

NEWS SNAPS

Woman killed after rape

UNB, Panchagarh
A woman was killed after rape at village Sariajot in Tetulia upazila here on Sunday.

Police said unidentified assailants stormed into the house of Fancy, 26, and strangled her after rape. She was living along with her four-year-old son after her divorce. Police recovered the body and sent it to the morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

Worker electrocuted

UNB, Chandpur
A worker was electrocuted at a hotel in Faridganj Sadar upazila here on Monday.

Wall painter Kamal Hossain, 25, came in contact with a live wire while he was working in the hotel.

Doctors declared him dead when he was taken to local hospital. An unnatural death (UD) case was filed.

Current nets seized

UNB, Chandpur
Police seized 36 current nets worth about Tk 3.60 lakh from Bashgari, Rajrajeshsar, Goalnagar and other adjoining areas in Sadar upzila on Sunday.

A mobile court led by a first class magistrate conducted the drive in the Meghna River to prevent catching fish fry.

Canal revives hopes of thousands in Satkhira

A part of Pranshaher Khal at Satkhira that has been re-excavated.

MORSHED ALI KHAN & ABU AHMED, Satkhira

The lifeline of Satkhira town Pranshaher Khal has been re-excavated to revive hopes of thou-

sands of people for a better environment and living.

The canal, flowing through the town had died years ago, leaving the people of Satkhira water logged during flood season.

During dry season the 8.64-kilometer long canal always became a pit that spread stink and bred mosquitoes.

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) took up the Asian Development Bank-aided Tk 1.54-crore project about two years ago and has now completed it. Engineers said they had to re-excavate the entire length of the canal to connect it with the Betna River in the north and the Morichap in the south.

"We had to re-excavate up to 10 feet at places to remove sediment and rubbish," said an engineer of BWDB.

Once completed the canal will have the tides from the rivers at both ends and keep the channel water clean and healthy. The revival of Pranshaher Khal will bring back life to new navigational routes. It will also create jobs for thousands in the area in both agricultural and water transport sectors, local people and officials said.

BWDB sources said that re-excavation project of the canal was taken up when Satkhira went under floodwater few years ago. Although almost every district town in the country has a similar canal running through it, most have either been filled up by encroachers or died down.

"This is for the first time in the country that a canal inside a town has been revived," said a BWDB engineer. Officials, however, said that they are still worried about indiscriminate dumping of solid wastes into the canal in the town's Borobazaar area.

"In our meetings we have raised the question many times, but neither the local government nor the administration is doing anything to stop dumping of rubbish," said an official source of BWDB.

Officials also said that there are two serious encroachments they could not remove despite several letters sent to the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Satkhira. Muktijoddhya Sangshad has built a toilet in the canal, which they refused to shift elsewhere. There is also another encroachment they need to remove immediately.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Satkhira, AYM Akramul Haque told The Daily Star that he had requested the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) to take up a walkway project along the canal. LGED would have to seek fund for the proposed scheme, the DC said.

"We have also requested the representatives of the municipality to take immediate steps to stop people from dumping wastes into the canal," said Haque.

The DC also said that LGED has redesigned all bridges over the canal to allow navigation of smaller boats in the canal.

Chairman takes oath after being elected from jail in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

Khalilur Rahman who was elected chairman from jail hajat took oath on Sunday after being released on parole.

Khalilur Rahman was arrested by the army-led joint forces along with a country-made revolver on January 8 and sent to jail hajat.

He was elected chairman of Gazirkhamar union in Sadar upazila in the UP election held on February 18.

Ruling party whip in the parliament Zahed Ali Chowdhury was present as the chief guest in the swearing-in ceremony of nine newly-elected chairmen out of 12, administered by Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Kazi Anwarullah.

Anti-war rally in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

A rally was brought out in the town on Sunday in protest against Anglo-US war threat on Iraq.

People of all walks of life, irrespective of caste and creed, participated the rally organised by social organisation 'Amra Juddhha Birodhi' (We are Against War).

The rally paraded different parts of the town chanting slogans for peace and carrying placards, banners and festoons.

Effigies of US President George W Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair were burnt.

Two unnatural deaths in Thakurgaon

UNB, Thakurgaon

Two people were killed in separate incidents in Sadar upazila on Tuesday.

Police said Ahd Ali, 70, of Debipur Dalalpara village, died on the spot when a motorcycle knocked him down at Burirbandh on Munshirhat-Atwari road.

In another incident, a 60-year-old day labourer, Dinesh Chandra, allegedly hanged himself at South village Botina in Sadar upazila.

