

SNAPS

Workshop on good governance

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
A five-day training workshop on good governance and human rights concluded at Bauphal on Friday.

A local non-governmental organisation (NGO), Speed Trust organised the workshop. Various issues on human rights, good governance and its barrier, gender issues were discussed in the workshop.

Death sentence for killing brother

Staff Correspondent, Khulna
A younger brother has been sentenced to death for killing his elder brother.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge, Bagerhat handed down the punishment to Elias Shaikh Monday for killing his elder brother Waliur Rahman. Elias is absconding.

Waliur Rahman and Elias Shaikh had dispute over paternal property. On March 23, 1999, elder brother Waliur Rahman was beaten to death by Elias during a quarrel at their paternal house at Chandipur village in Morrelganj upazila.

Ex- Patuakhali Poursabha chairman sued for fund scam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A former chairman and three other officials of Patuakhali Poursabha were charge sheeted for 'misappropriation' of 3 lakh 62 thousand and 339 taka in name of a road repairing project.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) submitted the charge sheet on March 22 with the local court against former poura chairman advocate Sultan Ahmed Mridha, executive engineer Ranjan Kanti Guha, sub-assistant engineer Sarder Mahoob including a contractor named Alamgir Sikder.

BAC inspector and investigation officer (IO) of the case Abdur Rahman Joarder submitted the charge sheet after investigation and approval of the Prime Minister.

BAC sources told this correspondent, six contractors submitted tenders at five per cent less than the estimated cost for the project in 2000-01 fiscal.

But the accused selected Alamgir Sikder as the contractor without any lottery. The poura chairman in connivance with the executive engineer and the sub-assistant engineer paid to the contractor a total of 3 lakh 62 thousand and 339 taka without doing any work.

After receiving the money the contractor deposited the entire amount to municipality chairman advocate Sultan Ahmed Mridha's Current Account No 18, Agrani Bank, Pura Bazaar Branch, Patuakhali.

BNP candidates for Patuakhali Poursabha polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on March 25 declared the names party candidates for contesting in the upcoming Patuakhali Poursabha election.

District unit secretary of the party Snahansu Sarker announced the names at a meeting at the party office where its senior vice president Abdur Rashid Chunnui Miah presided over.

The candidates are: chairman-Mostaque Ahmed (present chairman) while commissioners in reserved seats are Shahida Khanom Runu, Zahanara Razzak and Aklimunnesa. The names of commissioners in general seats are Anwar Hossain Sikder (Ward No 2), Moustafizur Rahman Rumi (Ward No 3), Akteruzzaman Nobel (Ward No 4), SM Towhid (Ward No 5), Monirul Alam Sapan (Ward No7), Rahman Khondokar (Ward No 8) and Khondokar Inam Hossain Nasir (Ward No 9). The names of contesting candidates for Ward No 1 and 6 will be declared later on, party sources told this correspondent.

Nor'wester in Netrakona village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Ten persons were injured, three of them seriously, as a nor'wester lashed Batta Banagram village in Kendua upazila on Tuesday.

Forty kutcha houses were also damaged.

Seriously injured Jasmin, 20, Hazera, 75, and Jharna, 55, were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

The district administration authorities and leaders of different political parties visited the spot.

Rajshahi city protection dam made vulnerable

Sand traders ignore ban, cut it for trucks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Despite a ban, sand traders have cut the Rajshahi town protection dam at more than a dozen points to facilitate trucks to carry sand from the Padma riverbed.

Water Development Board (WDB) officials here said they earlier notified the traders not to cut the dam and ply trucks on it. They also requested police to take action against the violators.

But police are yet to take any action. Rather, they blame a section of WDB officials for allegedly cooperating with the sand traders.

This correspondent during a visit on Tuesday saw the dam cut at Kajla, Talaimari, Borokuthi, Eidgah, Shreerampur and Haripur points and streams of trucks carrying sand from the riverbed.

At Shreerampur, trucks were seen plying over the 'dam mattress', a strategic portion of the dam.

WDB Executive Engineer Saidul Islam told this correspondent that three organisations applied in January for collecting sand from the riverbed. But Desh Nirmata Enterprise, one of the three, did not wait for approval. They cut the dam a day after they had applied.

On February 22, WDB filed a case against Desh Nirmata Enterprise and sought police action to stop plying of trucks on the dam. But no action followed.

