

SNAPS

Absconder arrested in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona
An abductor was arrested by Kalmakanda police on Wednesday night.

He was identified as Nakbor Ali of Bishompur village in Kalmakanda upazila.

A group of miscreants led by Nakbor abducted Nazrul, 12, son of Abdur Razzak of the same village on December 25 last year. After one month of the incident police arrested him while other accused were moving freely in front of police.

On contact, Kalmakanda Office-in-Charge (OC) told this correspondent that they had been trying to arrest other absconding accused.

Orientation programme

A CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
An orientation programme for the newly-admitted students of BSc(Ag), BBA and Computer Science and Engineering degree courses of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) was held on Friday.

Md Sultan Ahmed, Dean of the Agriculture Department was in the chair while Prof Dr AKM Abdul Hannan Bhuiyan was the chief guest. PSTU Treasurer Dr Abdul Laff Masum was special guest while Dr Akkas Ali, AKM Mostafa Jaman, Sarkar Osman Gani, Abdul Hossain, Amir Hossain, Moniruzzaman, Sharif Hossain, Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders Humayun Kabir and AKM Rakhayul Kabir spoke.

Prisoner dies at Nilphamari jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari
A convicted prisoner died at Nilphamari district Jail on Thursday.

Jail sources said the prisoner, Abdus Sattar (No. 240/A) of Baroipara village, was taken to Nilphamari Sadar Hospital at 11:45 am. He died there about one hour later.

But Sattar's wife told newsmen that her husband had no cardiac problem. She said she met him two day ago and saw him fine.

Record fertiliser price rise in 12 years

Tk 50 to 60 hike per bag in Noapara, country's biggest fertiliser market

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Prices of imported fertilisers have increased abnormally in a week in Noapara, the country's biggest fertiliser market.

Around 70 per cent of the country's fertiliser import is done through Noapara.

Prices of DAP, TSP and MOP have increased by around Tk 50 to 60 per 50 kg bag in one week, the highest in 12 years, dealers and importers said.

But the authorities concerned have not yet taken any step to check the price hike.

DAP (Cargil) is being sold at Tk 745 per bag against Tk 700 a week ago and Tk 565 in 2002-03.

DAP (Tunisia) sells at Tk 730 per

bag, which was sold at Tk 680 a week ago and at Tk 550 in 2002-03. TSP (Cargil) is being sold at Tk 740 per bag against Tk 675 a week ago and Tk 500 in 2002-03.

TSP (Tunisia) is sold at Tk 640 against Tk 580 a week ago and Tk 530 in 2002-03.

The price of TSP (China) is Tk 610 now. It was sold at Tk 575 a week ago and at Tk 450 in 2002-03.

The price of MOP has risen to Tk 495 per bag from Tk 420 three days ago. It was sold at Tk 265 in 2000-02.

Taking the advantage, locally produced NPKS (a mixture of Gypsum, Dolomite powder, TSP and urea) has flooded the market. But this fertiliser is virtually of no use for crops, farmers and agriculture experts said. They said the abnormal price hike will

affect IRRRI-Boro and vegetable cultivation this year.

Many purchasers were seen returning without fertiliser in the last couple of days.

Sources claimed that a section of dishonest importers enhanced the price in collusion with officials. There is no shortage of fertiliser and the prices have also not increased so abnormally in the international market, they claimed.

When contacted, importer Anisur Rahman, proprietor of M/S Joint Trading Corporation Ltd, claimed that prices of all varieties of fertiliser increased by 37 to 41 per cent this year.

He said the government should give subsidy on fertiliser import to keep the prices stable.

REB installs power line, thieves take away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Sizeable portions of a newly installed rural power supply line in Barisal, which is scheduled to be inaugurated by the prime minister on February 12, was stole by thieves twice in about 20 hours recently.

The Rural Electrification Board (REB) installed a 33 KV line from Khasherhat Muladi to Mehendiganj.

On January 18, thieves stole about two-kilometer live wire from the line, plunging the area into darkness.

As REB was installing it, thieves on the night of January 19, stole about one kilometre live wire from Alikhar Bazar to Hularhat Bazar.

REB officials said they are installing the line. They said it could be a sabotage ahead of the prime minister's visit.

The stolen wire is worth about Tk five lakh.

REB lodged a GD with Mehendiganj thana but police could neither recover the wire nor arrest any of the thieves.

