

## National

# More power, money for UPs suggested

From Our Correspondent

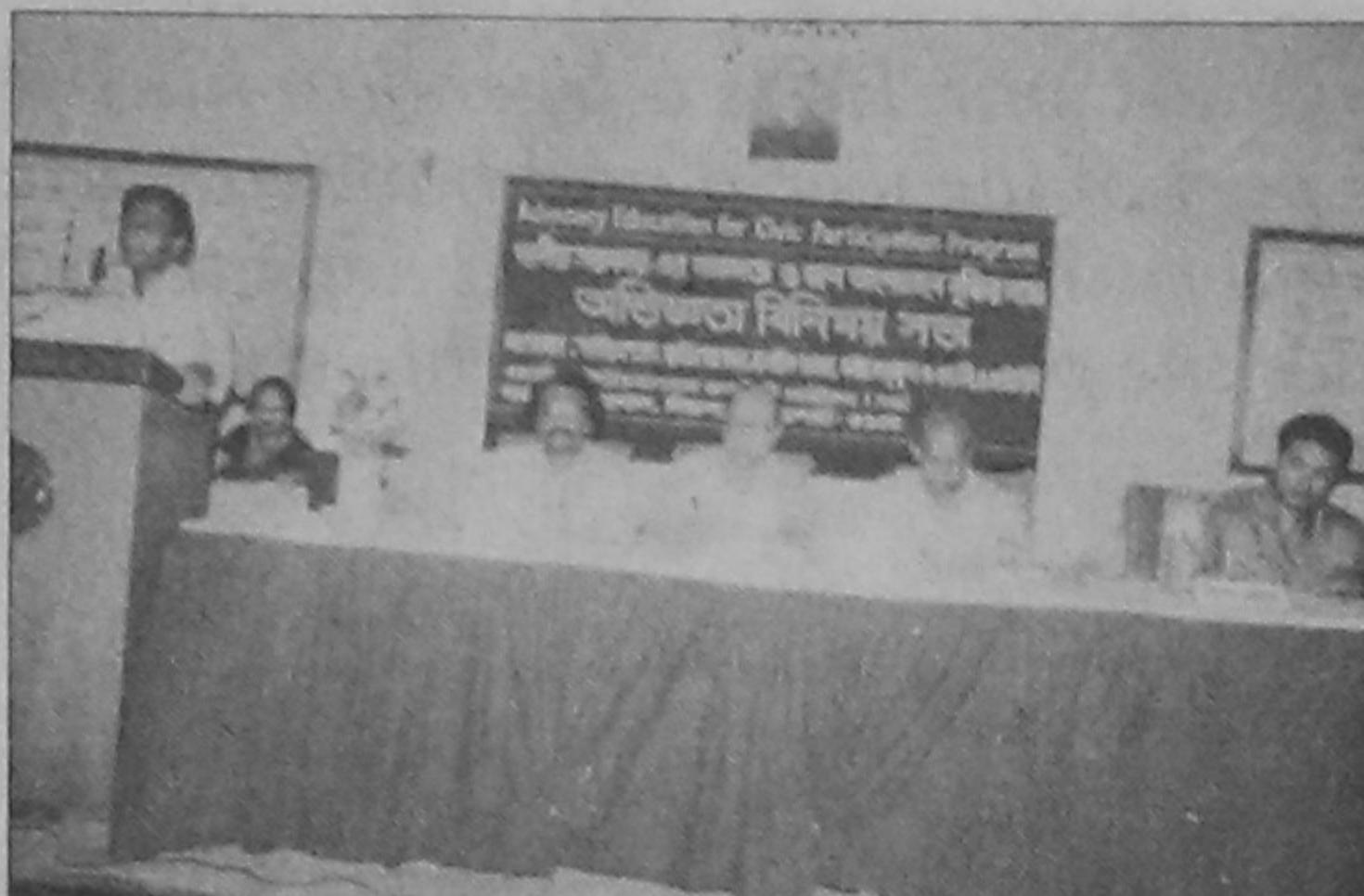
RAJSHAHI, Oct 27: Speakers at a meeting of exchanging experiences for enhancement of civic participation and power of local government suggested more power and money for the union parishads to ensure local development.

**Sachetan**, Rajshahi, a Rajshahi-based non-governmental organisation working with socio-economic development agendas, organised the daylong meeting in assistance with International Voluntary Services (IVS).

Held at Poba upazila auditorium recently, the meeting was participated by chairmen and members of five union parishads of Poba upazila, namely Naohata, Baragachi, Huzuripara, Haripur and Parila. NGO workers, civil society members, journalists, union parishad employees, social workers and representatives from the administrations.