Similarly, Khondokar Constructions and Nazma Enterprise also applied to WDB but did not wait for approval. They cut the dam at Eidgah and Pathanpara points for collecting sand.

WDB Superintendent Engineer

Jasim Uddin said the dam has been damaged at several points following indiscriminate plying of trucks. He said WDB did not approve any application for sand-lifting.

There may be breaches in the dam in the coming rainy season if those are not repaired.

He said WDB does not have adequate manpower to check dam-cutting. "We requested police and they did nothing".

When contacted, Rajpara thana OC Faizur Rahman said police can not check dam-cutting as influential people are involved in it.

The dam was repaired in 1999-01 financial year at a cost of Tk 60 crore to protect Rajshahi town from erosion by the Padma after it was damaged during 1998 floods.

WDB spends huge amounts of money every year to repair the dam.

5 Indians pushed back by BDR in Panchagarh

BSS, Panchagarh

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Monday night pushed back five Indian nationals through Panchagarh border.

The five of a family were pushed in by BSF of Beriberi and Tiabari camps in the morning.

They were Jahanara Bawa, 70, her son Zakir Hossain, 26, Zakir's Wife Anjura Begum, 20, his son Rabiul Hossain, 5 and Azadul Islam, 18 months, all Bangla-speaking Indian nationals, BDR sources said.

BDR personnel of Ghagra BOP under Panchagarh 22 Rifle Battalion pushed them back.

Khulna AL leader's business office bombed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Chabi Fish Processing Industries at Natun Bazar under Khulna thana owned by city Awami League leader Kazi Abul Kalam Azad alias Biku came under bomb attack Monday night.

Biku is also a vice-president of Khulna unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association (BFFEA).

According to eyewitnesses, two bombs hurled by an unidentified man exploded on the roof of the company's office while Biku was gossiping with friends on the roof of a nearby building.

Biku told The Daily Star that it was an attempt on his life as the attackers failed to realise toll from him.

He filed a general diary (GD) with Khulna thana.

15 hurt during Rangpur hartal for edn board

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

At least 15 persons including two photo-journalists were injured in a clash during hartal hours here on Tuesday.

A dawn to dusk hartal called by Rangpur Sikkha Board Bastabayan Committee was observed in five districts of Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

Eye-witnesses told this correspondent that a group of picketers was picketing in favour of hartal in two educational institutions at Jummapara in the town when anti-hartal supporters armed with lethal weapons attacked them. The two injured photojournalists were identified as Aftabuzzaman of The Dainik Paribesh and Feroz Mahmud of The Daily Juger Alo.

During hartal hours transport vehicles remained off the roads, attendance in government and non-government offices including educational institutions were thin.

A big procession was brought out in the town. After the procession a meeting was held at Court Square. Advocate Gazi presided over the meeting.

The committee called next hartals in the five districts on April 17 and 18 in demand of an education board in Rangpur.

New CUJ executives

CUJ CORRESPONDENT

Mostaq Ahmed of Daily Inqilab and Shahidul Alam of Daily Rupali were re-elected president and general secretary of the Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) for the next year in an election held at the press club on Tuesday.

Mostaq won defeating his rival M Nasirul Haque by three votes while Shahidul Alam was elected unopposed.

Other office-bearers are: Vice President- Md Shamsul Haq of Prothom Alo, Joint Secretary-Nazimuddin Shyamol of The Independent, Treasurer- Nur Uddin Ahmed of Ajker Chattagram, Organising Secretary- Alauddin Mazid of Noya Bangla, Publicity and Publishing Secretary- Daisy Moudud of Daily Purbokone. Members are Swapan Malik of Chhatra, Shahidul Islam of Daily Purbokone and Shamsul Huda Mintu of Bir Chattagram Manch.

REB men flee office seeing angry farmers

Demonstrations, sit-in for smooth power supply for irrigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Hardly a day passes in the district with farmers' demonstration for smooth power supply for irrigation.

They demonstrate and stage sit-in in front of administration and Rural Electrification Board (REB) offices in different areas for steps to save IRRI-Boro crops.

Yesterday, farmers staged a demonstration in front of the Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner's office and handed over a memorandum to the DC demanding smooth power supply to Barind region. Rajshahi district unit of Jatiya Krishak Samity organised it. IRRI-Boro crops have turned yellowish at many places in the district for lack of irrigation, they claimed while talking to this correspondent.

