

Divisional office of Rajshahi WDB closed

From Abdul Wadood
RAJSHAHI, May 13: The activities of Operation and Maintenance Division-2 (O&MD-2) of Water Development Board (WDB) of Rajshahi Divisional office have been suspended.

Earlier in July 1999, WDB had decided to close O&MD-2 but the Ministry of Water Resources later postponed the decision in the face of agitation programmes of the city residents.

O&MD-2 had special role in implementing flood control and irrigation projects and building and maintaining embankments alongside the river banks to protect Godagari, Charkhat, Bagha and Poba upazilas of Rajshahi, Lalpur upazila of Natore and Ishwardi upazila of Pabna.

The O&MD-2 was associated with other big projects like Northern Rajshahi Irrigation Project and Chalan Beel Project.

The city dwellers enforced general strike, laid siege to WDB offices, held protest rallies and brought out processions to reverse the decision to close the office. Later the decision was postponed.

Rajshahi Shahar Rakhy Prokpalpa Eboug Annyanya Prokpalpa Bastavayan Parishad, an organisation to protect the interest of Rajshahi, president Jamaat Khan said, "The closure of O&MD-2 is a direct blow to local people." The Minister for water resources himself had told us that O&MD-2 will not be closed, he said. "We shall launch tougher action programmes against the unjust move, he said.

Rajshahi City Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu said that the government had ignored the demand of the people.

Three including child killed in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 13: A young mother, her baby son and a rickshaw puller were crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus on Jamalpur-Tangail highway in the town on April 26.

The victims who were killed on the spot have been identified as Nuraza Begum, 26, wife of Salim of village Komppapur in the town, their six-month baby son Sohag and rickshaw puller Islam Hossain, 30. They were undergoing treatment in Jamalpur General Hospital.

Witnesses said, a rickshaw carrying them and three other relatives of the victims were hit by a babitaxi from behind. The victims were thrown on the road and crushed under the wheels of the minibus coming from the opposite direction.

Police seized the minibus, but the babitaxi driver managed to escape with the vehicle.

A case was filed with the Sadar thana in this connection.

Mysterious meter recovered from shrimp trader

COX'S BAZAR, May 13: Following alert, gun-totting terrorists are active on Cox's Bazar-Jessore air route, security personnel on Thursday recovered a "mysterious meter" from a shrimp businessman while about to board a cargo plane at the airport, officials said, reports UNB.

Intelligence personnel caught Shafiqul Alam, managing director of Al Mansur hatchery in Teknaf, along with the clock-shaped meter that also looks like a timer in the morning.

One of his employees, Abdul Jabbar, who was also held by the intelligence personnel, could manage to escape after they were handed over to airport authorities.

Official sources said the two men were caught when the intelligence personnel found Jabbar through barbed-wire fences handing over a bag to Alam who was about to board a cargo laden with fish fry to carry from Cox's Bazar to Jessore.

The meter found inside the bag might be used as a device in any subversive act, intelligence sources said. Now they are examining its functions.

Earlier, the government alerted the intelligence and security personnel that cargo planes are used to reach arms and ammunition to southwestern districts from coastal Cox's Bazar while carrying shrimps and fry.

Switzerland Dev Corporation team in Khulna

KHULNA, May 13: A delegation of Switzerland Development Corporation (SDC) visited Khulna on May 8. The delegation met with Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, Khulna City Corporation (KCC), at his residence, reports BSS.

The Mayor discussed the plans and programmes and future schemes of KCC including pollution, garbage, sanitation and poverty with the delegation. The Mayor also asked the delegation members to extend its cooperation to KCC.

Among others, Deputy Chief of SDC A Deneke Shusan Muler, Urban Specialist of the World Bank Dr. Tarifur Hasan, Chief Executive of KCC Fazal Abu Mansur, KCC Chief Engineer Liakat Ali Sharif and Chief Executive Director of Prodipon Ferdousur Rahman were present on the occasion.

Rangpur now an unhealthy town

Shyama Sundari canal silted up

From Mozammel Haq

RANGPUR, May 13: The 13-kilometre long renowned "Shyama Sundari" canal is being filled up with garbage.

