

SNAPS

AL-backed panel sweeps Bhola

Bar polls

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola
The Awami League-backed panel swept the Bhola District Bar Association election, held recently.

It won 11 posts. The ruling party-backed panel got the rest one.
Advocate Jahangir Alam belonging to the AL-backed panel was elected president. Advocate Salehuddin Ahmed and Mohamad Mohibullah were elected vice-presidents while Advocate Basirullah became general secretary. Other elected from the panel are Mohamad Shahidullah, Mostafizur Rahman, Dilipkumar Chanda, Fazlur Rahman, Fozle Shobhan, Momtaz Begum, Abdul Malek and Soharab Kaji.

Heroin recovered in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Narcotics officials recovered 250 grams of heroine and arrested an alleged drug peddler from a club in the Sadar upazila, police said yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, the officials accompanied by a police team led by Sub Inspector Mir Shah Jahan Ali raided the club recently, arrested Abdul Wahab son of Gias Uddin of Nabakhali village and recovered the heroine worth Tk one lakh from his possession. A case was filed with Satkhira thana.

Gun recovered, couple held in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Police arrested a couple for possessing a gun and three rounds of bullets from Chayfulah Kandi village under Banchhampur upazila on Friday night.

A police team of Banchhampur thana headed by sub-inspector (SI) Kurshed Alam raided Kanu Mia's house at the village and recovered the gun and bullets. Police arrested Konu Mia, 30, son of Hiran Mia and his wife Hasu Begum. A court sent the couple to jail for 14 days.

A case was filed with Banchhampur police station.

Trees dying in Patuakhlali sea beach

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhlali

Trees in reserve forests in Patuakhlali sea beach areas are dying, threatening existence of the greenery.

Forest officials and local people this correspondent talked to said thousands of trees like Screw pine, Gewa and Garan in vast areas of Char Gangamati, Kuakata, Khajura, Lambur Char and Kaver Char under Kalapara upazila in the district have already died.

It was noticed 4-5 years back when a small number of trees withered away gradually. But differ-

ent varieties of trees are dying in largescale now, they said.

They suspect that lack of sweet water could be one of the reasons. Roots of the trees do not penetrate deep into the soil and those are covered by sand carried by tidal wave. So the roots can not suck sweet water.

But some others differed with the view. They said the certain varieties of trees were planted considering that they would be able to survive without sweet water. There could be other reasons, they think.

This correspondent saw hundreds of left over roots after local people cut away the dead trees at Kuakata sea beach.

Abdul Mannan, 40, told this correspondent at Char Gangamati sea beach that the withering process start within 4-5 months after their roots are covered by 2 to 3 feet sand carried by tidal wave.

Officials at Patuakhlali forest division said "excessive deposit of sand" is harmful for mangrove forest.

They can be saved if the sand layer can be removed from forests. But it is costly, they said.



Roots remaining after local people took away dead Kewra trees from a forest in Kuakata sea beach.

PHOTO: STAR

Fortune from farming

Tomato changes people's lot in 3 Nilphamari unions:
Zakir dreams of food processing plant

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Graduating from a local college, Zakir Hossain started hybrid tomato cultivation. He is now a proud and rich farmer and dreams of creating jobs for others in agro-based small industries.

He earned Tk 1.5 lakh from seven bighas and expects to earn Tk 3 lakh to Tk 3.5 lakh more in the rest two months of the current rabi season.

He says small processing plants could be set up in remote and poverty-stricken Domar upazila to produce jam, jelly pickles and other exportable food items, which will show the road to prosperity to many in the area.

"The government can help us in setting up a specialised cold storage to preserve tomato and other vegetables", he told this correspondent at Nij Vogdaburi village

during a recent visit to three unions in the upazila.

Tomato farming has changed the fate of many in nine villages in the three unions. Marginal farmers and even landless share-croppers are now well off with hefty profits from their small holdings.

