

National

Bail prayer rejected

From Jahangir Alam
NETRAKONA, Aug. 26: The bail prayer of 35 BNP and JCD activists were rejected in a case under Public Safety Act (PSA) recently.

They appeared before the concerned court for bail. Two were arrested earlier.

Court sources said, on February 17 a clash took place between Awami League and BNP at Kendua upazila centering a prize distribution ceremony of a school.

At one stage BNP leader Rafiqul Islam Hilali fired on the Awami League activists by his own licensed gun and a few of Awami League activists were injured.

A case was filed with Kendua Police Station under PSA accusing 42 BNP and JCD activists including Rafiqul Islam Hilali on February 18.

After six months on August 16 they appeared before the court and prayed for bail. But the concerned Magistrate Court rejected the bail prayer and sent all of them to jail.

Man killed in Naogaon road accident

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug. 26: A man was killed and nine others were injured, three of them seriously, in a road accident at Naogaon town on Sunday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Nipu, 42. The three critically injured—Dulal Chandra, 40, Muslim Uddin, 45, and Insan Ali, 35—were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

According to police and witnesses, the accident occurred when tempo auto-rickshaw collided with a truck. The dead and injured were travelling in the auto-rickshaw.

Two new varieties of Clone tea evolved

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, Aug. 26: Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) at Srimongal has evolved two new varieties of Clone tea—namely BT-12 and BT-13 recently.

A ceremonial presentation function of the newly introduced two varieties of Clone tea was held at BTRI officers' club, Srimongal recently.

Chairman of Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB) Brigadier Daulat Islam and Member (Research and Development) of BTB Hasan Imam attended the function as the chief guest and the special guest respectively.

It was addressed, among other, by the General Manager of Gens Finley PLC MA Kashem, Director of BTRI AFM Badrul Alam, Director of the Project Development Unit (PDU) SA Hasib and Senior Tea Planter Lutfur Rahman.

Chief guest of the function Brigadier Daulat Islam hoped that the newly introduced BT-12 and BT-13 varieties of Clone tea will be helpful to promote tea production along with maintaining its quality.

AFM Badrul Alam, Director of BTRI told the journalists that the BT-12 and BT-13 was introduced following a long time research of tea researchers of BTRI, Srimongal. These varieties of tea are more productive and qualitative than that of other species. It will be able to protect from insects and pests and also able to adjust in drought.

A circular issued in the ceremonial presentation described that BT-12 specie of Clone is a mixture of 'Monipuri-Assam variety, and BT-13 is a mixture of 'Assam Agro-type are considered as model Clone.



(Left): Most crop fields of Shyampur and Shahapur have been devoured by the River Padma during the last four years in Rajshahi district. (Right): An open air primary school at Ranipara under Shujanagar upazila. The River Jamuna devoured the school situated in Sirajganj district.

Rajshahi city slums erosion victims' last resorts

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Aug. 26: Several hundred families residing alongside the banks of the river are being rendered homeless and landless by erosions every year in the district, but nobody cares about them.

"Neither the government nor the non-government organisations (NGOs) think of us," said Salimuddin of Shahapur village in Charghat upazila. They give some relief materials and even do some rehabilitation works for the flood-hit people. Some help are also extended to the families whose houses are burnt by catching fire. Even the storm hit people are also given some kinds of assistance. But the families rendered homeless, landless and wealthless by river erosions are no unfortunate that nobody comes forward to help them," he said.

"We are really unfortunate. We can draw attentions of none. Nobody feels for us," said Abdul Hye, coming from Lalpur in Natore, now residing at the railway slum in Meherchand area of Rajshahi city.

Shahadat Ali Mondol of Matikata in Godagari upazila who is now residing with his family in a hut erected on the slope of the Godagari bypass road said in despair, "Nobody enquires about where we are going to, where and how we are taking shelter, what we are

eating and what our future is." There are the mighty rivers Padma, Mohananda, Baral and Baranai — which are flowing through the district of Rajshahi.

The Padma and the Mohananda devour their banks through out the year, but become very furious during the rainy season. The Baral and the Baranai erode lands only in the rainy season.

