

# Polls fever grips RU teachers

### RUTA, Dean, Syndicate, AC, P&D committee elections Thursday

From Kamran Reza Chowdhury

RAISHAHI UNIVERSITY, Jan 22: Hectic campaign has been going on here on the campus over the ensuing Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA), Dean, Syndicate, Academic Council (AC), and Planning and Development (P&D) Committee elections scheduled to be held on Thursday (January 25).

Seven hundred and fifty teachers of the university are going to elect 15-member RUTA committee, five deans, five teacher representatives for the university syndicate, six AC members and one Planning and Development Committee member.

Polls fever has gripped teachers who are now busy campaigning door to door. Teachers belonging to pro-government Yellow panel and pro-opposition White Panel are contesting in the polls.

In RUTA polls, Prof Muhammad Mijanuddin of Sociology Department and Shafiqunnabi Samadi of Music and Dramatics Department have been contesting for the posts of president and general secretary respectively from Yellow Panel, while White Panel fields Prof AKM

Sahadat Hossain Mondol of Institute of Biological Science and Prof Jaglul Haider of Political Science for the posts of president and general secretary respectively.

Other candidates from the Yellow are Prof Md Shah Nawaz Ali (Vice President), Sushanta Kumar Bhattacharya (Treasurer), Dr Rostom Ali (Joint Secretary), Prof Md Atar Ali, Prof AHM Mostafizur Rahman, Prof Nasim Anjum, Md Rezaul Karim, Md Waliul Hasnat, Dr M Julfikar Ali, Abu Bakar, Md Ishanaif, Dr Mozibor Rahman, Prof Mushfique Ahmed, and Prof Shahidul Islam (Members).

Other candidates from the White are Dr Md Rakibuzaman (Vice President), Dr Md Zillur Rahman (Treasurer), Md Rafique Azad (JS), Dr Abdul Hye Talukdar, Dr Md Nurul Amin, Kazi Md Mostafizur Rahman, Md Sazuar Raihan, Md Abdul Matin Talukdar, Dr Md Zamshed Ali Sarker, Dr Md Shamin Khan, Md Omar Ali, Dr Md Rabiul Hossain, Dr Md Abul Bashar Mia (Members).

In Dean elections, Prof Md Haibur Rahman and Prof Md Abul

Khaleque, who belong to Yellow, have been elected deans unopposed of Law Faculty and Agriculture Faculty respectively.

Other candidates from the Yellow are Prof Khanam Mamtaz Ahmad (Arts), Prof Md Abdul Jalil Mia (Science), Prof Nishith Kumar Paul (Life and Earth), Prof Abdul Rahman (Social Sciences), and Prof AKM Abdul Mazid (Business Studies).

Other Dean candidates belonging to White panel are Md Sahjahan (Arts), Md Abdur Rahman Siddiqui (Social Science), Faizul Islam Faruki (Science), Abdus Salam (Life and Earth) and Md Amanullah (Business Studies).

Yellow Panel-backed candidates for the Syndicate are Prof Md Mokhlesur Rahman (Provost Category), Prof Md Mozaffar Hossain (Professor Category), Dr Md Rafiqul Islam (Associate Professor Category), Md Fayek-uz-Zaman (Assistant Professor Category), Pranab Kumar Pandey (Lecturer category).

White Panel-backed candidates for the Syndicate are Prof M. Keramat (Provost category), Dr

Abdul Quadir Bhuiyan (Professor category) Md Rafiqul Islam (Associate Professor category), Md Enamul Haq (Assistant Professor category), and Md Abdul Haq (Lecturer category).

Md Ansar Uddin, Dr Md Aktar Faruk, Dr Md Abu Taher, Dr Sarkar Sujit Kumar, Dr Abu Younus Khan Md Zahangir, and Md Mozibul Haq Azad Khan have been contesting for AC memberships from Yellow Panel. On the other, AFM Abdul Wahed, Md Motiar Rahman, Md Norul Islam, Md Nighar Rahman, Md Shariful Islam and Monjurul Alam have been contesting for AC memberships from White Panel.

Yellow panel-backed Prof Md Shah Alam of Botany Department and White Panel-backed Md Abdul Aziz Mia of Applied Physics and Electronics Department are contesting for the membership of Planning and Development Committee.

