

Six accused in murder case acquitted

From Our Correspondent
NATORE, Jan 25: Six accused persons have been acquitted for want of proper evidences against them in a murder case of Lalpur thana on last Saturday.

According to the prosecution story in brief, the victim Aneha Khatun, daughter of one Yahed Ali of Basudanga village of Lalpur thana was killed by some miscreants and her body was found in a sugarcane field of the same village on July 2, 1994. A case was filed with Lalpur thana accusing the six persons, suspecting them involved in the murder. Police on enquiry submitted charge-sheet.

The acquitted persons are: Toyzal Hossain, Babar Ali, Jalaluddin, Korban Ali, Bobbel and Rahmat of the same village. The district and sessions judge Shirajul Islam delivered the judgment.

TK 3 cr flood control project's future uncertain

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 25: The future of Tk 3.5 crore Brahmaputra Flood Control Projects has become uncertain for several reasons including terrorist activities and clashes among vested interest groups, reports UNB.

According to official sources, a Korean Company which had been awarded the contract for implementing the project could not take up the work, scheduled to begin last November.

Political touts are said to be involving even labourers in a mad race for offering sub-contract in the implementation work.

More than 50 local construction agencies have been formed and opened offices on the river bank. These agencies backed by political elements often engage in violent clashes resulting in loss of property and injuries to rival supporters.

Local police said 20 cases had been filed by feuding agencies and more than 50 people were arrested following violent clashes. They said they were unable to tackle the situation because of political influence.

The main contractor, the Korean Company, said it was impossible to start work on the project if congenial conditions were not created by possible intervention from the central authorities in Dhaka.

Husband gets 4-yr RI for assaulting wife

JESSORE, Jan 25: A man was awarded four years rigorous imprisonment (RI) on Sunday for grievously assaulting his wife for dowry.

The court also fined him Tk 4,000, in default, to suffer another three months' imprisonment.

The prosecution story was that Atar Ali, husband of four wives, of Rajhat in Avoyanagar thana broke the ribs of his first wife Nurjahan Begum by merciless beating for dowry.

The victim lodged a case under the Women and Children Repression Act on June 30, 1994. Police after investigation submitted charge-sheet against the accused.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge Mostafa Enamul Hafiz after examining the evidences and records awarded the punishment amid a crowded court.

Two jailed for keeping explosives

From Our Correspondent
PABNA, Jan 25: Two accused persons were sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for a term of three years each and also to pay a fine of Tk 5,000 each, in default of payment of fine, to suffer RI for a further term of three months each for possessing explosives.

The two convicts, Bander Ali and Rafiqul Islam, were tried under the explosives act and following the trial, Shafiqul Islam, additional district and sessions judge, Pabna, delivered the judgement on January 5 convicting both the accused persons.

The prosecution story, in brief, is that on July 11, 1995, police arrested both the youths along with several explosive articles from Sujanager union parishad office area.

The explosives were seized. A case was started and following investigations, charge-sheet was submitted by Sujanager police against both the accused persons.

3 police officers suspended in Habiganj

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Jan 25: Three police officers of Nabinagar thana under Habiganj district have been put under suspension for taking no action in a rape case. They are: Sub-Inspector Golapur Rahman, and Assistant Sub-Inspectors Abul Hashem and Shamsul Islam.

A gang of youngsters entered the house of one Sunil Sarker at village Noagaon of Dighalbak Union on the night of January 16. They tied him with ropes and took his newly married daughter, Mangali Rani, 20, to a nearby field where they raped her. The villagers recovered the victim in an unconscious state at midnight.

Malpractise at purchasing centres

Standing sugarcane turns into fuel!

From Md Meherullah

JAMALPUR, Jan 25: About ten lakh maunds of sugarcane have been withering away in the fields under Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills zone at Dewanganj in the district. As a result hundreds of sugarcane growers have been incurring heavy financial losses during the current crushing season, according to unofficial sources.

According to sources of Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills, about 20 lakh maunds of sugarcane are

It may be mentioned that the mills authorities issue vouchers to farmers against their purchase of sugarcane. The growers get money only after submitting the vouchers to the mills account sections.

It is alleged that a section of staff adopt a deliberate delay tactic to defer the payment thus forcing the poor to choose a painful option.

In selling the vouchers to the brokers the farmers are to sur-

weight in full knowledge of the farmers. We are bound to do it as sugarcane loses weight after purchasing, said one of the CIs.

