

BDR seizes 35 barrels of diesel in Meherpur border area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized over 35 barrels of diesel worth Tk 14,000 from different border points of the district in the last three days.

They BDR also arrested three people for their alleged involvement in smuggling out diesel from the country during the period.

BDR sources said smuggling out of diesel through Meherpur border nowadays has been stopped.

Rangpur Sugar Mills

Withdraw lay off decision, 11-Party urges govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gairbandha*

Gairbandha 11-Party Alliance has called upon the government to withdraw the decision to lay off Rangpur Sugar Mills.

It gave a deadline till March 21 for the withdrawal. Otherwise, a 6 am-2 pm will be observed in the district on March 22.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the alliance, held at the local CPB office on Monday. The meeting was presided over by Mihir Ghosh, district convenor of the alliance.

It was addressed by Aminul Islam Golsp, Mosadek Ahmed Bulbul and Jahangir Alam of Workers Party; Asifur Rahman Rafel and Saikha Singha Goswami of CPB; Monjur Alami Mithu of BSC; Kader Newaz of Cononaty Party and Mozaffar Rahman Babul of Gono Forum.

Digital telephone at a Manikganj union

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

A union in the district was brought under digital system telephone network on Monday.

Former Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan MP, opened the Tk 60 lakh 50-line digital telephone exchange of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) at Charigram Shahadat Khan High school ground.

Among others, Manikganj Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Bari, BTTB Divisional Engineer Habibur Rahman, Assistant Police Superintendent (ASP) of Manikganj Mujibur Rahman, BNP leaders Fazlul Haque Khan, addressed the opening function.

SNAPS

Half-day hartal observed at Banaripara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Banaripara*

A half-day hartal, called by the local traders' association, was observed at Banaripara upazila Sadar on Monday. The hartal was called to protest filing of a "false" case against Sarwar Howlader and Mithu Molla, two leaders of that association. They are also local leaders of Juba Dal.

Police said the case was filed as they allegedly hacked a local BNP activist, Milton, known as an extorter.

200 fall sick due to food poisoning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Banaripara*

More than 200 people fell sick due to alleged food poisoning at a marriage ceremony Sunday night at Kalapara upazila headquarter.

Twenty of them were admitted to the upazila health complex.

Police said one Amal Samdar of Kumar Patti area in the upazila headquarter arranged the ceremony on the occasion of his daughter's marriage. They said they visited the spot and probing whether it is a conspiracy.

Farmers' 'no' to imported hybrid seeds

Scientifically produced and preserved indigenous HYV paddy seeds give higher yield, open the door to prosperity for many

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from *Bhaluka*

NETRAKONA: Saying 'no' to imported hybrid paddy seeds, farmers in Bhaluka have started commercial production of indigenous high yielding variety (HYV) seeds.

The HYV seeds, scientifically produced and preserved with assistance from agriculture experts, are in good demand because they give higher yield and need lesser irrigation, the producers and users say.

This has opened the door to prosperity for many farmers. They produced about 800 maunds of seeds last year, bought by wholesalers from different areas of Mymensingh and Tangail districts.

Encouraged by local Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials, a few farmers initiated this in 1999. Now, about 100 small farmers have taken to commercial production and preservation of HYV seeds. They are not contract growers of (BADC) Bangladesh Agriculture Development

Corporation.

The yield from HYV seeds is four to five maunds higher than from hybrid seeds. The producers and users are very happy now because this has freed them from dependence on imported seeds. They said paddy produced from imported hybrid seeds can not be kept for use as seed later, thus making farmers dependent on imported seeds.

"I got 26 maunds from one bigha by cultivating BR-29 (HYV seed) last year. Hybrid seeds yield 20 maunds at best", Kala Mia of Dhidpur village told this correspondent during a recent visit. He is cultivating locally processed BR-29 this year also.

The response from farmers to go for commercial production of local HYV seeds has also encouraged AED officials, who arranged an exhibition on seed preservation last year.

The great job was initiated by Block Supervisor Mohammad Mohiuddin. He convinced five farmers of Dhidpur village to produce and preserve HYV seeds. Kala Mia is one of them.

"At first I did not care what Mohiuddin said. As he requested me, I agree to produce HYV seeds. He (Mohiuddin) showed me how to preserve the seed. Last year I sold 45 maunds and earned Tk 45,000", Kala Mia said.

Abul Kalam, produced 150 maunds of Binashail (HYV) seeds on two acres last year and earned Tk 50,000 by selling 50 maunds. "Farmers prefer our seeds", he said.

Kala Mia of Shantigonj village produced BREE-28 seeds. "BREE-28 gives better yield than hybrid seeds".

