

National

Two factions in Sirajganj BNP frustrate activists

From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, May 30: Serious disagreement between two factions of district BNP has been prevailing for the last one year, hampering organisational activities of the main opposition party here.

The conflict surfaced in April last year when the then district BNP organising secretary and former municipality chairman TRM Nur-e-Alam Helal was suspended from the party for one year. He was suspended for his 'anti-organisational activities'.

Although one year has passed, the suspension order was not withdrawn.

The two groups now take part in organisational activities separately, causing frustration among grass-root activists. Even on Tuesday the two factions chalked out separate programmes on the occasion of the 19th death anniversary of for-

mer president and founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman. Both the factions brought out separate processions in the district headquarters marking the day.

One group led by Helal has established its stronghold in Eliot Bridge, SS Road and New Dhaka Road areas in the town.

The other group, regarded as the mainstream, is led by TMA Mannan MP, convener of the district unit of BNP. The group holds its organisational activities mainly in Kalibari area.

District unit leaders Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, former Zila Parishad chairman, Advocate Makaddes Ali, Humayun Islam Khan, Azizur Rahman Dulal, Najimul Haq Babla, district unit president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Nazmul Hasan Rana and JCD General Secretary Rashidul Hasan Rana are supporters of the mainstream group known as Mannan group. Central lead-

ers of BNP usually join the programmes organised by the Mannan group.

On the other hand, Alamgir Alamir Kajoil, son of defeated candidate of 1996 parliamentary election Shamsul Alamir, Mokbul Hussain Chowdhury, president of Sadar thana BNP, Abul Hussain, Abdul Kader Chairman, JCD leaders Sydur Rahman Bachchu and Shaiful Alam Dolar, Jubo Dal president Ershadur Rahman Niru and Jubo Dal General Secretary Munshi Kamaluddin have sided with the dissident group. Alamgir Alamir Kajoil is regarded as the staunch supporter of Helal.

Some district unit BNP leaders, seeking anonymity, said central leaders should resolve conflict immediately for the better future of the party in the district. They said if this situation continues, the party will face setback in the next general elections.



Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia exchanging views with the local journalists recently at Cox's Bazar Press Club. The meeting was held after conclusion of her three-day visit to Cox's Bazar district. — Star photo

News snaps

Youths receive loans

SHERPUR, May 30: Some 3,690 unemployed but trained youths received over Tk 1 crore as loan from Youth Development Department for their self-employment, reports UNB.

Officials said a total of 7,347 youths have been imparted training on poultry farming, swing, pisciculture and computer. Of the youths, 31 received training on poultry farming, they said.

Taman farming programme

SHARIATPUR, May 30: A total of 5,000 hectares of land have been brought under transplanted Aman paddy cultivation seven upazilas of the district, in the current season, reports BSS.

According to Agriculture Extension Department sources, of the total land, 3,000 hectares have been brought under high yielding variety (HYV) and the rest 2,000 hectares under local variety.

Bridge collapses

BARISAL, May 30: Road Communication between Agoljhaba and the rest parts of Barisal division remained suspended after a bailey bridge at Fulsri in Sadar upazila collapsed on Friday, reports UNB.

Police said the bridge broke down when a truck plunged into a ditch breaking its railings, leaving boy, Tanjin, critically injured. Tanjin was hospitalised.

UP chairman, others sent to jail

MYMENSINGH, May 30: A court here on Sunday sent a UP chairman and 25 others to jail hating rejecting the bail petition in a case of looting government wheat, reports UNB.

The accused persons including Dhurail UP Chairman Sharaf Uddin and 2 UP members Matru Rahman and Abdul Mannan appeared in the court and prayed for bail. Magistrate Shamsul Alam after hearing arguments of both sides rejected the bail petition and sent the accused to jail hating. According to the case, local administration stored 4,470 kg wheat allotted for VGD programme in the godown of Rafiqul Islam Badsha in Durail Bazar. Chairman Sharaf Uddin along with his accomplices attacked the godown on March 6 and took away 2,432 kg wheat in broad daylight. Badsha filed a case on March 10 accusing 30 people. The police after investigation submitted charge sheet against them.



Children's homage to Nazrul

A children's painting competition was arranged at Jamalpur Pali Biddut Samity (Rural Electricity Association) on the occasion of Nazrul Joyanti, birth anniversary programme of the National Poet. — Star photo

Pilot project

GAZIPUR, May 30: State Minister for Rural Development and Cooperatives Advocate Rahmat Ali has said that present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has initiated a pilot project to turn every rural house into a farm for achieving self-sufficiency by the year 2020, reports BSS.

He was addressing a public meeting at Kaliakoir upazila here on April 9 organised by the local Awami League. AKM Moazzam Haq, Gazi Samanuddin, Ajmatullah Khan also spoke. Rahmat Ali said with the completion of the pilot project, Bangladesh could take its place in the table of developed nations. He said the government has been putting its relentless efforts in improving the lot of the teeming millions.



