

# Tk 27 cr stolen from Bogra uplift projects in 4 years

## District administration starts probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bogra district administration has started investigation into allegations that around Tk 27 crore in cash and kind was misappropriated by ruling party men from different development projects in the district in last four and a half years, according to sources at the Deputy Commissioner's office.

They said 25,571 tonnes of rice and over Tk 12.13 crore were allocated against 5, 260 development projects in twelve upazilas under Food For Work and other programmes.

It is alleged that at least Tk 27 crore have been misappropriated by preparing fake papers and using

substandard materials.

Citing examples, the sources said 25 tonnes of rice were allocated for renovation of two kilometer Pakulla-Charkandi road in Sonatola upazila. Twenty-five tonnes of rice were allocated for the project, out of which 22 tonnes were misappropriated by preparing fake papers.

Seventeen tonnes of rice were allocated for repair of one kilometer road in Ghonshaghata area but only two tonnes were utilised and the rest were stolen by showing fake papers, the sources said.

Many of the development projects are yet to be completed but the rice and money sanctioned for them have been drawn by the

contractors, most of whom are ruling party men, they said.

The investigation is being done by the respective upazila nirbahi officers, they said.

Letters were sent to all the 12 UNOs from the district administration between July 15 and 20 to probe the alleged misappropriation.

Sources in Sariakandi upazila administration said they have detected misappropriation of about Tk one crore for allocations for construction of Sariakandi Asrayan Prokalpa and some other projects and filed a case with Sariakandi thana. Investigation is going on and more cases could be filed, they said.

Sources in Gabtoli, Dhunot, Kahalu upazila administrations also said they have started investigation.

District administration sources said almost all the project development committees were headed by local leaders of BNP and its front organisations with recommendations of local Lawmakers and senior party leaders.

The sources said allocations for development projects in Bogra were higher in last financial year compared to previous years. The total allocation was Tk 14, 25, 93,000 last year while it was only Tk five crore in 2004-05 financial, they said.

## UPDF office gutted in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The office of the United Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDF) including 10 shops in the surrounding area were gutted in a big fire at Logung in Panchhari upazila yesterday, security sources said.

They said that property worth about Tk 30 lakh was gutted.

The UPDF has blamed the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) for the incident. Michael Chakma, a central committee leader of the party, said PCJSS has burnt their office to establish supremacy in the area.

However, the Khagrachhari unit leader of PCJSS, Sudhakar Tripura refuted the allegations saying UPDF has implicated them 'falsely'. As his party men believe in democracy, they are not involved in the incident in any way, he said.

More than three clashes occurred over establishment of supremacy in the area on July 20 and 21. UPDF member Kala Chakma was killed and Parbon Chakma was injured in the incidents.

RU SYNDICATE MEETS TODAY

## Progressive Teachers to protest 'illegal' recruitment

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Progressive Teacher's Society at Rajshahi University will besiege the administrative building during holding of the Syndicate meeting today to protest selecting of eight teachers in Marketing department against two advertised posts.

The forum in a press release yesterday said it will also submit a memorandum to the vice-chancellor against the 'illegal additional recruitment' in the University.

Prof Abdus Sobhan, a Syndicate member and convener of the Teacher's Society told newsmen that they would announce a fresh agitation programme if any illegal decision is taken at the meeting.

Campus sources said today's meeting will finalise recruitment of teachers in Marketing, Statistics and Fine Arts departments. Renovation of Mather Hall and recruitment of other employees will also be on the agenda.

Agitating students of Marketing department also threatened to stage demonstration in front of the administrative building when the Syndicate meeting will be held.

## Practising democracy at grassroots level

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A chairman of underdeveloped Char Sirta union in Sadar upazila answered to various queries of people in his area at a different type of meeting held at Mymensingh Press Club auditorium recently.

Char Sirta Union Parishad (UP) chairman Md Abdul Matin answered to various queries on construction of roads and culverts including sanitation, education and health related issues in his union.

Held under Advocacy for Grassroots through Mass Participation programme, the meeting was organised by the Sirta union Grameen Advocacy Centre of Massline Media Centre (MMC). It was assisted by DANIDA, an NGO.

Md Saidur Rahman Khan was in the chair while it was attended by over 60 villagers of Sirta of Char Sirta union including Char Gobindapur, Anandipur, Bhawanipur, Kharicha and Durgapur.

## 2 get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The Additional District and Sessions Judge Court here sentenced two persons to life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a verdict announced in Sham-suzzaman Manik Murder Case yesterday.

The convicts are Masud, 30, and Anarul Haque, 35. Each of them was fined Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer three months more RI.

The case story in brief is that Shamsuzzaman Manik, son of Abul Kalam Azad of village Baljuri in Bhaluka upazila was chopped to death by a gang of criminals at a fair at village Mukhi in Gafargaon upazila on July 12, 1994.

Later, Abul Kalam Azad, father of the victim filed a case with Gafargaon Police Station accusing nine persons. The criminal investigation department (CID) framed charges against six persons.

After examining witnesses and evidences, additional district and sessions judge Aminul Islam handed down the verdict acquitting four others of the charge.