It has been posing a threat to public health. Bad smell coming out from the littered garbage has been polluting the environment. This canal was dug in 1890 by the then Zamindar (land lord) of Dimla

para, Mulatole, Tetulitola, Gup-tapara, Bairagi Para and Mahigonj.

Here is a popular story that previously the town had been turned into an ideal breeding ground of mosquitoes, flies and other insects. Frequently the town dwellers had been attacked with malaria, typhoid and other serious diseases. At

that time there had been no arrangement to drain out stagnant water from the town. Following digging of the canal by the then Zamindar of Dimla the town became free from mosquitoes and insects, elderly people said.

Now after 110 years the canal itself once again has been turned into an ideal place of mosquitoes, flies and other insects. The canal has been turned into a dumping ground of garbages, stools and other things. Most of the latrines and safety tanks adjacent to the canal have been connected with the canal. Ignoring health hazards of the town dwellers. All the drains of the town, both new and old, have been linked with the canal to drain out dirty water. But the canal has been silted up as it lost its smooth flow.

People of Rangpur town and different socio-cultural organisations have been demanding reexcavation of the canal for a long time, but the municipality authorities are yet to pay heed to their demands. It has been alleged that due to acute fund shortage the municipal authorities had been unable to reexcavate the canal.

A spokesman of Rangpur Municipality told this correspondent that a survey work had been underway. They have got an assurance from the higher authorities regarding sanctioning of fund for its excavation work, but the spokesman could not tell when the scheme would be materialised. An immediate step should be taken up for reexcavation of the canal.



Misuse of canal

Partial view of Shyama Sundari canal. The snap was taken from the Kutchery Bazaar area in Rangpur town. Famous Keramata Mosque is seen in the background.

— Star photo

Nor'wester victims pass hard days in Kushtia

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, May 13: At least three people were killed and over one hundred injured as nor'westers lashed six upazilas in district recently.

The nor'westers also caused damages to standing Boro paddy, besides tobacco, banana, maize, betel leaf, sunflower, vegetables and other crops.

The storms also damaged a large number of houses rendering at least 5,000 people homeless. Affected people have not yet been provided with any relief materials either from Red Crescent Society or from the government. They are passing days. They have taken shelter in public places.

According to preliminary report, the loss due to storm was estimated at Taka one crore.

A teenage boy was killed by lightning at Daulatpur upazila during storm. The boy was

rendered homeless as their houses were destroyed by the storm.

The storm also damaged Naturia High School of Bagul union of Kumarkahli upazila. Two rooms of the school were badly damaged. The storm also damaged Bahauddin High School under Sadar upazila.

A storm at a speed of 90 kilometer per hour lashed Kushtia Sadar, Kumarkhali, Khosha and Mirpur upazilas on April 26 morning. Another storm swept over all the six upazilas of the district on April 28. Again on 29 a storm lashed the entire district, causing widespread damage to crops and houses. Another storm swept over Sadar upazila on May 2, leaving a trail of destruction in nine villages of Ujangram union. The affected villages are Baruipara, Karimpur, Shaympu, Mrittikapara, Durbachara, Sonaidanga, Gajinabipur, Ujangram and Ranjipur.

The identity of the dead could not be known. The injured were admitted to hospital.



Hot spell a boon for water melon vendors

An unbearable hot spell is continuing for the last few days in Sirajganj district. Continued rising temperature has made life miserable for people of all walks of life. But sufferings of low income group have multiplied due to such weather condition. Taking advantage of this situation watermelon vendors are doing a brisk business. Exhausted passers-by, rickshaw pullers, day labourers and others are thronging in greater number around footpath vendors of watermelons. Picture shows some thirsty people are quenching their thirst taking sliced melon from a roadside vendor in Sirajganj town.

— Star photo by Akhteruzzaman Bablu

900 prisoners living in Naogaon jail with a capacity of 101 inmates

NAOGAON, May 13: Over 900 prisoners have been condemned to live a sub-human life in the district jail which has capacity to accommodate only 101 inmates, according to a study report, reports BSS.

