

## SNAPS

### Madrassah exam centre cancelled in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Mohimaganj Alia Madrassa centre of Alim and Fazil examinations in Gobindaganj upazila was cancelled on Saturday following widespread cheating in examination.

Being informed by local administration and on-duty magistrate the higher authorities cancelled the centre from Sunday and shifted the centre to Gobindaganj College.

### 3 drown in boat capsized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Three persons including two women drowned as an engine boat with 150 passengers capsized in the Madhumati near Patgati Bazaar in Tungipara upazila on Friday night.

The boat was proceeding towards Pirojpur from Madanipur. When it reached near Patgati Bazaar another engine boat coming from the opposite direction hit it.

The dead are Tomila Kirtania, 70, Dukhi Rani Malakar, 60, and Santi Biswas, 65.

### 'Outlaw' killed by rivals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

An alleged activist of outlawed Sarbahara Party was killed in an internal conflict at village Folsia in Mohammadpur upazila.

The victim is Golam Mostafa, 35, son of late Kirinuddin of village Luguria under Lohagara upazila in Narail district.

Police quoting family members said a gang of five went to the house of Mustafa and called him out of his house in the early hours of Saturday. Later, they stabbed him to death at Folsia village.

### 7 teenagers to be freed from B'baria jail soon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A Task Force meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room on Saturday decided to take steps for immediate release of seven teenaged boys from jail on bail.

DC Md Younusur Rahman presided over the meeting. Other Task Force members present there were ADC (education and development) Md Saraf Uddin Ahmed, Advocate Hamidur Rahman PP, Acting Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department in Brahmanbaria Prodig Kumar Pal, AKM Abidur Rahman Buiyig; Magistrate Md Aminul Islam, UK-based Save the Children Coordinator Rumena Begum, The Daily Star Correspondent Sheikh Shahidul Islam and district Women Affairs Officer Manuara Begum.

Twelve boys were sent to Brahmanbaria jail at different times last year and this year for various offences. Five of them were released on bail between December last year and April this year.

The remaining seven are Sumanta, 17, son of Mangal Deb Barma of Tripura, India; Murad, 17, son of Shahjahan of Ashugonj; Md Shah Alam, 14, son of Muhammad Ali of Netrakuna; Rauf Mia, 16, son of Bazlu Mia of Kasba; Arman Mia, 16, son of late Jaheed Mia of Brahmanbaria and Rubel Mia, 16, son of Noor Mia of Brahmanbaria.

### Manikganj poura by-polls today

OUR CORESPONDENT, Manikganj

By-election for the post of chairman of Manikganj Poursasabha (municipality) will be held today.

About 34,674 voters are expected to exercise their franchise to elect chairman of the pourasabha.

Adequate measures have been taken to ensure free and fair election in all 19 centres of the municipality, according to Returning Officer Kazi Meraj Hossain.

However, all the 19 centres in the pourasabha have been declared vulnerable.

Meraj Hossain who is also an additional district magistrate told this correspondent a magistrate, necessary police including battalion police and BDR will be deployed in each centre. Six mobile teams will remain vigilant to maintain the law and order during the election period. They will patrol the entire pourasabha area to combat any untoward incident, he said.

Six candidates are contesting in the election. They are Four-party Alliance candidate Belayet Hossain Khan (Umbrella), Awami League candidate Romjal Ali (Candle), Sudev Saha (Bullock-cart), BNP rebel candidate Nasir Uddin Ahmed Jady (Bicycle), Ujjal Ahmed (Wheel) and Kazi Rayhan Uddin Tuku (Wall Clock) who won't contest the election.

The post of chairman fell vacant following removal of Md Mosharaf Hossain Babul after no-confidence by the commissioners on September 3 last year.

## Jamuna erosion alarming in Bogra

Shariakandia upazila hq only 30 metre away: Jamuna Bridge approach road to be affected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The Shariakandia upazila headquarters and the nearby river port are now threatened with erosion by the mighty Jamuna.

The river is only about 30 metres from the embankment at Titporol and 290 metres at Dabdanga.

Once the embankment is effected, the upazila headquarters and the river port will face erosion.

