari, Satkhira, Narail, and Tangail districts.

Speaking with The Daily Star, Bablu Baperi, a key organiser of PBCP (Lal Pataka) and accused in dozens of criminal cases, said, "I never imagined there will come a day when I'll be given the opportunity to return to normal life."

Bablu is among Lal Pataka faction's 90 operatives who are expected to surrender today.

Another organiser of the faction Iqbal Hossain, from Harinarayanpur village in Pabna Sadar upazila, said he had been a fugitive for 17 years and living a miserable life hiding in jungles and remote islands in different rivers.

He is eager to end the misery and integrate with the society to live a normal life, he added.

22 girls fall sick, taking deworming tablets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Twenty-two girl students of Naotana BM High School in Nazirpur upazila fell sick yesterday after having deworming tablets.

They were admitted to Nazirpur Upazila Health Complex.

"We gave the tablets, supplied by a representative of health department, to both male and female students. After taking it, several female students fell sick, one after another," said Headmaster Md Ashraf Ali.

Lalmonirhat school organises 1st int'l Scrabble competition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The "1st International Scrabble Championship" for schoolchildren was held in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila on Sunday.

Kaliganj Karim Uddin Public School organised the daylong word game competition in its playground.

Among the participants, 10 were students from nine schools in Nepal, while 66 were students from 32 schools in Bangladesh.

The board game is popular around the world as it is a great tool for building vocabulary.

Keshab Prasad Parajuli, a teacher at Singh Secondary School in Nepal, said the game gained popularity in at least 32 districts in Nepal

and its popularity is growing in the rest of the country.

He also said he believe that its popularity in Bangladesh will grow soon.

Nisha Bhattaraj, a student at Nepal's KEF Secondary School, said she has been playing Scrabble since 2016 and her English vocabulary is getting richer through playing it.

"Mobile application Scrabble Word Checker (with Collins Scrabble Words 2015) should be consulted to confirm spellings during the game," she added.

Rasel Islam, a student participant from Bangladesh, said, he has been playing this interesting game since January this year. "I will continue to play this game as it really helps me

learn the English language."

Khurshiduzzaman Ahmed, the headteacher of Kaliganj Karim Uddin Public School and also the coordinator of the competition, said, encouraged by its success in Nepal, he would take steps to popularise Scrabble among students in all schools in the country and students in his school have so far been keen on learning the game.

Scrabble helps not only build vocabulary, but also develop strategic, intellectual and social bonding skills. Moreover, the highly competitive fun game can be beneficial to a person's emotional wellbeing through developing confidence, Khurshiduzzaman added.

Nine held with 1,200 yaba pills

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Detective Branch (DB) of police in separate drives arrested nine people with 1,200 yaba pills from different areas in Habiganj early yesterday.

Of them, six were arrested from Sayestaganj upazila and two from Bahubal upazila while the rest was held in Habiganj town, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Manikul Islam of Habiganj DB police.

The arrestees are Shaheen Mia, 40, Sumon Mia, 30, Chan Mia, 25, Bokul Mia, 30, Jilu Hosain, 22, Nargis Akther, 30, Monir Mia, 30, Abdus Salam, 24, and Manna Mia, 20, of the district.

A case was filed in this connection, said the OC.

Lightning strikes kill 4 in 4 districts

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Four people, including two farmers, were killed in separate incidents of lightning in Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj and Sunamganj yesterday, report our correspondents.

In Jamalpur, a farmer died after he was struck by lightning at Taburchar village in Islampur upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased, Md Shahjahan, 35, was son of Habol Miah of the village.

Shahjahan was returning home from a nearby field amid rain around 10:30am when a thunderbolt struck him, killing him instantly on the spot, Officer in Charge (OC) of Islampur Police Station Ansar Ali quoted villagers as saying.

In Mymensingh, a rickshaw puller was killed in lightning strike at Khandakpara village in Haluaghat upazila yesterday morning.

The victim, Anarul Islam, 28, also father of two, was son of Fazar Ali of the village.