# Saidpur now a haven for smugglers

From EAM Asaduzzman

NILPHAMARI, Jan 22: Saidpur, the busiest town in the district, is also known as the Railway City. Country's largest railway workshop is located here. From Saidpur Railway Station, inter-city trains Rupsa, Simanta, Varendra, Titumir and many local trains start long journey for different destinations of northern and southern districts. The station platform is crowded with passengers when the trains depart and arrive. Passengers departing empty handed return with bags and luggage. Most of these passengers carry the smuggled goods. Due to convenient rail connection, Saidpur has now turned out to be smugglers' haven.

Apart from rendering very fast transportation facilities, inter-city services also protect smuggled goods from clutches of local hoodlums. From nearby borders of Rajshahi Naogaon, Joypurhat, Dinajpur Hili, Birampur. Indian goods specially cloth, sugar, salt, cosmetics, spare parts, spices, fruits, phensidly, heroin as other drugs are normally smuggled by these trains. All inter-city trains stop over in Hili station which borders India and is known as haven of smugglers. Although these trains have no scheduled stoppage in this station, but all trains stop over here. Most smugglers get down in this station from trains on way to Khulna and Rajshahi. Immediately hundreds of Indian nationals appear in no man's land. Some smugglers from this end ran into Indian part. The scene is unbelievable, unless one sees it in his own eyes. Ironically it is an international border and both ends are guarded by armed BDR and BSF jawans. However, whenever at the initiative of honest BDR officers, measures are taken to check such activities, border tension grips up.

When these inter-city trains arrive at Saidpur, Nilphamari, these are once again stopped in Birampur and Hili stations. Hun-

dreds of smugglers with smuggled goods ram into the train. Passenger compartments, bunks toilets corridors, electric bogie, buffet cards are all filled with smuggled goods. A section of BDR and police personnel remain silent spectators. After these trains start moving from Hili station, rail police, TTC and attendants divide the compartments amongst themselves. Based on the value of smuggled items, they collect their tolls from them openly. With their help, trains are stopped here and there and smugglers disappear with smuggled goods in no time. Reports are ripe that Parabatipur, Santahar, and Iswardi railway police have leased out their routes to influential smugglers. Reliable sources on condition of not disclosing their names state that auctioneer "PC" by name pay more than lakhs of taka to the police stations in this area for a single rail route.

In this way, with the direct patronisation of a section of corrupt railway men and rail police, smugglers in this region have established their huge network. The government is deprived of revenues of large amount. Railway is being deprived of large amount of its income. It is all the more dangerous that with these smuggled goods are coming firearms posing threat to our national security.

Unless effective measures and steps are taken against these activities, the slogan of the railway authorities for rendering "safe and enjoyable" journey to the passengers will never come true. At the same time, national and economic security will also remain threatened.

# News snaps



Mohammad Faruk, Chittagong Divisional Director of Family Planning Directorate distributes certificates among the participants of a two-day long workshop at Cox's Bazar. The workshop was held recently on Family Planning, Reproductive Health and Gender issues for the journalists of Cox's Bazar district. Deputy Director of Family Planning in Cox's Bazar Umme Hasina Begum is also seen in the picture --Star photo

## Man burnt to death

KURIGRAM, Jan 22: A mysterious fire burnt to death a night guard and valuables worth about Tk five lakh in the office of Motor Owners' Association in Sadar upazila on Saturday morning, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Farid Ali, 60. Witnesses said the fire broke out at about 7:30 am. Local fire fighters rushed to the spot and with the help of local people put out the flame after frantic efforts. The cause behind the fire could not be known immediately.

## Foodgrains misappropriated

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 22: A case was filed against the former In-Charge of Bangalpara food godown in Ashtagram upazila for misappropriation rice and wheat worth about Tk 4.44 lakh, reports UNB.

Official sources said Farid Ahmed Chowdhury misappropriated 28.48 mts of rice and 7.93 mts of wheat from the godown during his working period from July to November 2000. After preliminary investigation the concerned food officer filed a case against him on January 11.

## Tragic!

MUNSHIGANJ, Jan 22: A little girl met watery grave when she fell into the River Dhaleswari from a Barisal-bound launch on Saturday night, reports UNB.

# A threat to wildlife in Cox's Bazar

From Abdul Monayem Khan

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 22: Wildlife, particularly mammals, are gradually disappearing from Cox's Bazar forest region.

Rampant poaching and unabated deforestation are threatening the existence of wild animals in Cox's Bazar, causing imbalance in ecosystem in Chittagong Hill Districts.

It is learnt that 21 species of wildlife have already disappeared and 45 other species are on verge of extinction.