The inaugural session was presided over by Hasinul Islam, general secretary of Sachetan. Rajshahi, District Commissioner of Rajshahi AKM Shamsuddin Ahmed was the chief guest. The session was also addressed by Poba upazila Land Development officer Sohel Imam Khan and IVS country Director Abdul Matin as the special guests. Among others, the inaugural session was also addressed by Parila UP chairman Abdul Gaffar, Haripur UP chairman Bajle Ahsan Al Rajvi, Naohata UP chairman Abdul Gafur, IVS representative Abdul Hamid, Huzuripara UP chairman Harunur Rashid and Sachetan programme officer Abdul Azad.

Naohata UP chairman Abdul Gafur, who was elected consecutively for last three terms, won the prize of the best chairman and took trainings in home and abroad said that in spite of his long experiences as a chairman he had not known many things.



Sachetan, Rajshahi, in assistance with International Voluntary Services (IVS) organised recently a meeting of sharing experiences on strengthening local bodies and enhancing people's participation in the activities of local bodies. The meeting was held at Poba upazila auditorium in Rajshahi.

--Star photo

budget in time and implementing it in phases," he said.

Naohata UP member Yunus Ali said that people of his area did not call them wheat-thieves any more. "This has been possible for Sachetan and IVS who have taught us how to work along with people. Civic participation in our activities has tremendously increased. They now know everything and that is why they do not unnecessarily blame us for which we are not guilty," he said.

Huzuripara UP member Akkas Ali said that they had not been at all sincere to collect tax bearing that their popularity would go down. "Sachetan and IVS have convinced us and now we are collecting tax and observing that our popularity has not been at all affected," he said.

The UP members also cited some troubles they are facing. Yunus Ali said that they were compelled to adopt unfair means.

Haripur UP member Altanur

Haque alleged that they had to pursue for having a project. "Without good relation with MPs and ministers and managing government officials one cannot get this project passed," he said.

The chairmen and members demanded more power and direct development funds for the union parishads (UPs). They also demanded appointment of a minimum number of trained employees in the union parishads.

They, at the same time, acknowledged that most of them were not aware of their power and duties. The government is very reluctant in training up the UP chairman and members, they said.

International Voluntary Services (IVS) has been conducting, under the prevailing circumstances, a project titled Advocacy Education for Civic Participation Programme (AECP) from last four years in 30 union parishads through local NGOs.

The main objective of the programme is to enhance local people's direct involvement with the local democratic bodies and influence the bodies to take decisions in favour of their interests. Another objective of the programme is to create a congenial environment for reciprocal cooperations between the local democratic bodies and friendly organisations with a view to make the local democratic bodies more active and effective.

The meeting observed, regarding the experiences stated by the cross section of people, that AECP had helped strengthen working capacity of the five union parishads, increased transparency and accountability of the union parishads and enhanced participation of the civic people and local organisations in the activities of the union parishads.

## A success story of Natore traders

From Our Correspondent

NATURE, Oct 27: Self-sponsored anti-extortion activities of local business leaders have geared up police-drivers, during last several months in Natore town.

Local businessmen are now having a sigh of relief as most of the 'identified' terrorists who used to take tolls from the businessmen regularly, are taken to jail custody," said Abdus Salam, president of the Natore Central Businessmen's Movement Council for Resistance of Terrorism and Extortion (NCBMCRT).

He also said, that one year ago when local businessmen were cornered by some identified terrorists, we formed NCBMCRT which, in short, was wellknown as 'Lathi Bushi' (stick-flame) organisation.

"Within a few months, our organisation managed to earn businessmen's confidence and they spontaneously united with us," said Abdus Salam.

He also told this correspondent that we handed over a number of extortions to police in the meantime.

Businessman Saiful Islam Rogers, general secretary of NCBMCRT told The Daily Star that Natore was at present an extortion-free town. But, he added, activities of the organisation could not satisfy some of local political leaders.

A newcomer in the town may have found himself caught in a sudden breath-taking situation amidst of 'poo-poo' sound of many whistles and people running to and fro with a stick in hand each.

At present police, however, have become active against the towns top terrors following a directive from their high-ups. About 60 persons were arrested recently.



This is not a stick procession of any political party. This is a rehearsal procession by the businessmen in Natore town who have successfully curbed illegal extortion considerably recently. The processionists carrying whistles and sticks with them and chanting slogans against extortions.

--Star photo

## Pirates rule coasts

BARGUNA, Oct 27: Some 300 incidents of piracy took place in coastal areas of the country in the last three months indicating that the law and order situation continues to go down the slope, reports UNB.

According to Trawler Owners' Association, two fishermen were killed and three remained missing during the period, creating panic among the fishermen.

The association leaders said the pirates looted fish, fish nets, fuel and spare parts of trawler engines worth of Tk one crore leaving some 60 fishermen injured in the incidents.

