

SNAPS

Tk 7 lakh given to Buddhist monasteries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The government has sanctioned about Tk seven lakh for development of 110 Buddhist monasteries in Bandarban hill district.

Mama Ching, chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council and member of Bangladesh Buddha Kalayan Trust, received the fund and distributed it among the monasteries, official sources said.

Twenty-seven monasteries in the Sadar upazila got Tk 1.35 lakh, 10 in Thanchi for Tk 1. Lakh, 20 in Lama got Tk 1.20 lakh, 16 in Naikhongchari got Tk 80,000, 10 in Ruma got a Tk 74,000, 16 in Roanchari got Tk 80,000 and 11 in Alikadam got Tk 66,000, they said.

Young man kills father, stepmother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A young man ahas allegedly killed his father, step mother and step sister at Krishnapur village in Golachipa upazila.

Police arrested the wife of the alleged killer, Tahmina, 20. The alleged killer--Yusuff, 35--is absconding.

Police and local people said Yusuf was pressing his father for land property to live separately with his family after his father Abdul Ali Choqkider's second marriage. But Ali declined.

They often quarreled, police said quoting local people.

On Sunday night, Yusuff attacked and killed his father with a sharp weapon when he was sleeping on a cot on the corridor of the house.

He then killed his step mother Habiba Begum and step sister Tahmina, 10.

Tougher law demanded to control acid violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion meeting here stressed on joint efforts by people of all classes to create awareness against acid violence and tougher law to punish culprits.

A social movement should be built to create awareness against the heinous crime on humans, they said.

The meeting on 'Role of Acid Control Council at District Level and Citizens' Initiative', was jointly organised by Action AID and a local NGO, Sodesh.

Madhab Chandra Dutta, Executive Director of Sodesh,

moderated the discussion, held at Satkhira Sadar upazila auditorium. Action Aid Research Fellow Mahbulul Haq Ripon presented the key note paper.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Syed Iftakher Ali, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer AKM Ali Azam, Municipality Chairman Sheikh Ashraf Haq, Prothom Alo journalist Kalyan Banerjee, Satkhira Assistant Police Superintendent and member secretary of Acid Control Council Zillur Rahman Jewel, human rights activists Prof Pabitra Mohon Das, Sudhanga Shekhar Sarkar, Advocate Tapan Chakraborty, Advocate Ferdonsi Ara Lucky,

Tahmina Khatun, Dr Firozur Rahman, Sheikh Ajhar Hossain and Action AID co-ordinator Nigar Sultana addressed the meeting. At the outset, acid victim Nurunnahar from Bauphal in Patuakhali narrated her plight.

Mahbulul Haq Ripon in his paper said acid-throwing incidents have increased alarmingly across the country as the culprits escape punishment through legal loopholes. More stringent laws are needed, he said.

Lawyers, journalists, teachers, NGO representatives and some acid victims attended the meeting.



Nurunnahar, an acid victim from Bauphal, Patuakhali narrating her plight at the roundtable on Role of Acid Control Council, held at Satkhira on Monday.

'Tala BNP leader killed by hired outlaws' Intra-party rivalry alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Tala thana BNP President ABM Attaf Hossain was murdered allegedly by outlaws on contract for payment of Tk two lakh by his political rival BNP leader and Kumira Union Parishad Chairman Golam Mostafa.

This was claimed in a letter sent to Satkhira Reporters Club on Tuesday through post office. It was signed by Mohammad Narim, self-styled acting general secretary of Tala thana unit of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

The letter said both Attaf and Mostata were aspirants for the post of Tala upazila chairman.

Giving details about the murder, it also claimed that the motive and names of the alleged killers were disclosed as the promised money was not paid in full.

Attaf Hossain was killed on the night of May 4 when a bomb was thrown on him by unidentified assailants in front of Patkelghata bazaar BNP office in Tala upazila.

Altaf Hossain, a popular leader, was former upazila chairman.

The letter claimed that Mostafa joined hands with Altaf's opponents Badruzzaman Badrul and Rashedul Haq Raju to fulfill his mission. They agreed that after the killing, Badru and Raju would be president and general secretary respectively of Tala thana BNP and Golam Mostafa would contest for the post of upazila chairman, it claimed.

Narim claimed in the letter that on the night of April 28, he attended a meeting with Mostafa, Badru and Raju, held at a house at Mahmudpur village in Tala upazila. They offered him to give Tk two lakh to kill Altaf.

At about 8 pm on May 4, Narim and three other outlaws -- Mafizul Islam, Shahidul and Omed Ali of Noakali village-- gathered near the Patkelghata bazaar BNP office.

As Altaf came out of the office and left for home on a motorcycle, Mofizul threw a bomb but it did not explode. Narim threw the second

bomb in which carpenter Habib was killed on the spot.

