

BNP factions clash in Pabna

PABNA, Nov 28: A fierce clash between two rival groups of the ruling BNP at Nazirpur of the district today left at least 20 people injured, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said the clash erupted when a group led by one Hanif allegedly attacked the rice-crushing mill of their rival Jomuddin Monday.

During the clash, the feuding groups traded some 25 rounds of gunshots and exploded 10 homemade bombs.

Seriously injured Rajab Ali, 60, Kashem, 30, Jomuddin, 50, Panjab, 20, Shipon, 15, and Chadu, 35, were admitted to Pabna Sadar Hospital.



SYLHET: A team of representatives from the Saint Albans City from UK and District Council now on a visit to Sylhet. They would train the employees and officials of the Sylhet Pourashava on town planning, accounts keeping, safe dumping of wastes and others under "EC-Asia Municipal Environment Development Assistance Programme." The team members, Robin Jugitun, Allan Moorhouse, Carlton Lomax and Humayun Akhtar held a meeting with Badaruddin Kamran Chairman, Sylhet Pourashava to discuss the programme. The visiting team will stay in Sylhet till December 6. — Star photo

5 cattle traders killed in boat collision

From Our Correspondent
PABNA, Nov 28: Five boat passengers were killed near Nagarbari Ferrighat at Alokdiar when the running mechanised boat was hit by a barge recently.

The said five passengers along with others drowned at once. The mechanised boat carrying 17 passengers, was reportedly proceeding towards its destination — Kazirhat.

The day following the occurrence, four bodies were recovered from Sreepur char which after two days more another body was recovered from the same char.

The bodies were identified as those of Jeher Ali Bepari, 52, of village Chhota Skyampur, Baher Sardar, 51, of village Hugaladangi, Atar Ali Mridha, 61, of village Mirpur, Abdul Wahab, 57, of village Shyampur and Abdul Wahab — all hailing from Bera thana.

The boatman named Kader Pramanik, due to whose fault the accident allegedly took place, was safe but reportedly absconding following the registration of case with Bera thana.

Those who died were all cattle traders, it was learnt.

Post-mortem examination of the bodies were held in Pabna morgue.

Ganja trees worth Tk 2.5 lakh seized

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Nov 28: A special squad of Narcotics Control Department seized ganja trees worth Taka about 2,50,000 from two villages of sadar thana of the district recently.

According to the sources, acting on secret information the squad members raided the village Munuria and Dakkhin-Shikarpur and recovered 251 tree of ganja and about one kilogram of processed ganja.

Fifteen cases were filed with Jhenidah thana in this connection. But police could not arrest anyone so far, it was learnt.

17 injured in road accident

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Nov 28: Seventeen persons including three girls and a baby, were injured in a road accident yesterday at about 1:30pm near Kalimar Bailey Bridge on the Naogaon-Mohadevpur highway.

The injured were admitted into Naogaon Sadar Hospital. Later, Shakhawat Hossain, 28, Parul Begum, 19, Sajeda Begum, 24 and her son Shahadat of three months age were transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with critical conditions.

It was learnt that a running minibus Al Kaba (Ba-4916) had lost control to save a rickshaw and collided head on with a truck coming from the opposite side.

Fishermen rescued alive after 26 hrs of their floating in Bay

COX'S BAZAR, Nov 28: Sixteen fishermen were rescued alive from near Kutubdia Island on Sunday evening after 26 hours of their floating in the rough sea, reports UNB.

Six of the fishermen were admitted to sadar hospital in critical conditions, officials said here today.

Five of the fishermen — Ahmed Hossain, 35, Md Kalu, 36, Kamal Ahmed, 30, Md Alamgir, 23, and Kalimuddin, 40, — informed that most of the fishermen out of 105 in nine boats were still missing.

Meanwhile, officials confirmed the death of four fishermen while the unofficial sources claimed that at least seven fishermen were killed in the tidal surge and storm that destroyed some 20,000 dwelling houses in the coastal area.

Forest area in Pabna dist stands at only 3 per cent

From Ranesh Maitra
PABNA, Nov 28: Forest area in Pabna district has abnormally decreased to about three per cent of the total area of the district. This has brought a terrible effect upon the environment since, according to the environmentalists, at least 25 per cent of the total area, or at least 20 per cent of the same, is required to remain minimum ecological balance.