Cordial Bangladesh-Turkey ties

A 10-member delegation comprising of nine students and a teacher of Ataturk Model High School of Dagonbuiyan in Feni district left Dhaka for Turkey recently as special guests of the Turkish Government. They took part in the National Youth and Sports Festival of Turkey. Erding Ulumlu, Ambassador of Turkey and Habibullah, Director of National Bank Ltd who is also the chairman of the school managing committee saw off the delegation.

Five muggers arrested

RANGAMATI, May 30: Five muggers along with some looted goods were arrested by army members from Shailakshari area here on Wednesday and Thursday, reports UNB.

The arrested Dhan Chandra Chakma, 19, Ghanmoy Chakma, 18, Bitan Khisa, 22, Sushanta Chakma, 25 and Kumar Chakma, 20, were handed over to police. On Monday, the muggers on gunpoint looted 10 tons of foodstuffs and other goods from a motor launch of army supply contractors at Bhuddhatila. Following the incident, members of army conducted massive operations in the area and were able to arrest five of the looters with some goods.

Schoolgirl electrocuted

JHALAKATHI, May 30: A schoolgirl of Uttampur village in Rajapur upazila was electrocuted while ironing her dress on Saturday, reports UNB.

Family sources said soon after electrocution in the afternoon Rajia, 14, student of class IX of Adakhola Secondary School, was rushed to Rajapur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared her dead.

Objective journalism suggested

RANGAMATI, May 30: State Minister for information Prof. Abu Sayeed said here recently that we believe in the freedom of the press and free expression of opinion for development of the mass media in the country, reports BSS.

He urged the newsmen to maintain objectivity while making news to flourish fair journalism in the country. "Only and only the authenticated news can help remove misunderstandings from minds of the people," Abu Sayeed said. The State Minister for information observed with concern that the readers are being distracted with news served on the basis of one's personal outlook ignoring sanctity, objectivity and authenticity. The state minister was exchanging views with local pressmen at Rangamati Press Club recently.

Magura DIARY

Two rapists get life-term

From Our Correspondent
MAGURA, May 30: A court here convicted two persons and awarded life-term imprisonment for raping a teenaged girl and selling her to the local brothel.

According to prosecution in brief, the accused kidnapped Babita 14, on November 24 in 1997 while she was going to her uncle's house and raped her. On the following day they sold Babita to Magura brothel. A case was lodged with Magura sadar thana in this connection. Police after investigation charge-sheeted Shaheb Ali, Amina, Khalil and Sakawat.

After examining all the records and witnesses Additional District Judge SM Jahir found Amina and Khalil guilty and awarded them life-term imprisonment. Shaheb Ali and Sakawat were acquitted as they were found not guilty.

Workshop

A two-day workshop on 'Empowerment of Women' was held recently at the local Asaduzzaman Auditorium.

State Minister for Women Affairs, Zinnatunnesa Talukdar attended the workshop as the chief guest, while Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Magura AKM Rafiqul Islam was presided over. Advocate Biren Shikdar, MP, Professor MS Akbar, MP, Rehana Akhter Hira, MP, and Prof Tahmina Hossain addressed the workshop as special guests.

Free eye camp

A 15-day free eye camp was arranged recently at Radhanagar Primary School in Sreepur upazila.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) organised the eye camp while Maleka Eye-Hospital here collaborated. A total of 150 patients got prescription free of cost.

House wife killed in road accident

A housewife was killed and two others injured in a road accident in Pajakhola area of Magura-Narail Road on May 20.

The dead was identified as Niva Rani Baidya, 40, wife of Mukul Baidya, a resident of village Batikadanga in Sadar upazila. Niva was going to village home along with her husband and son riding on a motorcycle.

Nazrul jayanti celebrated

A recitation organisation 'Kanthobithi' here arranged a discussion meeting and a recital programme of Nazrul's poems in observance of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's 101 birth anniversary. Presided over by Abu Bashar Akhand the meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr Abdullah-hel-Kafi, Hossain Siraj, Khan Rakibul Huq (Dipu) and Khan Mazharul Huq. Shaiful Islam, Nahidul Islam, Zannatul Ferdous Asha, Lipi Akhand, Protiva Halder, Shifa and Flora took part in the recital.

Aus farming programme

Agriculture Extension Department here has taken up a scheme to cultivate Aus paddy on 17,130 hectares of land in four upazilas.

Thana-wise break-up of land is as follows: 5,500 hectares in Magura Sadar, 5,755 hectares in Sreepur, 775 hectares in Shalikha and 5,100 hectares in Mohammadpur upazila.