Shantu Larma to address Modhupur rally today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Parbattya Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity chief Jotinindria Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma will address a rally today at Joytagachha village where a Garo tribesman was shot dead by police on January 3.

Piren Slan was killed during a demonstration protesting construction of a boundary wall for the proposed Eco Park in Modhupur forest.

The killing sparked protests by the indigenous people who are opposing creation of the planned Eco Park there, saying that the park will displace them from their ancestral homes and destroy the ecology.

PSTU VC's resignation demanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal, youth and student wings of the ruling BNP held rally and demonstration at Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) demanding resignation of Vice Chancellor (VC) Dr Prof Abdul Hannan Buiyan and fulfillment of three other demands on Thursday evening.

Vice-President of Dumki upazila unit of BNP Abu Hanif, Joint Convenor of Upazila Jubo Dal Faruq Hossain, Jubo Dal leaders Tariqul Islam, Saiful Islam Mridha, Jahidul Haq, Masudul Alam and Chhatra Dal leader (JCD) Jasim Uddin, among others, addressed the rally.

Other other demands include cancellation of admission test held on January 16, cancellation of examination centre at Dhaka University Curzon Hall and cancellation of a recent appointment of 11 officials and resignation of a course co-ordinator Habibur Rahman and a hall super Mohsin Hossain Khan.

Two Barisal JCD activists held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were arrested in the city on Friday.

Police said Md Suman alias Pichchi Sumon, assistant office secretary of Barisal district JCD was arrested from Kawnia BSIC road area on charge of criminal activities. He was wanted in several cases.

In another drive, police arrested JCD cadre Kamal Hossain Kutti, 26, from the same area.

10 hurt as AL factions clash at Magura party council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Ten leaders of Awami League (AL) and it's front organisations were injured when two rival factions of the party clashed here yesterday morning and the night before over formation of a party unit in the town.

Two of them are in critical condition at Magura Sadar Hospital with stab injury.

Witnesses and party sources said the clash ensued from an altercation between district Krishak League Organising

Secretary Mirul Islam and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League Zahangir Hossain during party council of Ward No 3, held on the premises of Rigram School in the town.

Their supporters clashed with sticks and sharp weapons.

District AL convening committee members Abdul Kuddus Sardar and Golam Mowla, Mirul Islam, BCL leaders Babul Hossain, Kamrul Islam, Zahangir Hossain and Jubo League leader Azibor Rahman were injured.

Abdul Kuddus, Babul Hossain

and Azibor were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital and the rest were treated there, hospital sources said.

In a sequel to the clash, district AL Sechcha Shebak League Mofizur Rahman and his elder brother Moazzem Hossain were stabbed and BCL vice-president Ali Ahmed Ahad was beaten by their rivals in Bhaina area in the town at about 10 am yesterday. They were also admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital.

No case was lodged till filing of this report yesterday afternoon.

Step to root out cheating Teams to visit schools during terminal exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

To create awareness against cheating in examinations, the education ministry has decided to engage special vigilance teams during terminal and annual school examinations.

Vigilance teams are now engaged during SSC and HSC examinations.

According to official sources, a letter (memo no. Shim/Sha-10/14(4)/2003/146) in this regard signed by Md. Ataul Huq, senior assistant secretary of the ministry, has reached the offices concerned in Barisal.

In the letter, the Deputy Commissioner and Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNOs) have been asked to form vigilance teams to inspect educational institutions during terminal and annual examinations.

The Police Superintendent, Civil Surgeon, ADC (Education), headmasters of government and reputed private schools, the District Primary Education Officer, Ansar and VDP officers will be in the district level team. The District Education Officer will be member secretary of the team.

Assistant Commissioner (land), headmasters of local government schools, the Sub-Assistant Engineer of the Education Directorate, Upazila Primary Education Officer, Ansar-VDP officer, Upazila Sadar Union Parishad chairman and the Upazila Project Officer will be in the upazila level teams.

Schools will prepare question papers for terminal and annual examinations.

A good number of teachers and guardians talking to this correspondent hailed the proposed inspection by vigilance teams.

12 sued by Eco Park contractor

A false case to harass us, Garo leaders say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Nine indigenous people and three Bangladeshes have been sued for "looting" construction materials from the site where a wall was being raised for the planned Eco Park in Modhupur.

Contractor Rafiqul Islam filed the case with Modhupur police station on January 18, sources there said.

