

Pilot projects to combat 'monga' in N dists

Brac, North West Focal Area Forum to create employment opportunities for jobless farm labourers during lean period

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Brac, a prominent NGO and North West Focal Area Forum, a development body of 12 organisations, have undertaken two pilot projects to combat 'monga', a near famine situation during pre-harvest period of September-November, in Nilphamari and Rangpur.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports: Brac has launched two 'monga' alleviation programmes, one to popularise advance varieties of paddy, BRRI-33 and BRRI-39, among the farmers and the other one a special interest-free loan programme to support the ultra-poor people.

The programme has created a great enthusiasm among the farmers in six upazilas. The farmers are also showing keen interest towards crops diversification.

While exchanging views with journalists at its auditorium, Brac regional manager (special programme to combat 'monga')

Akbar Hossain Mollah said that they had already supplied 5000 kg of seeds of the two varieties at subsidised rates among 1,094 farmers. He said, the two varieties of paddy can be harvested during peak 'monga' period of mid-October within 110 days of plantation. 'Our agriculturists provide logistic support to the farmers,' he said.

Brac agriculturist Din Mohammad said their efforts will not only remove food crisis but also provide employment opportunities to poor people.

Apart from this, Brac also initiated a Tk 32,75,000 interest-free loan programme. Loan will be distributed among the ultra-poor people during 'monga' period.

Brac already disbursed Tk 2 crore for creating job opportunities among women till middle of June. It was aimed at protecting women from being trafficked.

Our Rangpur Correspondent reports: North West Focal Area

Forum has initiated a pilot project to alleviate 'monga' in the target region.

On successful implementation of the project, job opportunities will be created among thousands of agricultural day labourers during lean period.

North West Focal Area Forum which includes Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Bangladesh

Rural Development Board (BRDB), RDRS, TMSS, USS and other government and non-governmental organisations, undertook the programme after long research on several crops.

The programme emphasised on crops diversification and usage of modern technology during 'aman' and 'rabi' seasons.

Under the project, farmers are trained on cultivation of early harvest BRRI-dhan 32, BRRI-dhan 33, BRRI-dhan 39 including mung, potato and maize.

Dr Md Abdul Majid, senior scientific officer of BRRI Rangpur Regional Office told The Daily Star the main objective of the programmes is to create job opportunities among agricultural labourers in rural areas during lean period of Bangla months of Ashwin and Kartik.

He said, if farmers cultivate BRRI-dhan 32, BRRI-dhan-33 and BRRI-dhan 39 during 'aman' season then they can harvest these at least 45 days earlier than that of the conventional variety of 'aman' paddy. This will result in creating jobs, he said.

DAE will supervise the programme while BRRI will provide technical support to the farmers.

RDRS area co-ordinator M G Neogi told The Daily Star that people's suffering would be mitigated during 'monga' period by successful transfer of technology among the farmers.

Aug 17 serial blasts in Gaibandha: Charge framing date July 10

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The date of framing charge against four accused of August 17 serial bomb blast case here has been fixed on July 10. District and Sessions Judge Mohammed Shahabuddin fixed the date after a hearing at the court on Tuesday.

Of four accused, two were produced before the court. They are Ziaur Rahman alias Badal, son of Islam Ali of village Kotalkathi under Chapai Nawabganj and Abdul Qayyum, son of Shamsul Huq of village Haikandi under Shaghata Upazila in Gaibandha.

Two other accused, Matin Mehdi alias Taroka Matin, son of Enamul Huq of Bridge road under Gaibandha Pourashava and Abdul Aziz, son of late Kalimuddin of village Uria under Fulchari Upazila are still at large.

Gaibandha Sadar Police filed the case against 19 persons in connection with the serial blasts. Police submitted the charge sheet against four persons after long investigation on May 25, 2006. Fifteen persons were relieved of charges.

A series of bombs blasted at eight different important places including judge court, rail station, pousa park and bus terminal at 11 am on August 17, 2005. Eleven persons were injured in the attack. Later, police recovered the elements of bomb and leaflets of Jama'at Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Sub-inspector (SI) Farhad Hossain, filed a case against 19 persons in connection with the incident.

'We submitted petition for framing charge against two accused in absentia', said public prosecutor (PP) Jahangir Alam Jinnah.

Accordingly, the court fixed the date for framing charge against them.

Arson at Magura village: 400 HSC answer scripts burnt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 400 answer scripts of this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination under Jessore Education Board were burnt as rivals set on fire to nine houses at Binodpur village in Mohammadpur upazila last week.