They said law-enforces hardly dare chase the pirates as they hide into the dense forests of the Sundarbans after committing robberies.

The incidents of piracy, they said, rises alarmingly when fishing in the bay and rivers of the

country gains momentum. Sometimes, the sea robbers throw the fishermen into the rivers, tying up their hands and legs, or they confine them into the cold storage of trawler during piracy.

In 1994, the government had taken a decision to introduce coast guards in all coastal areas of the country to protect the lives of fishermen. But the decision could not be implemented in six years.

It was also decided that coast guard bases would be set up in 21 points of the coastal areas. But this decision too has been left unimplemented for reason unknown.

The coast base in Patuakhali is understaffed and lacks logistics support like vessels. There are only 30 marines working there under a commanding officer, according to a competent source.

## Goitre patients up

SHARIATPUR, Oct 27: Number of goitre patients is increasing day by day greater Faridpur district due to iodine deficiency, reports UNB.

The man along with 36 other compatriots was arrested by Bangladeshi coast guards in the Bay of Bengal while fishing illegally. They were sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for different terms. The prisoners were shifted to Sylhet from Chittagong jail on 16 March 1999. The jail terms of these people expired on April 15 of 1998. But the Myanmar government is not showing any interest to take them back, official sources said. Now there are 79 foreigners in Sylhet jail.

Conducted by a local non-governmental organisation, Sharatpur Development Organisation (SDO), the report said due to iodine deficiency the number of disabled people in these districts has been increasing gradually.

Iodine is termed as a strong agent for mental and physical growth. On average, an adult should take 150 micrograms of iodine, which is mainly procured from water and soil. But excessive rainfall and floodwater washed it away from soil.

But as the poor people of remote areas are not aware of the usefulness of iodised salt, they consume non-iodised salt and become victims to different diseases.

To meet country's iodine deficiency, the government enacted a law in 1994 for procuring, selling and using iodised salt. As per the new law, procuring and selling non-iodised salt is strongly prohibited.

## News snaps

### Gas detected in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 27: Engineers of a private firm named North Bengal Subsoil Investigator have detected the presence of natural gas in Khudra Sialkot here.

Engineers of the firm said they were testing soil in the area for a proposed industry by a private entrepreneur when they detected the gas. Hundreds of curious people rushed there to see the emission of gas. When contacted Assistant Engineer of the firm said their preliminary test confirmed the presence of gas.

### Degree examinees demonstrate

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Oct 27: Degree class examinees under the banner of All Party Students' Action Committee (APSAC) laid a siege to the office of Deputy Commissioner on Sunday and submitted a memorandum protesting the decision to exchange centres of degrees examinations in the district town.

Earlier, the students brought out a procession in the town. The students at a press conference at Mymensingh Press Club demanded degree examination centres at their own colleges. They threatened if the demand was not met they would go for tougher action programmes including rail and road barricades. Masud Rana Ahmed, convenor of APSAC, Nazmul Islam, Osman Hossain, Syed Sumon Ahmed and Liton Chandra Pal spoke at the press conference.

### Kularchar becomes illiteracy-free

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 27: Kularchar under Kishoreganj district on Tuesday became illiteracy-free as 37,539 people of the Kularchar Sadar and its six unions became literate under the Total Literacy Movement (TLM), reports BSS.

Local Government Minister Zillur Rahman on Tuesday unveiled the plaque of 'illiteracy-free Kularchar' at the Upazila Complex here. A total of 17,920 males and 19,619 females from the age groups of 11 to 45 became literate getting education from 1,330 reading centres in the upazila during the last six months. They proved their literacy by sitting in the final examinations at 310 centres. While unveiling the plaque at the upazila complex, the minister said the present government has strengthened the TLM across the country to make illiteracy-free Bangladesh towards reaching the goal of economic emancipation. He said the country did not reach its desired goal during 21 years prior to the coming of the present government when people were deprived of their right to education.

### Eight flood shelters underway

COMILLA, Oct 27: The construction of eight school buildings cum flood shelters here are progressing satisfactorily, reports BSS.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is implementing the work at a cost of Taka 79 lakh. In the meantime, 70 per cent work have been completed. The rest will be done very soon. These schools cum flood shelters were damaged during 1998 flood.

### Two housewives beaten to death

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 27: Two housewives were beaten to death in two villages at Kazipur upazila recently.