They shifted the responsibility to the "purji committee" which is basically controlling all purchase and sales activities. "We cannot do anything without the committee's decision," the CI said.

All the sugarcane growers under a purchase centre are the members of purji committee. These farmers elect a village committee and the village committee elect the central committee, in association with field staff of the sugar mills, prepare a list of the sugarcane growers. As per the list, farmers are given a 'permission receipt' to bring their produce at the purchasing centre.

The Daily Star correspondent, while investigating this complex process, found that the purji committee chairman was an influential farmer. Nepotism is widespread. The chairman gives priority to farmers of their choice in issuing permission receipt. The farmers who are given permission later on suffer loss because his sugarcane dries up in the field.

There are other irregularities in the sugar mills. Listed sugarcane growers are being provided with inputs, including fertilizer, pesticides. These are employees for this specific function, but farmers often complain they are provided with low grade input which hamper their yield.

All these have led to serious frustration among sugarcane growers. Increasing number of farmers are losing interest in sugarcane growing.

"We would be benefited more if we could make molasses out of sugarcane instead of selling those to this mills, said an aggrieved farmer.

Meanwhile, every year Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills has reportedly been incurring losses due to corruption, theft and other malpractices.

It is worth mentioning, the mill has been running under a holding company.



JAMALPUR: Dried up sugarcane in the field of Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills zone of the district. — Star photo

still standing in the fields of the mills zone. On the other hand one lakh maunds of sugarcane have totally and two lakh maunds of sugarcane have partially dried up in the fields under the mills zone. 50 lakh maund sugarcane are now being used as fuel for cooking.

When asked some sugarcane growers in Islampur, Melandah and Dewanganj areas told this correspondent that about 40 per cent of sugarcane in the fields have already dried up, while the remaining sugarcane are also losing weight.

The growers alleged that the government has imposed ban on production at gur (Molasses) in the early period of crushing season. The government relaxed the ban when the time for producing gur already ran out.

Taking advantage of the miseries of sugarcane growers purchasing centres are reportedly malpractising to deprive the growers of fair price.

It is alleged that the man who is responsible for purchasing sugarcane at different purchasing centres under this mills bought about one lakh maunds, of sugarcane, without purji (sugar purchasing receipt).

Farmers said that the land on which the sugarcane was still standing would remain fallow this season as the time of ploughing the land for cultivation of wheat, potato has already turned out.

Under the situation many farmers are contemplating to give up the sugarcane cultivation during the next season.

In the current season some farmers illegally produce gur under the mills area for crisis of purji (sugarcane permission receipt).

render up to 10 per cent of the sale proceeds to the brokers.

Thus the broker, who keeps on waiting outside the Accounts Offices of the mills.

According to, unofficial sources, every season about Taka 1.5 crore went to the pockets of the "commission agents".

Crushing season usually begins in October and ends in March or April. Sugarcane farmers are to face obstacles by frauds.

It is a common complaint of the farmers that mills staff known as Centre In-charge (CI) and Weight Clerk (WC) responsible for weighing canes, cheat them on the scale. When contacted some CI and WC staff admitted the allegation.

It is an open secret in sugar mills. We keep some margin in



JAMALPUR: A sugarcane grower producing molasses ignoring the official ban at Malanganj near the zone of Zeal Bangla Sugar Mills recently. — Star photo

Housewife beaten to death in Jessore

From Our Correspondent
JESSORE, Jan 25: A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Magura of Obhainagar thana last night.

According to police and local people, Rezaul Islam used to torture his wife, Farida Khatun, 22, to bring dowry from her father.

On the night of occurrence, Rezaul beat up his wife. Farida merclessly which resulted in her death, local people said.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Jessore General Hospital for autopsy.

A case has been filed. Rezaul was absconding till filing of this report tonight.

Two convicted for keeping heroin

From Our Correspondent
PABNA, Jan 25: Two persons were sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for a term of two years for keeping heroin in their possession.

Begum Laila Salma Banoo, Assistant Sessions Judge, second court, Pabna, convicted the above two persons, Nazim Uddin and Abdul Mannan, after conducting trial.

The prosecution story, in brief, states that the officials of Anti-Narcotic Directorate and police conducted a joint raid from inside an abandoned godown of M/s Edruc Ltd, Pabna situated in Dakshin Raghabpur area of Pabna Pourashabha, found the above two persons and upon search of their bodies, recovered four packets of heroin from their possession.

Following necessary investigations, the two accused persons were charge-sheeted under Drug Control Ordinance of 1990.

