

SNAPS

Road mishap kills old man

UNB, Rajbari

An old man was killed in a road accident near Jamidar bridge on the Daulatdia-Faridpur highway on Friday.

Hatem Ali, 80, of Goalandia Pourashava died on the spot as a Madaripur bound bus from Daulatdia knocked him down at about 10:30am while he was crossing the road.

The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with the Goalandia police.

Farmer slaughtered

UNB, Noakhali

A farmer was slaughtered by miscreants at Maidchera village in Sadar upazila Thursday night.

Criminals surrounded Abdul Halim, 40, and chopped him to death while he was sitting at a teashop. They also kidnapped the victim's younger brother Gias Uddin, 35, when he came to his aid.

Loan for destitute women

UNB, Rajbari

Local Social Service department disbursed interest free loan amounting to Tk 1.40 lakh among 28 destitute women here recently for carrying out income generating activities.

Ali Newaz Mahmud Khoiyam MP, disbursed Tk 5,000 each to the recipients at a simple ceremony at the Deputy Commissioner's office.

Construction work goes on

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Construction and renovation work of 26 educational institutions in five upazilas of Chapainawabganj district are progressing fast.

The project is being implemented by the Education Engineering Department at a cost of Tk 3.87 cr.

Bogra Nurse College to be ready next year

BSS, Bogra

Construction of Bogra Nurses' College, the second of its kind in Bangladesh, is progressing at a cost of Taka 11 crore.

Nearly 40 percent work of the college has been completed and the rest will be finished by June next year in three phases under the supervision of Construction and Maintenance Management Unit (CMMU) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The CMMU sources said that the government has stepped up efforts to upgrade and modernise the nurses training and colleges with modern technological facilities to extend medical services to the vast people of rural areas.

BJMC closes all 6 buying centres in Rangpur as jute harvest begins

Large quantities smuggled out

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

All the six jute purchasing centres of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) in greater Rangpur have been closed abruptly while jute harvest by farmers has started in full swing.

The centres have been closed mainly due to lack of funds, Abdul Mutalib Mondol, assistant director in the jute ministry, told this correspondent here when contacted.

There is no possibility of their reopening soon, he said.

Jute is selling at between Tk 240,00 and Tk 270,00 now as there are less number of buyers, accord-

ing to reports from different markets.

A BJMC official preferring anonymity said the price was around Tk 350 late last month before closure of the purchasing centres.

Bulk quantities of jute are being smuggled out of the country, traders and farmers said. Middlemen are purchasing jute at throwaway prices and smuggling those.

In the border areas, some people, allegedly financed by Indian purchasers, are buying jute directly from farmers, sources said at Patgram.

According to sources at Agriculture Extension Department, about six lakh bales of jute are

expected to be produced from one lakh and fifty thousand acres of land in greater Rangpur in the current season.

Mentionably, a large number genuine jute traders have huge amounts due from the BJMC for jute supplies last year. The total unpaid amount will be at least Tk five crore in greater Rangpur only, trader Idris Alisaid.

But BJMC has closed its purchasing centres without paying their outstanding bills, he lamented.



PHOTO: STAR

Landless people evicted from Kaya Bridgepara demonstrating in front of the Kumarkhali Upazila Parishad office recently.

600 landless protest eviction from khas lands in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

About 600 landless people evicted from khas lands in Kaya Bridgepara area held put up demonstration and held a rally in front of the Kumarkhali Upazila Parishad office recently demanding their permanent settlement on the lands.

They were evicted after they lived there for over nine years, they claimed.

The district administration

evicted 108 landless families from about 6.74 acres of khas land (RS No 440) from Kaya Bridgepara near the Gorai Bridge.

They were evicted by the Kumarkhali upazila administration following an order by the Deputy Commissioner in a letter (No 100/111/2003), issued on June 25.

When contacted, the ADC (rev) told this correspondent that the government had decided to con-

struct a housing project for the landless on the land.

But Rabindra Sangsad, a local NGO, which had helped the landless take shelter on the land nine years ago, claimed that the houses to be constructed would be allotted to ruling party men in the area.