The answer scripts were burnt as a house of an HSC was also burnt during the fire incident.

The incident followed murder of a businessman named Sourav Kumar Shaha over rivalry of the people of two villages to establish supremacy at a rural bazaar. There was a longstanding rivalry over the issue between the villagers of Bindopur and Khalia. The trader was hacked to death at the bazaar by Khalia villagers.

The incident sparked agitation at Binodpur village. The villagers swooped on their rivals' houses and looted foodgrains, cattle and other valuables. Five houses were also ransacked during the attack.

Later, they set on fire to four houses including that of HSC examiner Zahangir Kabir who is an English teacher of Mohammadpur Aminur Rahman Degree College.

On information, Sadar police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members reached the spot and brought the situation under control. A temporary police camp was set up to avert fresh clashes.

Magura Deputy Commissioner (DC) Neamat Ullah Bhuiyan and Superintendent of Police (SP) Mia Lutfar Rahman Chowdhury visited the spot and assured villagers to protect themselves from the attackers.



Gaibandha Districts Primary Teachers Association took out a procession in the district town yesterday demanding immediate realisation of their 21-point demand.

STRIKE AT IU BCL activists damage 5 vehicles on campus

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists yesterday damaged five vehicles on the Islamic University (IU) campus on the first day of their indefinite strike yesterday.

No class or examination was held during the strike period. All the offices were closed and no university bus plied from Kushtia to Jhenida town. The BCL activists stopped buses at the Customs intersection in Kushtia, Arappur and Tattipur intersections in Jhenidah.

A large number of party leaders and activists from Kushtia and Jhenidah joined their fellow members in the strike. Later, police and Jatayatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres chased them at about 11:00am. The BCL men took shelter in Bitipara area and ransacked five vehicles.

A meeting was held at the Customs intersection where the BCL leaders demanded immediate cancellation of the 'illegal recruitment', punishment of JCD cadres and removal of the VC.

The university unit of BCL called the strike following attack on them by JCD cadres on the campus on Tuesday. JCD attacked a BCL procession when they were taking prepara-

tion to stage a sit-in programme in front of the vice-chancellor's (VC) office. They were demanding his immediate removal. Nine BCL activists were injured during the attack.

Campus sources said BCL was demanding the VC's removal protesting the 'illegal mass recruitment' at the university.

The university reopened on June 11 after a 20-day unscheduled closure on May 20.

The university was closed following JCD rampage on the campus for failure of the university authorities to recruit 200 people according to their choice.

FFs urged to be united

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sakhira

Awami League (AL) Liberation War Affairs Secretary Capt (ret'd) A B Tazul Islam yesterday called upon all the freedom fighters (FFs) to be united to build a non-communal democratic country.

Islam said this while addressing a freedom fighters' gathering organised by Assassini upazila Mukti Joddha Samannaya Parishad.

Journalists Oppression Day observed in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

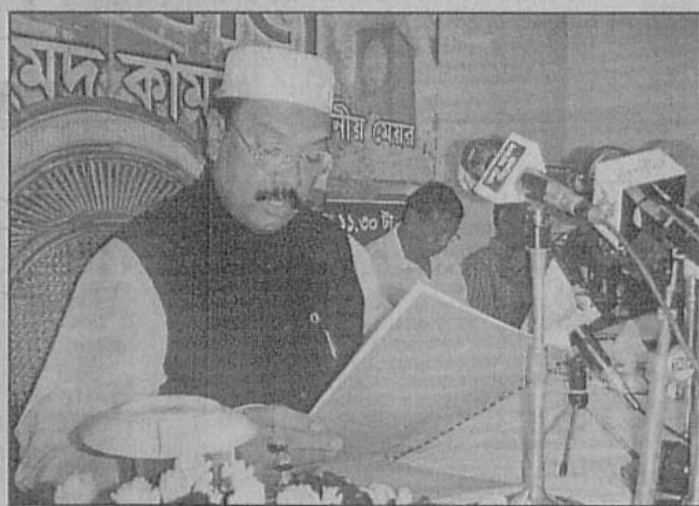
Speakers at a discussion held at Jessore Press Club yesterday demanded of the government to punish the culprits who were involved in attacking the journalists.

Jessore Journalists' Union organised the discussion to mark Journalists Oppression Day.

Jessore Journalists' Union president Shajed Rahman presided the discussion.

