

SNAPS

Effigy of Bush burnt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
An effigy of US president Bush was burnt by people at a protest rally here on Monday.

The rally was organised by Chitagon City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at Laldighi maidan in protest against the "US designed trial" of the deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hossain. Chitagon City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury chaired the rally.

Among others, the Chittagong city unit president of AL MA Mannan, party leaders Nurul Islam B Sc, Enamul Haq Danu and Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul also spoke.

The rally was followed by a procession which paraded different city streets. It ended at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Bandits throw 2 forest guards in river, one missing

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola
One person was missing as two forest guards of Monpura range, Bhola were thrown in the Meghna after beating by bandits on Sunday.

Forest guards Tobarok Ali, 50, and Gias Uddin, 35, went to Pochakora Bit Office for guarding plants. Finding a group of bandits felling trees over there they protested it.

Then the bandits took away them on board a trawler to Char Piai where they beat them up and threw them in mid-Meghna. One of them, Tobarak Ali, was rescued while the other one Gias Uddin remained missing.

Pneumonia kills 3 in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha
Pneumonia killed three children in Gobindaganj Upazila in the last two days.

The dead are one-year-old Sharifa of Charpara village, nine-month-old Sumi of Sonaidanga village and three-month-old Babu of Boohandaha village.

Over 100 have been attacked with the diseases, sources at the upazila health complex said.

AL's oust-govt movement from January 10

People to be freed from "misrule" by March-April, Jalil tells Kishoreganj public meeting



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil addressing a public meeting at Kishoreganj stadium on Monday afternoon.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Awami League General Secretary Mohammad Abdul Jalil MP has said an "oust-government" movement will be launched from a public meeting at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka on January 10.

The government would be dislodged by March-April next year, he told a big public meeting at Kishoregonj stadium Monday afternoon.

Jalil said people who believe in the spirit of independence, democracy and people's welfare should unite to "oust" the government as it has become "completely detached" from the masses for it's "misrule".

The people are fed up at its "atrocitiy and torture" and want to get rid of the situation. The government has failed in all sectors, he alleged.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, the AL general secretary said there is no security of people's life and property while prices of essentials have gone beyond their reach.

He also alleged that the government did not take any measure during the recent monga (lack of work before harvest) in northern districts when people passed days virtually half-fed.

AL central Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor MP told the meeting that people passed their days "half-fed" during the monga and now they are suffering from

biting cold. But the government cares a little.

The government which cannot ensure food and cloth to the people has no right to stay in power.

Presided over by Kishoreganj upazila AL convenor Chhokmol Mia, the meeting was addressed by, among others, Dr Hamida Banu Shova MP, Bogra district AL President Montajuddin Ahamed and local AL leader and candidate in the last parliamentary election Col (Retd). Maruf Saklain.

Prior to the public meeting, Jalil addressed a workers' meeting at the district Shilpakala Academy auditorium at noon.

He said Rajakars and anti-liberation forces are united. "They

are moving in cars fluttering the National Flag. It is shameful. They got the opportunity as we are not united".

At one stage at the workers meeting, tension was created among workers over differences between AL leaders of Kishoreganj municipal unit and the upazila unit.

It subsided at the intervention of Asaduzzaman Noor and other central leaders.

Jalil told the workers' meeting, "We had to accept an unprecedented situation (in the last parliamentary polls) due to lack of unity". There is no alternative to unity.

Big contingents of police were deployed at both the venues.



PHOTO: STAR

46 fishermen held by Indian coast guard from Bay

All sued, now in jail, fax message says

AKTER FARUK SHAHIN, Barisal

Forty-six Bangladeshi fishermen, caught by Indian coast guard on December 23 from Bangladesh territorial waters in the Bay, are now in jail in India.

They are facing a case under the Indian Foreigners Act, according to a fax message received at Patharghata Press Club on December 27 from Indian fish trader Rashik Chandra of 24 Parganas of West Bengal. Rashik Chandra has trade links with fish wholesalers in Patharghata.

The arrest of Bangladeshi fishermen was known when fisherman Jalil Howlader escaped the chase by Indian coast guard and reached Patharghata with his trawler F B Mansur on December 24. He narrated the incident to local journalists.

When contacted, Patharghata Trawler Owners Association President Golam Mostofa Talukder said that six trawlers which went for fishing about a week ago and are yet to return and that he also knew about the fax message from Indian fisherman Rasjik Chandra.

He also said Bangladesh coast guard and police have been informed of the incident.

According to Jalil, over 60 Bangladesh fishermen on board six trawlers were fishing in the deep sea in dense fog. Indian coast guard chased and caught five trawlers with 46 fishermen.

Jalil said he escaped the chased reached Patharghata.

One of the seized trawlers -- F B Four Star 1-- with some fishermen on board sank when the five trawlers were being escorted by the Indian coast guard. The coast guard personnel rescued the fishermen, Jalil said.

In his fax message Rashik Chandra stated that MR S C

Shing, Deputy Commandant of Indian coast guard filed a case against the 46 Bangladeshi fishermen under Section 14 of Indian Foreigner's Act.