Handloom weavers brought out a procession at Balla Bazar in Kalihati in Tangail on Thursday protesting galloping prices of yarn and dye.

# Weavers demand textile minister's resignation

## Protest galloping prices of yarn, dye as 5000 looms fall silent in Tangail in four months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Over 5,000 handlooms in Balla, Rampur and adjacent areas in Kalihati upazila in Tangail district, well known for producing famous Tangail Shari, is closed for about four months due to abnormal price hikes of yarn and dye.

Several hundred loom owners, weavers and traders are staging demonstration brought out a procession and held a rally at Balla Bazar on Thursday protesting the galloping prices of yarn and dye.

Looms are falling silent one after another as prices of the inputs increased by about 20 to 25 per cent in last four months while hat of produces remained virtually

unchanged, causing losses, they said.

Speaker at the rally demanded resignation of Textile Minister Shahjahan Siraj and urged the government to reduce prices of yarn and dye to keep the industry alive. Shahjahan Siraj is a man from the area.

This correspondent while visiting the area recently gathered that there are about 25,000 handlooms in Kalihati upazila, which is highest concentration of looms in the district.

Talking to this correspondent, some weavers said price of one bale of Eco brand yarn of 82/1 count has increased to Tk 66,000 from Tk 54,000; Sayham brand to Tk 67,000 from Tk 56,000; Nahid brand to Tk

63,000 from Tk 53,000 and Russel brand yarn to Tk 66,000 from Tk 54,000.

Prices of other raw materials including chemicals and Polyester are also increasing day by day, they said.

Mofakkarul Islam, president of handloom owners association in Balla, said prices of raw materials increase almost every week. "But we can not increase prices of sarees so often".

"Over 20 per cent handlooms in the area have already been closed. Weavers are selling their looms and leaving the profession", he said.

Mostofa Ashrafee, president of yarn traders association in Balla, they have to charge higher prices as mills increase prices.

## No stock of anti-snake venom at RMCH

60 patients admitted in 35 days, 8 die

RU CORRESPONDENT

There is no stock of Anti Snake Venom (ASV) for treatment of snake-bite patients at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Patients have to buy the medicine from outside at high prices. Lack of the medicine affects treatment. At times their life is endangered if the medicine is not available in time, hospital sources said.

They said around 60 snake-bite patients were admitted to the hospital in last 35 days and eight of them died.

The flow of such patients increase in the rainy season, they added.

Taking the opportunity, some drug sellers hoard the essential drug and charge prices at will, attendants of some patients told this correspondent yesterday.

The price of foreign-made ASV is Tk 300 to Tk 350 while drug traders charge Tk 800 to Tk 850, they said.

Doctors at the hospital said life of a patient becomes endangered if ASV is not injected within 24 hours of snakebite. Patients coming from rural areas run high risk as most of them reach the hospital late after taking treatment by quacks.

Dr Quazi Tariqul Islam said ASV is not effective of injected 24 hours after the snakebite. He could not say when ASV will be available at the hospital.

## Trader killed by outlaws in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A businessman was killed in Ataikula thana by the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) in the early hours of yesterday.

Police and local people said Md Abu Sayed, 30, son of Dabania Pramanik of Goarbania village was kidnapped by unidentified criminals on Thursday night. Later, he was shot dead by them, they said. Police recovered the body from a road at Goarbania in the early morning yesterday.

Police sent the body to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Janajuddho has claimed responsibility of the murder over telephone.

On contact, Ataikula Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Md Solaiman Miah said the victim is a businessman but his brothers are listed criminals.

# BNP, Jamaat at odds over nomination in Sylhet-5

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The four-party alliance is facing a crisis over nominating a candidate in Sylhet-5 constituency in the coming parliamentary election.

The difference is widening as alliance contenders have started pre-election campaign in the parliamentary seat comprising bordering



Haris Chowdhury

Zakiganj and Kanaighat upazilas. On the other hand, Awami League is dogged by internal feud in the two upazilas.

Moulana Farid Uddin Chowdhury of Jamaat bagged the seat in 2001 election by defeating AL's Hafiz Ahmed Majumder.

Farid Uddin along with his party men are in the field while prime minister's political secretary Abul Haris Chowdhury is lobbying for the alliance ticket, party sources said.

Haris Chowdhury often attends programme in the area in the name of development work, using his official status of a state minister. Haris Chowdhury also told local BNP leaders that he is hopeful of getting nomination.

Talking to this correspondent, some BNP leaders alleged that the Jamaat MP and his men have taken 'control' of all development activi-

ties in the region, ignoring BNP.

"We have a good public base in Zakiganj and Kanaighat upazilas. Most of the Union Parishad chairmen are BNP men. In the recently held municipal election in Zakiganj pourashava, the posts of chairman and most of the ward commissioners were captured by our party men", a local BNP leaders said.



Farid Uddin

But Jamaat-e-Islami is adamant to get its man as an alliance candidate in the constituency, party sources said.