Godagari, Poba, Rajshahi city corporation area, Charghat, and Bagha are worst affected by river erosions.

Neither the district administration nor the Water Development Board (WDB) have any statistics regarding the erosion-affected people. In the rainy season, they are considered as flood-hit people and are given some relief materials, district administration sources said. Actually there is no specific assistance or rehabilitation programme for erosion-hit people, sources said.

WDB sources said that they were not at all supposed to extend any assistance or relief to the erosion hit people. "Rather we are responsible for checking erosions and we try to do it as per schedule," said a WDB official. But erosions are turning more serious every year.

To explain the reason of increasing erosions, he said that

the Padma was shifting its courses to the side of Bangladesh. So the mainstream of the river has now been flowing along the Bangladesh side for the last several years increasing erosions.

The river shifted by 200-300 yards into the Bangladesh side during last one decade. Crores of taka are spent every year to check the erosions for the time being on temporary basis, but all go in vain.

"Permanent works are necessary to be done to check erosions under an integrated master plan," he said on condition of anonymity adding, "now the moneys are actually wasted in the name of protecting the river banks."

Alauddin Ali of Shahapur village in Charghat upazila, who is waiting when he will be homeless by erosions by the River Padma, said that they could not sell their lands. "Nobody comes to buy our lands. So we have to wait until the last piece of land is devoured. Then we shift to some-where," he said. Some people also leave their homesteads some time much earlier, he said.

The people rendered homeless and landless usually migrate to Rajshahi city, local people of the affected areas said. Some people go to the nearby

upazila headquarters and market places. Some others take shelter on the khas lands and road-slopes available nearby. They become labourers, rickshaw-pullers and beggars. Some, especially the young males and females do unfair jobs for their living. Somebody become 'carriers' of the smugglers' clique. They carry contrabands, mostly phensidyl from India to the destinations in Bangladesh.

Rajshahi City Corporation sources said that there had been no slum in the city area just about 15 years ago. Slums are increasing both in number and size very rapidly since early nineties. Poor people from Pabna, Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Bogra, Natore and other districts are coming to the city.

Erosion-hit people comprise the larger part of this floating and slum population.

Rajshahi city corporation has some kinds of programme to help these floating and slum people. It extends some health care facilities, safe water supply and development of roads in the slum areas. Some other government and non-government organisations are also working in the slum areas in different sectors like health, education, self-employment and micro-credit and savings programme.

B'baria Jamaat leader kidnapped, freed

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Aug. 26: A Jamaat leader was kidnapped by a gang of armed miscreants in the district town on Monday, but released after one and a half hour's confinement, police sources said.

The miscreants obstructed Kazi Nazrul Islam Khadem, District Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, near Tufayel Azam monument on TA Road while he was going to the main town riding a rickshaw along with a person. One youngman jumped on the rickshaw and threatened them to remain silent by clapping their throat and the two others came in a motorcycle and dragged him down to the bank of a pond near Surjamukhi kindergarten. The gang also beat up Nazrul.

Later the miscreants asked him if he was the District Ameer of Jamaat whose name was Nazrul Islam Khadem alias Khadem Khadem gave a tricky reply saying that he was not Khadem but Nazrul Islam and a supporter of Jamaat. Being confused the miscreants released the victims.

Accommodation problem in Rajendra college

From Abdul Matin Fakir

FARIDPUR, Aug. 26: The students of Rajendra University College, with a glorious heritage, have been facing an acute accommodation problem.

Over six thousand students both boys and girls have been studying here in 18 departments including Masters and Honours courses.

The suffering of girl students beggar description. They are to attend their classes at Baitulaman premises nearly four km away from the original college campus in the town, either by rickshaws or by college buses huddling together with their male counter parts.

The concerned authority should take measures immediately to remove the problem for the betterment of education.

Seminar on land right, democratisation

From A Correspondent

RAJBARI, Aug. 26: A day-long seminar on Land Right, Man-Woman Relations, Development and Democratisation was held on Monday at Rajbari District Shilpakala Academy Auditorium.