It was a different scene at Nij Vogdaburi, Gosaigang and Chilahati villages in Vogdaburi union; Mirzaganj, Jorabari and Bagdogra in Jorabari union and three other villages in Teprigan union. Jubilant farmers were working in tomato fields covering over 300 acres.

Raju Basunia, another educated youth, said he has already sold about 400 maunds for Tk 60,000 and expects to earn another two lakh from four bighas of land.

"The production cost is higher this year due to high prices of fertiliser and insecticide", he said.

Atar Ali, a small farmer of Bagdogra village, has earned Tk 10,000 from half a bigha of land (15 decimal) and hopes to get more Tk 25,000 in the rest of the season till the Bangla month of Baishakh. He got Tk 30,000 from the same land last year.

Share-cropper Horiher Barman cultivated tomato on 20 decimal land at Gosaigang village. He has to pay Tk 8,000 to the landowner. Still he is happy as he has already earned Tk 20,000 and expects to get Tk 30,000 more after meeting the production cost.

Marginal farmers like Nazrul of Teprigan village, Azizul of Nijvogdaburi village, Sukur Mia of Chilahati and Ketar Barman of Jorabari are also happy as tomato farming has changed their lot.

Zakir says 350 to 450 maunds can be produced on a bigha and the crop can be cultivated from the

Bangla months of Kartik (mid-October) to Baishakh (April).

But all of them said the marketing system is very difficult. Middlemen buy at low prices and supply truckloads of tomato to Dhaka and other cities.

Block Supervisors of agricultural department said the soil of the region is very good for vegetable cultivation and they are assisting farmers by teaching them improved methods of cultivation.

Commercial cultivation of hybrid tomato started in the area six years ago when Abu Musa earned about Tk one lakh from the crop at Nij Vogdaburi village in 1998.

Seeing his success, Zakir cultivated tomato on his father's three bigha land in the following year and earned Tk 1.5 lakh for the first time.



Bunches of tomato in a plant, left, and the crop awaits marketing after harvest, right.



PHOTO: STAR

Fire in Ctg, Barisal: Tk 40 lakh property damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fire burnt shops, factories and property reportedly worth about Tk 30 lakh in two separate incidents at Kala Miah Bazaar in Bakalia and Panwalarapa in Agrabad on Friday.

Fire Brigade sources said at least 50 semi-pucca and tin-shed houses and two biscuit factories at Jalal Ahmad Colony in Kala Miah Bazaar were burnt completely in the morning, causing a damage of Tk 20 lakh.

Firefighters from nearby stations doused the fire at 11:45am but could not ascertain the reason behind the fire.

In Panwalarapa, two cotton factories and their godowns were gutted in the fire originated from electric short circuit at around 10

am. The damage was estimated at Tk 10 lakh, sources said.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Four persons were injured and eight shops burnt in a fire originating from a burning cigarette at an illegal petrol shop in Pirojpur on Friday noon.

The fire broke out at Rima Enterprise, an illegal loose petrol and gas cylinder selling shop, at Post Office Road at around 12:15pm when driver Abdul Hye of the deputy commissioner's office entered the shop, smoking a cigarette.

Fire-fighters rushed to the spot and put out the fire after two hours. They said the fire caused a damage of Tk 10 lakh.

Of the injured, two were admitted to Pirojpur General Hospital.

Two get life for killing elder brother in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Two brothers were sentenced to life term imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer two months more rigorous imprisonment each on charge of killing their elder brother.

Two other accused were acquitted of murder charge due to lack of evidences.

The convicts are Rafiqul and Rabiul, son of Answer Ali of Kajoldhop village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

The acquitted accused are Answer Ali and Belina Begum.

They had a quarrel with their elder brother Nurul Islam, 40, over a family dispute on August 12 in 1997. They beat him up severely on the fateful day. As a result, Nurul sustained serious injuries. He died on way to hospital where he was being shifted.

His widow Fahima Begum filed a murder case with Gaibandha Sadar thana accusing four persons including father-in-law Answer Ali and mother-in-law Belina Begum.

Police filed the charge-sheet in 1999 after an investigation.

