

New body causes discord in Jamalpur BNP

MUHAMMAD ALI, *Jamalpur*

Internal conflict in Jamalpur district BNP has taken a new turn after the new convening committee of the district unit of the party was announced.

After the announcement on May 6, the gap between the two groupseled by Bhola Mallik and former deputy minister Serajul Hoque respectively has widened.

The group led by the former deputy minister is opposed to the new 92-member convening body while the Bhola Mallik group has welcomed it.

Bhola Mallik has been made Convenor of the new district committee. Shortly after the announcement in the town, leaders and activists of Mallik group brought out procession and distributed sweets among themselves.

On the other hand, former convenor Serajul Hoque criticised the new committee.

In an instant reaction, Siddiqur Rahman, Convenor of the town unit, held a press conference at the residence of Serajul Hoque, who was not present at that time, and castigated the new committee.

A large number of leaders and activists took out several processions in the district headquarters in favour of the former deputy minister. The activ-

New lists of terrorists being prepared

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Police department is preparing new lists of terrorists in the six southern districts under Barisal division prior to the upcoming parliamentary elections.

A highly placed police source here said, we are preparing the lists free from political influences.

But it is doubtful, according to political observers, whether the new lists would be free from political influence or not.

Meanwhile, the recent reshuffle in the Police Department here, even in the thana level, kept the police

personnel in the constant fear of transfer.

On the otherhand some leaders and workers of the main opposition BNP alleged that launching of police drive in the name of searching of warrant criminals may end in arrest of harassment of their activists.

It was also alleged that police in the meantime, raided some houses of the BNP and its front organisation leaders during this week.

A police source said, we are trying to bring the terrorists to book, whoever he may be or belonging to any political party. We will also nab

Father, son killed in Jessore road accident

UNB, *Jessore*

A poor green coconut seller and his son were killed in a road mishap in Jessore town on Saturday evening.

Police and witnesses said while selling coconut in their rickshaw van

near the Education Board office Ekabbar Ali, 45, and his son Jony, 18, of Monirampur upazila were injured seriously when the van was hit from behind by a Khulna bound speeding bus coming from Patuakhali.

They were rushed to Jessore

ists chanted slogans against the new committee.

A section of leaders and activists district BNP at a latest press conference held on May 12 in the town expressed frustration over on-going conflict in the party.

Terming the new committee undemocratic and autocratic, they called for cancellation of it and formation of a one free from controversy.

They said if the bickering continues ahead of general election BNP will face setback in the results. Among others, the press conference was addressed by Advocate Abdul Khaleq and Advocate Vares Ali Mamun.

They also sought party chief's intervention in this regard.

In the latest development, Serajul Hoque along with his supporters on Monday tried to meet the BNP Chairperson, Kahleda Zia, at the party's Banani office in the capital to lodge their 'protest'. However, the BNP chief, who is also Leader of the Opposition in parliament, did not meet them.

Party insiders told this correspondent the strife among local leaders has frustrated the grass-roots level activists and supporters.

They also apprehended disagreement will cast adverse impact on the party's nomination process for the next parliamentary polls.

College student drowns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

A student of Sirajganj University Government College feared drowned in the River Jamuna at about 7-30 pm on Sunday.

He was identified as Roni, 17, son of Abdul Hye, Assistant Engineer of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC).

Eye witnesses and fire brigade sources said Roni, Shamim and Zahid, all students of Sirajganj University Government College were practising how to swim in the River Jamuna on Sunday evening. Shamim and Zahid managed to swim ashore and were admitted to local clinics while Roni failed resulting in his instant death.

Meanwhile, local fire brigade sources sought the help of the fire fighting personnel of Bogra, Rangpur and Rajshahi.

Prices of essential items up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Netrakona*

Prices of some essentials have shot up abnormally in the hats and bazaars of Netrakona district much to the suffering of the consumers.

Poor and low-income group of people are the worst sufferers. When contacted, traders of Bara bazaar area of the said that prices of essentials including rice, onion and soyabean oil have been enhanced in the wholesale centres without showing any reason.

Soyabean oil is now being sold at Tk 40 per kg which was sold at Tk 30 two weeks back, coarse rice is available at Tk 13 per kg and fine quality at Tk 18 per kg against Tk 11 and 15 respectively a week ago.

Besides, onion is being sold at Tk 12 per kg against its previous price of Tk 7.



M A Mannan, Chairman and Managing Director of Butterfly Marketing Ltd., witnessing the display of the electronic appliances after opening the second Butterfly Show Room at 165 N S Road in Kusthia on Tuesday.

Premature electioneering Adv Humayun Kabir denies involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Brahmanbaria*

Local Awami League leader Alhaj Advocate Humayun Kabir on Monday denied his link with the electioneering posters pasted in various parts in Dhaka, saying his rivals in the party have deliberately done it to tarnish his image.

The posters read that Kabir had been nominated Awami League candidate for Brahmanbaria 2 and 3 constituencies in the coming parliamentary polls.

At a press conference at his residence in Brahmanbaria town, Kabir categorically said his rivals in Brahmanbaria-2 seat, comprising

Sarail upazila and parts of Sadar upazila, are behind the act.

