

SNAPS

Freedom fighters' reunion in Rangpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur
A reunion of the freedom fighters of Rangpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Gibandha and Lalmonirhat districts was held here on Wednesday.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Professor Rezaul Karim recalled the contributions of late President Ziaur Rahman in the Liberation War in 1971. About 5,000 freedom fighters of the region assembled at the reunion held at Rangpur Public Library Square.

Among others, State Minister for Housing and Public Works Alamgir Kabir, Chairman and Secretary General of the central command council of Muktiyoddha Sangsad Kabir Ahmed Khan and Shah Alam Chowdhury, BNP leader Alhaj Rahim Uddin Bharsa, chairman of Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and superintendent of police Monjur Kader Khan addressed.

Earlier, a colorful procession was brought out which paraded the main streets of the town.

Abducted housewife yet to be rescued

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola
A newly-married wife is yet to be rescued after 20 days of her abduction.

The victim, Salma Begum, 20, also an employee of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Rasulpur union of Charfassion upazila was abducted allegedly by Habibullah and four of his accomplices on March 8.

Police and Salma's father told this correspondent that when abducted the victim was going to the BRAC library where she worked as an office assistant.

The victim's mother filed a case with Charfassion thana accusing five persons involved with the incident.

Police arrested Habibullah from his house, but released him after a written bond.

177 arrested from Jhenidah, Chuadanga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

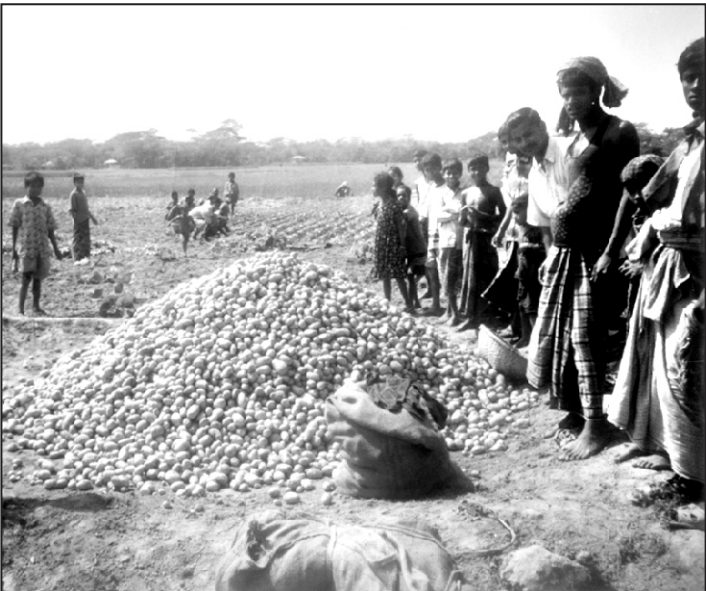
Police and joint forces have intensified combing operation in Jhenidah and Chuadanga where 11 persons were killed in 72 hours.

Khulna Range deputy inspector general (DIG) of police Abdul Aziz Sarker told The Daily Star that special combing operations began in Alamdanga, Damurhuda, Jibonnagar and Sadar upazila of Chuadanga and Shaikupa, Harinakundu and Sadar upazila of Jhenidah on Friday.

A total of 177 persons were picked up from the two districts.

Jhenidah police super Abdullah-al-Mahmud and Chuadanga police super M Khurshid Hossain are leading the joint forces of their respective districts. They are being assisted by additional police supers of the districts.

Apart from joint forces, policemen of 21 camps and two outposts of Chuadanga and 23 camps and three outposts of Jhenidah have joined the combing operations. Six platoons of Range Reserve Force (RRF) were sent to Jhenidah and Chuadanga from Khulna.



Helpless farmers ponder what to do with the harvested potato (left) and the huge unutilised BADC godown at Bhola (right).

Let this unused godown benefit farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Huge quantities of potato and other vegetables perish every year and farmers are deprived of fair prices due to lack of cold storage facility in the district.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials said production of potato is around three lakh tonnes this year. The production is increasing as farmers are switching to it in large numbers as the soil is suitable for potato cultivation.

But a large chunk of the produce is taken away by traders from out-

UTTARA HOUSING PROJECT

Allot houses also to Bangalees, AL MP demands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Awami League central publicity secretary Asaduzzaman Noor has demanded allotment of houses of the Uttara Housing Project at Syedpur to distressed people irrespective of Bangalees and Beharis (Urdu speaking people).

