

Moulvibazar DIARY

New committee of Mohila Dal

From Our Correspondent
MOULVIBAZAR, May 28: The newly elected committee of Moulvibazar district unit of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, women's wing of BNP, got approval of the central committee of BNP.

The committee was elected in the district conference which was held recently.

The approved district committee of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal was formed with Begum Dilruba Khan as president, Begum Monwara Jamir as general secretary, Begum Hafsa Akhter Rumi as organising secretary and Begum Asia Khan as treasurer. Begum Khaleda Robbani, former MP and former district president of BNP have been included the committee as a member.

New committee of Moulvibazar BNP

A new district executive committee of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for Moulvibazar district was formed and approved by the central high command of the party.

This new committee was formed without any council meeting of conference of party workers, it is learnt.

Moulvibazar district committee of BNP was abolished following the party's defeat in 1996 parliament election. A convening committee headed by former MP Advocate Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury was looking after the party programmes here.

At last the high command of BNP realised the demand of party workers and give them an executive committee.

Advocate Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, Advocate Juned Ahmed and Musharraf Hussain Badshah were selected president, general secretary and organising secretary respectively.

Former finance minister and local MP M Saifur Rahman, former MP from women's reserve seat Begum Khaleda Robbani and chairman of Srimongal Pourasava Mohsin Miah Madhu were included the district BNP committee as members.

There are seven posts of vice-presidents and 31 posts of secretaries including general secretary and joint secretaries in the 101-member committee.

NID observed

The 7th National Immunisation Day (NID) was observed in Moulvibazar district recently.

The first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) was given on the day and the second dose of OPV will be given on May 29.

A total of 1,658 NID centres were set up in different areas. Of the total NID centres, 288 were in sadar upazila, 293 in Baralekha upazila, 192 in Rajnagar upazila, 412 in Kulaura upazila, 221 in Kamalganj upazila, 218 in Srimongal upazila, 15 in Srimongal Municipality and 19 in Moulvibazar municipality.

This time a total of three lakh one thousand 624 children of age group between one month and 59 months were targeted for OPV (Oral Polio Vaccine). Of this targeted children 49,717 in sadar upazila, 32,881 in Rajnagar, 77,077 in Kulaura upazila, 43,444 in Baralekha, 38,989 in Kamalganj, 46,669 in Srimongal upazila, 3,273 in Srimongal municipal area and 9,574 children in Moulvibazar municipal area.

Fire Service Week observed

The fire service and civil defence week-2000 was inaugurated here at Moulvibazar Fire Station premises recently.

Faruk Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) presided over the function, while G K M Nurul Ameen, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the district attended as the chief guest. A K M Shahidul Haque, Police Super of the district and Alhaj Mohammadur Rahman, chairman of Moulvibazar Municipality, attended as special guest.

19 more edn instts brought under MPO

Nineteen more educational institutions were included in the Monthly Payment Order (MPO) of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education here recently.

Of the total 19 new institutes, one is a college, nine are junior and high schools and nine madrasas.

These institutes are Langla Modern College of Kulaura, Uluai Islami Dakkhil Madrasa and Jagathpur Madrasa of Moulvibazar, Jalalia Dakkhil Madrasa, Bhukshimul Darul Uloom Madrasa, Gourkaran Nurul Ulum Dakkhil Madrasa, Babnia Hasipur Nizamia Dakkhil Madrasa of Kulaura, Islampur Dakkhil Madrasa of Kamalganj, Golla Dakkhil Madrasa of Baralekha, Rupur Junior High School of Moulvibazar, United Junior High School, Kesrigol Junior High School, Kansai Hakalukia Junior High School of Baralekha, Sultanganj Mierunnessa Junior High School, Shahi Sundar Junior High School, Agrani Junior High School of Kulaura and Ahmed Iqbal Junior High School and Abul Fazal Chowdhury Junior High School of Kamalganj.

Pangs of a Shaheed Janani



Rizia Ahmed is the mother of a martyr of our Liberation War. She has lost her beloved son Captain Bashar in 1971. Since then she has been bearing the pangs of losing her dearest son with a consolation that her son laid down his life for the cause of motherland. In exchange of her son's life she expected a happy and prosperous Bangladesh. But in reality she finds instability, lawlessness and corruption all around. The situation makes her much more weaker physically. Mentally too she breaks down. But did her son shed blood for such a country? As a martyr's mother won't she be able to see peace in Bangladesh? It seems the photo shows she places this question before the nation while pointing her finger at the memorial plaque of *Shaheed* Bashar Gate at Jahanabad Cantonment in Khulna which she visited at the invitation of Bangladesh Army during the Army Service Corps Reunion in November last year. Today (Monday) is the 29th martyrdom anniversary of Captain Bashar. —Star photo by Z A M Khairuzzaman

Arsenic level alarming in 918 villages

Arsenic reached a dangerous mark in drinking water in 918 villages of the country, a study said, report agencies.