He is believed to have killed himself due to abject poverty.

Woman killed by neighbours in Barisal

UNB, Barisal

A woman was killed and another man injured at village Durgapasha in Hizla upazila in an attack by neighbours over a trifle matter here on Monday.

Union Parishad member Rashid Kazi and his supporters swooped on the house of Rashida Begum, 40, on Saturday as her son Sukkur, 14, injured a hen after throwing a stone. They beat Rashida Begum and one of her relatives Ahmed Ali.

Rashida died at her house on Monday while Ahmed is undergoing treatment at Hizla hospital. Police registered it as an unnatural death (UD) case instead of murder case.

15 injured in attack by rivals in Naogaon

UNB, Naogaon

At least 15 people, including women, were injured in an attack by the rival group at village Tepukuria in Potnitola upazila here on Sunday.

Police said hired goons, allegedly led by Quashem, Motiar and Osman, swooped on their rivals at 11.30am centering a dispute over capturing two ponds in the area, leaving 15 people injured.

Of the injured, Joba, Kalimuddin, Jewel Rana, Rashida, Abdus Sattar, Yasin Ali, Jharna, Ibrahim Hossain and Mozaffar were admitted to local health complex.

The attackers ransacked a number of dwelling houses, beat up the inmates and assaulted the women.

Election observers say

UP polls held peacefully in all but two unions in Nilphamari

ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Despite massive rigging in Gomnati union and manipulation in Magura union, the Union Parishad (UP) elections were held in a peaceful atmosphere in other unions.

Advocate Nurul Islam of election observer groups, Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) and Golam Rabbani of Democracy Watch informed this to The Daily Star last week.

District administration played a neutral role in other unions. Election observers termed this year's Union Parishad (UP) election as most peaceful after independence of the country.

Seventy per cent (pc) male and 80 per cent female voters exercised their franchise this time, election observers added.

However, the district coordinator of FEMA, Nurul Ashan told this correspondent that the electoral code of conduct was violated in Magura by influencing the voters.

He saw himself how Amjad, a member of parliament (MP) of the ruling party violated election code of conduct by campaigning in favour of chairman candidate Masud Rana.

District coordinator of Democracy Watch Golam Rabbani told this correspondent that they received the most sensational report of election rigging from Gomnati union of Domar Police Station. Defeated candidate of the union Yunus Sarker alleged that Lenin Chowdhury, a relative of a powerful central leader of BNP influenced the local administration resulting in Shajahan Chowdhury's victory.

Yunus also alleged that his polling agents were driven out from polling booths of numbers 7, 8 and 9 at around 10 in the morning of election day. Election was rigged by appointing new presiding officers who were loyal to Shajahan Chowdhury, he further alleged.

Hundreds of people of Ambari and Gomnati areas including local trader Mozammel Haque, Jubo Dal leader Ilias, shop owner Khairul Islam and peasant Abdur Rahman narrated the same story to this correspondent in frustration and anger.

However, Abdul Bari Khan, deputy commissioner (DC) and Chief District Election Coordinator told The Daily Star that he did not receive any complaint from anybody regarding violation of election code of conduct against any candidate.

He revealed to The Daily Star that 85 per cent female voters cast their votes, while 80 per cent male voters cast their votes in 53 unions.

Police super (SP) of Nilphamari Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun told this correspondent that out of 523 polling centres, 62 were marked "most risky" and 34 centres "risky" by the district administration. On the polling day in a "risky" centre, one officer, three constables, seven male Ansars and three female Ansars were deployed. A mobile team of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) patrolled the area all the time. He himself monitored the law and order situation in every centre round the clock, he informed this correspondent.

District president of Awami League (AL) Jan Ali said to this correspondent that recent observation and remarks of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) reflected the real situation in UP polls. This correspondent asked him to comment on the support of four-party alliance to AL chairman candidate Shyam in Lakshmi Chapa union as an instance of political tolerance. Ali replied that only time would say whether there was any motive or not behind this support.

Joint Convenor of District BNP Alamgri Sarker termed the UP election as free and fair. He said to this correspondent that BNP always respected people's verdict. He told The Daily Star that by rendering support to AL leader Shyam, the ruling party expressed its desire to hold the UP polls in a free and fair atmosphere.



PHOTO: STAR

A personnel of Ansar offers water to female voters waiting under the scorching sun to vote in the Union Parishad polls at Tarotia Government Primary School centre of Korotia Union Parishad in Tangail district on Monday.