This will cause a more disastrous situation. Once the upazila headquarters is washed away, the

Jamuna will merge with the Bangali river and threaten the western approach road of the Jamuna Bridge, Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) Executive Engineer Saydur Rahman told newsmen recently.

The two rivers are now about half a kilometre away at Tipporol.

He said it will be difficult to protect about 10 kilometers embankment from Tipporol to Dabdanga, built at a cost of Tk 577 crore if the erosion continues.

Sariakandi Upazila Nirbahi

Officer (UNO) Akber Hassain said the erosion has turned serious at Tipporol and Dabdanga points.

Sources at WDB office said, the government last month approved a Tk 130 crore project to protect the embankment from Tipporol to Dabdanga. But the work could not be started as funds are yet to be disbursed.

The World bank in a report in 1997 also said the western approach road of the Jamuna Bridge could be affected of the Jamuna and the Bangali rivers

merge.

Meanwhile, at least 6000 people became homeless and several hundred hectares of land disappeared in Tipporol, Antarpura, Eashamara, Dhap, Batiagram, Kalitola and adjoining areas due to Jamuna erosion, local people said.

At Kalitola, some classroom of BK High School have been shifted to a BNP office because the school is facing erosion, upazila administration officials said. About 100 hectares of cultivable land eroded into the river, they said.



Mighty Jamuna devouring lands at Titporol (left) and approaching the Water Development Board embankment near Sariakandi upazila headquarter and people made homeless by erosion moving elsewhere (right). The Jamuna is only 30 metre from the dike. The photos were taken on Saturday.



PHOTO: STAR

## PDB special drive skips bigwigs

Over 100 lines snapped, Tk 25 lakh realised out of Tk 3.58 cr arrears in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The Power Development Board (PDB) has snapped over 100 electricity lines in the district in about as month till May 29 and realised Tk 25 lakh under a special drive.

It has fixed a target to realise 1.5 crore bills by the end of the current financial year out of Tk 3.85 crore arrears.

Of the arrears, Tk 3.50 crore is due from government, autonomous institutions and some industries and the rest is from residential and other small customers.

The arrears increased as most of the non-residential consumers including government and autonomous institutions do not care to pay bills, PDB sources said

Two mobile teams are in action under the special drive.

Many residential consumers this correspondent talked to complained

that their lines were snapped for small arrears without prior notice but big defaulters are untouched. Even lines were snapped for non-payment of bills for two months only, they alleged.

The non-residential big defaulters include Magura Textile Mills (Tk 1.56 crore), Police Superintendent's office (Tk 40 lakh), Magura municipality (Tk 39.73 lakh), offices under Magura Civil Surgeon (Tk 2.24 lakh), Water Development Board (Tk 35 lakh), Magura district jail (Tk 5.83 lakh), Deputy Commissioner's office (Tk 5 lakh), Magura Primary Training Institute (Tk 2.73 lakh) Magura Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy Government College and Magura Government Women College (Tk 2.74 lakh).

Religious institutions like mosques, temples and churches owe a total of Tk 61 lakh.

When contacted, Executive

Engineer Santosh Kumar Sadhukhan said, "We have already sent letters to the defaulting government and autonomous institutions for payment of their outstanding electricity bills."

He however denied the allegations that lines were snapped without prior notice. "Notice is written at the bottom of the bill issued every month".

Other PDB sources said, they consider religious institutions like mosque, temple and churches as sensitive places and usually do not snap lines for defaulting on bill payment.

They said realisation of arrears from government and autonomous institutions is a very time consuming and difficult job. So, they have mainly targeted residential and small commercial consumers.

## PCJSS begins road, waterway blockade in Baghaichhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Baghaichhari thana unit of Parbatitya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) began an indefinite road and waterway blockade programme from Saturday.

They enforced the programme demanding peaceful co-existence of indigenous people and Bangalees, according to Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Mosharaf Hossain.

A memorandum submitted to the UNO on Friday night alleged that a vested quarter of Bangalees became hostile to indigenous people since killing of a woman by unidentified criminals on April 6. Blaming indigenous people Bangalee residents took several attempts to attack indigenous people, the memorandum said.

