

SNAPS

Hartal at Rangamati today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati
Buling BNP's fronts will enforce a day-long hartal today in Rangamati town to press removal of Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) chairman and its four members.

Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Jubo dal, Shechchashebak Dal, Mohila Dal, Jatiyatabadi Samajik Shangskritik Dal and Straik Dal are agitating since March 16 for removal of the council for its alleged corruption.

They held several rallies and brought out processions in the hill town to press the demand.

The recent allegation irregularities in recruitment of primary school teachers fuelled their agitation.

Highway barricade today for Padma bridge at Paturia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj
The Dhaka-Aricha highway will be barricaded from 1 am to 12 noon today in demand for building the proposed Jamuna bridge at Paturia. The programme was announced by an all-party committee at a rally at Manikganj on March 18, when a similar programme was observed.

Gazi Quamrul Huda Selim, general secretary of district Awami League and a leader of the committee said they will go for an indefinite strike if their demand is not met.

Urs in Manikganj on Mar 26

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj
The 93rd annual Urs of Hazrat Mawlana Syed Shah Abdur Rahim Wayesi (R) will be held at Wayesia Khanka Sharit at Dakarkhali village in Harirampur upazila in Manikganj district on March 26.

The programme will begin on the night of March 25. It will include Quran Khwani, Zikr, Milad Mahfil special prayers.

The organisers said a large number of devotees from different areas of the country attend the programmes every year.

BNP front's council held at Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona
A council of Netrakona district Jatiyatabadi Sechchasebak Dal was held on Tuesday at an Auditorium in the town.

With former whip MA Karim Abbasi MP, president of Netrakona district BNP, as the chief guest, the council elected Eakutur Rahman Khandakar and Iqbal Ahamed president and secretary respectively of the district body.

With MA Rafique Babul, senior vice president of Netrakona BNP, in the chair, it was addressed by, among others, district BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Talukder, Nuruzzaman Nuru, Mahfuzul Haque, Nazrul Islam Khan and local leaders of Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal and Mohila Dal.

A 'revolution' in pest control, environment protection

Hossain SERAJ, Magura

Agriculturists call it a revolution. A very simple but unique tool innovated by two farmers controls pest without use of harmful pesticide.

The tool--Ferromon Trap -- is very much user-friendly, easily available and involves virtually no cost compared to that of pesticide.

The trap is made with a plastic pot. A medicine named Ferromon is kept inside it.

The smell of the medicine attracts pests and insects. They fly into the pot and die within seconds. The pot costs only Tk 8.

Ayub Hossain and Laxman Chandra of Gaidghat village in Bagherpara upazila in Jessore innovated the tool in 2001. To spread the simple technology, they formed an organisation styled

Krishni Prajukti Bastabayan Kendra (KPBK --Agriculture Technology Application Centre).

Farmers in 32 villages in Shalikha upazila of Magura district and Bagherpara upazila of Jessore are now benefiting from this.

KPBK, now headed by Laxman Chandra, now well known in the areas.

This also increases the yield, some farmers told this correspondent during a visit to the village. The yield increased as the trap also kills pesticide-resistant insects, which earlier damaged crops, they said.

Dut Kumar, Name Gopal, Milon Kumar and Amal Biswas said they produced 230 maunds of pumpkin on 145 decimal lands last year using the trap against only 80 maunds in the previous year by

using insecticides.

Schoolteacher Siddiqui Rahman, himself a farmer, says the new method is not only tremendously benefiting the farmers by raising the yield and saving huge amounts they used to spend on pesticide but is also protecting the environment. "It is a revolution". Pesticides worth at least Tk 300 is needed to control pest attack on vegetables on one bigha land, he said.

KPBK's surprising achievement not only inspired local farmers but also drew many agri-scientists from home and abroad to the remote Gaidghat village.

During a recent visit agri-scientists Dr AE Henricks, Dr Shekey Miler, Dr Edwin Rajot and Dr Arora Baltarar of Philipine and Dr ANM Rezalul Karim, Country

Director of Integrated Pest Management and Collaborative Research Support Programme (IPMCRSP) highly appreciated KPBK's initiative and extended their support.

With the financial support of IPMCRSP, KPBK began distribution of Ferromon Traps among farmers free of cost to popularise the unique method.

KPBK members said, the method is being used on 1960.2 decimal lands of 50 farmers in the area this year against only 145 decimal last year.

Magura Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Osiul Islam when contacted said, KPBK's trap method will bring about a revolution is vegetable cultivation without use of harmful pesticides.



A Ferromon Trap in a sweet pumpkin field at Gaidghat village. the photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

JCD leader, 4 activists caught during bus dacoity in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Passengers of a night coach and villagers caught five dacoits when they tried to commit a robbery in the coach in Barlekha upazila Tuesday morning.

Police later identified them as Mahmud Hossain Shamun, General Secretary of South Surman Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and four activists of the party-- Quamrul Islam, Faizul Islam, Jamal and Abdul Mannan.

Quoting passengers and villagers, police said that when the Beanibazar-bound night coach from Dhaka-- Rupashi Bangla -- reached Rotuli village in Barlekha

at about 6 am, two private cars overtook it and blocked the road. Another private car stopped behind the coach.

As gunshots were fired from the cars, the coach driver sensed trouble and drove back, hitting and damaging the car behind it.

Meantime, passengers got down. Nearby villagers also came hearing a hue and cry. They caught the five dacoits.

The two cars in front of the bus drove towards Beanibazar to escape.