Quoting the deceased's family members, Sub Inspector of Haluaghat Police Station Jatish Chandra Deb said Anarul was hit by lightning when he came out of his house to respond to the

call of natural yesterday morning.

Injured Anarul was immediately rushed to Haluaghat Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Meanwhile, a man was killed by lightning strike in Joyenshahi area under Nikli upazila of Kishoreganj yesterday morning.

The victim, Billal Mia, 35, son of Abdus Sobhan of Purbogam village, was an electrician by profession.

Quoting locals, OC of Nikli Police Station Nasir Uddin said Billal went to adjacent Joyenshahi haor area in the morning when and a thunderbolt struck him while he was fishing there, leaving him dead on the spot.

Away in Sunamganj, an elderly farmer was killed in lightning strike in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased, Abdul Awal, 70, was a resident of Kolaia village in the upazila.

A thunderbolt struck Awal when he was working in his cropland in the afternoon, OC of Sadar Police Station Mohammad Shahidullah said, adding that injured Awal was taken to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.



School students (inset) playing Scrabble at the "1st International Scrabble Championship" in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila. Kaliganj Karim Uddin Public School organised the word game competition in its playground on Sunday.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY



Workers and Employees of Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company Ltd demonstrate in front of the main gate yesterday protesting what they said the authorities' unjustified decision to suspend production from April 15. The agitators warned of a continuous sit-in programme from April 11 if the decision to suspend production is not withdrawn while the company's managing director said the decision was taken for conducting necessary repair work.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

Grabbers eye Hindu's land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Land grabbers continued giving death threat to a Hindu family to occupy their land in Pirganj municipality area of the district.

The influential group, led by one Khayrat Ali of the area, also filed three false cases with Pirganj Police Station against owner of the land Sumon Roy and his family members.

Sumon made the allegation at a press conference at Thakurgaon Press Club yesterday.

Sumon said he bought 1.25 decimals of land adjacent to his house from one Moshir Rahman at a cost of Tk 7 lakh last year.

"Khayrat Ali and his goons continued threatening us to leave the land since it was purchased," he said.

On February 17 this year, a gang allegedly led by Khayrat Ali torched Sumon's house.

"Khayrat Ali and his accomplices also threatened to kill me and demanded Tk 5 lakh as extortion money," said Sumon.

He later filed complaints with different offices, including upazila nirbahi officer and superintendent of police, in this regard but to no effect yet.

Khayrat Ali could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

SCHOOLGIRL'S DEATH IN CEILING COLLAPSE 2 bodies start probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two separate bodies, formed to investigate the death of a Class III student of PK Government Primary School in Barguna's Taltali upazila after chunks of ceiling plaster fell on her on Saturday, started their investigations yesterday.

Earlier on Sunday, Barguna district administration and primary and mass education ministry formed two separate committees to investigate the incident.

Barguna Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kabir Mahmud formed a five-member probe body headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General, ICT and Education) Mahbub Alam on Sunday.

Meanwhile, primary and mass education ministry formed another two-member committee, comprising of Directorate of Primary Education Director Saber Hossain and Deputy Secretary Mahbubur Rashid, and asked it to submit the report within three working days.

As part of their investigation, both the committees visited the spot yesterday and talked to the victim's family members, students, teachers, school managing committee members, locals and officials concerned, District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) in Barguna Mizanur Rahman said.

"I hope we will be able to submit the probe report within the stipulated time," the DPEO said, adding that steps will be taken if anyone is found guilty in negligence of duty.

Nine-year-old Mansura, youngest among three daughters of Najir Hossain, was killed and at least 10 of her classmates were injured when chunks of plaster from the ceiling fell on them on Saturday.

Zakir Hossain, a member of the school managing committee, said the school was established in 1969.

In 2002, LGED built a one-storey building there and Setu Enterprise, a construction firm, was the contractor of the construction, he said,

But several cracks developed within a year of its construction, he said, adding that they informed the higher authorities about the matter before.