Block supervisor Mohiuddin said farmers can get three paddy crops - Amon, Aush and Boro - a year by using HYV seeds.

The farmers said their preservation method is very simple. They select the best quality paddy to preserve those as seed. After harvest they dry those in sunshine for four days and keep those in specially made air-tight containers made of clay or some other material, using preservatives which are also



(File photo) HYV seed paddy ready for harvest at Dhidpur village. The photo was taken last year.

cheap and locally available. They keep the containers in dry place.

They dry the seed in sunshine once in a month till their use.

Bhaluka Upazila Agriculture Officer Tofazzal Hossen said farmers can grow HYV seeds thrice a



(File photo) HYV seed paddy ready for harvest at Dhidpur village. The photo was taken last year.

year. About 200 maunds of seed paddy can be produced on one acre in a year. This has opened the door to prosperity for many farmers and stopped their dependence on imported hybrid seeds, he said.

Planning and Evaluation Wing of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) earlier.

A helipad was built unnecessarily in the compound at a cost of about Tk 12 lac for a "probable visit by the Prime Minister", sources added. The helipad was planned for the visit but the plan was implemented even after her visit was cancelled.

SRM authorities also spent Tk four crore for other works without proper approval by higher authorities, they said. These included construction of boundary wall, procurement of equipment and samples of spices from India.

Papers containing allegations of the financial irregularities were submitted to ruling party Whip and local MP Rezaul Barai by some local people including some contractors. The Whip sent the papers to the BAC and also talked to the Agriculture Minister over the matter.

3 day-ultimatum for PSTU VC's removal

VC yet to return to campus: Local BNP bars 8 new teachers from joining

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The local Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Monday gave a three-day ultimatum for removal of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) Vice-chancellor Dr. Prof. AKM Abdul Hannan Bhuyan.

The ultimatum was announced at a rally held in front of a cinema hall in the town. The rally followed a procession on the PSTU campus.

They are demanding removal of the VC for his alleged nepotism in recruiting eleven teachers and officials. Most of them are from

outside the district, the protesters claimed.

The rally was presided over by Dumki upazila BNP President Prof Bahauddin Bahar and addressed by, among others Union Parishad Chairman Golam Moruza Sukkur, Jubo Dal leader Saiful Islam Mridha, Chatra Dal leader Tariqul Islam, Faruq Howladar, Shahidul Islam and Jalil Khan.

The speakers said tougher agitation programmes will be announced if the VC is not removed within the deadline.

The local BNP is agitating since January 17 demanding the VC's removal and cancellation of

appointments of the 11 teachers and officials.

The VC who left the campus during the Eid-ul-Azha vacation did not return till yesterday. After the Eid, he filed a GD (general diary) with police here by post alleging that he could not return for lack of security.

Meanwhile the local BNP did not allow the 11 teachers and staff to join.

Eight of the teachers were recruited for computer science and BBA departments. Students of the two departments are lazing away time without classes, campus sources said.

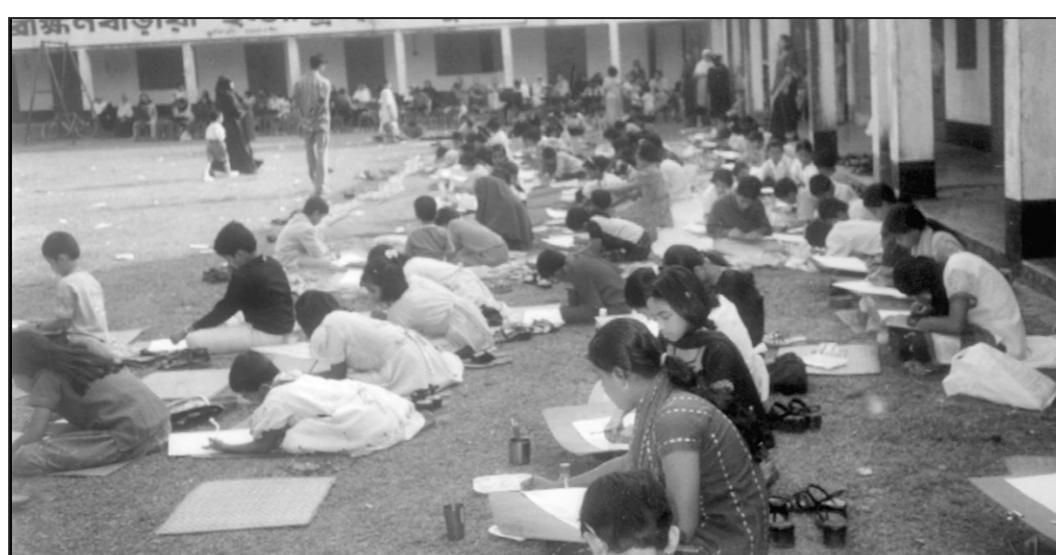


PHOTO: STAR

Shishu Nattyam, a children's organisation, organised a painting competition at Brahmanbaria Industrial School on the occasion of the Ekushey.