Two unnatural deaths

Two unnatural death cases were recorded with Magura sadar thana on May 26. Both the two persons died at Magura Sadar Hospital while they were undergoing treatment. According to police, Bidhan Biswas, 40, resident of village Thaipara in Shalikha upazila was found hanging with the cross-beam of his room's ceiling. In a critical condition he was admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital where he died afterwards.

Khas land for landless demanded in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, May 30: Different rallies on Saturday at all upazilas in Rajshahi district demanded of the government distribution of Khas land, shoal land and water bodies among the landless and fishermen.

One lakh landless people and fishermen took part in the rallies organised by Land Network for Development (LAND), a network of 47 local Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the northern districts.

The rally over, thousands of organised landless poor and fishermen brought out different peaceful demonstrations with placards, festoons and banners. They paraded the main thoroughfares of all the upazila headquarters of Rajshahi district. Later on memoranda were submitted to the Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) at all the upazila.

The demands included recovery of all the khas land, khas water bodies and shoal land from the illegal occupants and land grabbers, punishment to terrorists and land grabbers, conduct dyara survey for shoal land and change the policy of distribution among the landless poor, change of land classification for those land which already became cultivable, ban on false cooperative societies, stoppage of police harassment and disposal of all false cases on landless and fishermen by land grabbers.

He died on Saturday morning. **Yeahiya murder case: All accused acquitted**

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, May 28: A court here on Thursday acquitted all the accused 10 student leaders in the sensational Yeahiya murder case.

An activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, Yeahiya, 15, was killed during a clash between the then All Party Students Unity (APSU) and Shibir in Hatemkhan area in the city on January 14, 1993.

The acquitted persons are Mahfuzul Hasnine, Shaiful Islam, Milon, Shaiful, Mahabub Hossain, Abdullahul Al Masud, Nazrul Huda, Md. Iqbal, Habibur Rahman Babu, Shaheen Shah Ali and Liton.

Two women receive acid injuries in Jhalakathi

JHALAKATHI, May 24: A newly married girl and her friend suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack at village Barya in Rajapur upazila recently, reports UNB.

Sources said Faruque Howlader, 35, of the same village allegedly hurled acid at Reba Yasmin, 18, and her friend Nasima while they were chatting in their relative's house.

Faruque, a polygamist who has already two wives, had proposed to marry Reba, an offer turned down by her father.

Reba, 18, daughter of Rafiz Uddin Howlader, was married with Abdul Ganyum of Boishakhia village in Nalchiti upazila 23 days back.

The two girls were rushed to Betagi Health Complex and later shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated rapidly.

New research organisation floated

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, May 30: A research organisation, styled Centre for Political Studies, Bangladesh (CPS, B), was floated here recently.

Professor Tareque M. Taofiqur Rahman of Political Science Department of Rajshahi University was made executive director and Dr Aminur Rahman of the same department was nominated member secretary of the organisation.

Other executives are journalist Dr Abdul Wadood (Director-Research), Prof M Abdul Bari of Finance and Banking Department of Rajshahi University (Director-Survey), journalist Sardar Abdur Rahman (Director-Publication), PRO of Western Railway Dr Endru Alak Dewary (Director-Public Relations), Prof Shariful Islam of Social Work Department of RU (Director-Treasury), Prof JAM Shakilur Rahman of Population Science Department of RU (member), Prof Ruhul Amin of Political Science Department of RU (member), Prof Muhammad Mahmudur Rahman of Political Science Department of RU (member) and lawyer Selim Azad (member).

The organisation aims to conduct research, survey and publication on social, economic and political issues of the country.

1.5 lakh MTs of mangoes perish each yr in N-dists

NATORE, May 30: About 1.5 lakh metric tons of mangoes perish every year in the three northern districts due to lack of proper storage facility, reports UNB.

As a result the growers of Natore, Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts incur a loss of Tk 150 crore every year.

According to a competent source, there are about seven lakh fruit-bearing mango trees on 9,000 hectares of land in Chapainawabganj district while 4.08 lakh on 7.15 lakh hectares of land in Rajshahi and 2.5 lakh trees on 3 lakh hectares of land in Natore districts.

The growers produce 2.20 lakh metric tons of mangoes in Chapainawabganj district while 1.50 lakh metric tons in Rajshahi and 80,000 tons in Natore districts every year.

Of the total, around 25,000 metric tons of mangoes are eaten or used for making pickles and 1.5 lakh metric tons are damaged by natural calamities in the three districts.

The growers said they are reluctant to expand lands for mango orchards in absence of specialised cold storage for preservation of fruits and want of entrepreneurs for setting up fruit processing industries.

The small growers are being deprived of proper value of their produces as they sell their mango orchards during budding season at a throwaway price.

Experts opined that there is a great demand of processed mango abroad but due to want of mango processing industries the country is being deprived of earning foreign exchange.