The inaugural session was presided over by Abdul Kader, Executive Director Samata and addressed, among others, by Alf Eliason, first secretary, Swedish Embassy.

The main paper on land right was presented by Sarwar Alam, Director, Samata and discussed by ADAB Director Shamsul Huda and DU Professor Mesbah Kamal.

The main paper on Man-Woman Relations and Development was presented by Zafarunnahar Shelly, Gender Coordinator Samata and discussed by Executive Editor of fortnightly Ananya Dil Monwara Monu, Director of Bangla Academy Selina Hossain and Gender Consultant of Prip Trust Dr Nivedita Das Purakayastha.

The main paper on democratisation was presented by Anujad Hossain, central coordinator of Samata and discussed by Secretary General of BFUJ Akhter Ahmed Khan, Director of Bangladesh Human Rights Coordination Council Muhammad Hilal Uddin and Principal of Pangsha College ATM Rafiquddin.

Santhal leader's killing protested

From A Correspondent

NAOGAON, Aug. 26: Director General of Bangladesh Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission Master Kanailal Rabidas Mahanta, in a statement protested the recent barbarous killing of tribal leader Alfred Saron and burning of Bhimpur Santhal settlement in Mahadevpur upazila.

He said that such middle-age barbarity is unthinkable in a civilised society and expressed concern that the weaker minority communities such as the tribals are falling victims to the unabated greed of the influential and musclemen.

In the recent incident the hired goons of two influential land lords of the area raided the Santhal locality of Bhimpur.

He demanded of the government exemplary punishment for the marauders and all connected with such abominable act of crime, and proper relief and rehabilitation of the victims.

He called upon all human rights organisations and activists to take a joint stance against these anti-human terrorists.

30 pc Sirajganj dairy farms exist in papers only

From Our correspondent



This is a typical dairy farm at Baghabari in Sirajganj district where many so-called farm owners took bank loans and other government benefits which they allegedly misappropriated.

was raised with five cows. Each cow gave five litres of milk. Various so-called farm owners sold their cows on various occasions and in reality they showed to the government the same cows which allegedly belonged to other farms. Many unscrupulous farm owners also showed to the government false

farms which had no existence at all in reality. But they allegedly misappropriated a good amount of government money this way.

Proper monitoring system by the government would help check such unhealthy trend. As a result the government would also be benefited this way.

Health awareness among villagers increases

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, Aug. 26: Health consciousness is rising gradually among the rural people.

They are getting habituated in using sanitary latrines and in consuming pure water from tube wells instead of pond water or water from other water bodies. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been playing a vital role in motivating the poor rural people. These NGOs are extending their cooperation to bring majority of villagers under the programme.

At villages Pailanpur, Bhoghat, Kodalia, Harisankarpur, Kandra, Poranpur, Paikpara and other villages of Jhenidah Sadar upazila, a local development organisation Unnayan Dhara (UD) established 400 sanitary latrines and 64 tube wells among the beneficiaries of the

organisation.

When this correspondent visited Harisankarpur Bagdipara, a slum area, he saw most of the families using sanitary latrines.

Karuna Rani, 32, mother of four children, Mantu Biswas, 41, and some villagers said that they had been using bushes as latrines following the tradition of their forefathers. But none of them go to bushes now as the bushes are declining from the rural area sharply.

Moreover, they could understand the demerits of discharging stools here and there. Karuna Rani informed that they had been provided 'one latrine for one family' and one tube well for four families. The price of sanitary latrine and

tube well was Taka 750 and 2,625 respectively which would be recovered in 44 equal installments from them.

Being a member of Adibashi Mahila Samity of Unnayan Dhara, Karuna said that they sit in weekly meetings where their problems are detected and possible solutions are evolved by themselves. Unnayan Dhara workers work as facilitators. Each member of Adibashi Mahila Samity saves Taka 10 each week, she added.

Hosne Ara (Peara) and Rafeza Khanam (Hashi), Programme Organisers of Unnayan Dhara informed that previously the village people did not know the benefit of using sanitary latrines and tube wells. But now they have been motivated towards the right direction.