The accused are Ajoy Mree, Chalesh Richil, Prosanta Mankin, Pansaraj Gagra, Jordal Bong, Michal Nokrak, Euzin Nokrak, Naro Dalbat, Probin Chisim, and Bangladeshes Anwar Hossain, Habibur Rahman and Akther Hossain.

In the case Rafiqul Islam claimed that he and his men left the site after the wall construction was stopped by an order of Tangail

Deputy Commissioner after the killing of Piren Snal on January 3. After he left the area, the 12 men looted the construction materials worth Tk 6 lakh, he claimed.

Talking to this correspondent, some leaders of the indigenous people said the case is false. They claimed that DFO Abu Hanif Patwary and Modhupur thana officer-in-charge Abu Jafar Alam are behind filing of the case.

Ajoy Mree, one of the leaders, said the false case has been filed as part of efforts to 'suppress probe into the killing of Piren Sanal'.

Another leader, Albart Nokrak, said the false case has been filed only to harass the Garo people and to suppress the probe.

When contacted, Abu Jafar Alam said the looting of construction materials is a fact and he will take action against the looters.

Outlaws attack UP Chairman's house, one caught by people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Villagers caught one of the alleged outlaws as they attempted on the life of a Union Parishad chairman at Goalkandi in Banglamara upazila in the early hours of Thursday.

Zamal Hossain, a suspected member of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), was beaten and handed over to police.

Police said some ten outlaws encircled the house of Goalkandi UP Chairman Zahangir Alam and asked him to come out.

As Alam raised an alarm, local people came and chased the gang.

They caught Zamal.

In a case filed with Bagmara police station, Alam alleged that unidentified PBCP men were threatening him with death for several months as he was not giving them toll.

Earlier on Tuesday night, police arrested three alleged outlaws while they were pasting PBCP posters of in front of Rajshahi Women's College.

They are Roni, Arif and Liton.

RMP Deputy Commissioner Masud Mia said the case filing was under process and it was delayed for interrogating the outlaws.

Hefty gain from cotton cultivation

Farmers earn around Tk 7,000 from one *bigha* a season

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Cotton has turned into a cash crop for farmers and its cultivation is expanding in Kushtia, Meherpur, Rajbari and Faridpur districts.

The crop earned them good profit this year.

"I earned a profit of about Tk 7,000 by cultivating cotton on one bigha of land", farmer Rabiul Islam told this correspondent at Betbenia bazaar in Gangni upazila recently.

The yield was also good this year, he said. The production cost per bigha is about Tk 2,000. Five to eight maunds are produced, which is sold at around Tk 13,00 per maund, he said.

"Flood partially damaged the field but the average yield was good

this year," said Abdul Hanef of Dharmadab in Daulatpur upazila.

This correspondent also visited some areas in Kushtia and Meherpur and talked to farmers.

They said they cultivated cotton this year as a cash crop because of its good demand and quality. The cropping time is also short, about four months, they said.

According to sources at the Kushtia zonal office of Bangladesh Cotton Development Board (BCDB), 9,000 hectares of land were brought under cotton cultivation in the last season (September-December) with a production target of 18,000 bales. The zone includes Kushtia, Meherpur, Rajbari and Faridpur.

They said cotton plants on about 2,000 hectares were damaged

aged by floods but this was compensated by good yield.

They said farmers can raise other crops along with cotton.

Cotton cultivation is becoming popular.

They said the cotton grown in Bangladesh is very good in quality and can be compared with the crops grown in traditional cotton-growing countries. High lands are most suited for this crop.

The BCDB officials said, to encourage farmers, they are running 21 'farmers school fields' (FCF) an 'attended pest management programme (APMP) to train them in cotton farming and pest control.

But lack of loan is a problem for farmers, they said.

Sylhet dev council unit formed in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A 43-member new committee of Moulvibazar district unit of Dhaka-based Sylhet Division Development Council was formed here at a meeting here recently.

Advocate Mamunur Rashid became its convenor while Syed Mutassin Ali, Advocate Mohiuddin Manik and Syed Abdur Rouf Manik became joint convenors and Md Abu Taher was made its member secretary.

The meeting was held at the house of Syed Bazul Karim, ex-Deputy Police Commissioner, Moulvibazar with Advocate Mamunur Rashid in the chair.

Oysur Rahman Chowdhury General Secretary of the organisation's Central Committee attended the meeting as chief guest.