He said he could not do such kind of premature electioneering. I cannot announce my candidature bypassing the party decisions, he added.

Kabir said he will launch campaign to woo voters only after he gets party nod.

Meanwhile, Office Secretary of district AL Mojbur Rahman Babul, Vice-President of Sarial unit of AL Rafique Uddin Thakur and General Secretary of Sarail Jubo League Md Mahfuz Ali, whose names were printed in the posters as publishers, also have denied their involvement in the premature electioneering.

Betel leaf farming faces setback in Satkhira

ABU AHMED, *Satkhira*

Betel leaf growers in seven upazilas of Satkhira district have been facing manifold problems.

Dearth of inputs, high rates of carrying costs, paucity of loan and marketing facilities, insufficient rain and natural calamities like drought, cyclone, flood are the main causes behind the setback of betel leaf cultivation in Kalaroa, Debhata, Tala, Assassumi, Kaligonj, Shyamnagar and Sadar upazilas of the district. Betel leaf produced in these areas are large in size.

According to official sources of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), a considerable number of betel leaf fields have already been diminished in these area following abnormal price-hike of raw materials during last few years.

The cost of cultivation materials of betel leaves like straw, bamboo, jute stick, oil cake, pesticides, wire and labour charges have gone up in recent years.

About 40 maunds of oil cakes are required for one bigha of cultivable

land for betel leaf. Bamboo frame used for plantation of betel leaf are required to be changed frequently but high cost of bamboo which sells at Taka 80 to Taka 100 per piece has made it impossible to create the shed by bamboo frames.

Most of the betel leaves produced in these areas are exported to various Asian, Arabian and Middle Eastern countries.

Meanwhile, due to drastic fall in demand of betel leaf in domestic markets and unavailability of direct export facilities many of the growers have given up their traditional profession. On the other hand, the conditions of betel leaf farmers are very miserable. They could not cope with the production and the selling price of the betel leaf. At present about 35,000 families of these areas have been facing misery.

When contacted, some betel leaf growers told this correspondent that the prices of inputs such as straw, bamboo, fixture, coir, oil cake, fertilisers and jute sticks have increased abnormally.

Kutumbapur power plant goes into operation

UNB, *Comilla*

Power production in the newly set up Kutumbapur power plant in Chandina upazila in Comilla has begun on experimental basis.

Officials said Summit United Company has constructed the 11-megawatt plant at a cost of Tk 36 crore under REB's Palli Bidyut Samiti-1.

People of Chandina, Daudkandi, Homna, Meghna, Debidar, Muradnagar in the district and Gazaria upazila of Munshiganj district will be benefited from the power plant.

BSS from Khulna says: A total of 414 villages under 11 upazilas of Khulna and Satkhira districts were electrified in three years till 1999 under Rural Electrification Programme.

According to official sources, 1,724 kilometers distribution lines were established to electrify these villages under Satkhira Rural Electrification Association.

Besides, the association has so far given 39,153 domestic connections in these areas.

Another report from Jessore adds: State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam recently inaugurated the foundation-laying ceremony of Jhikorgacha zonal office of Rural Electrification Association - 1. Prof Rafiq on the occasion said the current power generation capacity had stood at 3400 megawatt, which was only 1,600 megawatt when the present government took over.

Rafiq said that the present government has increased its power generation keeping in view the demand of the whole country.

The state minister said about 30 per cent people of the country have now access to electricity.

He also said the rural electrification associations will be given the opportunity to generate electricity for meeting its own demand.

Prospect of soya bean farming bright

UNB, *Gopalganj*

Prospect of soyabean cultivation is bright in Moksudpur and Sadar upazilas of Gopalganj district.

A large number of farmers are cultivating the crop due to its profitability and great demand in the country. It also contains huge protein.

According to a survey, 500 acres of high land that are lying fallow in

Moksudpur and Sadar upazilas can be brought under soyabean cultivation by providing irrigation facilities during the dry season.

Farmers said they could cultivate the crop without irrigation during the Bengali months of Ashar and Sraban. They also said soyabean cultivation is easy in fertile land after harvesting the transplanted Aman paddy when the land remains uncultivated.

When contacted farmer Golam Mostafa Sheikh of Sadar upazila said he was the first soyabean cultivator in the locality and earned good profit by growing the crop. He said massive cultivation of the crop might meet the food deficiency in the country.

Another cultivation Suruj Ali Sarker of Moksudpur upazila told this correspondent that he cultivated the crop along with sugarcane and banana after harvesting Aman paddy and earned good profit last year.

He said different food items are made from Soyabean.

Local agriculture officials said they have set up several demonstration plots to encourage the farmers for cultivating the crop in large scale.

Two with drugs nabbed

UNB, *Khulna*

Detective police arrested two young men with heroine and phensidyl from Prantik Market in Khulna last week.

NEWS SNAPS

Garments worker killed as shed collapses

UNB, *Narsingdi*

A worker of Chowdhury Knitwear Mills at Shibpur in Narsingdi was killed and 25 others were injured when a concrete shed of the factory collapsed recently.