"Jamaat enjoys blessings of BNP stalwart Saifur Rahman in the area as he always favours Farid Uddin Chowdhury", a Jamaat leader told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

The possibility of Ershad's joining the alliance has created a challenge for both BNP and Jamaat. JP leader Shabbir Ahmed will also vie for nomination.

On the other hand, Moulana Abdul Latif Chowdhury Fultali, chief of a religious forum in greater Sylhet-Al-Islahmay be a factor in the coming election as he has a large number of followers in the area. He supported the alliance in last election but the scenario may be different this time as his differ-

ence with Jamaat over religious issues has widened, political circles said.

Moulana Obaidul Haque of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) was elected from the constituency in 1991. In 1996, Moulana Habibur Rahman of Al-Islah got 15,000 votes.

In 1996, AL's Hafiz Ahmed



Hafiz Ahmed Majumder

Majumder defeated Jamaat's Moulana Farid Chowdhury.

Majumder, former chairman of Pubali Bank, is known in the area as a clean man and he has a big contribution in spreading education in this backward area of Sylhet.

But he will face a difficult situation his time due to internal feud in AL in both the upazilas.

A few months ago, a delegation from Zakiganj upazila AL met central leaders in Dhaka and then held a press conference in Sylhet, bringing serious allegations against some party leaders. They also threatened of quitting the party.

However, political circles believe Majumder would be the AL nominee to fight the next polls from the area.

# AL nomination seeker's meeting foiled by rivals

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A view-exchange meeting of a central Mohila Awami League leader and nomination aspirant with Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders and activists was foiled by party rivals at Chand Khan Bazar in Chandpur Sadar upazila Thursday evening.

Dr Dipu Moni, Secretary of Mohila Awami League central committee and a nomination seeker

from Chandpur-3 constituency, was chief guest at the meeting.

BCL sources and witnesses said the attackers, numbering about 25, ransacked the venue and swooped on Chandpur district BCL President Zahidul Islam Roman there with a billhook. Dipu and Zahidul were unhurt. The attackers left soon after foiling the meeting.

The sources claimed that the attackers were from Baburhat and Motkhola areas.

"The reason of the attack is yet to be known", Chandpur AL Secretary Abu Nayem Dulal Patwary said later.

Dipu did not make any comment. She said she will talk to newsmen later.

Zahidul told this correspondent that some identified people made the attack but declined to name them. On information, police rushed to the spot.



Khagrachhari District Council Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura addressing meeting of The Daily Star Readers Club in the town yesterday.

## Daily Star Readers' Club meet held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The Daily Star Readers' Club was formed here yesterday aiming at creating enlightened citizens.

Earlier, a meeting to exchange views was held at the Shipakala Academy auditorium where The Daily Star readers, well-wishers and the civil society members attended.

The Daily Star Readers' Club co-ordinator Rafi Hasan presided the meeting while Khagrachhari Zila Parishad chairman Monindra Lal Tripura was present as chief guest.

Speakers stressed on the need for exercising English language alongside Bengali to develop the society. The Daily Star has come to enlighten the society, they said.

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

Most of the front-ranking leaders of Netrakona district BNP including two lawmakers have expressed their sharp reaction to Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad's move to join the four-party alliance.

BNP leaders and activists in Netrakona will not accept any JP leader as a coalition candidate in any of the five constituencies in the district, Netrakona district BNP President MA Karim Abbasi MP told this correspondent.

He claimed that JP does not have organisational strength and public support in Netrakona. Giving any seat to JP would mean losing it, he said.

Ershad's recent meeting with BNP Senior Joint Secretary Tarique Rahman created a rumour here that JP Presidium member Fakir Ashraf could contest from Netrakona-2 constituency as a coalition candidate in the coming

election.

When contacted, Fakir Ashraf said if JP forms electoral alliance with four-party combine, he will get nomination in Netrakona-2 constituency (Netrakona Sadar and Barhatta upazila). "I got such a hint from our party chairman (Ersahad)".

Fakir Ashraf contest from the constituency in 1996 election and in 2004 by-election as JP (Ershad) candidate but lost to Awami League candidate Fazlur Rahman Khan in 1996 and to BNP candidate Abu Abbasi in 2004.

In the 2004 by-election, held following the death of AL lawmaker Abdul Momin, Abu Abbasi got 81,067 votes and Fakir Ashraf got 32,019 votes.

MA Karim Abbasi outright rejected the possibility accepting Fakir Ashraf as a coalition candidate. "BNP leaders and activists will not accept any JP candidate in

any of the five constituencies", he said.

"If Fakir Ashraf gets nomination from Netrakona-2, then I will run as an independent candidate", he said.

Netrakona district BNP leader MM Selim said Jatiya Party does not have any political activity in many areas in the district. So JP's joining will have little effect in the district.

Asked about Fakir Ashraf, Selim said, he will not get support of BNP leaders and activists even if he is nominated from Netrakona-2 constituency.

This correspondent also talked to at least 20 BNP leaders, who shared the views of Selim and Abbasi.

But Netrakona district Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Abdul Hakim gave a different view. He said his party will support Fakir Ashraf or any other JP leader if nominated by the alliance.