

NEWS SNAPS

Rehabilitation projects going on

UNB, Rangpur

Three 'Abashon' (Rehabilitation) projects are being implemented in two upazilas of Rangpur utilising 76 metric tons (MTs) of wheat in the current fiscal year.

Official sources said 20 mMTs of wheat have been allocated for Uzail Abashon project in Taraganj upazila, 26 MTs for Binodpur Abashon and 30 MTs for Baldipukur Abashon in Mithapukur upazila. A total of 260 landless families will be rehabilitated.

Agri-fair ends

UNB, Gazipur

A three-day agriculture fair concluded in Sadar upazila, Gazipur on Saturday.

Director general (DG) of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Emdadul Haq Khondoker inaugurated the fair, organised by the department where 30 stalls were set up.

Eye camp in

Rangamati

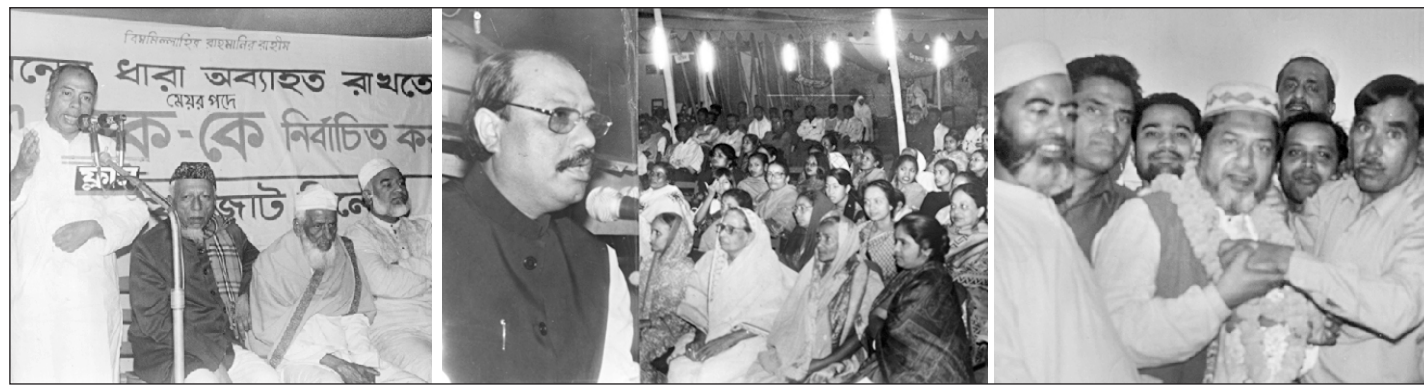
UNB, Rangamati

A five-day eye-camp will begin here on Sunday.

Chairman of Zila Parishad Dr Manik Lal Dewan will inaugurate the camp at the general hospital.

Bangladesh Blind Welfare Association of Chittagong, Rangamati Zila Parishad and district administration will jointly organise the camp.

Electioneering peaks in Sylhet



(Far left) Sylhet district BNP president and four-party alliance nominee MA Haque speaks at a projection meeting, while (middle) Awami League candidate Badruddin Ahmed Kamran addresses a gathering of women and (far right) AFM Kamal, a BNP rebel candidate at a recent mass contact campaign at a commercial area in Sylhet. Only two days are left for the city corporation elections.

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Electioneering has gained momentum in Sylhet.

There are only two days for the city corporation polls here.

City dwellers expect a triangular fight where Awami League (AL) backed Badruddin Ahmed Kamran, four-party alliance backed MA Haque and Sammilita Nagorik Committee nominee AFM Kamal, also a BNP rebel will contest very hard.

The number of mayoral candidates stand at 14, while 257 vie for 27 posts of ward commissioners and 69 contest for nine reserved seats of women.

About one lakh 81 thousand voters are likely to exercise their franchise in this year's city corporation polls.

Ministers, members of parliament (MPs) and central leaders of both the ruling alliance and the opposition Awami League have engaged themselves in day and

night campaign.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman MP, is out to make victorious his man to 'ensure uninterrupted development' in Sylhet.

Rajshahi city mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP, and ex-mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mohammad Hanif joined the campaign to seek vote for their candidates. State Minister for Relief Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, whip Fazlul Haque Aspia, five ruling party MPs too involved themselves in the electioneering.

Earlier, a leader of the ruling alliance Sahikhul Hadis visited Sylhet.

Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid recently visited Sylhet to address a workers' meeting here. State ministers Barkat Ullah Bhulu and Ehsanul Haque Milton, journalists Gias Kamal Chowdhury, poet Al-Mahmud, writer Sadeque Khan, Dr Aftab Ahmed, managing director

(MD) of Film Development Corporation (FDC) Wasimul Bari Rajib were seen at a mass contact programme here recently.

Central AL leaders like former ministers Abdus Samad Azad MP, SAMS Kibria MP, Abdur Razzaque MP, and Suranjit Sengupta MP, deputy leader of opposition advocate Abdul Hamid MP, Chittagong City Corporation mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury MP, and a former turned politician Asaduzzaman Noor MP, are already in the election arena to seek vote for their candidate. A parliamentary team led by chief whip of opposition Abdus Sahhid joined them recently.

Jatiyo Party chief HM Ershad recently visited Sylhet for second time to back his candidate Kazi Kamal.

Sitting mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, who was elected chairman of Sylhet municipality in 1995. Following its upgrading into a city corporation he became a mayor in 2002. He seems to be in a

better position.

Ruling alliance is in trouble with their rebels. AFM Kamal, twice-elected chairman of Sylhet Pourashava was expelled from BNP on March 4 on charge of indiscipline. He was also relieved of the post of director of Agrani Bank by the government. He refused to withdraw his candidature after repeated attempts by Saifur Rahman, Kamal said. Zia Parishad chairman Kamal has a vote bank here. A section of BNP men also support him. Another BNP rebel candidate Advocate Shamsuzzaman is in the race. He was ex-organising secretary of BNP. He was expelled from his party one year ago. He alleged that the ruling party men and local administration took repressive measures against his followers. Zaman's chief election co-ordinator was arrested on Saturday midnight. He was ex-general secretary of Sylhet city Jatiyotabadi Chhatra Dal and expelled from the party in January.

Three-day national exhibition opens in Bogra All-out assistance to entrepreneurs to attain self-reliance in fisheries, livestock sector: Tariqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP government will provide all-out assistance and necessary logistic support to entrepreneurs for flourishing the fisheries and livestock sector.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam announced this in Bogra on Sunday while inaugurating the three-day National Livestock Exhibition '2003' there.

"Our goal is to achieve self-reliance in livestock and fisheries sector and we shall do everything possible for the growing sector," he told the audience.

The exhibition, aiming at creating mass awareness about importance of this sector in national economy, is being held at Bogra Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

In his address the minister further told the audience that previous BNP government led by

Khaleda Zia took various measures to develop this sector to achieve self-reliance and meeting the nutritional demand of people. Because of the measures, import of egg and poultry birds from India stopped," he added.

Presided over by Fisheries and Livestock Minister and Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Sadeque Hossain Khoka, it was addressed, among others, by State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, local members of parliament (MPs) Golam Mohammad Siraj, Qazi Rafiqul Islam, Abdul Momin Talukder Khoka, Fisheries and Livestock Secretary Mohammad Abdul Haq, Director of Livestock Department Sultan Mohiuddin, deputy commissioner (DC) of Bogra Rafiqul Mohamed and local BNP leaders Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, Manjurul Haq, TA Siddique, Mahfuz Siddiqi Lito.

Sadeque Hossain Khoka in his speech revealed that import of powder milk came down to Tk 100 crore from Tk 500 crore due to fast growth of livestock sector during 1991-96. But the import again stood at Tk 500 crore during five years rule of Awami League (AL) government as they ignored the sector and did not take any initiative for its development.

"We have again take steps to reduce import of powder milk and the government has decided to assist the entrepreneurs for increasing production and marketing of livestock products," he added.

After the inaugural session, the ministers went round different stalls and talked with the entrepreneurs. Some 180 livestock farms are displaying high-breed cow, buffalo, goat, lamb, horse and poultry birds in the exhibition.

25 hurt as BNP activists clash with police in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 25 people were injured in a clash between police and activists of a faction of BNP in DIT commercial area on Saturday afternoon.

Police opened fire and resorted to baton charge to disperse unruly activists of BNP faction.

Witnesses said, a faction of BNP (Zakir Khan group) organised a protest meeting in number two railway gate area at 3 pm on the day. The meeting was organised in protest against lodging Sabir murder case against former Jatiyotabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) president Zakir Khan and ruling party member of parliament (MP) Giasuddin.

Police took away the mikes from the meeting venue ahead of the meeting. Then the supporters of Zakir Khan group of the party tried to resist police. At one stage police charge baton to disperse them.

Police also allegedly attacked processionists who were coming to the meeting venue. They started throwing stones toward police. The clash turned violent when police fired shots to control the situation. BNP activists chased police and threw hand made bombs on them. Chase and counter-chase continued for 2 hours leaving at least 25 people injured. The injured were taken to different clinics secretly.