Gaibandha District and Sessions Judge A M M Mohammed Sayeed pronounced the judgement in his court on Saturday.

Public prosecutor (PP) Jahangir Alam Jinnah conducted the case.

One to die, 5 get life for killing couple in Barisal

UNB, Barisal

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Barisal, on Friday awarded death penalty to a man and life imprisonment to five people for killing a couple in 1997.

Wahidul Islam Babul was given death sentence while Harun Talukdar, Jasimuddin, Mujibur Rahman Talukdar, Hasan Sikder and Wahab Sikder got life imprisonment.

M Abdul Motin, judge of the tribunal, acquitted nine others as charges brought against them were not proved.

According to prosecution, the convicts slaughtered rickshawpuller M Shahabuddin, 35, and his wife Rashida Begum, 28, at Dekhal village in Sadar upazila, Patuakhlali on the night of August 7, 1997 following a land dispute.

A case was filed against 15 people on the following day. Police pressed charges against the accused on September 27, 1999.

33 nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Brahmanbaria police nabbed 33 people on various charges from different parts of the district on Tuesday night.

The arrested included three accused of murder cases.

BSF picks up Bangladeshi in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The Border Security Force (BSF) of India picked up one Bangladeshi--Kabir Mia, 23,--from Bangladesh territory in bordering Chankhula village in Kashba upazila on Monday.

Quoting witnesses, police said BSF crossed the border and wanted drinking water from Kabir, who was working in his field. Kabir fetched them water.

After taking water, they took him along with them. He did not return home till noon yesterday, police said.

BDR was informed of the matter, Kabir's relatives said. Kabir is the son of Eidon Mia.

20 hurt in Magura AL-BNP clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 20 people were injured, eight of them seriously, when activists of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League clashed at Budhorpara village in Magura Sadar upazila on Tuesday.

Police said witnesses said supporters of Moghi union BNP President Abu Bakar Biswas and the union AL general secretary Pilton Mohamud clashed over establishment of supremacy in the area.

They used lethal weapons during the clash that lasted for about half an hour.

Seriously injured Pilton Mahmood, Bablu Biswas, Dul Mia, Taru Biswas, Mansur Rahman, Zamir Hossain and Saiful were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital.

No case was lodged till filing of this report at about noon yesterday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Directorate

Office of the Executive Engineer, Cox's Bazar

Memo No. LGED/EE/Cox/Tender-2/2004/54

Dated: 11-01-2004

Tender Notice

No. 28/2003-2004

Tender in Bangladesh Form No. 2911 under sealed cover are hereby invited for implementation of 4 schemes under Rural Infrastructure Development (Development of Important Roads & Haat Bazaars) project 3rd part project during 2003-2004 financial year in Cox's Bazar district under Local Government Engineering Directorate. LGED enlisted (as per class capacity) up-to-date renewed all contractors LGED & RHD joint registered and all projects under this directorate prequalified contractors can participate in the tender.

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| 1. Place of purchasing & submitting tender schedule | 1. Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong Division, Chittagong. |
| | 2. Superintending Engineer, Local Government Engineering Directorate, Chittagong Division Zone, 129/A, East Nasirabad, Road No. 4, Chittagong. |
| | 3. Executive Engineer (Maintenance), Local Government Engineering Directorate, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. |
| | 4. Executive Engineer, LGED, Chittagong / Cox's Bazar. |
| | 5. Upazila Engineer, LGED (overall) Chittagong. |
| | 6. Tenders received by post (registered with AD) at the office of the undersigned within the prescribed time will also be considered as dropped tenders. |

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| 2. Date of receiving tender in tender box | 12-02-2004 up to 1:00 PM at the respective offices. |
| 3. Date of opening tender box | 12-02-2004 at 1:30 PM at the respective offices. |
| 4. Date of opening tender | 15-02-2004 at 10:30 AM at the office of the undersigned. |
| 5. Last date of selling tender schedule | Up to 11-02-2004 (during office hours). |
| 6. Earnest money | The amount stated in tender notice in the form of BD/CD/Pay Order from any scheduled bank in favour of Executive Engineer, LGED, Cox's Bazar. |
| 7. Detailed tender notice & other information can be seen & known from the office of the undersigned & respective offices during office hours and this notice of LGED can be seen at www.lged.org web site. | |