Field organisers of Integrated Community Health Development Project (ICHDP) of Unnayan Dhara informed that they could not cover 100 tube wells as per target as the water level of her working area contains arsenic in danger level and a number of people were affected by arsenicosis. Demand for tube wells in her area was increasing day by day, she informed.

Hasina Khatun, 37, of Protiva Mohila Samity, and Sahida Khatun, President of the society said that they had been provided with health care facilities from the organisation as an MBBS doctor sits every week at Harisankarpur to ensure treatment for the rural poor. Talib Bashir Nayan, Director of Unnayan Dhara said that

the women and children of the district were socially disadvantaged, neglected and economically vulnerable. Due to endless poverty, malnutrition of pregnant mothers and children, maimed diseases, psychosocial trauma and depression, injuries and for lack of treatment a large number of people become disabled. Malnourished mothers give birth to disabled children. They are neglected in the family as well as in the society.

Realising the fact 'Unnayan Dhara' has taken Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Human Rights Development Programme, Community Health Development Programmes in Jhenidah Sadar, Saikupa,

Kaligonj, Harinakundu and Mohespur upazilas through its central office and two area offices.

Nayan informed that now a-days the soil fertility had been declining sharply for using chemicals fertiliser and pesticides. His organisation has taken the challenge with the community people to be united against the promoters of chemicals fertilisers and pesticides.

Workers of Unnayan Dhara have been working with the rural farmers and motivating them to use botanical pesticides, organic manure to ensure health of soil as well as to save the people from the evils of chemicals fertilisers and pesticides as part of sustainable development programme.

News snaps

Land tax heaps up

COMILLA, Aug. 26: Outstanding land development tax of different government, autonomous and semi-government organisations here has heaped up to TKO 5.23 crore, reports UNB. Official sources said these organisations could not pay the tax due to their fund constraint. Although officials claimed that the rate of revenue collection is satisfactory, only TKO 33.10 lakh was recovered from these organisations in the preceding fiscal year.

Sugarcane plantation begins

KUSHTIA, Aug. 26: Farmers of Battail embarked on sugarcane plantation with a formal opening on the cropland of Dr Utpal Sen Gupta on Monday, reports UNB.

On the occasion, they also held a rally with Deputy director of Agricultural Extension Department Anwarul Haq in the chair. MD of Kushtia Sugar Mill Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury, GM (Agriculture) Rezaul Karim, GM (Machinery) James Joy Mollik, GM (Finance) Jamir Ahmed, CBA president Zahidul Islam and general secretary Rezaul Karim also attend the programme.

Janmastamy observed

BANDARBAN, Aug. 26: A three-day long Janmastamy ceremony of Hindu community concluded in Bandarban district town on Wednesday, reports BSS.

In this connection, a colourful procession was brought out on Tuesday. It was led by the Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Bir Bahadur MP. The procession paraded main roads of the town. On the second and third day religious programme, discussion and cultural programme were held.

Janmastamy in Gazipur

GAZIPUR, Aug. 26: Janmastamy, marking the birthday of Hindu God Sri Krishna, was observed here on Tuesday last in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

The Puja Uddipan Parishad chalked out various programmes including discussion, rally and cultural function to celebrate the Day. A discussion meeting was held at Joydevpur Bortola presided over by Prof Mukul Kumar Malik.

Boy killed in road mishap

BARISAL, Aug. 26: The divisional headquarters had gone without most of the national dailies on Monday last as the Barisal-bound paper carrier from Dhaka fell into a road-side pond at Kashipur on Barisal-Dhaka highway in the morning after hitting a rickshaw from which left one little boy Abu Bakar, 14, seriously injured, police said, reports BSS.

The speeding microbus, which was carrying the dailies, hit first the rickshaw van and as a result the boy riding on it spattered on the road and crushed under the wheels of the microbus. He was admitted to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition where he died police said. About 3,000 pieces of different national dailies including the Observer, The Daily Star, Sangbad, Janakantha, Bhorer Kagaj, Bangla Bazar, Banglar Bani, Manab Janini, Arthanity and Jay Jay Din were damaged.

