

Shelaidah ready to celebrate Rabindra Joyanti today

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 7: Poet Rabindranath Tagore's anniversary of birth will be observed tomorrow at Shelaidah Kuthibari in the district. Residents in the area are taking preparations for the celebration. The 25th of Bangla month of Baisakh, the birth anniversary of the poet, is a special day for them.

The government has also chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion. Tagore used to stay in the house, commonly known as Shelaidah Kuthibari, during his early years. The poet used to oversee the estates of his family in the area. But the natural beauty and people in this part of Bengal influenced the poet a lot. Inspired by the culture and natural scenery of the area, the Nobel laureate wrote a number of poems and songs.

He also came in touch with Baul Lalan Shah in Shelaidah. Baul is class of unorthodox religious devotees singing devotional songs in a special mode. Baulism greatly influenced the poet.

Pramathanath Bishi, a noted scholar and close associate of the poet, said had the poet been a little late in reaching Shelaidah, his genius might have followed a different course.

The Tagore had zamindari (estate) in Shelaidah, eight miles northwest of Kushtia district headquarters. Prince Dwarakanath Tagore, the grand father of the poet, bought the zamindari in an auction in 1800 AD. Earlier this was held by the Sitaran Roy of Muhammadpur in Jessore.

Shelaidah stands by the side of the river Padma. During the British rule, there lived a tyrant



Rabindra Joyanti

Front view of Shelaidah Kuthibari of Rabindranath Tagore in Kushtia. The national front programme will be held here to celebrate Rabindra Joyanti, the birth anniversary of the Nobel laureate. — Star photo

indigo planter, Shelley. It is assumed that the village, Shelaidah, is named after the man.

The Shelaidah Kuthibari is spread over six bighas of land and an artistic boundary wall symbolises the ripples of the Padma.

It is a two and a half-storey building and has fifteen rooms. The bedroom of the poet is on the eastern part of the first floor facing the mighty river. A mango garden beside the

Kuthibari was bought by the Tagore family from one Upen in Shelaidah. The poet depicted the condition of marginal farmers of Bengal through Upen in his poem Dui Bigha Jami.

The poet had a small room, in fact a garret, on the top floor. It was his retiring room and many a time he passed here like a hermit.

Celebrities like scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose, poet Djendra Lal, Lokendranath Palit,

writer Pramatha Choudhury and poet Matilal Majumdar visited the Kuthibari during the poet's lifetime.

Tagore also founded a primary school in the area, which was named after his daughter in law, Pratima Devi.

The Department of Archaeology takes care of the Kuthibari. It has become famous tourist spot now. Many visit the residence of the poet every day.

Public Admin Reform Commission report at final stage

MYMENSINGH, May 7: Preparation of Public Administration Reform Commission report is at the final stage and existing problems of various cadre services will be solved through administrative restructuring reports UNB.

"There exists irregularities in every sector and present government has been trying to resolve the problems during its four years in office," said Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed while speaking about the reforms.

He made the observations while addressing the conference of Mymensingh region PROKRICHI-BCS Coordination Council at IEB Mymensingh Centre on Thursday.

Due to the irregularities embedded in the administration over the years efficiency of the officers declined, the minister said pointing out past two government's initiatives that went in vain.

Tofail said former BNP government, without taking care of local industries, knocked down import duties and signed the SAPTA agreement without guessing its consequences.

"In a bid to help the dealers make windfall profits it cut down fertiliser price from Tk 4,700 to Tk 3,425. Its ultimate benefit went to the pockets of BNP leaders and workers, not the farmers."

The minister pointed out various successes of present government, including production rise in mills, and urged the professionals to work with devotion to maintain continued progress.

Khulna Sramik Dal procession attacked

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 7: A procession brought out by main opposition BNP-backed Sramik Dal (labourers' party) came under attack by unruly supporters of ruling Awami League-backed Sramik League on May 1 in Goalpara area.

Two persons were injured in the attack. The procession was brought out on the occasion of May Day.

Indian hoodlums kill Bangladeshi, loot cattle

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 7: A Bangladeshi national was killed and four others were injured when a group of Indian hoodlums equipped with sharp weapons, who entered Bangladesh territory illegally, attacked them at frontier village Moslemur under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj district last week.

Villagers said the hoodlums, who launched attack at the dead of night, also looted 275 cattle and 45 sheep from the village.

The victim was identified as Mahabul Alam, 20, son of Anisur Rahman.

The four injured persons were identified as Shaiful Islam, 35, Badiur Rahman, 50, Sentu, 40, and Setabuddin.

Villagers said the gang of Indians numbering 10-12 entered Bangladesh territory with the help of India's Border Security Force (BSF).

