

NEWS SNAPS

Discussion on arsenic

UNB, Brahmanbaria

A discussion on arsenic was held at Chatalpar union parishad in Nasimagar of Brahmanbaria on Tuesday.

NGO Forum and Save the Children jointly organised the discussion aiming to raise public awareness about arsenic-linked diseases. Public representatives, NGO workers and journalists attended the discussion.

Schoolgirl molested in Sirajganj

UNB, Sirajganj

A schoolgirl was molested by some youths at a remote village of Sirajganj Monday. Villagers said the youths swooped on the 14-year-old girl of Barohar village in Ullapara upazila while she was going to her school Monday. The girl fell unconscious as the youths severely bit in her face and other parts of the body. She was rushed to the upazila health complex from where she was moved to sadar hospital the following day. A case was filed.

Reopening of closed deep TW's demanded

UNB, Thakurgaon

North-Bangladesh Deep Tubewell (TW) Project Protect Committee laid siege to the Thakurgaon Deputy Commissioner's office on Monday demanding immediate reopening of the closed deep tubewells.

It also submitted a memorandum to the DC in this regard. Earlier, several hundred farmers staged demonstration at the premises of local Water Development Board office. They demanded implementation of their 10-point demands, including introduction of crop-wise irrigation levy. In the memorandum the committee demanded installation of electric transformers in the villages, withdrawal of false cases filed against the secretaries of the committee and cancellation of false and minimum electric bill and advance payment of 25 per cent electric bill.

Two BNP leaders lock in scuffle

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Two local BNP leaders locked in a scuffle over allocation of wheat under test relief project at Kutubdia Island in Cox's Bazar Monday morning.

Witnesses said upazila BNP convenor Jalal Ahmed and BNP leader Noor Hossain first engaged in an altercation over the distribution of 63 mts of wheat at upazila Project Implementation Officer's room at about 11am. At one stage they engaged in serious scuffling which left the dresses of both the leaders torn out. Agitated JCD activists laid siege to Noor Hossain after the incident, but police rescued him.

AL leaders demand arrest of terrorists

UNB, Laxmipur

Local Awami League (AL) leaders have demanded immediate arrest of those involved in terrorist acts in Laxmipur.

The leaders at a working committee meeting on Friday expressed concern over the attacks by terrorists in different parts of Laxmipur including the town that left a number of leaders and workers of Awami League killed and injured. Chaired by district Awami League president AKM Shahjahan Kamal, the meeting was addressed, among others, by acting general secretary ANM Fazul Karim, Syed Mozammel Haq, Adv Abul Bashar, Adv Nurul Huda and Adv Shyamol Kanti Paul. Later they visited the residence of Chhatra League leader Biplab in the town who was killed by the terrorists recently and consoled his family members.



PHOTO: STAR

Child artistes belonging to 'Katha Sangeet Kendra' dance at a function arranged recently in Magura in observance of Poush mela, a fair arranged usually in the winter in rural Bangladesh, at Magura Press Club. Magura unit of Theatre, a cultural organisation, arranged the function.

Natore AL leader murder 12 BNP leaders, workers get life-term RI

ANWAR ALI, Natore

At least 12 BNP leaders and workers have been convicted on Thursday in the sensational Kashem Sardar murder case.

Each of them has been sentenced to suffer life-term rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The convicted are Shafiqul Islam Sharif, an union BNP leader and Moshinda union parishad member including BNP workers Haraf Ali, Rezaul, Omar Ali, Abdus Salam, Amir Hossen, Abul Kalam, Mofiz (absconding), Abul Kashem, Alam, Rawshan Ali and Ramjan Ali.

Each of the convicted persons has been fined Tk 4,000, in default to pay the fine, they will have to suffer two months' more RI.

The district and sessions judge Md Shiraj Uddin Ahmmad delivered the judgement on Thursday in a jam packed court room, cordoned by armed police.

On June 24 night in 1995, local Awami League leader and Moshinda union parishad member Abul Kashem Sardar had been hacked to death in South Majhpara area in Gurudaspur upazilla while he had been going home from a local hat (market).

The murder had been committed following a row over political rivalry between local AL and BNP and also over establishing supremacy in the area.

Next morning, police recovered the body of Kashem Sardar from a wheat-field in the area.

Kashem's son Selim Sardar lodged a case in this regard with Gurudaspur thana accusing 15 BNP leaders and workers.

Of the accused, three persons, namely, Suruj Sardar, Sanaulah and Mojahar Ali had been acquitted by the judge.

Police prosecutor Advocate Ruhul Amin Tagar pleaded the case for the complainant while Advocate Shakhawat Hossen Shawkat moved for the accused.

In a separate judgement on Thursday, additional district and sessions judge ASA Mahfuz convicted Md Aslam, son of Toyez Uddin of Nepalidighi in Sadar upazilla for killing his wife.

Md Aslam had been sentenced to two year's rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 2,000, in default, to pay the fine. Aslam will have to suffer three months' more in jail.

On May 9, 1995, Aslam unintentionally killed his wife Karimon Nesa by beating.

Justice delayed, justice denied

Trial of murder hangs for over 25 years

UNB, Jhalakati

Trial of a murder case that began more than 25 years ago is still hanging in court giving the plaintiff a feeling that he might not get justice in his lifetime.