Narim then took another bomb from Omed Ali and hurled it on Altaf. Altaf fell on the ground.

They left the scene exploding bombs and creating panic. Narim said in the latter that he then demanded the rest of the money, but was refused.

Child killed in clash over land

BSS, Rajbari

A nine-month-old child was killed and five members of a family were injured in a rivals clash over a disputed land at Barlaburia village of Ramkantapur union in Rajbari Sadar upazila on Monday.

The deceased is Akashi, daughter of Banon Sarder of the upazila and the injured are Rashed Sheikh, Doli Sheikh, Mithu, Alam, and Ziku, according to police.

Rivals attacked Akashi's mother while she (Akashi) was in her lap, locals said. The child was injured seriously and died on the next day on way to hospital.

Tree plantation 6 from Moulvibazar to get national awards

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Six individuals and organisations in Moulvibazar district have been selected for the Prime Minister's National Award for Tree Plantation-2003.

According to the local forest Department source, The Ministry of Forest and Environment has made the selection, according to sources in the district forest department.

The awards will be distributed next month at a function where the National Tree Plantation Campaign-2004 will be launched.

The awards are given in seven categories.

Chandbhag Government Pri-mary School in Rajnagar upazila has been selected for the second prize under primary school/Ebdataye modrassah category.

Nari Shikha Academy (Wo-men's College) in Baralekha upazila will get the second prize under Girls High School/Women's College category.

Sri Sri Nimai Shibban Temple in Srimongal has been selected for the third prize under religious organisation category.

Bangladesh Air Force in Shamsnagar in Kamalganj upazila will get the third prize under Ministry/Division/Sector Corporation/ category.

Nizamul Islam Dalun of Dwarak area and Maksud Begum of Banasri area in Moulvibazar town have been selected for second and third prizes respectively for rooftop gardening.

RU teachers slate shrine bomb blast

RU CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and forty teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) on Tuesday condemned the bomb blast incident at Hazrat Shahjalal's (RA) shrine in Sylhet on Friday.

Three persons were killed and 70 others including British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury were injured on the day.

In a statement the teachers demanded judicial inquiry into the incident and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible for the bomb blast.

They also said the bomb attack has tarnished the image of the country. The teachers also demanded ban on Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB).

Signatories to the statement include Progressive Teachers' Association (PTA) convener Prof Entajul Haq, former Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) president Prof Sayen Uddin, former RUTA general secretary Prof Abdul Latif, Prof Anser Uddin, Prof Moley Kumar, Prof Anando Kumar, Prof Hasibul Alam and Prof Tarik Noor.

Trade course for sex workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Youth Development Directorate of the government has been conducting three separate trade courses for sex workers here.

The 45-day trade courses began on April 11. In the first phase 25 sex workers took part in the training courses on sewing, duck and hen raising and goat rearing.

The courses had been aimed at creating alternative employment opportunities on self-help basis. There are 73 sex workers here and all of them wanted to rehabilitate socially. They will be offered training opportunities in phases.

Suranjit 'unwanted' in Moulvibazar: BNP

Do not destroy democratic atmosphere, AL leaders say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Leaders of Moulvibazar district BNP have declared Awami League stalwart Suranjit Sen Gupta MP "unwanted" in the district for his alleged "bad remarks" against Finance Minister Saifur Rahman and his son M Naser Rahman MP.

This declaration was made in a public meeting held at Chowmuhana Square in the town on Monday.

Presided over by Sadar thana BNP President Faruque Ahmed, the meeting was also addressed by, among others, district BNP general secretary and newly elected Moulvibazar municipality chairman Fayzul Karim Mayun, Joint Secretary Wali Siddique, district Jubo Dal President Wadud Alam and former district JCD general

secretary Abdullah Al Mamun.

Suranjit had made the alleged bad comments at a recent press conference held in Dhaka.

They BNP leaders said Saifur Rahman is the pioneer of all development activities in Sylhet division. The people of Moulvibazar will not tolerate any bad remarks against him. They will resist any attempt by Suranjit to visit Moulvibazar, the BNP leaders declared at the meeting.

Political atmosphere warmed up in traditionally peaceful Moulvi-bazar after the pourasabha election in the district town when AL brought allegations of massive rigging by ruling the BNP candidate, who own the polls. AL leaders had alleged that Naser Rahman led the BNP leaders and activists in the rigging. After the election, six out of seven ward

commissioners belonging to parties except BNP demanded re-election and staged demonstrations in the town to press their demand.

The BNP declaration drew criticism from local AL leaders. District AL President Syed Mohsin Ali and General Secretary Abdul Wadud in a statement condemned the declaration.

