

NEWS SNAPS

Big fire in Barisal: Four injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Four persons were injured and shops and dwelling houses numbering 20 gutted in a devastating fire at Niamati bandar in Bakerganj upazila of Barisal in the early hours of Sunday.

Witnesses said the fire originated from an electric short circuit in a shoe shop belonging to Chand Ali in the bandar area which gradually engulfed the nearby shops and houses.

Fire brigade dispatched to the spot from Barisal extinguished the fire after four hours with the help of local people. The injured were admitted to the local Bakerganj upazila health complex. Local people said the fire destroyed property worth Tk three crore.

Barisal JCD leader arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Kotwali police in Barisal arrested a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader from Sadar Road in Barisal town Sunday night.

Police said arrested Md. Sagiruddin Monti, 25, is an accused in a case and a warrant had also been issued for his arrest in a case in 1998.

Separate incidents claim five

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Five persons were killed in separate road accidents in Ishwardi and Natore within a couple of days.

Mohsin, 35, a trolley driver was killed on Ishwardi - Rajshahi road near Ishwardi Railway Station early morning on Sunday when a local train ran over him. He could not see the train due to deep fog in the early morning. Meanwhile, four persons were killed in separate incident in Bonpara area on Natore-Bogra highway on Saturday afternoon. A speeding truck ran over a trolley in the area leaving three passengers of the trolley killed on the spot. They were identified as Jibon, Hasmat and Sajal. Later, the trolley driver Shafiqul was killed on way to Natore Hospital. A case has been filed with the Bonpara thana in this connection.

Unidentified miscreants ransack temple

UNB, Madaripur

Some unidentified miscreants ransacked a temple and set fire to it in Madaripur town on Saturday.

Witnesses said the terrorists entered into the temple (Kali Mondir) at dead of night and damaged the valuables. Later they looted 35 sacks of cement kept for construction work of the temple and set fire to the morgue of the temple. The incident has created panic in the area. A case was filed.

Security of chairman at stake

UNB, Bandarban

Withdrawal of security from the official residence of the Bandarban District Council Chairman has evoked a sharp criticism.

Leaders of major political parties BNP and Awami League reacted sharply at the recent decision of the withdrawal by the Police Super. Chairman Ostad Kashoia went back to his own house at Modhyapara apprehending terrorist attack after the police super withdrew the house-guard from his official residence on October 25. When asked Police Super Abdul Bari said there is no provision to provide security to the District Council Chairman but the local chairman had enjoyed the facility for long illegally. The local political leaders separately demanded immediate restoration of the house-guard for ensuring security of the chairman.

Gazipur BNP leader shot dead

UNB, Gazipur

A local BNP leader was shot by armed terrorists at Chhoidani in Sadar upazila of Gazipur on Friday night.

Adv. Monir Hossain came under attack while returning home. He received three bullets and was undergoing treatment at a local clinic. Police suspected the attack as a sequel to intra-party conflict.

Cold wave in N districts

BSS, Rangpur

Five districts of greater Rangpur region are in grip of severe cold wave for the past few days.

According to Met office, mercury came down on Sunday morning to 13.2 degree Celsius in Rangpur while it was around 10 degree Celsius in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Gaibandha districts. The entire region was enveloped in deep fog until 11 in the morning Sunday. The sky was overcast and the sun was not visible till noon.

Rivercraft and motor vehicles could not ply on schedule at night due to deep fog.

A large number of people, especially infants and elderly persons fell sick and most of them are suffering from cough, cold, fever, bronchial pneumonia and other cold wave related diseases.

The poor, especially day labourers and agricultural wage earners have become the worst sufferers. Price of warm clothes has gone up. It is beyond the reach of the common people.

Administrations of the five districts have already informed the Ministry of Relief for urgent supply of warm clothes and blankets for the destitute.

Meanwhile, district administration of Rangpur ordered for one lakh blankets and sufficient warm clothes.

Int'l Disabled Day programme in Chittagong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Unite Theatre For Social Action (UTSA) has chalked out a series of programmes to observe the International Disabled Day-2001 in the port city of Chittagong on December 3.

In the first phase of the programmes which will be financially assisted by World Vision Bangladesh (ADP Chittagong) includes a colourful rally in front of the local press club at 10am to press home demand for establishing a ministry for the disabled. A colourful poster will also be published on the occasion this time. The second phase of the programme will begin at Shilpakala Academy auditorium at 2.30pm which will be organised jointly by ADAB, YPSA and CDC. A psycho-drama will be performed by the disabled themselves and a discussion meeting will also be held on the occasion.



Some minor students of Char Muguria Madrassa in Madaripur take basic Arabic lessons on Islamic religion from their teacher in exchange of a nominal fee. This madrassa offers a grand opportunity of studying basic religious education for the wards of the people mainly belonging to lower income group.

Plea for political consensus to curb terrorism in Fatikchhari

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Chittagong

Political leaders, elite and officials concerned of the administration in a meeting on Sunday said that the administration's unholy alliance with terrorists and self-interests of political leaders are the reasons behind serious deterioration of law and order in Chittagong's most violence-prone upazila of Fatikchhari.

Participants in the meeting held at Chittagong police super's office in Sholashahar area called for bringing all political leaders of the upazila to the negotiating table to find a permanent solution to end terrorism and violence in the area which left over a dozen dead in last three months.

Chaired by Chittagong district police superintendent AKM Shahidul Haq, the meeting followed the Thursday's incident where two terrorist leaders of Chhatra Shibir and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were killed. Political leaders of BNP, Jamaat, Jatiya Party and Awami League, elite of Fatikchhari and high officials of law-enforcing agencies were present.

