

SNAPS

JCD men occupy Zila Parishad shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira
Some JCD activists led by its Shyamnagar upazila president Azibar Rahman forcibly took possession of two new shops constructed in the town by Satkhira Zila Parishad in presence of Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam on Sunday.

The incident took place at a ceremony arranged to hand over shop allotment letters to 64 people who got those.

The two shops (No. 7 and 9) were allotted to Sikandar Hossain of Halbatpur village and Adhir Chandra Mondal of Kanchra Hati village.

Mondal lodged a complaint with the Zilla Parishad secretary, who ordered a probe.

Kaliganj Jubo League body formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira
A 51-member committee of Kaliganj upazila Awami Jubo League headed by Gazi Jahngir Kabir and Saeed Mehedi as president and general secretary was formed at its triennial conference held at Suhrawardi Park, Kaliganj on Sunday. Gazi Jahngir Kabir presided over while former member of parliament Monsur Ahmed was present as chief guest. Sheikh Wahiduzzaman, Khan Asadur Rahman, Mahmud Ali Suman, Abdul Mannan, Asaduzzaman Babu, S M Akil uddin, Enamul Hossain and Riaz Uddin spoke, among others.

Manikganj Bar Assoc office-bearers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Election to Manikganj Bar Association was held at the association auditorium here on Sunday.

Elected office-bearers are: President Md Meheruddin (Awami League-AL), Vice-President Tomizuddin Ahmed (AL), General Secretary Md Khalilur Rahman (AL), Assistant Secretary (elected uncontested) Md Sanwar Hossain (BNP), Finance Secretary Md Delwar Hossain (AL), Library Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed (BNP), Sports Secretary (elected uncontested) Md Shahidul Islam (AL), Literature and Culture Secretary ATM Shahjahan (AL), auditors Abdur Rashid (AL) and Md Ansar Ali (BNP).

Members: Petush Kanti Sarker (AL), Mokhlesur Rahman Talukdar (BNP), Mousumi Jubaydi Mili (BNP), Monwarul Haque (Jamaat) and Md Syeed Hasan Heru (AL).

CU admission test results published

CU CORRESPONDENT

Results of admission test for first year honours course in Chittagong University were published on Saturday.

The results of tests under Ka unit (Physical Science and Biological Science) and Chha unit (Marine Science Institute) were published.

Viva-voce of admission seekers who got 53 to 84 marks in tests under Ka unit (Physical Science) will be held on March 14, 15 and 16. Viva-voce of candidates scoring 62-80 marks under Ka unit (Biological Science) will be held on March 14, 15.

Viva-voce of candidates who got 73-59 marks in Chha unit (Marine Science Institute) will be held on March 10, 11.

10,000 child labourers in Barisal Bidi factories

Tk 15 to 20 only for 12 hours' work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal.

At least 10,000 child labourers are working in Bidi factories in Barisal division.

They work in hazardous and inhuman conditions but paid unbelievably small amounts. There are 17 big Bidi factories in the division, including six in Barisal district.

Most of the children are between eight and twelve. But in official records of the factories, there is no existence of child labourers. They are shown as 'assistants'.

One child labourer earns Tk 15 to 20 for twelve hours' work. He is paid Tk four for making 1000 Bidi sticks, which takes about three hours. Thus the average payment

per hour is only Tk 1.25. Payments are made weekly.

The working condition is very much unhygienic. Due to pollution from tobacco dust, they develop respiratory problems in early age, and become susceptible to fatal diseases like cancer and bronchitis.

Medical facility by the factory owner for their check-up or treatment is unthinkable.

Most of them are illiterate and so can not learn any other profession. Once they leave the factory in young age, they turn into drug peddler or criminal or labourers to earn livelihood.

The factory owners do not abide by any law.

These were revealed in a recent

survey by the Association for Sanitation and Economic Development (ASED), a local NGO. It enumerated 10,000 child labourers in Bidi factories in the division till December last year. The number is increasing with the growth of population and lack of literacy and social awareness.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) prohibits employment below the age of 14.

Literacy and social awareness can solve the problem.

The government can easily check child labour at Bidi factories and improve working conditions there, sources said.



Life starts with tobacco. The photo was taken recently from a Bidi factory in Barisal city.

PHOTO: STAR

Uttara Housing project at Syedpur**Bangalees threaten self-immolation**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Bangalees agitating for changing the authorities' decision to allot houses at Uttara Housing Project only to Biharis declared a fresh action programme on Sunday.

The programme which includes self-immolation on Wednesday was announced at a big rally at Wapda Natun Hat near the project. Several thousand people including women from nearby villages attended the rally, preceded by processions.

Abul Hasan Bulu, a leader of the agitating Bangalees, told the rally that he would be the first man to die on Wednesday.

Earlier they gave the authorities a February 28 deadline to change the decision, which, they say, violates an earlier government decision.

Abul Hasan appealed to the Prime Minister to intervene so that government's earlier decision is implemented as regards allotment of houses in the project.

The Prime Minister is likely to inaugurate the project on March 14.