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the popularity of card phones, some unscrupulous people are making profiteering and illegal business of phone-cards. They buy a large number of phone-cards from the banks to create artificial shortage and then sell these at higher prices. In Rajshahi, one phone-card of 100 units sells at upto Taka 300.

Office bearers of Ctg unit of BPJA

By Staff Correspondent

Ali Abbas and Rupam Chakrabarty have been elected president and general secretary respectively of Chittagong unit of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BPJA).

Other officer bearers of the organisation are Shishir Barua-vice president, Subhas Karan-joint secretary, Mustafizur Rahman-treasurer, Manzur Quader Manzur-publicity secretary, Manzurul Alam and Badal-members.

Salauddin, president of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association, acted as election commissioner.

Safiuddin Ahmed Bitu, AKM Mohsin and Sanah Haque, vice president, general secretary and treasurer respectively of Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association, among others, were present during the election held in Chittagong on April 20.

A tacit permission to smuggling

BENAPOLE, May 7: As the authorities have stopped checking the luggage of India-bound passengers with legal passports, smuggling of gold, dollar and other precious goods through Benapole land port has increased sharply, reports UNB.

Locals term the stoppage of baggage checking since mid-March in the port as a tacit permission to smuggling. The number of India-bound passengers has marked a rise in recent days for this reason, they said.

A banker said a smuggler nowadays does not need to go to 'hundi' traders for transferring Bangladeshi currency to India due to lax in banking rules.

Witnesses said the port authorities are allowing passengers to cross the checkpoint, taking only travel receipts from them.

According to the existing rule, a passenger could at best carry Tk 500 with him, but few passengers follow it. Besides, there is no list how many passengers cross the border a day for India through the port.

Travellers said the Indian customs authorities check every Bangladesh-bound passenger with metal detector and strictly examine whether the endorsed dollars were spent there or not.

World Press Freedom Day observed

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, May 7: A discussion was held at the Mymensingh Press Club Auditorium on Thursday on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed attended the discussion as chief guest.

Presided over by Md Imamuddin Mukta, local correspondent of Bangladesh Radio, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, news editor of the Daily Jugantar, Abdul Kalam Azad, President of BFUJ, Habibur Rahman Sheikh, editor of local daily the Dainik Jahan, Abdur Razzak, editor of Aker Bangladesh, Ataul Karim Khokon and Advocate Wazidul Islam.

Two rifles, ammunition looted from bank

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 7: A gang of bandits made away with a couple of two-bore rifles and 42 rounds of bullets from Chowbaria branch of Janata Bank situated at Malshira village in Tanore upazila on Sunday.

The robbers at the dead of night entered the bank by breaking the collapsible gate and wooden doors. They, however, failed to break the vault.

General Manager and Assistant General Manager of the bank from Rajshahi office visited the branch the following day.

A case was filed with police in this connection.

Outbreak of pneumonia, malaria in Kurigram

KURIGRAM, May 7: Various diseases, including malaria and pneumonia, have broken out in an alarming proportion here claiming 76 lives in last 13 months, reports UNB.

Sources at the district Civil Surgeon office said a total of 71,517 people were affected with malaria, pneumonia and an unknown fever during the period.

Of the deceased, four died of malaria, 57 of acute respiratory infection and others of fever, the sources said adding that majority of the victims were children.

Of the affected people, some 1,449 fell prey to malaria and 38,578 pneumonia.

Doctors attributed the outbreak of the diseases to lack of public awareness and inadequate treatment facilities, and in some cases negligence by health workers.

Kurigram is one of the 14 districts known as malaria zone.

The officials said 32 people in Razibpur, Roumari, Nageshwari and Bhurungamari upazila

News snaps



Tributes to May Day heroes. Artists of Jhenidah unit of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, a leading cultural organisation of the country, rendering songs on the historic May Day at UTDC auditorium at Sailkupa in Jhenidah district. — Star photo

15 including 4 cops hurt in firing

FENI, May 7: Fifteen people including four policemen were injured in firing by miscreants over wall writing in the town on Saturday, reports UNB.

Witnesses and police said a gang of armed youths created a reign of terror by exploding bombs and firing shots while they were erasing the wall writing of BNP on Panchgachia road at 6 pm. Vehicular movement on the road came to a halt during the one-hour vandalism by the youths. When police appeared in the scene the miscreants hurled bombs leaving four policemen wounded. Eleven passers-by also received injuries. Injured police constables — Omar Faruque, Safar Ali, Abdul Malek and Nazrul Islam — were admitted to local hospital. Later police arrested four passers-by identified as Selim, Belayet, Shaheen, Zahir and Abul Hossain from the spot.