Addressing a public meeting at meeting at Dhelapeer Hat near the project, he alleged that the ruling party lawmaker at Syedpur has created a volatile situation in the area only to secure his vote bank.

Nilphamari district AL Joint Convenor Jonal Ali and party lead-

ers Alimuddin Basunia, Akhtar Hossen Badal and Prof. Shakhawat Hossen also addressed the meeting with Syedpur upazila AL leader AbbasAli Sarkar in the chair.

Bangalees in the area are agitating for houses in the project but the local authorities, with alleged support from the lawmaker, says the houses are only for the Beharis.

Noor also demanded release of the Bangalees including their leader Dr Abul Hossen Bulu arrested during the agitation and withdrawal of "false cases" against them.

He said the BNP-led alliance government has failed in all

respects. So it is trying to cling to power through conspiracy and dividing the people.

He said innocent people fleeing homes in villages around the project due to police harassment.

On the podium during the meeting, Noor Banu, a madrassah student from Uttar Shonakholi village, narrated how she was harassed by police.

Noor said it police harassment of innocent people is not stopped, AL will start a agitation and paralyse Syedpur town, if necessary.

JCD men ransack doctor's chamber for demanding fee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) ransacked a doctor's chamber and asked him to leave Kushtia town as he demanded fee after treating a JCD leader.

According to a case filed by Dr. SM Mustanjid, Badsha, organising secretary of Kushtia town unit of JCD, went to Bogura Nourishing Home for treatment Tuesday evening. It is owned by Dr. Mustanjid and his wife Dr Fatema Ashraf.

After treatment, Dr. Mustanjid asked Badsha for fee, but he declined.

After some time, a group of 25 JCD men led by Badsha attacked the doctor's chamber, ransacked it and snatched some equipment. They also damaged his car.

The doctor filed a case with the Sadar thana accusing 20 JCD men.

Police arrested one person.

The district unit of BMA (Bangladesh Medical Association) has given a 48 hours ultimatum to police to arrest the accused persons.

Rupsha bridge won't be ready by November

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The Rupsha Bridge will not be ready for traffic by the November time-limit, its contractors say.

Eighty per cent work of 1360 metre long bridge has been completed.

Contractors of Shimizu-ITD Joint Venture have asked for more six months from the executing agency, Road and Highways Department (RHD), to complete the remaining 20 per cent work.

They said cracks had developed in one of the pillars in 2002. Those were repaired after bringing experts from Japan and Thailand. So, normal work was delayed.

But the RHD is yet to grant the extra time asked for.

"We hope RHD will extend the time-limit", said a high official of Shimizu-ITD.

They said the 13-kilometre approach road of the bridge is nearing completion and the 17-kilometre Khulna bypass road is expected to be completed within the specified time.

The bridge will provide a direct road link between Khulna and Mongla by eliminating ferry service and shorten the distance between north-western and the south-west regions of the country.

In future, the bridge will facilitate transportation of transit cargo to landlocked Nepal and Bhutan from Mongla port.

It is alleged that about 40 per cent of the people affected by the bridge construction are yet to get compensation as per the Comprehensive Resettlement Action Plan (CRAP).

Seminar on leadership

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Awami League (AL) leader Mohiuddin Uddin Khan Alamgir said disparity between poor and rich is widening day by day. He suggested effective steps to reduce disparity.

Former State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Alamgir was addressing a seminar as chief guest at the Kurigram Bar Council auditorium on Tuesday. He called upon the leaders and activists of all political parties here to create leaders at grass roots level on the basis of honesty, education and patriotism. The day long seminar on "Leadership at grassroots level, political atmosphere and development of Kurigram" was presided over by Kurigram district AL president Major General (retd) AMSA Amin.

It was addressed, among others, The daily Bangladesh Observer editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Secretary of Orthoniti Samity Professor Abu Barakat, Motahar Hossen MP, and Dr Mofizul Hoque Mantu.

Gen (ret) Amin read out the keynote paper. Leaders and activists of Awami League, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Gono Forum attended the seminar.

CPA land recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

About five-and-a-half kathas of land of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) were recovered from the clutch of land grabbers on Sunday.

The port magistracy in a drive recovered the land in Halishahar area worth one crore taka which was illegally occupied 10 years ago.

CPA first class magistrate Mohammad Munir Chowdhury lead the joint drive in collaboration with the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and the staff of mechanical, electrical and estate departments of CPA.

During the drive, the team also demolished an unauthorised semi-pucca commercial market built on the land in 1994.