Completed about two months back, the Tk four crore project has 1000 two-room housing units in 100 barracks, a market, a community centre and other facilities. The army supervised the construction work.

As per the government gazette announced on May 12, 1997, distressed freedom fighters, victims of erosion by river and land requisition, divorced women, land less families and Bangladeshi citizens are eligible to apply for the houses.

Bangalees started agitation as the local authorities refused to

accept their applications for allotment. They alleged that applications were received only from Biharis and allotment process was at the final stage.

Other speakers at the rally alleged that the houses are being allotted by taking huge bribes from Biharis and stranded Pakistanis.

A smuggling syndicate of Biharis in Syedpur has raised funds to bribe a section of officials and others concerned, they alleged.

When asked, local BNP lawmaker told this correspondent that allotment of houses at Uttara Housing Project would be given to Biharis. He further said that the earlier announcement made in the gazette is, however, cancelled.



PHOTO: STAR

A procession of Bangalees at Syedpur demanding allotment of houses for them at the government's Uttara Housing Project.

Short-supply increases fuel price in N-districts

Irregular supplies to Balashi, Chilmari, Baghabari depots: smuggling alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

High price of diesel and kerosene persists in northern districts due to short supply.

Dealers in Gaibandha say they are getting much less than their demand as stocks are not replenished in the two floating fuel depots at Balashi in Gaibandha and Chilmari in Kurigram districts.

Bagabari fuel depot, the largest in northern districts, is also supplying less as oil barge can not reach it due to emergence of numerous shoals in the Jamuna river.

They said every day a large number of tanker lorries return disappointed from the depots.

Kerosene is now selling at up to Tk 30 in rural areas, they claimed.

They claimed that a section of mid-level traders are hoarding diesel and kerosene and realising higher prices from buyers.

They also claimed that large quantities of diesel are being smuggled out. The smugglers get Tk 30 or more per litre, they said.

However, Senior Vice-President of Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers Association, Shajada Anowerul Kadir said the crisis will end within a week as emergency supplies of diesel are coming from Kuwait.

Other sources here said 30,000 tons of diesel reached Chittagong port on Feb 26 and another consignment reached on February 28. The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation is importing four lakh tonnes of refined diesel from Kuwait, they said.

Bad days for fishermen in coastal areas

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Government earns huge foreign currency by exporting fish abroad every year, but the fishing sector remains neglected.

Hundreds of fishermen in the coastal area have been passing days in misery. They lack capital for building new boats or repairing old ones and making fishing nets.

It is learnt by this correspondent while visited various fish trading centres in the river bank of the Meghna the fishermen told this correspondent that 'now is the best time for preparing them self for next fishing.'

Many fishing boats and trawlers remain idle at the following major fish trading centres situated on the Meghna.

The centres are Gazipur, Ilisha, Julatoli and Nasir Mazi in Bhola Sadar, Kazirhat Bhabanipur and Hazipur in Daulat Khan, Mirjakuhi in Borhanuddin, Lord Herding in Lalmohe, Charkossopia, and Dhalchar in Charfassion.

Ruhul Amin Majhi of Ilisha who is the head of a six-member family

borrowed Tk 2,500 last season from a money lender. But he is yet to repay the money. So, the money lender won't lend him money this year. He faces a grim future being unable to make a boat and fishing net. Pirates looted his boat and fishing boat last season.

Another fish trader Nizamuddin told that an amount Tk 1 to 1.5 lakh is needed to build a fishing trawler. It is not possible for a fisherman to build fishing trawler without bank loan or government assistance, he told this correspondent.

Fishermen are compelled to borrow money from money lenders or wholesalers at different fish trading centres at high interest. As a result the concerned fisherman has to sale fish to them throughout the season at much below the market price. In the process they being deprived of fair price.

Bhola district fishermen's cooperative society secretary Nurul Islam told this correspondent that there should be provision for distribution of loan among fishermen from government-owned commercial banks.



PHOTO: STAR

Idle fishing boats at Bhabanipur ghat on the Meghna in Daulat Khan upazila. The photo was taken last week.

Attack on Humayun Azad condemned

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Reports of protests condemning attack on prominent writer Professor Humayun Azad are pouring in from various districts.

Our CU Correspondent reports: Defying advice of the university's Proctorial body, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) brought out a protest procession on Chittagong University campus on Saturday slating the heinous attack on the Dhaka University professor.

SCF also demanded BNP government's resignation for failure to provide safety to intellectuals.

The university Proctorial body led by Proctor Professor Muzibur Rahman tried to prevent the SCF leaders and workers from bringing out the procession fearing attack by the Islami Chhatra Shibir activists gathered near the station ground to welcome the admission seekers.

The university teachers wore black badges.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and Bangabandhu Parishad also expressed their condemnation and protested the attack.

Ekatta Darshandesh, an organisation of the Philosophy department, Muktijuddher Shaheed Smiti Pathagar, Chittagong City Corporation ward commissioner Rehana Kabir Ranu and the city unit of Awami League also condemned attack on Dr Azad. They demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

Our Magura Correspondent reports: 'Kanthabithi,' the lone recital organisation in the district town, Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad and Divisional Theatre condemned the incident.