Witnesses said the shed with the load of about 12,000 pounds of wet towels and vests collapsed on 30-35 workers leaving Bhikchand, 42, dead. The garments were being dried up on the shed. Of the injured, Momen, 38, Mukhes, 35, Hanifa, 25, Ali Hossain, 30 and Mukarram, 28, were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital. The deceased's body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with Shibpur police. Fifty-two workers of this factory were killed in a fire on November 25 last year. Another worker as electrocuted on April 29 this year.

10 injured in N'ganj gunfight

UNB, *Narayanganj*

A fierce gunfight among the terrorists of four groups in Sonakanda area in Bandar thana on Tuesday left at least 10 people injured.

Witnesses said the trouble erupted at about 11:30am when the armed terrorists belonging to JP (E), BNP and Awami League locked into the fight over sharing of tender of scrap goods of dockyard. During the clash, the terrorists used pipe guns, revolvers and hand bombs. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Cash, valuables worth Tk 10 lakh looted

UNB, *Sherpur*

Armed dacoits looted cash and valuables worth Tk 10 lakh from shops in Bhayadanga Bazar in Sreewardi upazila in Sherpur district early Tuesday.

Witnesses said the masked bandits, numbering about 35, stormed into 10 shops at about 2am and looted cash and valuables at gunpoint. They decamped with the booty in a truck.

JP (E) announces its Chuadanga candidates

UNB, *Chuadanga*

Jatiya Party (Ershad) has announced its candidates for contesting from two constituencies in Chuadanga district in the next general election.

A party meeting on Monday selected Advocate Sohrab Hossain for Chuadanga-1 and Advocate Rabiul Islam for Chuadanga-2 constituencies.

141 uplift projects underway

UNB, *Khagrachhari*

Some 141 uplift projects are being implemented by Khagrachhari Hill District Council in eight upazilas of the district.

The projects involving Tk four crore are designed to improve socioeconomic condition of the local people. Education, infrastructure, games and sports, communications, fisheries and land development are among the major fields of the schemes. The Hill District Council has also taken up 47 more projects and implementation of those will start soon. Khagrachhari Hill District Council implemented a total of 114 development projects at a cost of Tk 7.13 crore last year, sources concerned said.

Banana cultivation hampered in Tangail

BSS, *Tangail*

Banana cultivation in being hampered due to excessive heat and drought in Shakhipur Hilly Gar areas of Tangail district.

According to banana farmers, rain occurred only once during the last seven months. Leaves of banana trees were blighted by the rainless climate and the yield will be less, they added. Irrigation facilities, however, saved some banana farms in some areas but poor farmers in most cases failed to manage it they said. A huge number of banana Sagar, Agniswar and Champa is produced in this hilly upazila and people earn money for their livelihood purchasing those. But they are afraid of the situation.

Bumper output of wheat in Chapainawabganj

UNB, *Chapainawabganj*

Farmers of Chapainawabganj district this season harvested a bumper production of wheat breaking all previous records.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), wheat was cultivated on 21,215 hectares of land and the farmers harvested 64,000 tons.

Earlier, DAE fixed a target of producing 46,000 tons of wheat from 20,000 hectares of land. Favourable weather, use of quality seeds, proper application of fertilisers and absence of crop diseases are the main reasons behind the bumper production, DAE sources said. Growers informed that they had sowed Inqilab, Kanchan, Sourav, Gourav and UP 2-6-2 varieties of seeds to get a good harvest this season.

Bumper 'boro' production expected in Pirojpur

BSS, *Pirojpur*

Farmers of Pirojpur are expecting a bumper boro production in all six upazilas of Pirojpur district in the current season.

Officials sources said, over 17 thousand hectares of land was brought under boro cultivation and quality seeds, integrated pesticides management, moderate supply of fertiliser, favourable weather water, management and irrigation system has contributed to success the programme.

Private companies hand over trains to govt

UNB, *Benapole*

Apparently dogged by staggering losses four trains running under private management in Bangladesh Railway's western zone have been handed over to the government.

Five trains, including two for commuters, were running in the region under private management. With the surrender of the four trains, now only a rocket mail remains under private management in the region, said a BR official. He said the government had gradually leased out the Mahananda Express, Nakshikantha Express, Rocket Mail and two other commuter trains of Khulna-Benapole route. But the leaseholders, who owe a huge amount of money to be government, recently surrendered four of the trains to the government on the plea of staggering losses. Another official, who declined to be identified, said the private companies were, in fact, making profit. Even then they surrendered the trains in an attempt to evade the payment of government dues.

Dinajpur hospitals need more doctors

UNB, *Dinajpur*

Some 50 posts including 10 doctors and 40 employees in different hospitals and health centres in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur district remained vacant for long.

Of the total, seven out of nine posts of medical officers remained vacant in the 31-bed hospital in upazila headquarters, two in Noupura and Sanka health centres and one in family planning department. Besides, posts of six sub-assistant community medical officers, one office assistant, four inspectors, five security guards, 11 pharmacists and 13 health assistant have been lying vacant in different health centres. According to official sources, only two doctors are now performing duties for serving about 2.5 lakh inhabitants of the upazila.