On Tuesday, farmers with spades on shoulder and sickles in hand marched to the Godagari upazila headquarter to protest erratic power supply.

The farmers from Ramnagar,

Aihairahi, Digram, Hatathpara, Ghanashampur and Ataharpara villages in Godagari upazila laid a seize to the REB office and staged a sit-in before the Upazila Nirbahi Officer's office.

All the officials and employees fled from the office seeing the farmers approaching the office.

The farmers told the UNO that they were getting power for only six hours a day, but they need continuous irrigation to save crops.

On Monday, several hundred farmers from Jhilim, Baidadanga and Gobortala unions of Sadar upazila in Chapainawabganj staged a demonstration in front of the house of local ruling party legislator Harunur Rashid.

Rashid expressed his solidarity with the farmers and urged the officials concerned to ensure smooth power supply to irrigation machines on an emergency basis.

The farmers later laid a siege to the local REB office and held a rally on the DC's office premises demand-

ing uninterrupted supply to deep tubewells.

Chaired by Gobortala UP chairman Asjadur Rahman, the meeting was addressed by farmers Bisharat Ali and Anwar Ali.

The speakers said that they did not get power supply to their irrigation machines for ten days and that their fields were turning yellowish for lack of water.

More than 90 per cent of the 7,000 irrigation machines in the Barind region comprising Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon districts depend on electricity. Loadshedding keeps many of the deep tubewells inoperative for hours together, farmers said.

At times low voltage damages irrigation machines, making them inoperative.

According to Rajshahi Power Development Board, the national grid is supplying less than half of the daily requirement of 300 MW in the northern region.

Hasina begins Patuakhali tour tomorrow

AL holds first public meeting in Altaf's constituency in two and a half years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina arrives here tomorrow on a three-day tour of Patuakhali where hartal called by her party was not observed since BNP came to power.

She will address public meetings at the district headquarter, Bauphal, Galachipa upazila Sadar and Ranabali. She also will address meetings on way to Barguna from Patuakhali, party sources told this correspondent yesterday.

District AL leaders alleged that

they could not observe hartal or hold any public meeting in the district due to opposition by ruling BNP and harassment by the administration. Many activists of AL and its student front Chhatra League were arrested and implicated in false cases, they alleged.

But BNP leaders say hartal was not observed in the district as people ignored the AL call.

Former home minister Altaf Hossain, now commerce minister, hails from Patuakhali.

On Tuesday, local AL held its first

public meeting in two and a half years at Altaf's native upazila Mirjaganj.

Hasina's visit will reunite them and boost their political activities, district AL organising secretary Kazi Alomgir said.

Tuesday's meeting was held at Kakrabunia bazaar. It was addressed by, among others, local AL leaders Kazi Mokhlesur Rahman, Jashimuddin, Ismail Hossain Mridha, Moslehuddin Mintu and Habibur Rahman with Abu Kasem Master in the chair.

Campaign hot on the heels of polls schedule

Gaibandha, Gobindaganj municipal polls on May 6, 8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The polls are far away, but prospective candidates are on race to reach closer to voters.

They have started campaign hot on the heels of Election Commission's declaration of polls schedule for Gaibandha and Gobindaganj municipalities.

The polls will be held on May 6 at Gaibandha and on May 8 at Gobindaganj.

Nomination papers will be accepted on April 11 and scrutinised on the following day. April 19 is the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers, according to the EC's schedule announced earlier.

Posters in favour of prospective

candidates have appeared on walls and leaflets are being distributed.

The candidates have started informal campaign, holding small gatherings and bringing out processions to woo voters. They are promising steps to eliminate crimes, improve civic amenities and bring about development.

Eight candidates are likely to vie for the post Gaibandha pourashava chairman. They are incumbent chairman Anwarul Hasan Sabur of Awami League; former chairman Waheduzzaman Titu, advocate Sekender Azam Anam and TM Abu Baker Siddique of BNP; Sahadat Hossain Suja of Awami League, incumbent municipal commissioner Shamsul Alam, Advocate Rafiqul

Islam Sarder and businessman Abul Hossain.