The landless people appealed to the local administration time and again for their permanent settlement on the land, but to no effect.

Stick processions against extortionists, Jamaat leader

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Traders brought out a stick procession in the town recently, protesting extortion.

They chanted slogans against local BNP leaders Abul Kalam and Sajul Mia, who are alleged ringleaders of extortionists, and demanded their arrest.

The two are also involved in other crimes, the demonstrators alleged.

Another stick procession was brought out by the people of Tangvanga union, protesting alleged misappropriation of four tonnes of rice, given as flood relief, by Union Parishad chairman Habibur Rahman, also a local leader of Jamaat-e-Islami.

They also held a meeting and submitted a memorandum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer demanding his removal.

UP chairman suspended after no-confidence by members

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Chairman of Munshibazar Union Parishad (UP) under Kmolgonj upazila in Moulvibazar district, Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, has been temporarily suspended following a no-confidence complaint against him by UP members.

Shafiqur Rahman is a local leader of ruling BNP.

Official sources said the Komolganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) took the action after the UP members lodged a complaint to him.

They also brought charges of misappropriation of funds, corruption and irregularities against him, the sources said.

After receiving the complaint, the UNO arranged a meeting on August 3 at the UNO office and asked the chairman to prove confidence of the UP members.

As nine out of 13 members expressed no-confidence in a secret voting, UNO put the UP chairman under temporary suspension, the sources said.

Ranganmati Dist Council gives Tk 8.78 lakh stipends to students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) has given Tk. 8.78 lakh stipends to 365 students studying at different educational institutions in the country.

RHDC Chairman Manik Lal Dewan handed over the cheques to the students at a simple function, held recently at the local Tribal Cultural Institute here.

Deputy Commissioner Zafar Ahmed Khan attended the function as special guest with Usha Hla Roaza, convenor of RHDC's District Education Affair Sub-committee, in the chair.

Last year, the RHDC gave Tk 6.33 lakh stipends to 301 students. It gave Tk 66.53 lakh stipends to 2869 students since 1992.

BCU Cg dist unit formed

CU CORRESPONDENT

Mintu Chowdhury and Sayed Shakhawat have been made president and general secretary respectively of Chittagong district unit of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) at a two-day council that ended in the city Thursday night. Baki Billah, central president of BCU, announced a 31-member executive committee of district unit at the council, held at the Muslim Hall.

The other office bearers include Vice-presidents -- Asma Bithi, Lusifar Laila and Subrata Biswas; assistant general secretaries Arup Kumar Bhowmik and Siraj Uddowla; organising secretary Sumon Chowdhury; office secretary -- Yousuf Sohel; publicity secretary -- Nowzin Laila Nishi; education and research secretary -- Rajib Moinuddin Shaon; social welfare secretary -- Sudip Barua; sports secretary -- Tapas Roy and students affairs secretary -- Kolloi Das. The BCU council ended with a call upon political parties to do politics free from terrorism and fundamentalism.

Speakers at the inaugural session said terrorism, muscle power and money power have overtaken politics in the country. Politics has to be freed from these.

Professor of Jahangirnagar University poet Mohammed Rafiq was present at the council as chief guest.



PHOTO: PID

Information Minister Tariqul Islam launching Bangla daily the Dainik Janodosh, published from Natore, recently.

Manmade problem multiplies miseries in CHT

Illegal extraction of stone aggravates landslide, destroys ecology.

MONIRUL ALAM, Rangamati

Illegal extraction of stones and boulders has aggravated landslides in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and is destroying the ecological balance there.

Hills in certain areas, already made vulnerable by the July 27 tremor and aftershocks, will crumble if this continues, sources said.

The illegal extraction continues almost throughout the year in connivance with a section of Forest Department officials and others concerned, which increases during the winter.

Although strictly prohibited, explosives are often used to extract stones, said a Water Development Board (WDB) official who witnessed the illegal extraction. A section WDB contractors are involved in it, he said.

Stones are in good demand and

fetch hefty profit as those are used for construction of roads and bridges and protection of riverbanks, he said.

As stones available from CHT regions are economically attractive, illegal extractors operate in about 55 spot, said a Forest Department official.