The guilt of both the accused having been proved beyond doubt during the trial, the learned Assistant Sessions Judge awarded the above sentence against both the them.

Eight killed, 64 hurt in various incidents

From M A Ali Himu
NATORE, Jan 25: At least eight persons including a mother and her baby-daughter were killed and about 64 others were injured in separate incidents in Natore district last week.

On January 12, one Nazrul Islam, 30, was killed and four of his companions were seriously injured in a clash between two rival groups following fishing in a disputed pond at Arjunpara village of Lalpur thana.

According to witnesses and police, the clash erupted when Nazrul group of Beel Shalia village went to catch fish in the pond at Arjunpur village, and their rival 'Mannan' group of Arjunpur village objected to it. Both the groups used sharp lethal weapons during the clash. Nazrul Islam, leader of Nazrul group succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi medical college hospital and Jakat Salam, Manik and Mannan of both groups were admitted at Natore sadar hospital in critical condition.

A case has been filed with Lalpur thana in this connection and police arrested Mannan as the main accused of the case.

On January 14, three separate road mishaps left two persons killed and 10 persons injured. Mechher Ali, 35, succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi medical college hospital when a sugar cane loaded trolley hit him at Chhatni area on Natore-Rajshahi highway at dawn.

In another incident a caretaker of local district council auditorium, Nuru Mia, 45, died on the spot when a bus bound for Pabna from Rajshahi ran over him in front of Government Girls' School in the town in the afternoon. Nuru Mia was returning home for taking his 'tiffin'.

On the same day at noon, 10 persons were seriously injured when a Bogra bound bus and Natore bound minibus collided head on in front of district collectorate office on Natore-Bogra highway.

The injured persons were admitted at Natore sadar hospital.

A mother and her one year old daughter met a tragic death when Titumeer Express, a Parbatipur bound inter-city train, ran over them near Basudebpur railway station on January 15.

Witnesses said, they were crossing the rail-line. However the names of the victims could not be ascertained till filing of this report.

On January 18, three passengers were killed and 50 others injured when a coach from Dhaka bound for Chhapainawabgonj overturned near Banpara bazar, 18 km from the town, under Boraigam thana.

Police and fire service sources said, the coach, Insaaf Special, fell into a ditch while trying to avoid the diversion road. The driver of the coach wrongly drove towards a broken bridge. Two of the deceased were identified as Tushar, 20, and Almas, 27.

Fifteen of the injured have been hospitalized, four of them at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and they are: Alef Hossain, Golam Mowla, Samsul Haq and Abdul Haquim.

A case has been filed with the sadar police station in this connection.

Fertiliser

Appointment of Deviganj dealer challenged

From A Correspondent

PANCHAGARH, Jan 25: The representatives of the local bodies of Deviganj thana under Panchagarh district along with members of the local business community lodged a complaint with the additional secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, against fraudulence on appointment of fertiliser dealership in the area, according to concerned sources.

A copy of the signed complaint by a total of 15 persons including the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) Chairman, Deviganj, member of Deviganj Union Parishad, representatives of the local trade and business was submitted to the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture recently.

The complainant alleged that the fertiliser dealership was awarded to a person for Deviganj area who was not a businessman of the locality and not even a resident of that place. They further accused that the said person received the dealership through fraudulence and demanded cancellation of the order, as according to them, many genuine aspirants were victimised.

Expressing concern, one of the complainant said that the government rule was violated as the dealership was supposed to be given only from amongst the resident business community. Besides the government appointed only two dealers from a particular area this time, he added.

DAB files defalcation case against 3

From Our Correspondent
KISHOREGANJ, Jan 25: The District Anti-corruption Bureau has filed a case against three persons including the Project Implementation Officer (PIO) of Mitamoin and an UP chairman with Mitamoin thana on charge of defalcation of wheat meant for a false project under Test Relief (TR) programme.

According to the Bureau Office, during the financial year 1995-96, Raisuddin, Chairman of Kathkal union parishad prepared a false project and a 5-member project committee was formed with Abdul Latif, a local UP member as its chairman.

The project chairman lifted 2 metric tons of wheat sanctioned for the project and later misappropriated the whole quantity in collusion with Raisuddin, the UP chairman and Mukarram Hossain, Project Implementation Officer of Mitamoin.

The PIO submitted false completion report of the work to the higher authority.

On receiving complaints, Md Shabar Ali, Assistant Inspector of District Anti-corruption Bureau (DAB) inquired into the matter and found no existence of the project. Later a case was filed against all of them with Mitamoin thana on December 31.