Speakers blamed the Alliance government cadres for oppression on journalists and demanded investigation into the attacks in Kushtia and Chittagong. They stressed on unity of journalists at this critical period.

Among others, Rukun-uddoula, Ashok Sen, Kiron Saha, Touhidur Rahman, Rimon Khan, Moniruzzaman Monri, Gopinath Das, Monotosh Bosu, Golam Mortaza Moni and Abdul Kader addressed the discussion.



Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran presenting the annual budget of the Corporation for the 2006-07 financial year in Sylhet yesterday.

Tk 544.88 cr Sylhet City Corporation budget announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran yesterday announced a Tk 544.88 crore budget for the 2006-07 financial year.

He announced the budget without imposing any new tax at a press conference held in the afternoon at the City Corporation Conference Room.

The major heads of income had been targeted with Tk 150 cr as ADP grant from government, Tk 105.2 cr as slum development and setting up of a power plant, Tk 80 cr as special development allocation from government, Tk 100 cr as flood rehabilitation project, Tk 25 cr environmental and beautification project, Tk 15 cr as grant for water and sanitation project.

Other major income heads had been listed with Tk 15.86 lakh as holding tax, Tk 3.5 cr in land property transfer tax, Tk 2 crore as trade tax, Tk 1.5 cr as building construction and reconstruction tax, realisation of Tk 2 crore as compensation for road cutting from different government and private organisations.

Besides, Tk 2 cr would be realised by selling tender documents while Tk 1.5 cr would be earned as fees for transferring shop ownership in different city corporation markets.

The major heads of expenditures include execution of ADP projects-Tk 150 cr, flood rehabilitation projects-Tk 100 cr, special projects implementation-Tk 80 cr, water supply and sanitation project-Tk 15 cr, development projects-Tk 49.18 cr, slum development projects-Tk 51 cr and construction and reconstruction of markets, housing project and others Tk 10 cr.

Other heads of expenditure had been shown as Tk 6.4 cr for establishment, Tk 5.16 cr for health and sanitation, Tk 40 cr for tree plantation and maintenance, Tk 28 lakh as education, Tk 3.39 cr for grants for social organisation and religious institution, sports and cultural activities.

Ward commissioners and officials of the city corporation were present at that time.

11 hurt in separate incidents in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Eleven people were injured in separate incidents at Shamsnagar in Kamalganj upazila and Rangunia in Srimangal upazila Tuesday night.

Initially, nine people were injured following a quarrel over damaging standing crop of Abdul Khaleque by a cow of his neighbour Mosabbir Ali on the night. Consequently their families were engaged in the quarrel. At one stage, one group attacked another group with lethal weapons. At once the other group retaliated resulting in injuries to nine people.

The injured are Mosabbir Miah, Shafia Khatun, Md Mohsin Miah, Md Mustakim Ali, Abdul Khalik, Mamata Begum, Liakat

Ali, Abdul Majid and Babu Miah. Of them, condition of Shafia Khatun and Md Mohsin Miah is stated to be critical. They were sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

In another incident occurred at Rangunia village in Kalapur union of Srimangal upazila the same night, two persons were injured over a family feud.

According to the local people, former Union Parishad chairman Md Monor Miah had a quarrel with his brother Sonor Miah.

At one stage, members of the two families were involved with the quarrel resulting in injuries to Suhel Ahmed, son of Monor Miah and Jasim Uddin, son of Sonor Miah. They were admitted to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.



Rohingya children celebrated the World Refugee Day at Kutupalong Refugee camp in Teknaf yesterday.



Lablu serving mushroom-made food items to his customers at his shop at BRTC market in Bogra.

Bogra youth sets example by selling mushroom products

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

An enterprising youth has set an example by cultivating mushroom and selling its products in the town.

Rubiyat Nurul Hasan Lablu earned a diploma in Hotel Management from an institute in the Republic of South Africa in 2004. On completion of his study, he got an offer to serve at a hotel in Canada. But he preferred self-employment to serving in a foreign country. He came back to his hometown and took training on mushroom cultivation organised by the Agriculture Ministry the same year.

Later, he established a shop of mushroom products at Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) market in the town.

Now he earns Tk 15,000 per month by pursuing his business, he claimed. He also claimed himself to be the first mushroom cultivator in the northern region.

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Change of Address

This is for general information of all concerned that the Address & Contact Phone Numbers of Corporate office of ACME Group has been changed as under:

Previous Address

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