Police arrested 20 people from different areas after the incident.

Police along with the followers of advocate Tainur Alam Khondoker attacked a peaceful procession, and stampeded the procession by fire and baton charge.

None could be contacted to comment on the incident.

Tension gripped the entire port town where police forces were patrolling till filing of the report on Saturday evening

Three killed in Bogra road accident

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least three persons were killed and two others injured in a road accident at village Noimail in Majhira upazila on Sunday morning.

The deceased were Ismail Hossain, 55, son of Habib Akandha of village Bamunia in Majhira upazila, Jobber Master, 32, son of Jaber Uddin of Noimail area and van puller Ferdous, 30, son of Sokir Uddin of village Baroanjul in the same upazila. Critically injured Ziaul Haq, 40 and Motahar Ali, 45 were admitted to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital.

Witnesses said the victims were going to Aria Bazaar from village Noimail by a rickshaw-van when a truck dashed the van from behind.

A case was filed with Majhira police station. Police could not trace out the truck till Sunday afternoon.

Mymensingh road mishap kills 3

UNB, Mymensingh

Three people were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident at Modhupur in Tarakandi upazila on Mymensingh-Sherpur road on Saturday.

Police said two rickshaw passengers and a pedestrian died on the spot when a bus knocked them down before hitting a roadside tree at about 10am.

The bus, carrying students of Barhatta Baushi High School in Netrakona, was going to Gozni of Sherpur for picnic.

Eight of the injured including a rickshawpuller were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) in critical condition.

Tribal miscreants abduct 4 brick kiln workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A gang of tribal miscreants on Thursday night abducted four brick-kiln workers for ransom at Chandanaish in Chittagong.

Twenty-five armed miscreants abducted the workers from two brick-kilns at around 8pm to extort tolls, as they did not find the owners.

The abductors demanded Tk 20 lakh for release of the four, who were taken to an unknown place.

Two of them are Alamgir and Khorsheed of MBM brick-kiln, while others could not be identified immediately.

The brick-kiln owners do not want to file any case and are trying to solve the matter through negotiations, police said to this correspondent.

PBCP claims responsibility for March 11 bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) has claimed the responsibility of bomb attack on March 11 night on a four-member police patrol party at Shaikpara. Two constables died and two others injured in the attack.

A fax message signed by PBCP's divisional chief Ripon Ahmed addressing Dainik Purbanchal office, a local daily in Khulna said that attacks would continue in southwestern region 'as part of class struggle against the oppressors'.

'PBCP has been entrusted to hit police personnel who are responsible for exploiting the oppressed millions unleashing terrorism at state level,' the message stated.

The fax sender has admitted that PBCP cadres looted a short gun from Shaikpara patrol police after launching the bomb attack.

"We are checking and rechecking PBCP's claims," said a senior officer of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) to this correspondent.

The constables murder case lodged with Sonadanga thana on March 12 has been handed over to Detective Branch (DB). Police inspector Abdul Mannan is investigating case, said Milliy Biswas, DC (headquarters) to The Daily Star. According to her, two more had been arrested on Friday night who are being interrogated.

Arrested young men are Omar Faruque Kachi, 30, and Rafiqul Islam Milton, 32, of Sher-e-Bangla Road in Khulna thana.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Sonadanga thana said to this correspondent that the arrested had links with a group of miscreants and had been shown arrested on charge of constables murder.

The number of arrested stood at

seven. Five other arrested are Abul Hossain, 22, Askar Shaikh, 25, Rezaul Shamim, 25, Mohammad Badal, 22, and Aslam Sheikh, 28.

Chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) of Khulna is yet to grant prayer for their 10-day remand.

Missing short gun and 20 rounds of ammunition are yet to be recovered. According to eyewitnesses, three short guns had been looted, but KMP officials insisted that only one arms had been missing.

The patrol police in city have been provided with bullet-proof jackets. All the five police stations here have been put on red alert following three incidents of bomb attacks in last two months.

Three police personnel including traffic sergeant Ariful Islam died and six others were injured in the attacks.

According to a top official of an intelligence agency, all key installations in the city have been put on high alert suspecting acts of sabotage.

Work on nurses' training centre goes on

UNB, Pirojpur

A training centre for nurses is being constructed in Pirojpur at a cost of Tk 3.43 crore.

Health Ministry is implementing the project with the financial assistance of World Bank. The project works include construction of a hostel, academic building, classrooms and boundary wall. Work on the project is expected to be completed by June.