10,000 settlement cases undecided in 3 hill dists

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 25: More than 10,000 settlement cases have remained undecided for past nine years in the three hill districts due to legal complication and local problems, reports UNB.

Land Revenue officials said thousands of landless people are living in uncertainty while more than 50,000 acres of land remain uncultivated causing considerable loss in crops and revenue.

Legal complication is due to an ordinance of 1989 which requires the Deputy Commissioner to take prior permission of the Chairman of Local Government Council before distribution of Khas land.

Land allotment applications, forwarded to the Local Government Councils have remained pending for the last nine years.

On the other hand, the district authorities have been allotting thousands of acres of land for rubber plantation which are creating further complications as in individual settlement cases because the tribals do not possess any document for the land they are occupying.

The landless people have formed groups and associations to raise their problem and submit their demands to the district authorities and the Local Government Councils.

Housewife beaten to death

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Jan 25: A housewife and a mother of three children were beaten to death at Haqtoila village under sadar thana of Patuakhali district Thursday evening.

Witnesses said, following an altercation over a trifle matter scuffle took place between Yunus Gazi, husband of Sharbanu, and Yunus's brother Sahajahan, Sharbanu, 30, tried to cool down both of them, but eventually failed. At one stage angry Sahajahan beat Sharbanu mercilessly with a stick resulting in her death on the spot. A case was filed with sadar thana. Police arrested Sahajahan in this connection.

Abducted businessman still untraced

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Jan 25: Saikupa thana police could not rescue as yet the businessman, Sankar Saha of Saikupa town who was allegedly abducted by a group of armedmen in the night of January 21.

Police said, the miscreants abducted Sankar, 32, near his house at Rangopalpara in the town at about 7 pm. The abductors allegedly demanded Taka 10 lakh to release Sankar. Police could not rescue him till writing of this report.

Housewife strangled to death

From Our Correspondent
FARIDPUR, Jan 25: A young housewife was allegedly strangled to death by her husband at her father's house at Nagarkanda in the district recently.

The victim, Rokeya Begum, 23, daughter of Mojaher Matubar of village Ashfardi in Nagarkanda thana in the district was allegedly strangled to death.

According to police and family sources, the victim with her husband Abdur Rahim of the same village went to sleep in the same room of the house on the night of the incident. But the following morning the inmates of the house found her lying dead alone in the bed. Her husband reportedly went into hiding.

Clash over khas land All but 2 landless peasants get bail

From Our Correspondent

PABNA, Jan 25: A total of 41 landless peasants of Beel Kurulla under Chatmohar thana of the district, accused in a criminal case by the "Kabuliat" holder landlords surrendered before the court of Magistrate, First Class, Pabna, on Tuesday. The Magistrate, upon hearing the application for bail submitted on their behalf, granted bail for 39 peasants.

The learned Magistrate, however, rejected the prayer for bail submitted by two other accused persons — bail application for whom was also submitted along with the said 39 peasants.

The two peasant leaders whose bail prayer were refused are Madar Bux Mandal and Abdul Mannan.

It may be recalled here in this connection that the above case was lodged with the Chatmohar thana by the Kabuliat holders over the incident of January 18 in which 30 persons including seven women peasants were injured. A few 'lathials' of the Kabuliat holders also received injuries during the clash.

It may further be recalled that the incident of bloody

clash occurred when on January 18, the lathials engaged by the "Kabuliat" holders, all being armed with various types of deadly weapons, allegedly attacked the landless peasants when they were engaged in tilling the khas land of Beel Kurulla for cultivating IRI-Boro paddy. The landless peasants claim that the said land was sited long under their possession and they had been cultivating the land and harvesting the crops also for years together despite illegal attempts made on several occasions by the "Kabuliat" holders and jotedars.

The landless peasants told that the above case was actually a counter — case lodged by the 'illegal' Kabuliat holders against the genuine case instituted with the same thana earlier.

Both the cases were under investigation, told a police official.

Meanwhile, for making an on-the-spot investigation of the situation in Chatmohar over the bloody incident of January 18, Mohammad Jafrul Kuddus, Programme Co-ordinator of the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD),

rushed from Dhaka to Chatmohar and visited the area on January 20.

Following his visit, Jafrul Kuddus alleged that the officer-in-charge of Chatmohar thana did not work in a neutral manner and hence such an unfortunate incident could take place. In spite of his prior knowledge the tension has been prevailing over the area. He said that the predecessors of the present officer-in-charge of Chatmohar were found neutral and hence they could avert many incidents of the similar nature and could also succeed in maintaining peace.