On an average, six tonnes of stone are collected from each spot during winter and explosives are often used as the earth becomes harder then, he said.

The spots are Wagga, Narayangiri, Doluchhari, Boraichhari, Shilchhari, Rampahar, Sitapahar, Arachhari, Chitmoram, Manikchhari, Sapchhari, Ghagra and Kalmichhari in Rangamati; Roangchhari, Ruma and Lama in Bandarban and some places in Khagrachhari, they said.

The illegal extractors are not only destroying the hills and the ecology but also depriving the government of big amounts of royalty.

About 50 to 60 thousand cubic feet of stones are extracted from CHT region yearly against government permits of up to two thousand cubic feet. The permits are issued by a section of officials through underhand, sources said.

When contacted, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Shyam Shundar Sikder said he did not issue any permit in last one year. Action will be taken as per law against the illegal extraction, he said.

He suggested this correspondent to contact relevant Upazila Nirbahee Officers and Union Parishad Chairmen to find out how the permits are issued.

IU running with loans, donations!

AN IU CORRESPONDENT

Shortage of funds is hindering development activities at Islamic University, its authorities said.

The government allocated Tk 9.11 crore in fiscal 2003-2004. Of this, Tk 7.70 crore will be spent for payment of teachers' salaries, Tk 2.40 crore for electricity bills, Tk 3.20 lakh for sports and games, Tk 3 lakh for publication, Tk 1.40 lakh for purchase of book for different departments, Tk 2.50 lakh for the purchase of books for the central library, Tk 3 lakh for the training of teachers, Tk 15 lakh for conducting examination and Tk five lakh for scholarship and stipend.

There has always been a fund deficit. After meeting internal

expenses, nothing is left for development work.

The university authorities have to depend on the assistance from donor agencies like Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and OIC for development works.

There has been no government allocation for the science faculty in the last seven years since its inception in 1995.

The authorities are maintaining expenses of the science faculty with loans. The university has a deficit of Tk eight crore now.

In the current financial year, the government allocated Tk 5 core for development works and IDB has assured Tk 3.87 core.

20 pc tube-wells arsenic affected in C'nawabganj

A CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

Water of about 20 per cent of tube-wells in Chapainawabganj district is arsenic-contaminated, according to a recent survey conducted jointly by three NGOs.

The CARE, DASCO and IDE conducted the random survey in 37 unions of five upazilas and in three pourasabhas under the supervision of the Department of Public Health & Engineering.

Over 2.5 lakh people drink arsenic-poisoned water as they have no other source.

Tube-well water in seven unions is not arsenic-contaminated. These are Nachole, Kosba and Nizampur unions in Nachole upazila; Shajahanpur in ther Sadar upazila;

Parbatipur and Rahanpur in Gomastapur upazila and Rahanpur pourasabha.

The survey has also revealed that there are 416 arsenicosis patients in 10 unions and one pourasabha.

Ninety percent of the patients are in Chhatritpur union in Shibganj upazila, Ranihati union in the Sadar upazila and Chapainawabganj pourasabha. They have been suffering from diseases like liver and renal disorders and gangrene. Their condition is deteriorating for want of medicine and balanced diet.

They survey report said nothing meaningful has been done by the government for their treatment and supply of safe drinking water.

Anomaly in pay BR diploma nurses threaten hunger strike

CU CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-six diploma nurses working at different hospitals of Bangladesh Railway (BR) will go on a hunger strike in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka if their demand for removing alleged discrimination in pay is not met by August 11.

Their leader, Fency Masuda Khanm, in a statement sought the Prime Minister's intervention to resolve the problem.

Nine of the nurses are working at BR hospitals in the port city.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), Chittagong sent an investigation report to human right leader Sigma Huda on the alleged disparity and urged her to take steps to remove those.



PHOTO: ISPR

Inter-Base Qirat and Azan competition of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) concluded on Thursday at the central mosque of BAF Base Matiur Rahman in Jessore. Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Operations and Training) Air Commodore M Shafiqul Islam is seen with the BAF Base Bashar team which retained the title.