When contacted, the Pabna District Forest Officer admitted the above situation, expressed his concern but said that the government has been making an all-out multi dimensional efforts towards solving the problem effectively. The District Officer further told that active co-operation of the people and a greater awareness among them with regard to environment and other related matters were of tremendous importance.

The District Forest Officer (DFO), appreciated the role of the NGOs in playing a vital role in the afforestation or tree plantation programmes but said that a more vigorous drive from them, and that under a co-ordinated manner, would help improve the situation greatly.

It was learnt from the official documents that the average area under forest in Bangladesh now was nearly 17 per cent and in this context, the situation prevailing in Pabna district was of very grave concern.

When contacted over telephone, the District Forest Officer told The Daily Star that during the financial year 1994-95 which ended in last

June, the Forest Extension Department of Pabna arranged planting of 4,16,677 saplings throughout the district. Besides, it was further disclosed that 9,54,267 plants of different varieties were also distributed among the members of the public during the same period.

Besides, the DFO further disclosed that under the "Community Forestry Project" launched by the Asian Development Bank for the North Western Zone of Bangladesh, Pabna District Forestry Extension Department, associating various other agencies in the district, planted a total of 3,25,000 saplings and brought an area of 731 kilometres on both the sides of various roads and highways, embankments and railway lines. BIRM, an NGO further brought a total of 135 hectares of land under the afforestation project.

He further stated that people near or around the areas brought under the afforestation programme were organised under the banner of ten associations for planting, nursing and protecting the planted trees and when those trees were sold out, 40 per cent of total sale proceeds, amounting to Tk 6, 54,265 were also distributed among them (those associations). This was done under "Community Afforestation Project." The implementation of this project was completed within five years from 1982-87 as scheduled by the government.

Financed by the Asian Development Bank ADB, the Forest Extension Department of Pabna, under an integrated planning, brought a total area of 216.5 miles under joint efforts made by the said department, Pabna Roads & Highways Department, WAPDA and the Railway Departments.

Inspired with the success of the above "Community Afforestation Project," the government of Bangladesh took up another project, named, "Social Afforestation Project" and implemented the project in Pabna district during the period 1988-1995. This project included Thana Afforestation Projects. People of the areas concerned were also associated with this scheme and the share of the people was fixed at 65 per cent.

During the current financial year, the government has taken up another ambitious project, known as "Extended Social Afforestation Project" but its schemes and financial sanctions for the district of Pabna were yet to reach the concerned authorities in the district.

But inspite of all the above optimistic figures, the fact remains that Pabna district has been acutely and alarmingly suffering from a massive deforestation and vast areas of the district reached the stage of desertification. Trees are being cut, burnt in brick fields defying all the restrictions imposed by the government and were also being used as firewood and also for making furniture etc. As a result, prices of wood have gone up abnormally — its scarcity also became acute.

to farmers at fixed rate. Accordingly supply of fertilizer has been made through dealers for distribution among the farmers but dishonest traders and musclemen have taken opportunity to lift huge quantity of fertilizers and sold to farmers at high prices.

Recently a meeting of the fertilizer dealers was held at Deputy Commissioner's conference room to review the high prices of fertilizer in the market. The meeting also reviewed the movement, supply and distribution system of fertilizers in the district.

The officials said the government had sanctioned Tk 8 lakh and 100 mts of rice for about 1.5 lakh affected people.

Fertilizer bags being sold at double the rate in Chandpur

From Our Correspondent
CHANDPUR, Nov 28: Abnormal price hike of chemical fertilizers have been hampering IRRI, boro and rabi cultivation in all seven thanas of the district during the current season.

It gathered that non-availability of fertilizers at normal price has deepened the crisis adversely affecting the poor and marginal farmers particularly.

All kinds of chemical fertilizers in the district are supplied from ghat number 5, a river part area. It is the distribution and whole sale centre of fertilizer in the district. There are about 50 whole sale dealers of fertilizers at the place. The rate of fertilizer has increased at this centre abnormally all of a sudden. It is learnt from different sources that the prices of chemical fertilizers including urea, TSP and SSP have gone up by more than 100 per cent and the fertilizer bags are at present being sold at between Taka 260 and 300 per 50 kg bag against the government rate of Taka 195.

