

SNAPS

Seven policemen suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna  
Seven policemen were suspended on Monday for negligence of duty.

A police team led by Aminpur police post-in-charge SI Shamsul Haq arrested listed criminal Teko Kabir with a shutter gun from a restaurant at Kashinathpur bazaar on Saturday. But Kabir fled from their captivity.

Following the incident SI Shamsul Haq, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Gokul Chandra and five constables were suspended.

Arms, army uniforms recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban  
Army recovered a foreign made revolver, a home made gun and four sets of army uniforms from an abandoned hut on the hill in Dolupara area here on Sunday.

But locals said four indigenous youths went to the army check post to return to normal life abandoning criminal activities. They deposited the arms after a discussion with the army.

Row at Pirojpur law and order body meeting

Difference of views on admin's role in municipal polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Ruling BNP Whip Shahidul Huq Jamal at a meeting of Pirojpur district law and order committee meeting on Saturday asked the district administration and police to "ensure victory" of ruling party-backed candidates in the upcoming elections in Pirojpur and Motbaria municipalities, according to meeting sources.

But Deputy Commissioner Azmal Hossain and Police Superintendent Abdullah Al Azad declined to act accordingly, saying they got instruction from the government to remain neutral and to ensure peaceful holding of polls. There was exchange of words at the meeting.

The ruling party men also made

"objectionable" comments at the meeting, a high police official told this correspondent yesterday seeking anonymity.

State Minister for Planning Shah Md Abul Hossain, who is in charge of Pirojpur district, tried to cool down the situation, but failed.

This correspondent talked to several officials and ruling party men who attended the meeting. They confirmed the incident but declined to be named.

At the meeting, Md. Shafiq, Pirojpur district Jamate-e-Islami secretary, asked the SP to transfer the Motbaria thana Officer-in-Charge.

In reply The SP said as per law an official can not be transferred before polls.

This angered some Jamaat

leaders who told the meeting that any official defying instructions from ruling party men should be transferred.

When contacted yesterday, Whip Jamal declined that he asked the administration to interfere in the polls to ensure ruling party candidates' victory.

The meeting discussed law and order and matters relating to NGOs. There was no discussion on election, he said.

Motbaria municipality election will be held on May 11. The High Court on Monday vacated a stay order on holding of election in Pirojpur municipality. A new schedule will be announced soon for holding polls there, Election Commission sources said.

Gangrape victim takes life due to police 'duplicity'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A gangraped mother of three children has taken her life as she failed to get justice due to alleged police duplicity.

Sabitri Rani Das, 28, of Barabilla village had filed a case with Tala thana against two miscreants -- Aditya Das and Supada Das -- under the Woman and Children Repression Prevention Act after she was gangraped by them on February 6, her relatives said.

But the investigation officer, Sub-Inspector Abu Dand, in the charge sheet filed on Thursday last did not accuse the rapists under the Act.

Two days after filing of the charge sheet, the accused threatened the victim and her husband to withdraw the case.

On Saturday, a dejected Sabitri committed suicide by hanging herself from a tree near her house, police and the victim's relatives said.

Hartal observed to press for reopening of Rangpur Sugar Mills

Train detained by demonstrators

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A day-long hartal was observed in Gaibandha district yesterday for reopening of the Rangpur Sugar Mills.

Political parties including Awami League, Jatiya Party and 11-Party Alliance, socio-cultural organisation and professional bodies extended their support to the hartal, called jointly by the District Workers and Employees Federation and the Rangpur Sugar Mills Workers Union.

Police restored to baton charge on a procession at Gaibandha bus

terminal during the hartal, injuring six persons.

The injured people include Rabiul Hossain, President of Workers Federation; Mihir Ghosh, Secretary of Gaibandha CPB, Ashsanul Habib Sayeed, Co-ordinator of BSD.

Agitated people barricaded the railway track and detained Lalmonirhat bound Padmarag Express train at Mohimaganj railway station for two hours.

A protest meeting was held in front of Gaibandha Press Club. It was addressed by, among others, Rabiul Hossain, CPB central leaders Wasiur

Rahman Rafel, Shahadat Hossain and Gaibandha Gono Forum President Monjur Alam Mithu.