Already four accused in the murder of Mukter Ali Howlader while committing armed robbery in his house have died of old age while another accused is said to be in the death bed. Most of the prosecution witnesses have either died or are untraceable.

In the process of seeking justice for the murder of his father, Delwar Hossain now became pauper and sick spending thousands of taka, time and energy of his prime age running after the lawyers. Nearly broken, he is occasionally found in the corridors of the court with the case file.

Delwar, who is now 58, said, "Our home in village Sangor of Rajapur upazila was attacked by armed bandits at dead of night on July 6, 1976. I was young then. The bandits plundered the houses and looted cash and valuables, including gold ornaments.

"At one stage my father, who was in mid-40s, tried to resist them. The brutes killed him in front of me."

As he was narrating the long ordeals, he was sobbing. Wiping out his tears, Delwar said the following morning he filed a case with Rajapur thana accusing 26 people of killing his father and committing armed robbery in their home. The case no 3 of July 7, 1976, GR No. 45/76.

After two years of hearing in the lower court the case was transferred to the Special Tribunal Judge's court

of Barisal (No. 69/78). After 222 hearing dates, the court convicted eight accused sentencing each of them to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI). Eighteen others were acquitted.

But soon they moved the High Court and appealed against the Special Tribunal Judge's verdict (No. 17/85).

The HC division bench comprising Justice Nurul Haq Bhuiyan and Justice DS Ansaruddin in its verdict on June 18, 1989 sent back the case for retrial with observation: The case merits trial in Sessions Judge's court. Holding trial by the Special Tribunal Court was not proper and in due form.

On return, the case came to the Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in 1989 (Case No 40/89). Fresh trial began after long one decade. Hearings continued for 142 days when deposition of three out of 28 prosecution witnesses was completed. The fourth witness appeared before the court.

But even after 25 years and eight months the trial of the case could not proceed in the absence of other witnesses. They are either dead or untraceable.

An elderly lawyer requesting anonymity told that investigation might reveal similar cases lying in the courts pending disposal for years and decades. Many people have been languishing in jail for years without trial.

About the Mukter murder and armed robbers case, the lawyer said during the post-independence period, there was provision of trial of cases in Special Tribunals. But in this case armed robbery was given prominence over the killing although

murder should be dealt by the Sessions Court.

Holding trial by the Special Tribunal has left legal lacuna and complicated the whole process of trial and caused inordinate delay.

New Chairman of Ramgarh Municipality

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CHT

Belayet Hossain, district president of BNP was elected the Chairman of Ramgarh Municipality unopposed last week as there was no other candidate to contest.

Returning officer Additional District Magistrate Jagadish Roy declared Belayet as the chairman of the municipality.

However, nomination papers of four candidates declared invalid out of 48 candidates contesting for the posts of commissioner. The last date of withdrawal of candidature was January 26 and the election will be held on February-12.

Meanwhile, the High Court issued a stay order on holding election of Lama Municipality of Bandarban and also issued a notice to the government to show cause why the election will not be declared nullified. The High Court gave the order on Monday following a prayer of Dr Amar Chowdhury, a local resident.

The complainant filed the case in the High Court as the name of 300 were not enlisted in the voter list due to the alleged irregularities in ward distribution of the municipality.

Seven including C'nawabganj DC sued

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Seven people, including the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Chapainawabganj, have been sued for causing damage to a mango orchard in Nachole upazila by setting up two brick-fields near the garden.

Nine mango farmers, including a member of Fatehpur union parishad in the upazila, filed a case against them with local Assistant Judge's court on Sunday.

The other accused are: owners of the brick-fields Muhammad Latif Ali, Haji Amir Hossain, Abul Khair, Azizul Haque, Abdul Khaleque and Kalu Biswas.

In their case, the plaintiffs alleged that the two brick-fields have been set up near the mango orchard and residential areas at Mallikpur in Fatehpur union of the upazila affecting mango output and polluting the environment.

They further said that their written complaint and lawyer's notice to the Deputy Commissioner in this regard also went unheeded.

After hearing the case, the court asked six of the accused, except the DC, to show cause by appearing in person before the court within the next 15 days.

Vegetable trader robbed, murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A vegetable trader was allegedly robbed and murdered by an unidentified truck driver in Natore on Saturday.

The victim, identified as Abu Bakar Siddique, 35, son of Akbor Ali of Jalanda in Boraigram upazila, boarded on a Bogra bound trucks from Laxmipur bazaar at dawn on Saturday.

Police quoting witnesses said, the driver of the truck, on which Siddique was travelling for business purposes, forcibly robbed his money amounting to Tk 35,000 and stabbed him indiscriminately. The driver then left him beside the Natore-Pabna highway near Gazipur beel (water body).

Siddique succumbed to his injuries at Natore hospital.

A case has been filed with Sadar thana in this regard.

Canteen manager of RU hall dismissed

RU CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Canteen Manager of Shah Mokhdum Hall of Rajshahi University Md Fazlur Rahman was dismissed from his duty on Friday because remaining portion of cigarettes were found in the dish of pulse in the canteen.

The provost of the hall, Prof Jalal Uddin discharged him in face of violent agitation of the residential students of the hall. The provost also declared that a new manager will be appointed through official advertisement within a week.