The study claimed after a five-year field level research that Bangladesh's arsenic calamity was the virulent in the world.

Researchers of Dhaka Community Hospital and the School of Environmental Studies (SOES) of Jadavpur University, India conducted the study recently.

In the executive summary of the study, the experts opined that the magnitude of the problem in Bangladesh surpassed the aggregate problem of all the 20 countries of the world where arsenic contamination has been reported.

We have their full identification and details of skin lesions," the researchers said.

Even after five years field survey in Bangladesh, we feel that we have seen only the tip of an iceberg of the actual calamity. The more we are surveying the more we are finding people are suffering with arsenic skin lesion.

Our experience in the Indian state of West Bengal says more and more tubewell waters which were once safe for drinking are now being arsenic contaminated, they said.

Another report from Rangpur says: Arsenic, a deadly poison, has been detected in tubewell waters at four villages in Kandi union of Pirkachha upazila of the district.

The researchers said that so far they had analyzed around 11,000 hair, nail, urine, skin samples from affected villages (about 50 per cent of sam-

ples are from those developed skin-lesions and rest 50 per cent from those did not suffer skin lesions). Over 90 per cent of the people tested arsenic positive in their hair, nail and urine and it was above safe level, they said.

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Even after five years field survey in Bangladesh, we feel that we have seen only the tip of an iceberg of the actual calamity. The more we are surveying the more we are finding people are suffering with arsenic skin lesion.

Once this profession was a lucrative one thousands of people were engaged in making earthen jars, plates, small cauldrons, toys and various other thing to earn their livelihood.

The affected villages are Pathok Shekor, East Pathok Shekor, Dadon and Chapra.

The contaminated tubewells have been sealed and the people advised not to use waters of those tubewells, the PHED officials said.

The meeting was further informed that 11 people have been affected with arsenic related diseases in the four villages. They are now undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.



Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh David Preston recently visited the Adarsha Secondary School in Bera Dakuri under Gopalpur in Tangail. The High Commission extended financial help for construction of an additional school building, a project of The Adarsha Gram Unnayan Sangstha. Picture shows Golam Mustafa, President of the School Management Committee and Habibur Rahman, President of the Gram Unnayan Sangstha receiving David Preston and Mrs Preston.

Drug addicts increasing

SYLHET, May 28: The smugglers are doing a brisk business of phenylid and the number of addicts is increasing sharply in the district, causing a grave concern among the guardians, reports UNB.

Taking the advantage of open border in the 680-kilometre frontier of the district, Indian phenylid trading are, Zinda Bazar, Jallarpur, Subidbazar, Manikpeer Road, Kastagharpur, Baghbaria, Kajalashila, Akholla, Chharbarapur, South Surma Terminal, Medical Colony, Mirza Dighi, Lamura, and Shibganj.

With easy availability of the drug, the number of addicts among the youths has increased sharply.

A large number of poor, in-

cluding women, work as carriers of phenylid smuggled from across the border by organised groups of traders.

The guardians are worried with their school, college and varsity going children.

In the town, the main points of phenylid trading are, Zinda Bazar, Jallarpur, Subidbazar, Manikpeer Road, Kastagharpur, Baghbaria, Kajalashila, Akholla, Chharbarapur, South Surma Terminal, Medical Colony, Mirza Dighi, Lamura, and Shibganj.

People usually blame the police for the widespread phenylid trading. But a vested group with strong backing is behind the scene. Some guardians alleged that the police administration, for unknown reason, is overlooking drug trafficking.

National

Jute, Aus farming declining

From Aminul Islam

MYMENSINGH, May 28: Farmers here have lost their interest in jute cultivation.

This is because of low price of jute which is far below than the production cost. This has been happening for the last couple of years.

Jute cultivation has drastically fallen down in all 12 thanas. Cultivation of this crop, which was once called the 'Golden Fibre of Bangladesh' is being abandoned by farmers gradually. Jute which was once the cash crop has now become a bane for farmers.

Farmers are now showing no interest in cultivation of this crop.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) official sources, 4,000 hectares of land have been brought under jute cultivation this year. Of the total land, 3,000 hectares under local variety and 1,000 hectares under *Tusa* variety.

The chronology of last three years' jute cultivation here shows how fast cultivation of the crop is vanishing.

A total of 28,600 hectares of land were brought under jute cultivation in 1997 while achievement was 16,057 hectare.

A total of 13,720 hectares of land were cultivated in 1998 while the target was 30,716 hectares.

A total of 10,000 hectares of land were cultivated in 1999 against its cultivation target of 30,716 hectares.

AED sources also informed that the cultivation and production target could not be achieved here for the last couple of years.

Once Mymensingh region, especially the shoal areas of Mymensingh district were famous for quality jute production in the country. But those days are gone away because most of the farmers have aban-

doned jute cultivation totally.