In the case it was stated that the Bangladesh fishermen were arrested from Indian territorial waters near Haldia thana of West Bengal.

The four trawlers taken away are F B Baba Loknath

owned by Shukh Rangan of Tushkhali village under Pirozpur district, F B Nur Taz owned by Patharghata Ice Factory, F B Gazi owned by Sagir Member and F B Labon from Chittagong.

In December last year, 112 Bangladeshi fishermen were arrested by the Indian coast guard. They returned to Bangladesh in October this year.

10 hurt, 2 women missing as launch, trawler looted in Galachipa

A CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Ten people were injured and two women are missing as dacoits looted about Tk one lakh in cash and valuables from passengers of a launch and trawler in two incidents on Bora Gowrango river in Char Najir area in Galachipa on Sunday night and Monday.

The missing women are Rahima, 36 and Beauty, 30, both launch passengers.

Police said, dacoits posing as passengers had boarded ML Mayer Doa which was going to Lalmohon from Rangabali Sunday night. As it reached Char Najir, the miscreants swooped on passengers.

In another incident on Monday in the same area, dacoits looted Tk 33, 000 and valuables from passengers of a trawler, which was going to Galachipa from Char Bastin.

Journalist beaten at Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Shaful Huq Mithu, Pirojpur correspondent of national daily Janakantha, was seriously injured when attacked by some miscreants activists at Pirojpur town on Sunday night.

He was rushed to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Doctors advised sending him to Dhaka for better treatment.

Police and victim's family sources said Mithu was attacked near the Sikder Medical Hall square in the town when he was returning home from Press Club at about 9:30 pm.

He was beaten and injured in the head. Hearing the news, journalist rushed there from the Press Club and took him to hospital with the help of local people.

Local people caught one of the alleged attackers--Russel -- and handed him over to police.

Sources claimed that the attackers belonged to the ruling party.

No case was lodged till the report was filed Monday night.

However Pirojpur Police superintendent Abdullah-Al-Azad Chowdhury visited Mithu at the hospital assured him of action against the attackers.

The Pirojpur Press Club and the local unit of Sangbadik Samity at a meeting on Monday at the Press Club condemned the attack and demanded punishment of the attackers.

Local journalist will give a memorandum to the administration today and bring out a procession on January 7 demanding punishment of the attackers. Barisal Reporters Unity in a statement also condemned the attack.

Fog disrupts waterway service

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Dense fog in river routes delayed arrival of vessels to Barisal from different parts of the country by seven to eight hours Sunday night and on Monday.

The situation did not improve yesterday.

BIWTA sources here said Khulna-bound Rocket steamer PS Lepcha was stranded for about four hours at Alur Bazar near Chandpur on the Meghna and reached Barisal seven hours behind schedule Sunday night.

Triple-decker lanches MV Suravi-6, Parabat-2, Parabat-7 and Emadad Khan reached Barisal from Dhaka about eight hours behind schedule.

Ferry service between Aricha and Dauladia and between Mawa and Char Janazat were suspended for about two hours, which created jams of vehicles at the terminals.

Night coaches also reached Barisal from Dhaka and other districts hours behind schedule, sources said.

RU ignores UGC order, gives over Tk 2.5 cr subsidy on power a year Heaters used for keeping rooms warm

A RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi University authorities give over Tk 2.5 crore subsidy on electricity consumption on the campus every year, ignoring a UGC (University Grants Commission) directive to reduce the subsidy.

The university gives around Tk three crore power bills a year but realises only around Tk 13 lakh from consumers, sources at the accounts section said.

The rest amount is given as subsidy by the UGC.

The sources said UGC on several asked the RU authorities to check misuse and reduce the subsidy, but to no effect.

"It has become a regular practice now that the UGC gives orders every year (to reduce subsidy) and the RU authorities remains bent on seeking more allocation on power sector", commented RU Accounts Section Director Anwar Hussain while talking to this correspondent recently.

It is alleged that consumers on the campus use high-power electric heaters in cooking. Some of them use heaters even to dry clothes during rains and to keep houses warm in winter, sources said.

Even in the administrative building, heaters are used to keep rooms warm in winter.

Besides, there is system loss.

Official sources said several attempts to check misuse went in vain due to alleged inaction by the committees formed to check misuse.

High officials, including the vice-chancellor, pro-vice-chancellor and treasurer and residents students at 14 dormitories who use the maximum power are exempted from paying bills.

Other teachers, officials and employees who reside university quarters on the campus are charged as low as Tk 0.40 per unit. This is one of the cause s of misuse of power.

Water crisis in CHT

Problem will go when two plants commissioned, says PHE engineer



PHOTO: STAR

One of the 6,500 tube-wells now inoperative in CHT. The photo was taken from near the Khagrachhari district town recently.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Drinking water has become scarce in different regions of Chittagong Hill Tracts region in the current dry season as over 6,500 tube-wells are out of order.

Users of most of the tube-wells said this is due to faulty sinking of tube-wells at inappropriate places.