AL organising secy urges all parties at party council

Unite to oust corrupt govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Awami League Organising Secretary Abdul Mannan has reiterated his party's demand for immediate resignation of the government and mid-term parliamentary elections.

"There is no other alternative to dislodge the anti-people government to realise our 15 point demand", he said while addressing a triennial conference of Shyamnagar upazila AL at the upazila auditorium on Monday.

Days of the government are numbered he said and called upon party men to intensify their move-

ment.

He alleged that the Four-Party Alliance government has pushed the country towards ruination. Law and order has deteriorated and prices are spiraling, making people's life miserable.

They are trying to cling to power by repression on the opposition. Criminals are killing AL workers under the protection of the ruling party, he alleged.

He bitterly criticised his recent police actions in Dhaka which foiled AL's programmes on the occasion of Ekushey.

AL's central leader S M Kamal

Hossain called for unity of all opposition parties to dislodge the government.

Chaired by Bakhtiar Ahmed, the conference was addressed by, among others, Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Monsur Ahmed, Nazrul Islam and Sheikh Abu Nasim Moina.

The conference formed a 67-member Shyamnagar upazila AL committee headed by S M Jaglu Haidar and S M Abdul Kader as president and general secretary respectively.

The police commissioner could not confirm if RAB will come here before or after February 28 country-wide hartal called by the Awami League (AL).

The money was misappropriated from February 27, 2000 to July 12 last year.

Police said they misappropriated Tk 34,54,987 from seven accounts of the Pourasabha with different banks.

As per the case, Tk 22,79,221 was taken away from accounts with

PBCP ringleader Riron arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A self-styled ringleader of the outlawed Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP) was arrested from Sharsa upazila in Jessoron Saturday.

The arrested is Alimuzzaman alias Ripon, 38, son of Moniruzzaman Chowdhury of Haji Mohsin Road, Jessoron. He was the Khulna divisional chief of PBCP Janajuddho faction.

He was assigned to lead the killing squad, involved in all murders committed in the city and the district in last six months.

Sharsa thana Officer-in-Charge (OC) said Ripon was arrested while trying to flee to West Bengal, India via Kashipur border.

According to Jessoron police, Ripon joined PBCP in 1989 to avenge his father's murder. He confessed his involvement in planning execution of his party's decision to kill journalist Manik Saha.

Most often Ripon's signed statements were dispatched through fax to newspaper offices in Khulna. The statements used to claim responsibility of all murders, police said. He was being quizzed by the law enforcing agencies when this correspondent filed this report.

Two Khulna AL leaders arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The joint forces on Monday arrested Firdaus Hossain Labu, president of ward no 27 unit of the Awami League (AL) and Z A Mahmud Don, joint secretary of Khulna city unit of Shechchhashebok League in Bania Khamar area of the city.

According to police, they have been arrested on charges of extortion and subversive activities.

They are being quizzed at Shitalabari camp, it is learnt.

Meanwhile, leaders of the district and city units of the AL have strongly condemned the arrest of Labu and Don and demanded immediate release of the two leaders.

RAB to crackdown on Khulna outlaws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) will be deployed in Khulna soon to crackdown on underground operatives and subversive activists.

According to Additional Police Commissioner Sajjad Hossain, arrangements are underway to deploy one battalion forces and set up a separate office in the city.

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The police commissioner could not confirm if RAB will come here before or after February 28 country-wide hartal called by the Awami League (AL).

They assured this at a discussion organised by Gopalganj police administration at Bedogram village adjacent to the town on Sunday.

Former Durgapur Union Parishad Chairman Emdadul Huq presided over the meeting while Gopalganj Police Superintendent (SP) Md Shafiqul Islam was chief guest. People of all walks of life attended the meeting.

While returning to Barisal, they

Sit-in for better healthcare

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Several hundred citizens demonstrated yesterday demanding improvement of medicare facilities at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Organised by the Rajshahi Protection Movement Council (RPMC), a citizens' body, the demonstration began at around 10.30am when people brought out a large procession and gathered at the hospital premises.

They staged a sit-in in front of the hospital director's office and held a rally on the hospital premises with RPMC conveyor Zamat Khan in the chair.

The rally was addressed by, among others, Rajshahi Bar

Bomb recovery: 7 quizzed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Seven persons including Phulbaria Degree College Principal Md Mujibur Rahman were interrogated by a three-member investigation team on Monday.