On May 27, Bangalees attacked two Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinees belonging to indigenous community when they were returning to their houses after the examination. One of them was injured when BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) personnel posted nearby saved them. Protesting the incident, PCJSS submitted the memo and went on the road and waterway blockade programme, the UNO said quoting the memo.

on May 26, a group of women from the Muslim Block cluster village under the thana submitted a memorandum to the UNO demanding arrest of those responsible for the murder of Fatema Begum, 40, and quick justice.

Fatema was murdered on April 6 when she went to a nearby jungle to bring back her cattle at noon, Sub-Inspector Selim told this correspondent.

Fatema's husband filed a murder case with Baghaichhari thana accusing seven indigenous youths, Selim added.

The district administration held several meetings with local (Baghaichhari) leaders of indigenous people and Bangalees which yielded no result.

Tension mounted in the area.

## 23 chargesheeted in Rajnagar 4-murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Rajnagar thana police have submitted charge sheet of the sensational four-murder case in Kasimpur village.

The officer-in-charge of Rajnagar thana told this correspondent that, 31 people were accused in the case.

After investigation, police submitted charge sheet against 23 of them.

Thirteen of the 23 were arrested and the rest 10 are absconding since the murder.

Four persons including a school boy were killed in gunshots by rivals over a theft at a nursery in the Kashmir village in Fatehpur union in Rajnagar upozila on September 28 last year.

They were Md Lulu Miah, 32, Farid Miah, 18, Md Ripon, 18 and Faysal, 12.

## 'Dislodge autocratic govt thru' mass movement'

Jalil at B'baria AL council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Zailil MP on Saturday called upon the party men to launch a vigorous movement to dislodge the "autocratic" government from power.

The government is violating human rights and has pushed the country on the verge of ruin.

Law and order has deteriorated as the ruling party men are protecting terrorists, he told a triennial conference of Brahmanbaria AL.

AL Presidium member Zillur Rahman MP was the chief guest at the conference, held at the Poura Mukta Mancha with its district unit

president advocate Sayed Sirajul Islam in the chair.

It was addressed by, among others, Bir Bahadur MP, Capt (Retd) A B Tajul Islam, Saidul Hoque MP, Ashim Kumar, Lutful-Hi-Sachchu and Humayun Kabir.

Abdul Zailil also alleged that the Four Party Alliance government has made the parliament ineffective as the opposition is not allowed to speak in the House.

It is also violating democratic rights by not allowing opposition parties to stage demonstration on streets against the governments repression and misdeeds, he alleged.

Zillur Rahman alleged that at

least 26,000 people were killed and 18,000 AL leaders and workers arrested in the country in the last two and a half years.

Bangla Bhai, an organisation of Islamic militants, has establish a "parallel government" in the north region of the country under the protection of the government, he alleged.

At the conference, Jalil announced a new district committee with Lutful-Hi-Sachchu and Humayun Kabir as president and secretary respectively. The last party conference was held on March 25, 1997.

## Little hope to salvage Diganto from Meghna

High tide, overweight of sunken vessel disrupt operation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Efforts to salvage MV Diganto from the Meghna bed continued yesterday but some high officials of BIWTA seeking anonymity said they are not optimistic about a success.

Navy ship Shoibal, BIWTA salvage ships Rustom, Hamza, Kapot and Titash and 75 frogmen are engaged in the salvage operation.

The frogmen earlier tied two chains to the front and back of the sunken double-decker launch. Now they are trying to tie two more chains with the vessel, BIWTA Port Officer Saiful Islam told The Daily Star yesterday when contacted over phone at Chandpur.

But high tide was obstructing their operation, he said.

The vessel has been located at Jahajmarar Char, about 25 kilometers north west of Chandpur.

But a high official of BIWTA declining to be named aid they

may be compelled to abandon the operation due to high tide and overweight of the vessel under water.

The under-current speed of water close to the river bed in between nine and 13 nautical miles per hour at different times. The weight of the 125 feet vessel, filled with mud and sand, would be 180 to 220 tonnes now.