Narsingdi AL's meeting

NARSINGDI, May 7: State Minister for Rural Development and Cooperatives Advocate M Rahmat Ali on Saturday called upon the Awami League workers to work with perseverance to help build Sonar Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu, reports BSS.

Addressing a workers' meeting of the party's district unit here in the local municipality auditorium, Ali said the present government had been working relentlessly to improve the lot of the people. He said the government had implemented different development programmes including formation of 'Poli Bittahen Foundation' (foundation for the rural assetless) for alleviation of poverty, introduction of 'Asrayan Prakalpa,' and 'Shantinibash' programme.

Tofail asks opposition to join JS

CHAPAI NAWABGANJ, May 7: Martial law and autocratic administrations were the impediments on way to economic development of the country, Industries Minister Tofee Ahmed has told a meeting of the district level officers in the district conference room here on April 29, reports BSS.

The Industries Minister said the opposition parties should join the parliament for reaching a consensus on vital development issues to achieve nation's economic emancipation. He emphasised the need for political stability saying until and unless we fail to separate the economic agenda from political agendas all our efforts for building a prosperous Bangladesh will go to in vain. The meeting was presided over by the deputy commissioner and addressed, among others, by the State Minister for Child and Woman Affairs Professor Jinnatun Nesa Talukdar.

Police outpost opens

THAKURGAON, May 7: The government is determined to maintain law and order in the country for the welfare of the people, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Shatish Chandra Roy told a meeting held at Ramnathhat, Ruha under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on Saturday while opening a police outpost at Ruha 20 km off the upazila headquarters, reports BSS.

Ramesh Chandra Sen MP, M Abdul Baki, DC Thakurgaon, M S M Azgar Ali, GS District AL, M Abdur Rashid, principal Ruha College, M Taimur Rahman, Chairman Ruha UP, M Mosharrul Haque, chairman, Rajagaon UP, Jiban Kanti Sarker OC, Thakurgaon police station spoke on the occasion. Fatema Begum SP, Thakurgaon presided over the function.

Reception

JHALAKATHI, May 7: Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu said the government is determined to protect the interest of the business community but the businessmen should try their level best to ensure sustainability amid tough competition created by free market, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing a reception hosted by local chamber of commerce and industry. The food minister urged the businessmen to protest negative and destructive political programmes launched by the opposition. President of Jhalakathi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sarder Mohammad Shah Alam chaired the function. It was also addressed, among others, by president of district unit of Awami League Advocate Shajahan Ashraf, municipal chairman Belayet Hossain and Deputy Commissioner Bimal Kumer Kunda.

AL's meeting in Munshiganj

HASAIL (Munshiganj), May 7: Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed on Saturday said BNP has realised the fact that only election, not violence, can change an elected government, reports UNB.

"It's a good sign. At last they could realise that people's mandate is the only way to change an elected government. They now became election-oriented," he told a public meeting arranged by local Awami League at Hasail School ground at Tongibari. District Awami League president Mohiuddin Ahmed and general secretary Lutfur Rahman, film director Alamgir Kunkum and Dr Syed Mahmud Hossain also spoke at the meeting chaired by thana AL president Advocate M A Mukhtar. Hasail UP Chairman Sheikh Abbas Uddin, Outshahi UP chairman Golam Sarward Shikder joined Awami League along with some UP members at the meeting.



Road link snapped. A bridge on Chandpur-Ibrahimpur road in Chandpur district remains incomplete causing inconvenience to the pedestrians and others. — Star photo

Municipality chairman sued

BAGERHAT, May 7: The chairman of Bagerhat Municipality has been sued for pocketing government funds, reports UNB.

Assistant Inspector of Anti-corruption Bureau Anwarul Islam filed the case against chairman Atahar Hossain Abu alias Bara Mia on May 4 for misappropriating Tk 3.2 lakh by leasing out a number of water bodies, ghats, hats and bazars. Earlier on April 30, the Bureau filed another case against the chairman and municipality secretary, administrative officer and a contractor for drawing Tk 1.5 lakh against construction work of a municipality Super Market without depositing any cheque.

50 pc card phones in Rajshahi region inoperative

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, May 7: Fifty per cent of the card-phones in four districts of Rajshahi region of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) have been lying inoperative for many days.

According to official sources, there are a total of 50 card-phone booths in Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj and Pabna districts. Out of the total, 25 card-phones have remained inoperative for months together.

Lack of maintenance is the main cause behind the problem. Most of the inoperative card-phones can be made operative again only by replacing some spare parts, sources in Rajshahi Divisional Office of BTB said.

"Neither we have these spare parts in our hands nor we can make these in our country,"

said a BTB official here on condition of anonymity. "The spare parts should be imported from foreign countries, but no step has yet been taken in this concern," he added.