Jafrul Kuddus hoped that the administration including the police administration would observe strict neutrality henceforth, release the two peasant leaders and withdraw all the false cases pending against the landless peasants.

The landless peasants of Beel Kurulla — both men and women — held a protest demonstration against the attack on the peaceful landless peasants, release their two leaders, withdraw the false cases and ensure peaceful atmosphere in the area.

Voters of Bandarban enrolled as voters of Rangamati

From CHT Correspondent

RAZVILLA (Bandarban), Jan 25: Despite repeated appeals for the last 12 years, a number of 391 'eligible' people of Razvilla union parishad in Bandarban sadar thana of the district could not be enrolled as voter of the district who were enrolled as voters in Rangamati hill district by a vested quarter, it was alleged.

A number of 155 Bangalee families of Noyapara, Islam-pur, Balumura and Patharban villages in Razvilla mauza of

Bandarban sadar thana have regularly been paying their holding-taxes to Razvilla union parishad and land revenue to Bandarban hill district collectorate. These families were there rehabilitated by the government in 1984-85. The ownership documents of the land were also given to them by Bandarban hill district authority, it was officially available.

A vested quarter, politically empowered of Rangamati hill district in entente with the

concerned authority allegedly enrolled them as voters in Rangamati hill district. Rhui Prue Aung Chowdhury, chairman of Razvilla Union Parishad in Bandarban sadar thana said, UP Chairman, Chowdhury sought the early and necessary steps of the appropriate authority so arrange enroll themselves as voters in Razvilla union parishad, so that they can exercise their rights of franchise in the coming union parishad poll.

RUTA strike 2,000 RU students fail to appear in BCS exam

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Jan 25: About two thousand students of Rajshahi University have been deprived of appearing in the next 18th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination for the ongoing strike of university teachers.

According to the campus sources, results of honours final year examinations of 19 departments have been withheld and ongoing examinations of honours final year and masters classes of 26 departments have been postponed for work abstention programme launched by Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) since January 8.

Most of the total examinees numbering about 3,500 could fill up the BCS examination form by submitting certificate of appearance in the examinations. Those who have already completed their examinations could not collect their appearance certificates as the teachers were not working till filing of this report.

Prof Aminul Islam, former RUTA President commented that teachers could not do such great harm to their students. "They can at least exempt from their programmes for the betterment of the students," he said.

Fertilizer crisis may hit crop cultivation in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Jan 25: Crisis of urea fertilizer may hit the Iri, Boro and wheat cultivation in the district this season, it is apprehended by the peasants.

According to Jhenidah district Agriculture Extension Department (AED), four fertiliser dealers were appointed for Jhenidah sadar thana, three dealers for Saikupa thana, five dealers for Kaliganj thana, and one dealer was appointed for Mohepur thana of the district.

Seventeen more dealers will be appointed soon for proper and quick delivery of the same among the farmers of the district, sources said.

According to sources, 1508 metric tonnes of urea fertiliser was allocated for the month of November, 1833 metric tonnes for December last year and 5026 metric tonnes for the month of January this year. But only allocated 1508 tones of fertiliser

for November last year was available to the dealers. Rest allocation for December last year and January this year was yet to reach the dealers.

Taking advantage of the situation some dishonest fertiliser dealers have been selling the fertiliser bags between Taka 340 and 350 a piece instead of the fixed rate at Taka 250. In remote areas the price was much higher, alleged some farmers.

To ensure proper delivery of the chemical fertiliser bags in the district a meeting was held in the district collectorate building with Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Jhenidah in the chair on January 20.

It may be noted here that 44,100 hectares of land was brought under Iri and Boro and 14,000 hectares of land was brought under wheat cultivation in six thanas of the district this season.

Acute fertilizer crisis in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 25: Acute crisis of fertilizer has been prevailing in the district. The dealers of the district are yet to get their quota.

It is alleged that the present government has suspended supply of fertilizer from September, 1996. As a result, farmers are being compelled to buy fertilizer at higher price from blackmarket.

It is learnt from an official source that the number of dealers in the district has been

raised from 40 to 53.

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) allotted 20 metric tons of fertilizer to each dealer of the district during October-November last year. But they failed to lift it as there was no supply of it. Besides, 47 metric tons of Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) and 32 metric tons of SSP fertilizer given by BCIC for distribution in the district in January this year was also canceled, said an official source.

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