M A Bashir

Executive Engineer

DFP-1157-17/1
G-51Local Government Engineering Directorate
Cox's Bazar

Tk 4cr scam: Islami Bank manager, 2 others face charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Three persons face corruption charge for alleged involvement in misappropriation of over four crore taka.

They are importer Md Rezanur Rahman Reza, discharged manager of the Bogra branch of Islami Bank (IB) Sarwar Alam and Md Ershad Ali, discharged In-Charge who used to handle foreign exchange of the bank.

The Inspector of Anti-Corruption Bureau, Ashrafur Islam filed a case with Sadar thana on Saturday against them for alleged misappropriation of about Tk 4 crore 5 lakh 18 thousand and 881.

It was alleged that Rezanur Reza, owner of Reza and Company opened 12 letters of credit (LCs) against a sanction of Tk 4 cr equivalent to US 16 lakh 62 thousand dollar for import of Indian goods. The LCs were opened during a period from November 11, 1995 to December 30, 1998 from the bank.

Tk 2.50 cr Srimongal rly station work going on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

ATK 2.50 cr project to modernise the Srimongal Railway Station, a century-old station in the district, is being implemented.

According to the Scheme, an amount of Tk 60 lakh has been sanctioned for construction of a new building, Tk 23 lakh for expansion of its platform, Tk 59 lakh 20 thousand for construction of the platform's roof, Tk 2 lakh 50 thousand for construction of its boundary walls, Tk 7 lakh 58 thousand for renovation of approach roads, Tk One lakh 80 thousand for modernisation of its signalling system and Tk 21 lakh 40 thousand for other works.

The station master told this correspondent that Srimongal railway station was established on 5149 square fact area of land in 1892. No renovation or reconstruction work was done in over 100 years.

However, the entire scheme is expected to be completed by June next year.

Fresh attempt to lease profitable BPC motel in Sylhet

'Vested quarters lobbying'

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The authorities' move to lease out the profit-earning Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) motel in Sylhet has evoked a reaction from different quarters including political leaders.

The motel has been earning profit since its establishment in September 1993, an official said.

This is the third such move as two earlier attempts failed as 'suitable' parties were not found, the official said.

The hilltop motel on 40 acres of land along the Airport Road in the suburb of the divisional city sur-

rounded by scenic hillocks is attracting boarders since its inception. The motel was formally inaugurated in 1994.

However, last year, 13 acres from its land were handed over to a private party for setting up of a Shishu Park.

The motel near the Sylhet Cadet College attracts boarders as they can enjoy a panoramic view of the area. Officials at the motel said it earned reputation though it is understaffed and lacks some other facilities. Twenty-five people are now working in the motel against posts for 57.

The initiative to lease the motel

for 15 years' was first taken in 2002. The attempt failed as the response was very poor with only five parties taking part in the bid.

As the authorities decided for a second attempt, one of the parties filed a case challenging the move. But a High Court verdict went against the petitioner.

The third tender was floated in November last year, inviting bids from business establishments including foreign firms having experience in running hotels and motels. Only five parties responded.

Any decision is yet to be taken.

Sources said a strong lobby is working to lease the motel to some

private party.

People prefer to stay at the motel due to its cheap rate and the scenic beauty around it.

President of Sylhet district Awami League ANM Shafique said the lone BPC motel in Sylhet region should not be leased to any private party. It is running well despite a lot of problems. Rather, it should be developed to attract more tourists including foreigners, he added.

Some businessmen this correspondent talked to said once leased, the cost will go up and inflow of boarders will decrease. Some vested quarters are trying to lease it only to earn profit, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of the lone BPC motel in Sylhet.