The speakers said a tough agitation will be launched soon if the mill is not reopened.

They condemned the police action on the peaceful procession and demanded punishment of the policemen involved in the incident.

At the meeting, it was announced that a grand rally will be held at Paltah Maidan in Dhaka on April 23 for reopening of the sugar mill and other demands of workers.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF STUDENT BY JCD ACTIVIST

SUST students to announce fresh programme today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

About 2000 students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) brought out a big procession and held a meeting on the campus on Monday demanding punishment to the culprits who sexually abused a student.

At the rally, they said a tough agitation programme will be announced if justice is not taken against the culprits by Tuesday.

The SUST Disciplinary Committee held a meeting on Monday and discussed possible action against the accused, an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, (JCD).

Students irrespective of party affiliations have been agitating for

the last several days to press for their common demand. A JCD faction also joined the agitation.

The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Teachers' Association (SUSTTA) also announced their six-point demand while female teachers handed over a memorandum containing their nine-point demands to the Acting Vice Chancellor on Thursday. They too demanded immediate and exemplary punishment to the criminals.

Meanwhile, Kamal-Imran faction of JCD created a panic among the students on the campus by firing gunshots on the air. They also ousted their rival faction from the Shahporan Hall for protesting the incident four days back.

The district JCD president

Emran Ahmed Chowdhury and general secretary in a meeting declared that the accused were not JCD activists. They also demanded punishment to the accused after a proper inquiry.

The disciplinary committee headed by Deans and departmental heads of the university sat in a meeting at 5 pm on Monday to discuss the latest situation and for taking necessary action. It was going on till filing of this report at 7 pm on Monday. The Syndicate was also scheduled to sit at an emergency meeting at 8 pm on the day.

A 6-member inquiry committee which was formed in the Syndicate meeting did not submit its report till filing of the report on Monday evening. Monday was the date to submit the report.

3 units of Ashuganj power plant not operating

All eight units need overhaul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Three units of Ashuganj power station are not operating.

According to sources, all eight units of the station became inoperative in three days from April 14 to 17 allegedly due to lack of proper maintenance and timely overhauling.

Engineers repaired three units on April 17 and made those operational. By April 19, they repaired two more units, which were operated yesterday.

Generation capacity of the station has come down to around 700 MW from 728 MW because of the dislocation, sources at the station said seeking anonymity.

The station is gradually losing its

generation capacity due to lack of maintenance and timely overhauling, they said.

A generation unit needs overhauling after it runs 50,000 hours. But only one unit (unit-3) was overhauled in time. The rest were operated for over 2,00,000 hours each but not overhauled, the sources claimed.

All the generation units need thorough overhauling for smooth operation but it can not be done due to shortage of funds and frequent change in policy of the Power Development Board (PDB), they said.

When contacted, authorities at the power station refused to comment on this.

Fund crisis halts it halfway

Kuakata Rakhain Women Market boosts handicrafts, local textiles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Rakhain Women Market in Kuakata sea beach has opened the door to better life for Rakhain community people by boosting local handicrafts production.

It is an attractive spot for tourists as various types of lucrative handicrafts and fashionable garments made with handloom textiles produced by Rakhain women are sold there at cheaper rates. Tourists flock to the market in large numbers.

But construction of the market, started long ago, is yet to be completed, some women shop owners lamented while talking to this correspondent recently.

Once completed, the market could attract more tourists, they said.

The construction began in 1998 with funds from the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). Rakhain people donated the land for the

market.

Sixteen shops have so far been built with Tk 20 allocated by the LGED out of the projected cost of Tk 1.5 crore, sources said.

Construction is stopped for three years due to lack of funds.

LGED sources here said more Tk 20 lakh has been allocated in the current financial year and tender for the work has been floated. Seven more shops, a Rakhain food centre and toilet for women will be built with the money.

Talking to this correspondent, Mon Than, 25, a Rakhain women shop owner, said, "The market has opened the scope to sell home-made handicrafts and a better life for my family".

