

NEWS SNAPS

Body recovered

UNB, Bagerhat

The body of an unidentified man was recovered from Kendua beel, a water body, in Mollahat upazila on Friday night.

Police said the assailants shot the middle-aged man dead and left the body in the beel. Police suspected that he might be killed due to previous enmity.

Dacoity at

Laxmipur

UNB, Laxmipur

Dacoits looted cash and valuables worth over Tk 1.50 lakh from a house at Abimagar-Ramgati road in the town on Friday.

Police and witnesses said a gang of robbers numbering 20/22 swooped on the house of rice trader Amol Chandra Shaha. They looted Tk 8,000 in cash, 14 tolas of gold and other valuables fastening the family members. They also injured Amol Chandra and his wife Anjana Rani Shaha when they tried to resist them. Police visited the spot.

Wheat for uplift schemes

BSS, Bheramara

Relief and Rehabilitation Department has taken up a plan to implement 195 schemes in six upazilas and five municipalities of Kushtia district during the current fiscal.

Some 336 tons of wheat have been allocated for execution of the schemes. The upazilas are Kushtia Sadar, Mirpur, Khoksha, Kumarkhali, Daulatpur and Beramara. The municipalities are Bheramara, Kushtia, Kumarkhali, Mirpur and Khoksha. Of the total, 63 tons of wheat have been allocated to implement 31 schemes in Kushtia Sadar upazila, 75 tons for 40 schemes in Daulatpur, 38 tons for 25 schemes in Beramara, 56 tons for 37 schemes in Mirpur upazila.

Violence marks UP polls in a Moulvibazar union

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Violence has marked the Union Parishad (UP) elections in Mostafapur union of Sadar upazila.

Reports of snatching of ballot papers and rigging poured from different polling centres in this union. Before vote counting, supporters of one of two chairman candidates took the streets and started mass agitation. They staged sit-in programme in front of the office of deputy commissioner (DC), Moulvibazar.

When this correspondent tried to establish contact DC, Police Super (SP) and upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) time and again for their comments, they could not be reached. However, some officials working at Sadar upazila election control room said to this correspondent that election and counting of votes concluded in Mostafapur union more or less peacefully.

Elections to six UPs in Sadar upazila was held on February 26. Polling in five other UPs-Giasnagar, Kanakpur, Upper Kagabola, Amtail and Nazirabad was held in a peaceful atmosphere.

In Mostafapur union people began agitation on the election day when some people tried to capture polling booths. They allegedly kicked out the polling agents and snatched ballot papers from polling officers.

In the evening thousands of supporters of chairman candidate Shahed Ahmed brought out a big procession in the town and paraded its main streets

with brooms, shoes and sandals. were in hand. They demanded re-election in Mostafapur. They also chanted slogans against Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, local MP M Naser Rahman and chairman candidate Md Rafiqul Islam (Mani Miah). Afterwards, they went to the DC office where they staged a sit-in to it to press home their demand.

Shahed Ahmed, a follower of BNP told The Daily Star that people took to the streets when his opponent Mani Miah, brother of Minister M Saifur Rahman forcibly captured different polling stations and snatched ballot papers from polling officials.

However, an official message was sent there from the UNO's office declaring Shahed Ahmed unofficially elected. Rafiqul Islam (Mani Miah) lost by more than 1,100 votes, according to the message. At once the agitated people brought out victory procession.

Mani Miah arranged a press conference at his Baharmordan village home at night on the day. He told the newsmen that Shahed Ahmed violated the election code of conduct by resorting to terrorism. He also alleged that Shahed purchased election officials and snatched away people's verdict in collaboration with the election officials. As brother of a minister and uncle of local MP, he showed extreme patience. He demanded reelection there.

Shahed is a former chairman of the UP. Only two candidates both from ruling BNP contested here.

Defeated UP chairman candidate killed

UNB, Pabna

A defeated union parishad (UP) member candidate was shot dead by assailants at his village in Pabna on Friday night.

Rustam Matbar, the defeated UP member candidate was shot dead by assailants at his village Brahmadanga in Fakirhat upazila.

Separate cases were filed with the police.