Police sources said Ambia Beoua, 45, wife of late Moksed Ali of Gandal village was beaten to death by her son and brother-in-law recently. Following an altercation between them, they beat her up to death. After her death they hanged the body with the ceiling fan of a room. A case was lodged with Kazipur police station. But police failed to arrest the culprits. Police recovered the body and sent for autopsy at Sirajganj General Hospital. After autopsy the concerned doctors declared that she had been murdered. Another housewife Lal Vanu, 25, wife of Shahidul Islam of Kabir village in the same upazila was also beaten to death by her husband and relatives recently. Police sources said her husband proposed to marry another woman. The couple exchanged hot words. The husband and his relatives beat up the victim to death. Police recovered the body and after autopsy the body was handed over to her father. The concerned doctor declared that she had been murdered. A case was also lodged with Kazipur police station. None was arrested.

### 10 phenisidyl traders surrender

HABIGANJ, Oct 27: Ten phenisidyl traders recently surrendered to a committee of local Narcotics Control Department, reports UNB.

Seven of them were identified as Dail Didar, Sheikh Selim, Touhid Mia, Phenisidyl Rahmat, Bachchu Mia, Heroin Jamal and Ramjan Ali of Shayestaganj Municipality. Taking advantage of an amnesty announced by the committee, the drug traders surrendered to the committee in a bid to correct themselves. Local municipality chairman Abdur Razzak heads the committee.

### Wheat for uplift schemes

KISHOREGANJ, Oct 27: Some 97 metric tons of wheat have been allocated for implementing various development schemes in one municipality and six unions of Bholab upazila under a test relief programme, reports UNB.

Of the total wheat, 75 mts has been allocated for the six unions while 22 mts for the municipality. Officials said the wheat would be utilised for repairing roads and worship places, educational institutions and playgrounds. During the Bangla months of Ashwin and Kartik, poor people, especially the agriculture labourers, face acute hardship, as they don't have work during this lean period. Any test relief programme gives them an opportunity to earn their livelihoods.

### Incredible weight indeed!

PATUAKHALI, Oct 27: Baby Habib has attained an incredible weight of 41 kg at the age of three years, reports UNB.

Son of fish trader Mohammad Nurul Islam alias Pyada of village Gerakhal in Sadar upazila, Habib is the youngest among four brothers and one sister. He was a normal baby at birth said father Nurul Islam but started gaining weight soon after. "At present he can't stand up or walk without support", Islam said. According to the local Child Specialist Dr Bikash, it's a genetic disease created by inadequate secretion of a thyroid hormone. Nurul Islam and his wife Shahida Begum are at a loss over their youngest son's all.

### Experience-sharing meeting

PIROJPUR, Oct 27: An experience-sharing meeting on capacity-building of Local Government and to ensure increased people's participation in local elected bodies was held at Zila Parishad, reports BSS.

A local NGO "Dak Diye Jai" organised the meeting, sponsored by International Voluntary Services (IVS) under its Advocacy Education for Civil Participation Programme (ACEP). Deputy Commissioner S M Zahurul Islam attended the meeting as the chief guest while ADC Enamul Hoq and IVS Country Director M A Matin were the special guests. NGOs Executive Director Shahjahan Qazi was in the chair. Chairmen, members and women members of union parishads, civil society representatives and NGO workers of different unions attended the meeting.

### Mushroom growth of brick fields

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, Oct 27: Brick manufacturing enterprises have mushroomed all over the district posing threat to the environment and fertility of arable lands around the brick fields, reports BSS.

Witnesses said about 10,000 acres of cropland are being used for manufacturing brick and the brick fields owners use mango and other class of trees as firewood. Farmers said agricultural productivity and mango production around the brick fields had declined due to poisonous smoke polluting the environment.

### Winter vegetable farming scheme

MADRIPUR, Oct 27: A total of 17,900 hectares have been brought under the cultivation of winter vegetables in five districts of Barisal Agriculture Region during the current Robi crop season, reports BSS.

The target of production has been fixed at 26,800 tonnes, of the total 4,000 hectares have been brought under vegetable cultivation in Faridpur, 3,000 hectares in Madaripur, 3,200 hectares in Gopalganj, 3,100 hectares in Rajbari and 4,600 hectares in Sharatpur districts. According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED) sources, the vegetables to be produced are tomato, lady's finger, pumpkin, brinjal, cauliflower, china shak, bean, sweet gourd and other vegetables. A source in the AED said, thousands of unemployed youths and students have also started cultivation of winter vegetables.

**Directorate General Defence Purchase**  
Ministry of Defence  
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

**Re-Tender Notice**

1. Sealed tenders are invited in local currency from bonafide Manufacturers/ Dealers/ Suppliers/Indentors (Enlisted Firm) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh "Army" :

Sl No	Nomenclature	Date of Selling	Date of Opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To		
a.	Fd Wksp, Demolition & Mining Eapt (Qty-2 Line)	11-11-2000	14-11-2000	Local	1047/P-7

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (not refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hrs and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of all tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/858  
DFP-25625-23/10  
G-1878

Lt Col  
For Director General