Experts said, poaching, expansion of human settlements, industrialisation and extension of arable lands are the reasons behind the natural degradation.

According to forest officials, the 21 extinct species of animals include nil cow, wild buffalo, wild cow, big horned deer, wolf and three types of rhinoceros.

The species gradually disappeared mainly after the liberation of the country and were totally wiped out in the last 15 years. Besides, the

number of tigers, elephants, deers, monkeys, ghorial and dolphin are also decreasing, they added.

The number of wild animals is decreasing every day in five of the seven upazilas of Cox's Bazar due to various reasons for quite a long time. Teknaf, Ukhia, Ramu, Chokoria and Cox's Bazar Sadar upazilas of the district were once teeming with different types of wild animals such as fox, jackal, wild cat and wolf.

But these are now rarely found. These animals mainly live on rats and harmful insects and thus saved the crops.

But during the last three decades the number of wild animals have decreased in an alarming proportion.

The population of the district has been increasing at an alarming rate. Every year new human settlements are established by clearing the jungles. Felling of trees for fire-wood have badly affected the habitat of wild animals.

According to experts, in Bangladesh there are 105 species of mammals, 567 species of birds, 129 species of reptiles and 14 types of amphibians which constitute a rich wild-life resource.

Local people urged the concerned authorities to take proper steps to save the wild animals from further extinction to maintain a healthy environment.

At the same time, indiscriminate felling of fruit-bearing trees caused a serious threat to the ecology and fruit production of Cox's Bazar district. Fruit bearing trees in all the seven upazilas of the district are on verge of extinction, due to large-scale felling.

According to sources, Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu, Ukhia, Kutubdia, Mohekhali, Chokoria and Teknaf upazilas were once famous for abundant production of jackfruit, lichi, mango, palm, guava and pineapple.

But now these trees are very few in number due to indiscriminate

felling of trees. As the economic condition of the rural people is rapidly deteriorating they are compelled to sell their fruit bearing trees to a section of traders.

Agricultural experts said, the district situated in a region where fruit bearing trees grow with minimum care and cost. A huge quantity of surplus fruits were marketed by the growers.

Some farmers said, they took loans from the money lenders by mortgaging their trees to meet their daily expenses. They failed to refund the loans and ultimately they lost their trees after a few years.

It may be mentioned that there are 80 brickfields and 65 saw-mills in the district.

Hundreds of wood-loaded trucks are seen on their way to different areas of the country every day. On the other hand, planting of fruit-bearing trees is rare, causing ecological imbalance which is changing the rainfall and weather pattern of the district.

# Massive Rabi farming scheme taken up in Mymensingh

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Jan 22: A massive Rabi crop cultivation programme has been taken up in the district. Pulses, mustard, spices and vegetables will be cultivated under the programme.

According to local Agriculture Extension Department (AED), a total of 7,500 hectares of lands were brought under mustard cultivation with a production target of 6,750 metric tons of mustard.

Seeds and fertilisers will be made available to make the programme a success, agriculture officials said.

Of the total land, 1,000 hectares will be brought under the farming in Sadar upazila with a production target of 900 mt, 1,200 hectares in Muktagachha with a production target of 1,080 mt, 400 hectares in Phulbaria with production target of 360 mt, 600 hectares in Nandail with a production target of 540 mt, 400 hectares in Trishal with a pro-

duction target of 360 mt, 700 hectares in Ishwarganj with a production target of 630 mt, 400 hectares in Gouripur with a production target of 360 mt, 900 hectares in Phulpur with a production target of 810 mt, 400 hectares in Bhaluka with a production target of 360 mt, 400 hectares in Galarganj with a production target of 360 mt, 700 hectares in Haliughat with a production target of 630 mt and 400 hectares in Dhubaura upazila with a production target of 360 mt.

Besides, in the district, a total of 600 hectares of lands will be brought under masur pulses cultivation with a production target of 460 mt, 3,000 hectares under gram farming with production target of 2,790 mt, 400 hectares for mug pulses with production target of 280 mt, 1500 hectares under mashkalai pulses with a production target of 1100 mt, 240 hectares under matar pulses

with a production target of 170 mt, 25 hectares under aroher pulses with a production of 17.50 mt and 1500 hectares under khesari pulses cultivation with a production of 1140 mt.