The study conducted by Bangladesh Manobadhikar Commission revealed that there are 62 women among the inmates of the prison.

It said the prison was constructed during British period for 20 prisoners and later in 1947 its accommodation capacity was raised to 103.

"In the last 50 years, the number of inmates increased nine times but its amenities did not rise accordingly," said an official of the commission.

Also among the prisoners are four children who were born in the jail, he said.

He said four wards and one of the 15 cells of the jail are now in dilapidated condition and prisoners are living there with a risk of life.

Of the cells, two are used as food godowns while another as doctor's chamber.

The report said each ward that can hardly accommodate 70 inmates is crowded with over 140 inmates, forcing them to

pass sleepless nights.

Allegations are also there that jail wardens take bribe from the visitors.



Give democracy a chance

A B M Akram Hossain, President of Natore district unit of Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) recently handing over the recommendations of electoral law reforms of FEMA to Md Ruhul Quddus Talukder (Dulu), Member of Parliament (MP) of Natore Sadar Constituency-2.

— FEMA photo

Death threat to Kazi Farooque condemned

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, May 13: Leaders of local cultural organisations have urged the government to take legal actions against persons who had allegedly threatened to kill Kazi Farooque, chief executive of Proshika, a non-governmental organisation.

They also condemned people who publicly issued death threat to Proshika chief.

In a statement recently leaders of Jhenidah Theatre, Panjushah Gobeshona Parishad, Jhankar Shilpi Goshthi, Bibaran Sanstritik Kendra, Bibaran Nattaya Gasthi, Lalor Parishad, Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, Unnayan Dhara Theatre, Garajganj Theatre, Focus, Muktodhara Sanskritik Kendra, Dibalok, Dihary Goshthi, Khulumbaria Sanskritik Goshthi, Polly Natya Andolok, Shishukunj Sanskritik Kendra, Kaligaj Sanskritik Academy, Kaligaj Purasabha Sanskritik Parishad and Kotchandpur Sammilito Sanskritik Jote demanded immediate arrested and punishment to the people who issued death threat to Kazi Farooque.

Medicine shop employee axed to death

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 13: A gang of armed youths chopped an elderly medicine shop employee to death here on Tuesday night.

Police said as Abdus Salam, 50, an employee of Shefali Drug House at Monirampur Bazar

under Shahjadpur thana refused to give sleeping pills, an armed gang of seven youths attacked him with Chinese axe. The man died on the spot.

Police nabbed three persons on Wednesday evening in connection with the murder.

Demanding immediate arrest and trial of the killers, traders at Shahjadpur thana enforced a dawn-to-dusk general strike throughout the thana headquarters on Wednesday.

Smuggled cigarettes seized in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 13: Smuggled cigarettes of London brand worth about Tk 4 lakh were recovered in the city early Monday.

Panchlaish thana police, acting on a tip-off, intercepted a truck at Khatiburhan on Haji Chand Mia Road at around 4.30 am and recovered the cigarettes.

Police also arrested two persons, who were identified as Shahidul Islam, 30, and Khorshed Alam, 25, in this connection.

Two killed in Sirajganj road accident

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, May 13: Two persons were killed and three injured in a road accident at the western part of the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge.

One victim was identified as Sabder Ali, 35, of Nurparia village of Kazipur upazila. Identity of the other victim aged about 40 could not be known.

Police said the accident occurred when the trucks collided.

The injured were identified as Minu Miah, 30; Mizanur Rahman, 27, son of Dudu Miah of Palashbari upazila in Gaibandha district; Abdul Khaleque, 30, of Meghali village of Kazipur upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when the trucks collided.

The injured were identified as Minu Miah, 30; Mizanur Rahman, 27, son of Dudu Miah of Palashbari upazila in Gaibandha district; Abdul Khaleque, 30, of Meghali village of Kazipur upazila.

One of the victims was identified as Minu Miah, 30; Mizanur Rahman, 27, son of Dudu Miah of Palashbari upazila in Gaibandha district; Abdul Khaleque, 30, of Meghali village of Kazipur upazila.

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