They said people have the democratic right to criticise activities of any minister. "Moulvibazar has not been mortgaged to Saifur Rahman or Naser Rahman", the statement said.

They urged local BNP leaders not to destroy the traditional democratic atmosphere in Moulvi bazar.

They reiterated their demand for re-election in f Moulvibazar municipality.

Panic stalks Netrakona haor people

Tamsu Bahini active again as wet season approaches

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The wet season has brought panic for the people of Karimgonj and Kishorganj haor areas. "Tamsu Bahini" may loot their houses any time as road links are gone for at least seven months.

Numerous complaints to police against the gang in the last couple of years produced virtually no result, many villagers alleged while talking to this correspondent recently.

The haor area is a safe haven for the criminals as villages dot vast sheets of water all around in the wet season.

They commit crimes from dacoity to abduction for toll, murder and rape. Wet season is the ideal time for the crimes as law enforcers can not reach villages in time because boats are the only means of communication.

Police says the gang with around

50 members is led by notorious criminal Mohammad Tamsu, now in his 30s. He is the son of one Torab Ali of Gouripur village in Patiyadi upazila.

They arrested a number of the gang members in the last two years, but the ringleader escaped dragnets. He recruits new members from Joyka, Kadamtali, South Nashree, North Kalabag, Khojsgao and others village in Karimgonj upazila. Unemployed youths can be easily lured for crimes.

Kishoreganj thana OC Ashraf Hossain and Kotiadi thana OC Yusun Ali, when contacted said Tamsu faces at least 10 ceses for murder, abduction, toll collection and dacoity.

Local people, joined by public representatives and political leaders, on several occasion demanded action against the gang.

In November last, local political leaders and law enforcers organised a meeting at Mandis bazaar in Nanshree, seeking cooperation from the people to arrest the gang members. But crimes by them continued.

Many villagers said they do not date to give information to police fearing reprisal by the gang.

A local leader of BNP told this correspondent that every businessman, rich former and government employee in the area have to pay toll to the gang twice a year.

A businessman in Joykatold said the Bahini is running its terrorist activities for long, but law enforcers could do a little to check those.

Anisur Rahman, OC of Karimgonj thana, said joint forces in a special drive in a village few days ago arrested some of the gang embers but the ring leader escaped.



A usual scene on highways... Traders and hawkers virtually block highways near markets, causing traffic jam. The photo was taken recently at Madhobdi wholesale vegetable market along the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Narsingdi. Traffic police do not bother to keep highways clear along such markets.

CARE changes garment workers' lifestyle

Taslima now earns Tk 12,000 a month

PINAKI ROY, back from Chittagong

Taslima Begum, a garment worker will bring back her eldest son from an orphanage at a madrasa. She is now better off.

Three years back, due to poverty, Taslima had sent him to the orphanage, keeping her two other minor sons with her.

She with her three sons started a grim battle for survival after her husband married another girl.

Taslima told this correspondent she does not have to worry now. She also bought gold ornaments for her. 'I don't want anything but education for my children', she said.

Female garment workers like Taslima saw a ray of hope when CARE, Bangladesh undertook a comprehensive programme to improve the standard of living of garment workers in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) in 2002.

Under the programme, 15,000 garment factory workers living at Bandartila, Navy Gate and Saltgola here were brought under the CEPZ Corporate Pilot Project (CCPP) being implemented in

collaboration with a local NGO, Mamata.

The objective is their economic emancipation through micro-credit, creating awareness about their rights, practising hygiene and combating AIDS/HIV. The project started with the Youngone factory workers while it was financed by a major buyer US based company, Timberland through CARE.

CARE provided Tk 20 lakh taka revolving fund (that has to pay back) to Mamata to run the micro-credit project but now it has reached to three crore taka even taking only two percent interest for loan," CARE Asistant Project Manager Sajja Akter said to this correspondent.

Taslima took loan from Mamata for four times. She bought an embroidery machine and a sewing machine. She works in the evening after coming back from the garment factory. She sells sarees and other dresses making various designs on those.

"Now I earn Tk 10,000 to 12000 every month," Taslima said to this correspondent.

Like Taslima, other garment

workers like Afroza, Beauty, Halima, Nurun Nashar and hundreds of others earn extra money in this manner.

CCPP project co-ordinator Hosne Ara informed that previously there were no savings and credit institutions within the reach of garment factory workers.

"We do not work like other NGOs. Even we take savings amounting to two taka only. We give them loan with two percent interest so that they can pay back on installment within six months,' she told The Daily Star.

Booths were opened in the factory to collect their monthly savings and installment of their credit so that garment workers can easily run the programme. They keep open their office till late evening.

The activities of the pilot project will expand covering 12 factories of Youngone Group of Industries where 21,000 workers are employed, 18,000 of them women.