It is learnt, a group of fertilizer dealers are importing inferior quality of fertilizer at lower rate taking advantage of bank credit facilities. These dealers are influential in society and they reportedly have influence over controlling fertilizer markets. The importers are importing fertilizer below the annual requirement of the country to crisis in the market. Government has taken up steps to ease the situation and make fertilizer available



Professor Eayaz Uddin Ahmed, UGC Chairman, visiting a Rajshahi University girls dormitory recently. — Star photo

One killed, 32 hurt in road mishap

From Our Correspondent
SHERPUR, Nov 28: One person was killed and 32 others were injured in a road accident Monday, police sources said today.

The victim identified as, Abdul Karim, age about 30 from Munsirchar area of the district was hit by a Jamalpur bound passenger bus, No-Dhaka-Jha-3508, near Khuribattola at around 5:15 in the evening. The victim died on the spot.

Out of the 32 injured in the accident, 10 persons who received serious injuries were admitted to the Sherpur sadar hospital.

Police said, it was not yet known how the accident occurred.

Agitators plan to gherao XEN's office of PDB in Sunamganj

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 28: The office of the Executive Engineer of Power Development Board in Sunamganj will be gheraoed today to press for immediate arrangement to start repair of three embankments with a view of saving about 25,000 acres of cropland.

The agitators will also hand over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press the demand, it was announced at a meeting held at Baitakhali Ferry Ghat of sadar thana Sunday.

Clash suspends bus service for the second time in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Nov 28: Bus service in Sirajganj Betkandi route remained suspended since yesterday morning following clash among passengers and bus workers on the issue of fare collection, it was learnt from the concerned authority.

Seven persons were injured in the clash. They were treated in Belkuchi Thana Health Complex.

Hundreds of persons are suffering due to the suspension of bus service for the second time this week.

Clash between farmers, lathials: 36 injured

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Nov 28: At least 36 farmers were injured, 11 of them seriously in four separate incidents and clashes between the armed lathials and farmers at Badarkhali village under sadar thana and neighbouring areas yesterday.

During the clashes in these places seriously injured Mannan Khan, 30, Khaleque Khan, 28, Abul Hossain, 25, Hakim Munshi, 30, Sahalam, 25, Karam Ali, 75, Jalil Gazi, 30, Manir, 20, Ayub, 35, and Samsul Haq, 20, were admitted to Barguna and Amtali hospital. Nur Mohammad, 60, was admitted to Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Bus passenger arrested with revolver in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Nov 28: A bus passenger was arrested with a revolver and 10 rounds of bullets from Daulatdia yesterday, reports UNB.

Daulatdia river police said, they arrested Masudur Rahman, a passenger of Diganto Paribahan coach, coming from Jessore.

A case was filed with Goaland thana.

RU UGC Chairman visits female dormitories

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Nov 28: Prof Eayaz Uddin Ahmed, Chairman of the University Grant Commission (UGC) has paid a visit to the dormitories of girls students of Rajshahi University recently. He talked with the inmates of the halls and enquired about their problems. He assured all possible help from UGC.

Later in a students' gathering he announced that all two storeyed girls halls of the university would be extended into three storeyed building immediately. Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof M Eusuf Ali, Pro Vice Chancellor Prof M Altaf Hussain also accompanied the UGC Chairman Prof Eayaz Uddin Ahmed.

Metropolitan



Non-government primary teachers wrapped in burial clothes brought out a procession in the city yesterday to press for their demands. — Star photo

What's on today . . .

- Science lecture:** The National Museum of Science and Technology (NMST) will host a talk on 'Computer Network'. Venue: NMST auditorium. Time: 4:00 pm. Dr Md Lutfur Rahman will deliver the talk.
- Talk on communication revolution:** The Centre for Communication Programmes will hold a talk on 'The Communication Revolution: Health Promotion for the 21st Century'. Venue: American Recreation Club. Time: 4:30 pm.
- Stage drama:** The drama 'Bisarjan' by Rabindranath Tagore will be staged by Trjok Natya Dal. Venue: Public Library auditorium. Time: 6:30 pm.
- Zahir Raihan Film Society:** The films 'Ran' at 4:30 pm and 'Farewell My Concubine' at 6:30 pm will be screened. Venue: Goethe Institut.
- Congregation of Mutwallis:** The Bangladesh Waqf Estates Mutwalli Samity will organise the ceremony. Venue: Institute of Diploma Engineers, Kakrail. Time: 10:30 am. Chief guest: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.
- UNAB symposium:** The United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) will organise the symposium to mark the Palestine Solidarity Day. Venue: Institution of Engineers. Time: 4:00 pm. Chief guest: Mohammad Shahta Zarab, ambassador of the State of Palestine.