Farmers patrol border to check diesel smuggling

Sieze 160 litre fuel, 'token' in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Farmers in bordering villages in the district are patrolling their areas to check smuggling of diesel out of the country as law enforcers failed to do this.

Farmers led by Banshdah Union Parishad member Altaf Hossain Bakul seized 160 litres of diesel at Reyui village in the Sadar upazila while it was being smuggled on Wednesday, police said.

Three 'tokens' allegedly given by some BDR personal were also

recovered from the smugglers. The seized diesel along with the 'tokens' were deposited to Satkhira thana, police said.

A case has been filed accusing three alleged smugglers. To take revenge, the smugglers snatched seven bicycles used by some of the villagers during patrol, police said.

Local people alleged that with the help of law enforcers, organised gangs of smugglers are smuggling diesel to India through border areas in Tahigachhi, Hawalkhali,

Pachraki, Kushkhali, Kakkdanga, Keragachhi, Bhomra, Kathanda, Ghora, Baikari, Banshdah and Reyni.

When contacted, Major Ashraf of BDR refuted the allegation and said the recovered 'tokens' were not issued by BDR.

But Sub-Inspector Shahjahan, acting officer-in-charge of Sadar thana, confirmed the incident and said a case has been filed against three smugglers but declined to disclose their names for the interest of the investigation.

Give snap polls to show if people still backs govt

Ershad tells meeting in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad called upon the ruling alliance and the opposition Awami League to show tolerance to each other for the sake of consolidating democracy in the country.

Democracy is tolerance to other's views and actions. But neither the ruling party nor the major opposition party can tolerate each other. This is causing sufferings to the people.

He was addressing a gathering marking the qulkhwani (religious rites after death of a person) of the mother of JP Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader at Baher Char village under Dumki upazila in the district yesterday.

He criticised the BNP-led ruling alliance government for deterioration in law and order and price hike of essentials.

The present slide in law and order is because the ruling party is sheltering criminals. Law can not take its course because of interference by ruling party leaders, he alleged.

He claimed that people were happy under the rule of JP, when there was law and order and essentials were cheaper.

The former president said corruption and politicisation of the administration has become all-pervasive now, which is hindering development.

Ershad claimed that only his party could salvage the nation from the present suffocating situation and urged the people to rally round JP again.

Ruhul Amin Howlader and its JP Presidium member Habibur Rahman also addressed the gathering.

Our Barisal Correspondent adds: HM Ershad said the government

to step down as it as it has failed to ensure security of people's life and property.

He was addressing a big gathering on the Shashid Minar premises at Bakerganj upazila in Barisal district on Thursday on his way to Patuakhali.

The meeting was presided over by Jahangir Hossain Manik, president of bakerganj upazila Jatiya Party and was addressed by, among others, JP leaders Ruhul Amin Howlader, AM Hannan, and Abu Sufian.

He said demanding resignation of a failed government is not undemocratic. If the ruling party is confident of people's support, it should step down and face election, he said.



People waiting for hours for drinking water at Amran Bazar. The photo was taken recently.

Diarrhoea kills 5 in Noakhali 500 others attacked due to water crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Jungle bandits are gone but the people of Noakhali shoals are now gripped with another panic--diarrhoeal diseases--due to scarcity of pure drinking water.

At least five children died in Char Longoria in last one week and over 500 people are now attacked with diarrhoea, dysentery and other intestinal diseases, according local people.

No official confirmation of the deaths was available as government health officials hardly visit the areas and health service is virtually absent.

Thousands of landless families

are suffering from acute scarcity of drinking water in Char Longoria, Southern Char Clark, Char Uria, Southern Char Uria, Boier Char, Char Zia and Char Bata.

People have to walk four to five kilometres to procure drinking water from tubewells as most of the small ponds dug by the forest department for their people have dried up.

The forest department also fielded some deep tubewells for its men, but most of those are inoperative.

Last 12th March we saw uncountable men, women and children have collected water standing in a

line from During a recent visit to some of the shoal areas, local people told this correspondent that diarrhoeal diseases may turn epidemic if urgent steps are not taken. They also appealed for setting up of temporary health camps indifferent shoals and supply of medicines.

This correspondent saw a large number of people queuing for water at a deep tubewell at Amran Bazar in Char Longoria. Many of them said they walked long distances with pitchers and other containers to collect drinking water.



Be it scorching sun or rain, people have to wait for hours outside the Sylhet Osmany International Airport to receive or see off relatives. There is no visitors' gallery at the airport. The photo was taken recently.