

SNAPS

Seminar on Library Year

BSS, Barisal

A seminar on 'Library Year 2003' was held here on the Aswini Kumar Town Hall premises on Tuesday.

Organised by the Bangladesh National Library Authority, the seminar was attended by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Mrs Selima Rahman as chief guest.

It was presided over by Director of the Library Department M Anisuddin Mia while principal Abdul Rashid Khan attended as special guest.

Lightning kills three in a day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Three persons were killed by lightning in Barisal and Barguna districts on Thursday.

According to police sources, lightning killed Saidul Islam, 20, and Sattar Kha, 25 on a fishing boat on river Meghna in Baushia area in Hizla upazila. Twelve-year-old Hafizur Rahman was killed by lightning while he was returning home from market at Bukabunia village under Bamna upazila in Barguna.

PBCB posters on RU walls

RU CORRESPONDENT

A few posters of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) on walls on Rajshahi University (RU) campus drew the attention of teachers, students and employees of the university on Wednesday.

JSD activist shot dead by outlaws

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An activist of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was shot dead allegedly by the cadres of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) at village Kaloa in Kumarkhali upazila of the district on Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Hasem Ali, 45, son of Siraj Ali of the same village.

Police told this correspondent that 10 cadres of the outlawed party led by its regional leader Belal Ahmed stormed into the house of Hasem on Wednesday morning. They shot at him point blank while he was taking preparation to go to Kushtia town. He died on the spot.

Police rushed to the spot and sent the body to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

However, no case was filed with police till 6:45 pm Wednesday.

Momtaj murder in Notore

Awami League protests in Mymensingh, Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Mymensingh district AL and its front organizations held a joint rally and brought out a huge procession in the town on Wednesday protesting the recent killing of Awami League leader and former MP Momtaj Uddin in Notore.

The procession paraded the main streets before it terminated in front of Mymensingh Press Club in the evening.

No onward incident took place during the rally and the procession.

The rally, held in front of the AL office, was addressed by, among others, district AL president principal Alhaj Motiur Rahman, secretary advocate Nazim Uddin Ahmed, Mahmud Al-noor and Aminul Islam.

The speakers said killing of Momtaj Uddin is part of a conspiracy to liquidate Awami League.

Awami League is a people's organisation and it can not be suppressed through killing and repres-

sion, they said.

They urged the people to unite and launch a movement against the government.

A RU Correspondent reported that Rajshahi University (RU) and Motihar thana units of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), and Jubo League and Sechhasebok League units at Ward No 30 in Rajshahi city jointly organised a protest meeting in Binodpur area on the campus on Wednesday demanding immediate arrest and trial of killers of Momtaj

Uddin Ahmed.

Speakers at the rally blamed a state minister for masterminding the killing.

Among others, BCL leaders Shahidul Islam Shahid, Shahidul Islam Bachchu, Shechhasebok League leaders Minhajul Islam spoke at the rally, presided over by City Awami League (AL) General Secretary Khairuzzaman Liton.

Verdict in Mirabazar double murder case likely this week

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Trial of the Mirabazar double murder case in Sylhet is nearing completion and the verdict is likely within a week, sources said.

Deposition of 48 of the 56 witnesses has been completed. However, the prime witness in the case --Shithil Ranjan Dey--did not appear before the Speedy Trial Court despite issuance of warrant against him three times in the last three months. This delayed the trial.

Shithil Ranjan Dey is the lone eyewitness, who identified the accused in the case, the sources said.

Anwara Begum, wife of business magnet Ajab Ali Sheth and housemaid Jubeda Begum were killed in his house at Mirabazar in the city on February 17, 2001.

The detective branch of police submitted the charge sheet in the court on June 15 last year, accusing 10 persons. They are Chamak, Salek, Hannan,

Matlib, Kala Miah, Faruque Uddin, Tojoi Miah, Fakhru Islam, Jainal Ahmed and Sattar Miah.

Five of the chargesheeted accused are in jail, four on bail and one Jainal Ahmeds yet to be arrested.

Shithil Ranjan Dey alias Shitol of village Salutikar under Gowainghat upazila and his family is "missing" from their house since March 4. The house is under lock and key since the morning of March 4.

Complainant Ajab Ali Sheth earlier alleged that Shitol was hiding under the protection of his cousin Faindra Ranjan Dey.

Dey denied this and said the killers might have forced Shitol to go into hiding.

The disappearance of Shithil Ranjan Dey was discussed at a meeting of the divisional committee for monitoring sensational criminal cases, held on June 10 with Divisional Commissioner Nazrul Islam in the chair.

One rescued on payment of Tk 1 lakh ransom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sushil Ranjan Talukder alias Jhantu master, a retired schoolteacher who was kidnapped by a gang of armed robbers from his village home at Bhabanipur in Tahirpur upazila in Sunamganj in the early hours of May 23.

He was rescued after 16 days on payment of Tk one lakh ransom.

Harun-ur-Rashid, chairman of

Dakhsin Sripur union under Tahirpur upazila mediated his release Saturday night at Panchagaon village bordering Netrakona.

Tahirpur thana police handed him over to his family members Monday afternoon.

Police of three bordering police stations in Sunamganj and Netrakona districts along with BDR personnel failed to rescue him.

Death from diarrhoea in Rangamati DC asks for report on alleged food crisis in 7 villages

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Rangamati district administration has asked the Sazek Union Parishad (UP) chairman and the local village headmen to submit a detailed report immediately on the death of 18 tribesmen from diarrhoea and malnutrition due to food crisis in seven villages under the union.

"We have sufficient foodgrains to fight such crisis but it is also important to find the truth. I have ordered the UP chairman and the headmen to submit a detailed report immediately", Deputy Commissioner Jafar Ahmed Khan told this correspondent on Wednesday.