Post-election clash: 10 hurt

UNB, Rangamati

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of winning and losing Union Parishad (UP) member candidates at Marisha union in Baghaichhari upazila Thursday.

Police said the clash erupted between the supporters of winning member Mohammad Hossain and defeated member Abdur Rouf soon after the election results were announced.

Six of the injured were rushed to the upazila health complex in critical condition. Rouf.

Top criminal arrested

UNB, Pabna

A top criminal was arrested from Bera upazila of Pabna on Friday.

Police said they raided the hideout of Nantu Sardar at dead of night and arrested him. He was wanted in a number of criminal cases. Nantu went into hiding during the army led joint drive who recently returned to the area, police added.

Wives v husbands in the UP polls

Z A M KHAIRUZZAMAN

Husband and wife contests are adding spice to the Union Parishad (UP) elections, with several men finding that their toughest opponents are their marriage partners.

Many female candidates want to help create a better society. Some look at the predominantly male world of politics and feel that standards are disappointingly low. A few have decided that they could do better than their husband.

Manikganj district leads the trend, with four couples competing for the chairmanship.

The duelling duos are Parveen Hasan and Rafiqul Islam of Chouhati union in Dhamrai upazila; Sultana Begum Parul and Amjad Hossain Lal Mia (Hargaj union in Sauria upazila); Hafiza Khatun and Anwar Hossai (Teota union in Shibabaya upazila); and Monira Begum and Fazlur Rahman (Fukurhat union).

Jhalakati district comes next, with two couples vying for chair-

manships - Nimoni Akhter and Bazlur Rahman (Dupdapia union in Nalchhiti upazila) and Minara Begum and Harun-or-Rashid (Patkelghata in Kathalia upazila).

In Bogra district, Morzina Motalib of village Magura in Malancha union under Kahalu upazila stands face to face in the race with her husband Abdul Motalib.

Hosne Ara Khatun and Jamil Hossain Bachchu are fighting it out in Koya union in Kumarkhali upazila, Kushtia district.

In Jamalpur district, Hamida Begum of Adarbhitia and Aatur Rahman Ator are locked in battle in Adarbhitia union in Madarganj upazila.

And in Narshingdi district, the tussling twosome are Rezaul Karim and Monowara Begum of Srinagar union in Raipur upazila.

The increase in the number of partners prepared to air their political differences in public shows that women's empowerment is taking root.

Man held while carrying bombs in B'baria

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Police arrested a man while he was carrying nine bombs in a packet of sweet at Sonarampur in Banchharampur upazila on Saturday.

Police arrested Kalon Miah, 32, when he was going to a polling centre at Morichakandi union by a rickshaw. A case was filed in this connection.

New sea-truck for tourists in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

Sea-truck 'Khijir', a new attraction for tourists, has been pressed into service here on Saturday.

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, Bir Bikram, inaugurated the Mongla-Hironpoint-Mongla sea-truck tourist service at the new ferry ghat (terminal) of Mongla port on the same day.

'Khijir', pressed into service with over 150 tourists on the first day at the initiative of private tourism company, which is being operated by Bangladesh Internal Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC).

The new sea-truck will leave Mongla everyday at 8.30am and return at 7pm. The cost has been fixed per person at Tk 700 while Tk 500 for children under 12 years of age.

Chairman of BIWTC Shimul Bishwas presided over there. Chairman of Mongla Port Authority Commodore MA Alam (retd), Former MP Mofiqul Hasan and General Secretary of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists Monjurul Alam were also present there.

Three killed in separate incidents in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj

Three people were killed in separate incidents in Habiganj district on Thursday.

Police and witnesses said assailants strangled Ayat Ali, 47, at village Rahelpur in Azmiriganj upazila over an election-related conflict.

In another incident, a housewife Phooljan Begum, 35, allegedly committed suicide by taking poison at her husband's house at village Prothom Rekh in Baniachong upazila.

Phooljan, wife of Samrul Ullah, died at the upazila health complex after her admission there.

A rickshawpuller Jalal Mia, 32, was killed as a bus hit him on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway at Madhovpur.

Separate cases were filed with police.