Weather

Dry weather to continue

The prevailing dry weather is likely to continue over the country in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said, night temperature may slightly fall. Country's highest temperature 28.1 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra while the lowest 11 degrees at Rajshahi.

The sun sets today at 5:10 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:23 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded yesterday in some major cities and towns were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.2	14.8	68	73
Chittagong	27.0	17.5	97	76
Rajshahi	26.4	11.0	75	73
Khulna	27.1	14.4	80	68
Barisal	27.4	15.0	83	86
Sylhet	26.4	16.4	90	80
Cox's Bazar	26.5	18.5	82	-

President shocked

President Abdur Rahman Biswas expressed his profound shock at the loss of huge property in the devastating fire which gutted about 2000 stores of Bangabazar market in the city on Monday, reports BSS.

In a message, President Biswas hoped that with the assistance of the government and the commercial banks, they will be able to re-start their business soon.

Shamsul

Meanwhile Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday expressed his sympathy for those affected by the devastating fire at the three hawkers' markets including Bangabazar in the capital.

He assured all possible co-operation of the government to enable the affected business to re-start their business afresh.

'Artists' camp' begins Dec 3

The second 'artists' camp' organised by the German Cultural Centre will begin on December 3, with artist Hella Berent as guest from Germany, says a press release.

The 15-day camp will explore the 'different perspective' which might be inherent in works of women artists.

Newsman attacked

A journalist was attacked by hijackers at Shantinagar area of the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Sheikh Rakib Uddin, diplomatic correspondent of the United News of Bangladesh (UNB), came under the attack when he was coming in a rickshaw.

39th founding day of Drama Circle Dec 1

Drama Circle, the oldest theatre group of the country, will celebrate its 39th founding anniversary on Friday, December 1, says a press release.

A discussion meeting and get-together will be held at 6 pm on the day at 91, Kalabagan, (Pizza Lake entrance) on this occasion.

All members, old and new, friends and well-wishers of the organisation have been requested to attend.

Calcutta daily slates opposition for agitation against BNP

The Ananda Bazar Patrika Monday strongly condemned the opposition parties in Bangladesh for creating the country's present political deadlock, BSS reports from New Delhi.

In an editorial comment on the political situation of Bangladesh, the Calcutta-based Bengali daily was sharply critical of the uncompromising attitude of the opposition parties, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Dwelling at length on the background of the 19-month long movement programme of the Opposition, the daily said the main demand of the Opposition is resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to hold polls under a neutral caretaker government.

Discussion on Toaha

Leaders of left leaning parties yesterday laid emphasis on a greater unity among themselves to develop an alternative political process by organising the underprivileged people of the society, reports BSS.

They were speaking at a memorial meeting, organised in observance of the eighth death anniversary of comrade Mohammad Toaha under the auspices of Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (M-L) at Jatiya Grantha Kendra auditorium in the city.

Obituary

Wadoodul Huq, son of late Khan Bahadur AM Shahdodul Huq, died of old age complications at his Mirpur residence in the city last morning. He was 78, reports BSS.

He was buried at Banani graveyard yesterday.

His quikhwani will be held at House 45, Road 11, Block 'C', Banani on Friday after Asr prayers. Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the quik.



On invitation of the German Cultural Centre (GCC) Thirza Bruncken, free lance theatre director of Cologne, Germany, is now in the city to collaborate with theatre personality Sara Zaker in directing the Sea Gull by Anton Chekov. During her 2-week-stay here there will be an intensive exchange of ideas and experiences between Sara Zaker and Thirza Bruncken about this forthcoming Nagorik production under the direction of Sara Zaker and also the opportunity for other theatre activists to meet with Bruncken and discuss matters related to contemporary acting and directing. — GCC photo