The civil surgeon has also ordered Baghaichhori thana health officer (THO) to send a medical team to the villages. "I have sent a written order today", Civil Surgeon Samar Kumar Barua said.

The plight of the tribesmen in the seven villages under Sazek union

came to light when The Daily Star, quoting local UP chairman L Thanga, published a report on the deaths and the food crisis there.

Thanga had told this correspondent that 18 people died of diarrhoea and malnutrition in the villages in May due to acute food crisis as crops from jum cultivation were exhausted much earlier.

Of them, 10 died in Tuichui and Shialdailui villages, three in Vhuachhori and 1 each in Batling, Old Lonkor, New Lonkor and Rului villages, according to the UP chairman.

The food crisis forced the 26000 tribesmen in the villages to eat bamboo roots, wild potato and other uneatable things collected from forests for survival, causing diarrhoea, he had said.

He had talked to this correspondent when he came to the district headquarter to seek government assistance for the tribesmen.

Feud in Rangpur AL surfaces

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Internal feud among the two factions of Rangpur district Awami league has surfaced with separate demonstrations staged by the groups, accusing each other.

One group led by district AL president Shah Abdur Rezaque brought out a procession in the town on Tuesday and submitted memorandum to the deputy commissioner (DC) and the police superintendent (SP) demanding arrest of the rival group leader, Aabul kalam Azad, for his alleged involvement in an

attempted to kill party leader Rafiqul Islam Dulal. Dulal belongs to Razzaque's group.

In reply, the group led by Abul Kalam Azad also came on the streets and submitted memoranda to the DC and the SP for withdrawal of the false case against Azad.

On June 7, Dulal was attacked and injured by some unidentified persons. Dulal lodged a case with Kotwali police against Azad, accusing him of attempting to kill him.

Azad, a worker's leader, joined AL about three years back.

'Land rights day' observed

About 20,000 landless people rallied at Bishnupur Primary School ground under Sathia upazila in Pabna Tuesday to voice their demand for distributing all khas lands in the country among landless people, says a press release.

Burni Adhnikar Dibash Udjapan Parishad' first time organised the rally on the occasion of Land Rights Day, commemorating the landless people's victory over 'jotdars' (landlords) in the area some eighteen years ago.

On June 10, 1985, about twenty thousand people revolted against a few powerful jotdars, who forcibly occupied a large swath of khas land in Sathia depriving the landless. The landless people fought with the men of jotdars and drove out the jotdars from the area. Half a dozen landless peasants were killed and several hundred injured in the fight.

At the rally, the landless people demanded that the day be given state recognition and observed as a national day.

They said that the total area of khas land in the country is about thirty lakh acres and urged the government to take initiatives to allocate that land among the landless.

Besides Pabna, people came from other districts including

Rajbari, Faridpur, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj, Gopalganj and Natore.

The rally was presided over by Ranesh Maitra, convener of Celebration Committee, while Kamal Lohani, editor of Daily Prokhat, addressed the function as chief guest.

Among others, Abdul Quader, Executive Director, Samata, Saidur Rahman Ruku, Executive Director of Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC), Nizamuddin, former Sathia upazila chairman and Barkat Ali Bakul, president, Land Network, spoke on the occasion.

To mark the Land Rights Day, a seminar was organised at Badhan Community Centre in Pabna on the following day, June 11.

The seminar titled "Historical land movement of Ghughudaha and Land Rights Day" was address as chief guest by Selina Hossain, DG of Bangla Academy. Shamsul Huda, Member Secretary of Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh and Dr Abul Barkat of Dhaka University, among others, took part in the discussion. Md. Abdul Kader, Executive Director of Samata, presented papers. The seminar was also presided over by Ranesh Maitra.



A partial view of the landless people's rally at Bishnupur Primary School ground in Pabna.



PHOTO: STAR

A portion of the about one kilometre embankment at Shovagacha in Kazipara upazila in Sirajganj, eroded by the Jamuna within a year of its construction. Local people alleged that boulders taken there by Water Development Board to repair a spar was being taken to another place. This created resentment among the local people, they said.

Over 1 km Jamuna dam washed away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Over one kilometer area of the flood protection embankment at Shovagacha under Kazipur upazila has been washed away by Jamuna water, a year after construction.

Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB) constructed a spar in Shovagacha-Baoikhola area at a cost of Tk 15 crore last year but the mighty Jamuna washed away about half of it last year.

The rest of the spur is under threat as one kilometer area of the embankment has been washed away.

In the face of erosion, Tarakhandi High School, Bangla Bazar Girls High School, Khukhsia High School and Khukhsia Government Primary School, Shovagacha Primary School have been shifted.

At least 100 families have become homeless as their homesteads were devoured by the river. Many people have taken shelter on the embankment of Jamuna.

Meanwhile, WDB sources said they have started implementing 11 projects involving Tk 11 crore 97 lakh to protect the embankment at different places including that in Shovagacha.

Nor'wester kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least two persons were killed and 30 injured in a nor'wester that lashed 20 villages in Shyamnagar upazila on Tuesday.

The dead are Amirul Islam, 45 and Khuku Mani 13, of Gobindapur village.

The worst affected villages are Gobeindapur, Joyakkhali, Soyakkhali, Bosekhali, Moukhhali, Kalinchi, Tengrakhali, Golakhali, Manikkhali, Jelekhhali, Dhumghat, Harinager, Munshigony, Kultali and Datnekhali.

The nor'wester also damaged over 500 houses and some schools, madrasshas and mosques. Many trees were uprooted and cops on vast areas were damaged.