Various problems of the division were discussed in the meeting and participants expressed their views on development-related issues of different districts under the division.

Md Abu Taher member secre-

tary of the newly-formed committee told The Daily Star that the committee is duly approved by the central committee.

3 Kushtia JCD leaders held for 'stealing' rly sleepers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Three leaders of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of ruling BNP, were arrested Friday night on charge of stealing railway sleepers.

They are Kushtia Poura JCD organising secretary Sumon Mahmaud, joint secretary Amir Hossain and Chuadanga College JCD unit secretary Babu

Police said they were arrested on charge of stealing six railway sleepers from Railgachi railway station.

Officer-in-charge of Chuadanga Sadar police station Abul Hossain said after arrest, they threatened the policemen with transfer if they are not released. But police remained firm and filed a case against them.



Nizamuddin



Mahtab

Police patrol boat tragedy Body of cop recovered, another missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal.

Body of a ASI Nizamuddin was recovered from a shoal at the confluence of Dhansiri-Gabkhan and Bishkhal rivers near Charvatakanda, about four km off Jhalakati on Friday.

Nizamuddin drowned and his colleague ASI Mahtab Hossain is still missing after their patrol boat sank there after being hit by passenger launch MV Belayet on Wednesday night. Police said they found a shoe there, which

belonged to Mahtab. The body Nizamuddin was handed over to his family after autopsy and Janaza.

Search for Mahtab's body and efforts to salvage the vessel is continuing.

A three-member inquiry committee headed by Abu Sufian, ASP, Sadar Circle of Jhalakati has been formed to probe the incident.

A case was lodged by constable and patrol boat driver Abdur Rahim as complainant with Jalakati Sadar Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of a human chain formed at Makinganj town yesterday protesting the recent armed attack on district BNP leader Tozammel Haq. People from all walks of life joined the demonstration.

10 hurt as BNP, Jamaat clash in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 10 persons were injured in a clash between activists of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in the town yesterday.

The clash ensued from beating of the son of a Jamaat leader for allegedly lifting a mobile phone set of a JCD activist.

According to police, Humayan Kabir Babar, JCD general secretary at the Islamic University, lost his mobile set several days ago. He filed a GD with Saikupa police.

Yesterday, the mobile set was found with Abu Sadat, son of Abdus Sattar, Amir (chief) of Saikupa upazila Jamaat. Babar beat Sadat. Sadat returned the mobile set, but without the SIM card. This angered Babar.

He along with others caught Sadat and handed him over to police.

This provoked Jamaat activists. They chased JCD men in Babupara area in the town, resulting in the clash.

16 Bangladeshi fishermen on hunger strike in Indian jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sixteen Bangladeshi fishermen were on hunger strike for several days at Tamluk Sub-jail in Midnapore district, West Bengal to press home their demand for going back to Bangladesh.

The fishermen hailed from Cox's Bazar district.

According to a report published in the Ananda Bazar Patrika of Kolkata, Indian sea guards arrested 100 Bangladeshi fishermen on charge of intrusion on December 29 in 2002 from Bashanti area in 24, Parganas district of West Bengal.

Seven fishing trawlers were also seized for trespassing the Indian territorial waters.

The arrested fishermen were handed over to Haldia thana where two separate cases were recorded against them.

However, 84 out of 100 fishermen were pushed back at the intervention of Bangladesh Embassy in India, according to the Ananda Bazar report. Seven seized trawlers were also set free.

But the rest 16 fishermen are still languishing in jail.

Salma Sobhan's contributions recalled

A CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Speakers at a condolence meeting on Friday recalled the contributions of late Barrister Salma Sobhan in protecting human rights in Bangladesh.

The meeting was organised by a memorial committee at Manikganj Bar auditorium.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Executive Director Mueyed Chowdhury said Salma Sobhan devoted her entire life in protecting legal rights of the oppressed, especially of women.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Secretary Ayesha Khanam said Salma worked hard to create mass awareness at the grassroots level.

BRAC Region Coordinator Abu Musa said that under BRAC's Legal Education Programme, 20 lakh rural people across the country receive law education as Barrister Salma Sobhan contributed a lot in making the curriculum easier for common people.

The meeting was also addressed, among others, by the deceased's husband Rehman Sobhan, Manikganj Bar Association President Md Meher Ali and Abdur Rahman of BRAC.