Rough and wrong handling by the people is another reason that often put the card phones out of order. Some owners of private commercial telephone centres are also allegedly involved in putting the card phones out of service with an ill-motive to favour their own businesses.

Out of the total 24, nine card phones have been lying out of order in Rajshahi district. These are one each at Rajshahi Court premises, Rajshahi University Jubery Bhaban, Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT), Rajshahi GPO, and RDA Market in the city and one

each in the upazila headquarters of Bagmara and Mohanpur and two in Sarđa of Charghat upazila.

In Chapainawabganj, two, out of three card phones are not working.

One is situated at the GPO office and another at the Public Call Office (PCO) premises. There are 14 card phones in Pabna, out of which five have been lying inoperative. These are at Edward College premises, Cadet College campus, Katcha Bazaar, General Hospital premises and GP campus.

All the four card phones in Natore district headquarters and five in the upazilas have been lying out of order for many days.

The card phones have introduced much advancement in the communication sector of the

districts and thana headquarters. Larger portion of the population who have not their own personal or official telephone use the card phones. Cost of card phones are much lesser than that of commercial ones. Moreover, it takes lesser time than that wasted in the Public Call Offices or Upazila Telephone Exchange Offices. For these reason the card phones have become very popular.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the popularity of card phones, some unscrupulous people are making profiteering and illegal business of phone-cards. They buy a large number of phone-cards from the banks to create artificial shortage and then sell these at higher prices. In Rajshahi, one phone-card of 100 units sells at upto Taka 300.

Undertrial prisoner dies at hospital

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 7: An under trial prisoner died at Sirajganj General Hospital on Thursday.

Hospital sources said the under trial prisoner, identified as Muktar Hossain of village Udhunia Satiathi under Belkuchi upazil, died of intestinal disease.

The man was arrested in connection with a theft case on May 1 and was sent to hospital the following day.

Prison sources said police beat him mercilessly following his arrest.

Outlaw killed in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 7: An outlaw was killed in the city on Wednesday.

The dead was identified as Saiful Islam alias Bitu, 25, of Royermahal.

According to police, Saiful was slaughtered at about 9 pm in Shishir Boys Club building area under Sonadanga thana.

Outlawed Purbo Bangla Communist Party claimed the responsibility of the killing.

The party had warned Saiful, who was an activist of the organisation of serious consequence for his alleged involvement in crimes like extortion and rape, police said quoting an anonymous telephone caller.

No one was arrested in this connection.

HSC examinee commits suicide

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 7: An HSC examinee allegedly committed suicide at Sadar Hospital staff quarters in the town on Monday, reports UNB.

Family sources said Tereza Bauli Sumri, 17, took her life by hanging herself from a tree as she was expelled from the examination on April 30 for adopting unfair means.

Police later recovered the body and sent it to the hospital morgue for autopsy.



Frustrated Magura farmer. Motiur, a farmer of village Beroil in Magura district became frustrated observing his paddy field. — Star photo

Frustration grips farmers

From Hossain Seraj

MAGURA, May 7: The farmers of Magura sadar thana are now frustrated as the grains of their standing IRRI-boro paddy on at least 1,200 acres of land have been turned into smut.

This correspondent visited the affected villages of Beroil, Benga, Raghobdair, Jagla, Amuria, Shirishdia and Jagdal. He saw most of the grains of the paddy have been turned into smut. Now the farmers have been using the paddy plants as

fodder instead of harvesting those.

Farmers said, they transplanted 'Nayanmoni' and 'Ratna' varieties on their land this season. But during maturing stage it was seen that most of the grains of their paddy turned into smut.

"We transplanted Nayanmoni and Ratna varieties every season as these are produced in short time compared to any other varieties," said Noor Islam, a farmer of Beroil village in the Sadar thana of Magura district.

"We brought our lands under cultivation by Ratna and Nayanmoni varieties to avoid damage due to unfavourable weather conditions," said Mohon Mia, a farmer of Jagla village.

Talking to this correspondent Abdus Sattar, a farmer of village Amuria said, "I transplanted 'Nayanmoni' variety as it was cost-effective, profitable and produced within short

time. But most of the grains of my paddy turned into smut," he added.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources admitted the damage of paddy on 300 acres of land only. DAE sources added, Dr Moimul Huq, Senior Scientific Officer of Kushtia Regional Agriculture Research Institute, visited the affected area and reported that the farmers transplanted their paddy in the month of November instead of the usual period of December and January which forced grow smut.

May Day observed

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 7: May Day was observed here in a befitting manner.

Several political, social and cultural organisations chalked out various programmes in the district headquarters.