In Gobindaganj pourashava, seven prospective candidates have launched informal campaign. They are incumbent chairman Ataur Rahman Sarker, Abul Kalam Azad and Mokades Ali Badu of Awami League; Faruk Ahmed and Sanower Hossain Dipu of BNP and Mojibar Rahman Ful Mia.

Though local body election is held on non-party basis, interested candidates have started hectic lobbying for party back-up in the polls.

Many of the candidates meanwhile set up campaign camps in different areas of the towns.



PHOTO: STAR

People blocked Barisal-Kuakata highway at Bakeganj on Monday demanding construction of the proposed Bakeganj-Barguna highway from Bakeganj.

SUGAR MILL LAY-OFF

'Make April 4 Gaibandha hartal a success'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha district unit of the Workers and Employees Federation at a meeting in the town on Tuesday called upon the people to make the April 4 hartal programme in the district and the 'grand rally' in the town a success.

The programmes were announced earlier jointly by the 11-Party Alliance and the Rangpur Sugar Mills Employees Union demanding withdrawal of lay-off of the mill.

Speakers at the meeting called

upon the people irrespective of political opinions and professions to join the agitation to compel the government to withdraw its decision.

The meeting, held at Gaibandha Shop Workers Union office was presided over by Rabiul Hossain, president of the district Workers and Employees Federation.

It was addressed by, among others, Abdul Matin, president of Rangpur Sugar Mills Workers Union; Aminul Islam Golap, General Secretary of Gaibandha Workers Party; BSD leader Manjurul Alam Mithu; Ganotantri Party leader Kader

Newas; Jatiya Krishak Samity leaders Jahangir Alam and Bidhan Das; Samajtantrik Sramik Front leader Probir Chakkravarti; Motor-Truck Sramik Union leader Lal Mia Sarker; Rickshaw Sramik Union leader Rafiqul Islam; Farid Ahmed; Abdul Asad Babu and Tofazzal Hossain.

They bitterly criticised the government for closing down mills and factories one after another, making thousands of workers and employees jobless. Several thousand farmers will also be affected by closure of the sugar mill, they said.

Big haul of smuggled goods in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police seized two trucks and one trawler with smuggled Indian goods worth over Tk 55 lakh in Tushkhali under Mathbaria upazila in Pirojpur district yesterday and arrested three persons.

The police raid was made when the goods were being loaded to trucks from the trawler early in the morning.

Barisal Range DIG of Police Golam Mostafa said he got information that the smuggled goods were brought to Tushkhali. He immediately directed Jhalokhathi Police Superintendent Hemayet Hossain to go for action.

The SP rushed to the spot with

force, seized the goods and arrested three persons. They are Sabuz of Bagerhat, Harun-or-Rashid of Madaripur and Mojibur Sarder of Tushkhali. Others escaped.

The goods include 113 sacks of Indian sarees, 10 cartons of banned medicine, 20 bags of sugar and huge quantities of cosmetics and ballpen.

The arrested persons told police that the goods were loaded in their trawler from an Indian trawler in the deep sea in Bay of Bengal Sunday evening.

The trawler reached Tushkhali Tuesday evening and loading of the goods in trucks started after midnight.

The DIG said an international smugglers' gang is involved in it.

Strike at Barisal medicine factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Over 150 employees and workers of Medimate Pharmaceuticals stopped work yesterday demanding provident fund, gratuity and salary hike.

The striking employees also held a rally in front of the factory at Rupatali in the city and did not allow any body to enter the factory.

They said the management at a meeting with them on March 21 promised to fulfil their demand by March 30. They have stopped work as the management did not keep their promise.

Factory manager Sanaul Haque Chanu, when contacted, refused to make any comment. Police have been deployed on the factory premises.

Sylhet Int'l Trade Fair opens today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At last, the month-long International Trade Fair organized by Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) opens today at a changed venue— Range Police field.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will inaugurate the fair.

The fair was scheduled to begin on March 27 at Sylhet Government Alia Madrassah field. The venue was shifted due to objection by students of the madrassah and Islami Chhatra Shibir activists.

Participants from Thailand, Korea, China, Malaysia, Iran and Taiwan will join the fair. There will be 187 stalls and 16 pavilions, the organisers said.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Diploma Engineers' Coordination Committee observed a token hunger strike in front of Mymensingh Press Club recently to press its 4-point demand.