Killing protested

GAZIPUR, Aug. 26: A discussion meeting was held in protest of the killing of Advocate Habibur Rahman and Advocate Kallidas Baral, Member of Bar Association recently at Gazipur District Bar Association's auditorium, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by Advocate Haris Uddin Ahmed. Among others, Advocate M Humayun Kabir, Aftab Uddin Ahmed, Fayezuddin Mollah and Sultia Uddin Advocate spoke in the meeting. Speakers demanded immediate arrest of the killers of two advocates.



Alf Elianson, First Secretary, Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh addressing the inaugural session of a seminar on Land Right, Man-Woman relations, Development and Democratisation at the Rajbari District Shilpakala Academy Auditorium on Monday.

Body recovered

NAOGAON, Aug. 26: Police recovered a body with several injuries recently from Abadpukur village in Rainagar upazila, reports BSS.

The body was identified as Ismail Hossain Mondal, 50, hailed from Madhipur village.

Acid attack on housewife

SHERPUR, Aug. 26: A 35-year-old housewife in Jhinaigati upazila suffered serious burn injuries in an acid attack allegedly by one of her relatives on Wednesday, reports UNB.

Police said Akram Hossain, 25, of Dighirpur village hurled acid at Lili Begum following a dispute over property. She was admitted to Sadar Hospital. Meanwhile, Police Super of the district visited Lili's house.

Certificate cases filed

JHALAKATI, Aug. 26: In a bid to recover Tk 3.7 crore, classified loans, four nationalised banks operating in the district filed 1,849 certificate cases during the last fiscal, reports UNB.

The banks are Janata, Agrani, Sonali and Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB). During the period, according to officials, BKB filed 911 cases for realising loan of Tk 2.84 crore, Sonali Bank 202 cases for Tk 32.04 lakh, Agrani Bank 186 cases for Tk 11.69 lakh and Janata bank 73 cases for recovering Tk 4.66 lakh.

Fish looted

BARGUNA, Aug. 26: Armed pirates looted fish, nets and other fishing materials worth about Tk 5 lakh from seven fishing boats in river Baleswar on Wednesday night, reports UNB.

They also abducted a fisherman, Chan Mia, 40, who was later rescued by his relatives from the Sundarbans paying the pirates a ransom of Tk 5,000. Another report adds: Villagers caught an alleged dacoit, Farid, 30, from Gerabonia village in Antali upazila on Wednesday night and handed him over to police.

300 poultry farms open

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Aug. 26: The department of livestock, Chapainawabganj, opened 300 poultry and dairy farms here last year, reports BSS.

Official sources said 224 dairy and 76 poultry farms were set up in five upazilas to encourage unemployed youths to take farming as a profession. The department set up 91 vaccination centres for poultry and vaccinated 97,597 animals and 14,06,490 poultry birds.

VGF programme in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, Aug. 26: A total of 7,776 metric tons of rice were distributed among the destitute people in six upazilas and three municipalities of Narsingdi district under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme in the last fiscal 1999-2000, reports BSS.

According to district Relief and Rehabilitation Office sources, per family got 120 kgs of rice through 72 centres set up in the district. The Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation has issued 64,800 VGF cards for distribution of this rice among the destitute families here. Of the total, 1512 metric tons were distributed among 12,600 card holders in Narsingdi Sadar Upazila, 2592 metric tons among 21,600 card holders in Rajpara, 756 metric tons among 6,300 card holders in Belabo, 1188 metric tons among 9,900 card holders in Monohardi, 972 metric tons among 8,100 card holders in Shibpur, 432 metric tons among 3,600 card holders in Polish upazila and 324 metric tons among 2,700 card holders in three municipalities.



Top seed South Africa's 6-3, 6-4 to win day's final oppo Monica Seles, doctor examining a child at Unnayan Dhara Health Centre at Harisankarpur (middle) A girl at village Kodalia washing hand with soap after using sanitary latrine (right) King to a beneficiary at Bagdipara under Harisankarpur in Jhenidah upazila.

— Star photo