Fund shortage hampers work on bridge in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Fund shortage has been hampering reconstruction work of an important bridge at Khalshi on Gobindaganj-Dinajpur highway.

A concrete slab of the bridge collapsed during the 1998 flood. A Bailey bridge was set up temporarily to restore road communica-

tions. Since then vehicles are plying at risk over the bridge which is now unable to carry load of heavy traffic.

Gaibandha roads and highways department undertook a plan to construct a 40.355-metre long RCC bridge in 2001-02 fiscal. Estimated cost of the project was one crore 42 lakh 43 thousand and 676 taka. But its work order is yet to be issued from the authorities concerned. This is because of fund shortage.

A project to construct a by-pass road beside the main bridge was

also undertaken at a cost of Tk 18 lakh. But the contractor concerned compelled to stop work sometime after an initial work for want of adequate fund.

The bridge is vital to connect with Dinajpur-Gobindaganj-Dhaka highway.

Abdul Mottaleb Akanda, local member of parliament (MP), Gaibandha-4 urged the government to reconstruct the bridge at the earliest to mitigate sufferings of people.

Resist anti-state campaigners

Bhuiyan asks BNP men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has called upon the leaders and workers of BNP to build up resistance with people against the anti-state campaigners.

"A vested quarter has launched false campaign against the people and the government in a motive to mislead the world community and international organisations," he further told them.

Addressing a party meeting at Thakurgaon Pourashava auditorium on Friday night, he said Bangladesh is a non-communal and liberal democratic country and the people here earned independence and democracy through long struggle.

Presided over by state minister for agriculture and Thakurgaon district BNP President Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, it was addressed, among others, by district unit general secretary Samaun Haq Samu, district Samik Dal president Abdul Gafur Bhuiyan, Mohila Dal general secretary Husne Ara Farida, JCD president Rashed Alam Labu, Juba Dal president Anwarul Haq and presidents of all upazila units of the district.

He hoped that the propaganda would not be able to confuse and mislead the people here as well as the international bodies.

Bhuiyan, who is also the secretary general of ruling BNP, said that leaders and activists of BNP would have to play a pioneering role to resist the campaign.

Referring to price-hike of essentials, he said the government is fully aware of the situation and took effective steps to reduce the prices of essentials.

"Prices of commodities have started coming down. Strict measures will be taken if anyone conspires and try to create artificial crisis," he added.

Bhuiyan asked leaders and workers to strengthen the party down the grass root level and work for it with dedication and sincerity.

The minister also inaugurated the newly constructed central bus terminal here. He planted a sapling at the terminal ground.

Later, he addressed a gathering organised by Thakurgaon municipal authority with poura chairman Akbar Hossain in the chair. State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir addressed the function as special guest.

Deputy commissioner (DC) of Thakurgaon Maksumul Hakim Chowdhury, police super (SP) Sohrab Hossain, poura commissioner AKM Shafiqul Enam Parvez, Nazrul Islam, transport owners' association general secretary Ramjan Ali and business leader Arshad Ali also spoke.

Bhuiyan asked the authorities to keep the terminal clean and maintain it properly. He said that although the government enhanced 10 per cent (pc) of bus fare, but the owners, in most cases, enhanced the fare by 100 pc. He urged the bus owners to reduce the fare immediately.

20 injured in BNP factional feud in Pabna

UNB, Pabna

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two factions of BNP at village Datia in Bera upazila on Friday.

Locals said there had been rivalry between local BNP leaders Goni Fakir and Idris Ali since long over establishing supremacy in the

area. The fierce clash erupted between their supporters over a trifling matter.

Both the groups used batons and lethal weapons in the hour-long clash creating panic in the area. Six of the injured were rushed to the upazila health complex in critical condition.



Dr Dewan Mohammad Salauddin, member of parliament (MP) of Dhaka-12 constituency (2nd from left), Yukio Oka (centre) of World Vision Japan and Takasuna, representative of Kenshin Oshima, Shoko Fund are seen at the opening ceremony of Gouripur Minnat Ali Primary School building constructed by ADP World Vision at Ashulia, Savar. World Vision is a humanitarian organisation dedicated to serving the poor in over 100 countries.