BIWTA salvage vessels Rustam and Hamza have a total capacity to pull 120 to 130 tonnes. So it was beyond their capacity, he said. Lt. Emdad, Commander of BNS Shoibal and Lt. Col Rashid, leader of a special frogman team, earlier told newsmen at Chandpur that six earlier efforts by the frogmen failed due to high tide and depth of water.

MV Digonto, caught in a twister, sank in the Meghna early morning on Sunday last with over 70 passengers. At last 40 of them are still missing.



## Captain Bashar's death anniversary observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The 33rd death anniversary of freedom fighter Shaheed Capt RAM Khairul Bashar was observed at his home town in Nilphamari on Saturday.

The Shaheed Bashar Smrity Parishad arranged a Quran Khwani, Milad Mahfil and destitute feeding programme at his father's Sabujpara residence in the town. A large number of freedom fighters, friends and relatives of Shaheed Capt Bashar and the elite attended the programme.

Capt Bashar fought in Sector No 2 and he fell a martyr during the Liberation War in 1971.

Capt Bashar Memorial Gate, built at the entrance of Nilphamari town in honour of the martyr, was formally inaugurated on the Independence Day (March 26) this year.



PHOTO: STAR

Syhet City Corporation (SCC) Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and Harunuzzaman Chowdhury, Chairman of Helix, a local company, signing an agreement at the SCC office on May 29 for scientific and safe disposal of hospital waste in the city.

## Hartal today in Sylhet for hanging bridge on Surma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A half-day hartal will be observed in Sylhet at the call of Sylhet Bibhag Gonodabi Parishad to press its demand for construction of a hanging bridge to replace the age old Keane Bridge over the Surma river, planned earlier.

The hartal culminates a month-long programme called by the Parishad, a non-political forum, after the government announced a decision to construct an RCC bridge on the site, dropping the hanging bridge project.

The agitation programme included rallies and processions, human chain, handing over of memorandum and view-exchange meetings at district and upazila headquarters in Sylhet division.

Leaders of the Parishad at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club Saturday evening called upon the people to observe the hartal to realise the demand.

"It is a conspiracy to drop a project approved by ECNEC (Exec-

utive Committee of National Economic Council)", said Parishad Secretary Md Abdul Malik in his written statement at the press conference.

He said a tougher agitation will be launched for the hanging bridge. Meanwhile, the authorities are going ahead with a plan to build an RCC bridge, ignoring protests by people and different organisations.

Seven construction firms have dropped proposals against a tender floated by the Roads and Highways Department for the proposed RCC bridge.

Finance minister Saifur Rahman had announced the plan to construct a hanging bridge. The project was approved by the ECNEC on October 23, 2002. An international tender was also floated in the same year for the Tk 150 crore proposed 1033-feet bridge.

But the ECNEC on March 17 cancelled the hanging bridge project and decided to construct an RCC bridge.

## Another 'snail mail'

Letter from Sylhet reaches Nilphamari in 2 yrs 10 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Another incident of 'snail's mail' was came to light on Saturday. A letter from Sylhet reached Nilphamari in two years 10 months and nine days.

An army man -Montu - wrote a letter to his mother. The envelop addressed to Bristi Cloth Store, Haji Mohsin Road, PO/Dist Nilphamari, bore the seal of Sylhet Post Office, dated July 15, 2001.

The letter, delivered on May 24, bore the seal of Nilphamari Post Office, dated May 24, 2004.

Earlier, a letter from Bangla Hill Post office at Hakimpur upazila in Dinajpur took two years 10 months and 11 days to reach the addressee in Nilphamari.

As the news appeared in newspapers on May 27, postman Bipul Kumar Das was relieved from duty and two inquiry committees were formed. Bipul delivered both the letters.

When contacted, he said, "I should not be blamed because I delivered the letters (the first and the second) to the addressees in time".

The Nilphamari Post Master said he is yet to get any complaint about the second letter.

The Deputy Post Master General at Rangpur when contacted refused to make any comment before investigation.

## Two held in JCD leader murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Nabinagar thana police have arrested two persons in connection with the murder of a local Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader.

The two - Aminul Islam and Murchalin - were produced before court, which sent them to jail hajat.

Md Farid Mia, president of Nabinagar Pourasava unit of JCD, was killed, allegedly by some of the villagers last week.

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