Jute cultivation is being continued here in a very lower scale.

Most farmers continue jute cultivation for jute sticks only.

Md Ali Asgar of village Char Gobindapur in Sadar thana is one of those frustrated farmers. He also said that he has lost all interests for its continuous

"Now I buy firewood from a local sawmill to meet the fuel demand," said an unhappy Ali Asgar adding "I shall cultivate jute again if the price becomes reasonable in future in comparison with the production cost."

DAE sources also said that following the nor'wester which lashed all the thanas here several times recently caused damage to the jute crops.

Aus cultivation is also facing serious setback here.

Aus cultivation has sharply been decreased here as the farmers showed their interest in *boro* cultivation for its good production with more profit. Now Aus cultivation has touched its last edge.

A total of 81,140 hectares of land have been brought under jute cultivation here this year.

Of the total land, 54,540 hectares are under High Yielding Variety (HYV) and 26,600 hectares under local variety. But only 10,000 hectares of land have been cultivated this year.

A total of 41,000 hectares of land had been cultivated last year here, while the cultivation target was 91,159 hectares.

Following massive pest attack on Aus fields after *Boro* harvesting production of Aus has been affected seriously causing a huge loss to the farmers.

The projects included construction of different rural roads. Of the total work, 80 per cent has already been completed and the rest will be completed by June next. After completion of the whole work the local communication system would be developed.

News snaps

Police officials sued under PSA

NETROKONA, May 28: Fazlur Rahman, Officer in Charge of Durgapur Police Station, Mohammed Hanif, an Assistant Sub-Inspector and other six police constables of the PS have been sued under Public Safety Act (PSA) on charge of forcibly entering into a house of Abdul Hashim of village Barabatta and beating up the inmates including females. They have also been charged for taking bribe from the inmates by giving threat of arrest, reports BSS.

According to Netrakona District Judge Court sources, Salema Akter Khatun, wife of Abdul Hashim of village Barabatta under Durgapur thana filed the case under Public Safety Act in the court of District and Session Judge Netrakona on May 16. Meanwhile, Fazlur Rahman, Officer-in-Charge of Durgapur Police Station told local newsmen the allegations brought against him and others is totally false and baseless.

Swedish Minister visits Rajbari

RAJBARI, May 28: Visiting Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy Maj-Inger Klingvall visited Doyalganj village in sadar thana on Thursday to see the activities to Somota, a non-government organisation, reports UNB.

She talked to the field workers, members and organisers of the NGO that works for recovering khas land resources in the area every year from the river Padma. The NGO activists informed Klingvall of their struggle in realising the khas land and alleged that 80 per cent people who live below the poverty line are being deprived of the khas land. Talking to them, the Swedish Minister assured them of all possible help after consultation with the government and said people in their country too have been working for recovering eroded lands. Swedish Ambassador in Bangladesh Ander Johnson, among others, accompanied the minister.

Three killed in Bogra

Bogra, May 28: Three people were killed and nine others injured in separate incidents in the district in three days till May 19, reports UNB.

Two of the deceased were identified as Salamat Ullah, 60, of village Ramsahar and Sirajul, 30, of Dastika in sadar Upazila. Police said Salamat was chopped to death by his rivals on May 17 following a land dispute. Sirajul, son of Dr Halim, was also chopped to death allegedly by his younger brother on May 18. In another incident, a 30-year-old unidentified passenger was killed and nine others were injured when a bus veered off the road and went down a ditch at Mohipur in Sherpur Upazila on Friday. The bodies were sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

4 uplift projects progressing

PANCHAGARH, May 28: Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has been implementing four development projects here at a cost of Taka 40.58 lakh in the current fiscal, reports BSS.

The projects included construction of different rural roads. Of the total work, 80 per cent has already been completed and the rest will be completed by June next. After completion of the whole work the local communication system would be developed.

Rewarding the best one

Dr Mainuddin Ahmed, Civil Surgeon of Jhenidah distributing first prize to a participant of a drawing competition held recently on the occasion of National Nutrition Week at Jhenidah Sadar Hospital in Jhenidah district.

— Star photo

Sunflower farming gains popularity

PANCHAGARH, May 28: Cultivation of sunflower is gaining popularity as a profitable occupation, reports UNB.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), this year, growers cultivated sunflower on over two hectares of land. Yield of sunflower is higher than mustard and groundnut and it can be cultivated in both winter and summer seasons. A good number of growers told that they earned a significant profit from their production and are willing to expand its cultivation. An official of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said sunflower seed contains high quality edible elements, which are beneficial to health. Cultivation of sunflower is more profitable than any other crops, he added. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) every person needs 35 gm of edible oil while we take only 26 gm, he said. Bangladesh produces only 25 per cent edible oil of the total necessity, the rest is imported from abroad.

Four get life term

BAGERHAT, May 28: A court here on Thursday condemned four people to life term imprisonment in a murder case, reports UNB.

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