In the two-hour meeting, the speakers blamed two former and one sitting members of parliament (MPs) of Fatikchhari and some other political leaders over narrow personal interests for the decade-long widespread violence and terrorism prevailing there.

The leaders of ruling BNP, Jamaat and Jatiya Party, however, reached a consensus in the meeting to form a law and order committee at each of the 20 unions of the upazila and a central co-ordination committee in Fatikchhari thana area to help curb violence and terrorism in Fatikchhari.

They regretted the absence of three feuding political leaders local Awami League lawmaker Rafiqul Anwar, former BNP MP Najibul Bashar Maizbandari and former upazila union chairman Peyarul Islam -- saying the meeting could have been more successful if they were present.

Chittagong north district Jatiya Party president Mazharul Haq Shah Chowdhury proposed a discussion meeting on Fatikchhari's law and order bringing the three leaders to a table.

A local businessman Mirza Abu Monsoor while depicting the situation in Fatikchhari said, "It is unfortunate that the public representative or even the local lawmaker from one area seldom dares to visit the other part of the upazila which is under the domination of their opponent."

"Local people residing outside Fatikchhari cannot go to their locality even to celebrate religious or other festivities," he said.

General secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association Khurshid Jamil alleged that common people of the upazila have become puppets in the hands of political leaders in Fatikchhari.

They also brought allegations of an unholy alliance between terrorists and the local police administration. Muhammad Idris, president of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ), said the people could not hope for security or justice from the same police official who attend parties thrown by terrorists.

Local Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) Nurul Amin said it is important for public leaders or representatives to make sure that terrorists like Tayeb the leader of infamous Tayeb group, Didar or Osman are no longer patronised by the vested interests. Echoing the same sentiment, the police super also said the crisis in Fatikchhari is political.

He regretted that the police officials concerned face threats while discharging their duties saying that the reality in Fatikchhari is such that even the Inspector General of Police could not ensure the safety of a police officer for taking proper action against a terrorist.

With obsolete arms, police can do little to fight terrorists equipped with modern sophisticated weapons in the forest clad hilly upazila of Fatikchhari, said police officials present in the meeting.

Jhenidah: A safe route for carrying illegal arms

DELWAR KABIR, Jhenidah

Jhenidah has become a safe route of carrying illegal firearms to Dhaka and other parts of the country from the bordering areas of the south-western region.

The illegal practise is increasing day by day, admitted a source related to a law enforcing agency.

On November 29 midnight, four gunmen were arrested by policemen of Hatgopalpur police outpost, about 14 kilometres of Jhenidah.

Police sources said, the youngmen led by Sohel, 30, of Postagola in Dhaka were carrying two Germany made sophisticated revolvers in a molasses pot. They started their journey from Meherpur through a Dhaka-bound coach.

Police suspected Sohel and his three accomplices are involved in fire arms related crimes in Dhaka city

and the arms were being collected from Meherpur, Chuadanga or any other border areas. These arms were rushed from India, police said.

On the same evening Saikupa police arrested another youngmen Jahiruddin, 27, of Bhulundia village and recovered a pipegun with 17 rounds of ammunition from his possession. Nine or 10 accomplices of Jahiruddin managed to flee.

Police said, when they chased the gang near Kattagari canal of about 5 PM all the miscreants expert Jahir managed to flee.

A source requesting not to be named said that huge quantities of firearms had been entering into the country from India through bordering areas of Chuadanga, Kushtia, Meherpur, Jessore and Jhenidah. Illegal arms traders have chosen Jhenidah as the transit route as Jhenidah has a well road communication will other parts of the country.

New power plant starts production

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A newly constructed 100-megawatt (MW) gas turbine power plant has started production from Sunday.

An Indian company-Messrs Bharat Heavy Electrical Company Ltd has constructed the plant at Baghabari in Sirajganj at a cost of Tk 136 crore 95 lakh. The project was approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC). Power will be supplied to the national grid from the plant time to time which will fulfill the consumers' demand of the northern region. On the first day it supplied 25 megawatt of electricity and on the second day the plant supplied 50 megawatt of electricity to the national grid, local PDB sources said to this correspondent.

Alleged irregularities in Sirajganj school

AKHTERUZZAMAN BABLU, Sirajganj

Alleged irregularities and corruption have been detected at Sabuj Kanon Preparatory Kindergarten and High School in Sirajganj.

It has been alleged that members of the school managing committee Taimur Farooque Munna and Suja Uddin have misappropriated Tk 25 lakh showing false voucher for purchasing some articles which had not been purchased actually. The school building had also been distempereed without valid authorisation, it has been alleged.

The aforesaid committee members did all the corrupt activities under the banner of Awami League (AL) during the AL rule while at present they changed colour and became self-declared BNP leaders. They are now carrying on their

misdeeds in the name of BNP.

This correspondent visited the school on Wednesday and found that the two aforementioned members had been creating pressure on some teachers who opposed State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood during the general elections.

When this correspondent brought about the alleged irregularities and corruption of the school to the notice of Tariqul Islam, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Sirajganj who is also the chairman of the school managing committee, he informed that he had been investigating the matter secretly. "If I find anybody responsible for any misdeed then I shall certainly take legal action against him," the DC further told this correspondent.



Villagers enjoying fishing at a village in Munshiganj. Winter is the time of fishing, because water recedes in this particular period of the year from almost all the water bodies in rural Bangladesh. People of all ages, even little boys and old people take part in fishing with the help of locally made fishing nets