The growers demanded of the authorities concerned to immediately take up proper measures for setting up of fruit processing industries and preservation of their perishable fruits.

Another reports says: Litchi, a popular summer fruit, has grown better this year in Natore and other northern districts compared to the previous sea-

sons due to favourable weather. It has started coming to the market, but the price is still high. The best quality litchi are now sold at Tk 120 to 150 per hundred. Traders predict the price will come down during the peak harvest late this month.

Rajshahi regional office of Agriculture Information Service said quality litchis are produced in Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Natore, Panchagarh, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Thakurgaon and Chapainawabganj districts. But moderate variety is also produced in other northern districts.

According to Agriculture Extension Department, 45,000 hectares of land have been brought under litchi cultivation in the region this year and there are trees, each gives a yield of more than five lakh litchis.

The varieties are Bombai, Golapee, Bedana, Mozaffar, Sitamati, Kathali. Of this, Bombai, Mozaffar, Sitamati, Golapee and Kathali varieties, which are of good taste had an excellent growth this year.

Rajshahi people frustrated over transfer of power transformer

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, May 30: Transfer of the 132/33 KV 25/33 MVA transformer from Rajshahi to Dhaka has created frustration among the city dwellers.

Different political, social, cultural and professional organisations have expressed their deep concern over the matter.

Some organisations have continued to bring agitation processions, hold protest rallies and laying siege to PDB offices. Leaders of the organisations jointly met AKM Ahkaf, Project Director of Greater Rajshahi Power Project on May 10 morning and requested him not to take away the transformer from Rajshahi. But it was taken to Dhaka the same night.

The transformer was sent to Rajshahi for Katakali Sub-Station about seven months ago for installation.

A tender was also called for installation of the transformer on May 4 last, official sources said.

Power Development Board (PDB) chairman in a letter recently ordered PDB, Rajshahi office to send the transformer to Ulan Sub-Station in Dhaka. The transformer of Ulan Sub-Station recently went out of order creating serious power crisis in the area.

Local authorities of PDB requested not to take the trans-

former from Rajshahi, but their requests were not heard, PDB sources said.

There are only two transformers in Rajshahi that can supply 42 megawatt of electricity to the local lines from the National Grid. Official sources said that there had been demand for upto 65 megawatt of electricity in Rajshahi. When

Computers stolen from IU lab

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, May 30: Computers and other IT accessories worth about Taka 30 lakh were stolen from the Information Science Laboratory room of Islamic University (IU) Thursday night.

Burglars entered the laboratory room by breaking the door and made away with the goods, IU officials said.

A case was filed in this connection. However, the university authorities formed a two-member inquiry committee to investigate into the matter with Professor Khondoker Safayet Hossain as convener. Associate Professor Abul Kalam Patwary is the other member of the committee.

power supply in the National Grid remains sufficient, even then the local demand cannot be met for lack of transformer. As a result, power crisis in Rajshahi has remained an usual phenomenon even when power supply in the National Grid is enough.

The 132/33 KV 25/33 MVA transformer allotted for Katakali Sub-Station could supply another 24-megawatt electricity to the local lines from the National Grid improving the power situation. The expectation of the people of Rajshahi was frustrated for taking away the transformer to Dhaka.

PDB sources could not say when or whether another transformer would be sent to Rajshahi or not. "It is not possible at this moment, you understand," said a PDB official here on condition of anonymity. "If there is any additional transformer in hand, this one would have not been taken away", he said.

Meanwhile, Ayub Hussain, Additional Chief Engineer of PDB, Northern Region in a press release on May 11 said that the transformer had been sent to Dhaka to meet the emergency demand. "Another alike one will be bought soon for Katakali Sub-Station", the press release said.

Rajshahi Raksha Committee (Committee for Protection of Rajshahi) laid a siege to Katakali Sub-Station on last May 10 and 11. The sit-in demonstration was addressed, among others, by Rajshahi city Mayor Mijanur Rahman Minu, Workers' Party Central Polit Bureau member Fazle Hossain Badsha, Bangladesh Silk Industries Owners' Association president Moenuddin Ahmed Manik, UP Chairman Abu Sayeed (Chand), Ruhul Quddus (Tunnu), UP chairman Majedur Rahman, trade union leader Jalaluddin and Ferdous Kamal Masum.

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Three convicted in case under PSA in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, May 30: A court here in a first ever case under Public Safety Act convicted three people to seven years imprisonment on Sunday and fined them Tk 1,000 each, in default, to suffer more one year RI, reports UNB.

The convicts are Abdul Qadir of Chanpur village, Askir of Mohonpur village and Modlu Mia of Richi village in Sadar upazila.



Save rivers

Unscrupulous traders doing brisk business of sand and bricks encroaching part of riverbed at Shyampur in Narayanganj district. — Star photo