An official report said the scarcity of water will become more acute in Khagrachhari, Rangamatiand and Bandarban as the groundwater level will fall further because of no rain in dry season.

There are about 21,000 tube-

wells, deep tube-wells, Tara pumps and ring-wells of the region.

Admitting negligence by a section of officials in site selection and proper sinking, Superintendent Engineer of Public Health Engineering Directorate in CHT Circle Khoda Bakhs said a good amount of money was wasted due to corruption by them.

In a bid to mitigate the people's problem, two water treatment plants with a capacity of 4 lakh and 2 lakh gallons are under construction at Rangamati and Bandarban, he added.

Tussle over an abandoned house in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two organisations, one for the disabled and the other for women, had a tussle over occupation of an abandoned house here on Monday. The trouble began when the Chittagong Society for the Disabled (CSD) organised a training programme for the disabled in three rooms of the house on MM Ali Road at Dampara under Kotwali thana.

On information, members of the Chittagong unit of Jatiya Mohila Sangstha (JMS), which claimed itself to be a leasee, rushed there and drove out 25 disabled persons from the house which resulted in stoppage of the training programme. They also 'damaged property worth Tk 10,000, it was claimed.

Chairperson of the Sangstha Dr Quamrunnahar Dastogir, wife of the Chittagong city unit BNP General Secretary Dostogir Chowdhury was also present at that time.

However, the CSD General Secretary, Salim Nazrul, told The Daily Star that they organised the training programme at the consent of Chittagong DC who happens to be their chief patron.

He claimed that they had been pursuing to get lease of the house since June last year.

Meanwhile, JMS in a press statement alleged that a vested quarter occupied the abandoned house with an ulterior motive.

A case was filed, they informed. Signatories to the statement were: Dr Quamrunnahar Dostogir, Advocate Perveen Akter Chowdhury, Nilufer Momen, Rawnak Jahan and Gultaj Begum.

On contact, Quamrunnahar Dostogir told this correspondent that a process of lease of the house was under process.

'But a vested quarter led by Mahfuz attempted to grab the house', she alleged.

Earlier, the house was used as Officers' Club.

1484 arsenicosis patients in Satkhira

Arsenic in groundwater beyond WHO limit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Large scale arsenic contamination of tube-well water beyond the WHO permissible level has been detected in seven upazilas of the district.

According to a survey conducted jointly by the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) and a local NGO, there are 1484 arsenicosis patients and 3762 'suspected cases'.

Of the arsenicosis patients, 685 are in Kalaroa upazila, 450 in Tala, 256 in Assassumi, 65 in Debhata, 28 in Kaliganj.

The survey was conducted from January to November this year.

According to survey, 51463 tube-wells out of 78996 in the upazilas are contaminated with arsenic beyond the WHO (World Health Organisation) permissible level.

The rate of contamination is over 50 microgrowns per litre in 16195 tube-wells out of 17859 in Kolaroa, 16277 out of 24605 in Tala, 7949 out of 12299 in Assassumi, 6666 out of

9270 in Debhata, 4202 out of 12723 in Kaligonj and 174 out of 2240 in Shyamnagar upazila.

The survey in 14 unions in the Sadar upazila is going on.

The number of arsenic affected people is increasing and the situation may turn serious if measures are not taken immediately, PHED sources said.

When contacted, PHED Executive Engineer Abdul Hamid Mia said a programme has been taken up to supply arsenic-free drinking water in rural and coastal areas in the district.

He said 211 deep tube-wells and 90 PSFs (pond sand filter) will be installed in the district: seven deep tube-wells and 10 PSFs in the Sadar upazila, 70 deep tube-wells in Kalaroa, 29 deep tube-wells and 25 PSFs in Tala, 33 deep tube-wells and 40 PSFs in Assassumi, six deep tube-wells and 15 PSFs in Kaliganj and three deep tube-wells in Shyamnagar upazila.

8 firearms recovered in Rangamati: one held

BSS, Rangamati

A youth was rounded up and eight firearms and huge ammunition were recovered from Naniarchar and Langadu upazilas (Uzs) on Saturday and Sunday.

Security forces rounded up Sudatta Chakma, 25, son of Jitormoy Chakma of Morachiggi village while he was loitering suspiciously in the Guniapara area under Naniarchar upazila on Sunday.

A pistol, 10 bullets and receipt

books of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) were recovered from his possession, security sources said.

Meanwhile, a shot gun, an ammunition, a barrel of shot guns and a combat shirt of army were recovered on Sunday from the Baradam area under Langadu upazila.

Besides, the security forces recovered six local guns, 147 rounds of bullet, three barrels of LG and eight rounds of bullets on Saturday from the same area.



PHOTO: STAR

A great deed indeed! The local government constructed the bridge to connect Safakhali and Pakkhiapara in Kalapara in Patuakhali. But the kutcha road linking the areas remain under water even during high tide in winter. Local people ask whether funds were allocated only for the bridge or for development of the road also. Where the money for the road has gone?