Writers, litterateurs, cultural and human rights activists at a joint rally on the public library premises on Sunday also voiced their demand for resignation of the home minister for his failure to ensure safety and security of people.

Speakers have demanded a prompt action to nab the culprits and a their speedy trial.

With Khan Mazharul Huq in the chair, the rally was addressed, among others, by Abu Bashar Akhand, Shafiqul Islam, Rakibul Huq, Zahanara Ferdous Arafat Hossain Lenin, Rubayet Feroz, Kazal Goldar, Sayeda

Nazmunnesa, Ehsanul Huq and Md Hossain Seraj.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Satkhira unit of Muktijuddher Shahid Smiti Pathagar brought out a procession and held a rally at the post office intersection in the town on Sunday protesting the attack.

Presided over by Sharifullah Kaiser Suman, it was addressed, among others, by Principal Asit Kumar Majumdar, Enamul Haq Biswas, Sardar Kazem Ali, Saifullah Laskar, Prof Subhash Sarker, Mahbub-e-Elahi, Abu Kazi, Sudhagshu Shekhar Sarker and Amir Hamza. Speakers said the attack was not merely on Azad, but also on the democratic and progressive forces of the country. They blamed the communal forces for the attack and said the government could not avoid its responsibility for the dreadful act.

They demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the culprits and alleged that criminals were being encouraged due to the government's failure to nab and punish the killers of journalist Manik Saha.

'AL creating anarchy'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natrakona

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk said Awami League is creating terrorism and anarchy in the country in the name of hartal.

He said an elected government which came to power with a massive people's mandate can not be dislodged by hartal and violence, which only obstructs development.

He was addressing a public meeting at Sontush park at Durgapur upazila headquarters on Sunday.

The rally, presided over by MA

Jinnah, president of Durgapur upazila BNP, was addressed by, among others, Netrakona district BNP President MA Karim Abbashi MP, general secretary Mahfuzul Haque, Durgapur upazila BNP General Secretary Abdul Malak and other local leaders.

He called upon Awami League to shun the path of violence and anarchy and to think about people's welfare. Otherwise, the government will be compelled to take tougher action against violence for the sake of people's interest, he said.

He urged AL to return to parlia-

ment if they believe in democracy and really wants people's welfare.

Violence disrupts peace and development, he said and called upon the people to resist trouble mongers.

The education minister said this government has succeeded in stopping copying in public examinations.

He thanked teachers for helping the government in eradicating copying in examinations.

Reward for detecting cheating in exam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Patuakhali district administration has announced rewards for catching any SSC examinee while cheating, or any teacher helping the examinee.

The reward will be Tk 100 for nabbing an examinee and Tk 500 for catching a teacher.

The rewards and some other decisions to 'completely eradicate' cheating from examinations were taken at a meeting of teachers and officials of the district administration and education department, held at the Government Jubilee High School with its acting headmaster Sabita Rabi in the chair.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Bazlur Rashid was the chief guest.

Among others, Patuakhali Teachers Association President MA Khaleq, M A Rob, Abu Sayeed addressed the meeting, attended by teachers from both schools and madrasahs.

Source said 9531 students will appear at the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) and Dakhil examinations in the district this year.

JCD drove them away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

They went to submit nomination papers for Babugonj Agricultural Institute students' union election but JCD activists beat and drove them away.

JCD activists went to the institute Sunday morning and were waiting with sticks, not to allow any Chhatra League (BCL) and Chhatra Moitree candidate to enter.

At around 11 am, when some BCL activists led by its VP candidate Mamun Ahmed, Shahid, Suruj Sikdar and Moitree candidate Debashish entered the campus, JCD activists swooped on them. They beat and chased them out of campus. Four BCL activists were injured, BCL claimed.

Sunday was the last date for submission of nomination for the March 17 polls.

JCD however denied the allegation and said their opponents did not submit their nominations as they have no support among the voters.

Nurul Islam, principal of the institute, when contacted said he did not get any complaint. He said JCD candidates submitted their nominations in time.

One killed, 10 hurt in clash over land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

One person was killed and 10 others were injured in a clash between two groups in a land dispute at Birman Pur village in Trishal upazila on Friday.

Two of the injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) in critical conditions. One of them -- Din Muhammed -- died Friday night. A case was lodged.



PHOTO: STAR

Japanese Ambassador in Bangladesh Matsushiro Horiguchi and his spouse Hiroko Horiguchi at a reception accorded to him by students of Japan-Bangladesh Friendship School at Daudpur village in South Surma thana, Sylhet on Sunday. The school's founder Dr Niaz Ahmed Chowdhury and Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury, a member of parliament (MP) are also seen.

Abducted girl rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhabari

Akhaura police on Sunday rescued ten year-old-girl Runa from abductors in Moulvibazar and arrested two of her captors.

Police said Runa, daughter of Amal Shah of Radhanagar village was abducted from Akhaura on February 20. The abductors demanded Tk two lakh ransom.

Acting on a tip-off, police rescued her from a house at Moulvibazar and arrested two persons -- Md Yousof Ali, 60 and Yeasim Ali, 38.