Sales woman Chan Chan So said she got a chance to work and earn more money for her family. Once completed, the market will promote local handicrafts, she said.



PHOTO: STAR

No more exploitation by middlemen... Rakhain women in Kuakata now sell their home-made handicrafts at the Rakhain Women Market at the sea beach.

LGED ROAD DEVELOPMENT WORK Tender manipulation by pro-BNP contractors alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Tender manipulation by pro-BNP contractors prevented the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) contractors from buying and dropping schedules for 1.06 crore taka road development work.

The LGED invited tenders for development work in five groups under Pisciculture Development and Greater Jessore development projects.

In a complaint to the LGED executive engineer on Saturday, Khan Afzal Hossain, a contractor alleged that 'influential contractors' snatched his schedule on the last date of dropping at the LGED office. He did not mention any specific name, but demanded re-tender.

Preferring anonymity another LGED contractor told this correspondent that he was prevented from buying tender schedule by pro-BNP contractors. The contractors claimed that only 21 schedules were sold and only five schedules

were dropped.

On contact, Magura LGED executive engineer admitted receipt of the written complaints. 'A tender committee will investigate and look into the matter,' he told this correspondent.

Schoolgirl abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A girl was abducted by an unidentified gang at Degreerchar village in Daulatpur upazila on Sunday night.

According to police, the gang kidnapped Rozina Khatun, 14, a student of Class eight of Degreerchar Girls' High School at about 8.30 pm when she was returning home from a neighbour's house after attending a function.

Police said, the gang took the girl to an unknown destination.

S-W region a death valley: Inu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) president Hasanul Haq Inu has termed the southwestern region as a death valley being ruled by outlaws.

Inu told this while addressing a party meeting at Mirpur upazila auditorium here on Monday.

He blamed the BNP-Jamaat government for releasing at least 2,500 outlaws who surrendered to the government with huge arms and ammunition on July 23, 1999. The present government released them with an intention to use them in the next election as they did earlier, he said.

Inu also termed this government as a betrayer which did not control the price-hike of essential commodities creating people's sufferings. He urged the people to create an agitation to topple the Khaleda-Nizami government from power.

Upazila JSD president Safiul Alam was in the chair while the meeting was addressed, among others, by JSD central leader Mohammad Abdullah, district JSD president Shahub Ali, general secretary Abdul Alim Swapan, Cashi Nazrul Islam and Asit Kumar Singho Roy.

Five die of diarrhoea in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Diarrhoea killed five children and attacked over 100 people in Gopalganj Sadar upazila in the last ten days.

The dead are Marani, daughter of Jashim Sarder of Digarkul village; Seema daughter of Babu Ram of Domrashur village; Sagar, son of Azizur Sikder and Rabiul son of Md Dulal of Karpara village and Jehad Ali, son of Abul Kalam of Kachna village, according to sources at Gopalganj Sadar Hospital yesterday.

Diarrhoea is spreading in the area due to scarcity of pure drinking water.

Rough sea idles fishermen in southern coast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Thousands of fishermen in southern coastal areas are sitting idle for about a week as the sea is rough.

It is Hilsa-catching season now but hundreds of fishing boats and trawlers are moored in safe shelters in Alipur, Mohipur, Doshkhal, Charmontaj, Ancharchar, Charbiswas, Kalapara, Patharghata, Galachipa shores and islands.

The sea is very rough with waves rising up to 10 feet, according to reports received from Kuakata, Patharghata and Galachipa.

Kalapara Radar Station sources said the sea is rough due to full moon and bad weather. This will continue four to five days more, they said.

Morshed Ali, a fish trader at Alipur fish market in Kalapara upazila, said the Hilsa season has started but fishermen do not dare to go to the sea due to the rough weather. There is no supply of fish in the wholesale market for about a week, he said.

BCL leader killed in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Former president of Sujaganar upazila unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Aminul Islam Bakku, 35, was stabbed to death by unknown assailants early Monday.

The killers waylaid him on the flood protection dam at Kolchari at New Gohail village in Sadar upazila and killed him.