Cultivation of various kinds of spices has increased in the district in recent years. The AED sources said, a total of 1000 hectares of lands were brought under onion cultivation with a production of 10,000 mt, 800 hectares under garlic with a production of 4600 mt, 1500 hectares under chilli with a production of 3000 mt, 249 hectares under zinger with a production of 1245 mt, 850 hectares under turmeric with a production of 2125 mt and 500 hectares under dhanias with a production target of 1,110 mt.

# Faridpur DIARY

## 50 injured in clash

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Jan 22: At least 50 people were injured, 15 of them critically, in a clash between two rival groups at Baliahati Bazar under Nagarkanda upazila recently.

According to local people, supporters of Yakub Matubbar and Nuru Matubbar clashed over establishing supremacy in the area. On receipt of information police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The 15 critically injured were admitted to Faridpur Medical College Hospital and Faridpur General Hospital.

## FFs' list prepared

A list of 3531 freedom fighters in the district has been prepared.

Captain (Rtd) Nurmohammad Babul, district unit president of Freedom Fighters' Scrutiny Committee, at a press conference held at Faridpur Press Club recently said the list was finalised on the basis of the principles set by the central command council of Muktiyoddha Sangsad. The upazila-wise break-up of freedom fighters is as follows: 336 in Sadar, 396 in Madhukhali, 148 in Char Bhadrasan, 395 in Boalmari, 758 in Alfadanga, 727 in Nagarkanda, 254 in Sadarpur and 517 in Bhanga. Hasibul Hasan Lablu, chairman of Faridpur Municipality was also present on the occasion.

# Corruption at Atpara Health Complex alleged

From Jahangir Alam

NETRAKONA, Jan 22: People of Atpara upazila in the district brought out a procession on Wednesday demanding stoppage of alleged irregularities and corruption going on at Atpara Health Complex. People of Atpara upazila are being deprived of minimum health care service for a long time. Poor patient, are getting only paracetamol tablets from the hospital since long. Doctors and nurses often misbehave with the

patients and their attendants. Paucity of water, absence of regular cleaning, shortage of medicine, irregularities and negligence of doctors worsened the situation.

On January 4, local people of Atpara went on rampage and damaged the office room of the Upazila Health Officer. Angry people also manhandled the doctors and Upazila Health Officer Dr. Jahir Uddin.

# Sirajganj cold victims need warm clothes

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 22: Unprecedented cold wave during the last few days has almost halted normal life in this district town.

Severe cold wind coming from the Himalayas has made lives of the dwellers, specially the homeless people of this small town miserable. At least 10 people died here due to cold wave who had been attacked with various cold related diseases. Intensity of cold worsens after midday and turns extremely unbearable in the evening. Everyday, fog clouds the town until 8 to 9 am and vehicles ply in the streets with their headlights still on. Although the sun appears for a while around 10 am, but it soon disappears to the dismay of the dwellers. Last Monday morning drizzles made things even more worse. Destitutes are trying to combat this bitter wave through heat generated from burning heaps of straws and old rubber tyres. On the other hand second hand warm clothes sellers are making best use of this situation, are earning handsomely by raising the prices two and even three times. Disease like fever, cough, cold and dysentery have also alarmingly increased. The only government hospital is crowded with bronchitis and an asthma patients. But the hospital is short of oxygen and do not have the "lobolizer machine." As a result distress and sufferings of the patients know no bounds. The owners medicine pharmacies also making good use of this abnormal situation have doubled prices of life saving "salbutamol inhalers."

Severeness of cold in this small district town situated near the

Jamuna river side is usually bitter than other areas of the country. Which usually deteriorates in January and February observers feel that this cold will worsen further during next few weeks. Cultivation of winter crops, particularly potato is facing damage from this unnatural coldness.

Although some voluntary organizations have come forward with warm clothing for the destitutes, but this is extremely merger compared to requirements. Authoritative sources believe unless the government and the rich section of the country come forward with arrangement for distribution of sufficient warm clothes for the homeless people in this area, possibility of loss of life from this bitter and severe cold may not be ignored.

People here are crowding winter garment shops. Sellers display varieties of warm clothes in shops. Many vendors are also selling garments including old ones, on footpaths and in public places. A large number of makeshift shops have also sprung up in SS Road, Jam-e-Mosque area, station road area, court premises area Bahingola area. But prices are comparatively high this year, local residents said.

"People of low-income group are flocking shops which sell old warm garments," said Abdul Batan, a resident in the district headquarters.



A big procession was brought out recently in Khulna by the All-party Action Committee demanding immediate cancellation of the Public Safety Act (PSA). --- Star photo