As police came, the five dacoits were handed over to them. Police also seized the damaged car (Dhaka metro-Ga-1954).

Barlekha police gave a message to Beanibazar police. Beanibazar police put up a barricade on the road near the Beanibazar thana building.

As police intercepted the two fleeing cars, dacoits fired shots from inside.

About 20 shots were traded there, injuring a policeman. Rickshaw puller Zillu Miah, 22, was also injured in the cross-fire.

The dacoits managed to escape but left the two vehicles (Sylhet-Ka-11-0022 and Dhaka Metro Ka-03-5259).

Beanibazar police found one sawn-off rifle, one SBBL gun and a cartridge in the vehicles.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers brought out a procession in Barisal city on Tuesday to press their eight-point demand.

'Notorious criminal' dies in police custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A youth described by police as a "notorious criminal" died in police custody at Shailkupa thana Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Ashraf Ali, 30, son of Golam Mustafa of Nityanandapur village in Sailkupa upazila.

Police said they arrested Ashraf from the village in the early hours of Sunday with one Shutter Gun, one rifle and 12 bullets.

He felt serious pain in the chest during interrogation, police claimed. He was taken to Sailkupa health complex at about 2 pm, where he died soon after admission, they claimed.

Locals alleged that Ashraf died due to police torture but the Officer-In-charge (OC) of Sailkupa thana, when contacted, denied this.

A doctor at the health complex, Rafiqul Islam, who attended Ashraf said the victim had heart problem.

Police said Ashraf was a notorious criminal and was accused in about a dozen cases including some for murder, filed with Sailkupa police.

Measles claim two, attack 50 in Manikganj

'Area not covered under EPI'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Two babies died from measles and at least 50 are suffering from the disease now in Shivalaya upazila in the district.

The two babies --Bedena, 3 and Kulsum, 3, died on Sunday at Alokdia Char a shoal in the Jamuna river.

A World Health Organization (WHO) team of doctors visited the place on Tuesday and collected samples of the germ from several attacked children.

They told this correspondent that those attacked were not immunised.

Some organisation which worked under the EPI (Extended Programme of Immunisation) in the district also claimed that the Alokdia Char and some other areas were not covered by the programme due to negligence of its officials concerned.

Obituary



Tahera begun, wife of Abdul masum Khan, general manager of Sylhet Shishu Park, died on Friday (March 19) She left behind her husband, two sons and a daughter. She was buried at the family graveyard in Manikganj.



Leaders of Swandip Samity in Dhaka called on Shipping Minister Col. (Retd) Akbar Hossain on Tuesday and handed over a memorandum for development of the island's waterway communication with rest of the country.

CITY CORPN ALLOWANCE

Day-long strike by govt staff in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Employees of all government, semi-government and autonomous bodies in Barisal city abstained from work yesterday, held a rally and brought out a procession to press their demand for city corporation allowance with retrospective effect.

There was no work also at the collectorate and in telephone and telegraph department.

They are demanding the allowance with effect from December, 2002.

Barisal and Sylhet were made city corporations at the same time. Government employees based in Sylhet city are getting city allow-

ance since December 2002.

The government, following agitation by employees in Barisal, announced the allowance for them from January this year.

No government vehicle rolled on streets as their drivers also abstained from work.

The employees' meeting held in front of the Town Hall at about 11 am was addressed by, among others, Md Shamsuddin and Manik Mirdha, convenor and secretary of the newly formed City Bhata Bastobayn Sangram Sarishad Barisal (Committee to realise city allowance).

They announced a five-point programme to realise their demand.

20,000 attacked with chicken pox in Rangpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Chicken pox has broken out in the different areas of Rangpur district.

Sources at the Civil Surgeon's office put the number at about 20,000. Patients are being given outdoor treatment at eight upzila health complexes, they said.

Besides the health complexes, patients, mostly children, are also going to private clinics and doctors in large numbers.

Dr Mofizul Islam Mantu, a child specialist at Rangpur, said about 18 per cent child patients who came to him for treatment in

last seven days were attacked with chicken pox.

Chicken box usually breaks out in April-May. But the incidence of attack is more since the beginning of the season this year, he said.

Several private practitioners told The Daily Star that most of the patients are children. As the disease has no quick treatment, they suggest patients to remain isolated from others so that the germ can not spread and attack others.

A health inspector of Rangpur Pourashava said mosquito menace is the main cause of rapid spread of chicken pox germ.

HARUN GAZI MURDER

3 with death sentence surrender to Barisal STT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Three of the four absconding convicts given death sentence in the sensational Harun Gazi murder case in Patuakhali have surrendered before the Speedy Trial Tribunal (STT), Barisal, sources said yesterday.

They are Tipu Gazi, Sohul Gazi and Motiur Rahman.

Another convict, Moti Gazi, also sentenced to death is still absconding.

STT Judge M A Matin gave the verdict on March 1. Another 11 accused were acquitted.

Harun Gazi was murdered in a feud over land dispute at Khalishakhola village in Patuakhali on March 23 last year.

Housewife killed in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A housewife -- Biwi Ayesha, 40 -- was slaughtered at Naillyachhari village in Kawkhali upazila in the early hours of Tuesday.

Being informed by her husband Manik over telephone, police recovered her body yesterday.

Quoting neighbours, police said Manik used to beat his wife often.

A case has been filed, police said.

Neighbours said the victim's daughter told them that she found her mother slaughtered in her room the morning after her father felt home.