

SNAPS

Workshop on democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To strengthen and ensure democracy at grassroots level Gram Bikash Shohayak Shangstha (GBSS), a development organisation, organised a daylong workshop at Ganasadan auditorium in Munshiganj on May 29.

Local Union Parishad (UP) chairmen participated in the workshop aided by ARD-USAID where they spoke to ensure transparency in local government.

Participants in the workshop, presided by Ali Asgar Ripon Mallik, chairman of Sonarang UP, formed a 19-member Munshiganj district committee of National Union Parishad Forum (NUPF).

NUPF executive committee president Golam Srawar, NUPF member Sayed Shakhawat Hossain Selim, Dhaka divisional committee convenor AKM Mannan Khan, ARD policy advisor Dr AKM Saifullah and GBSS executive director Masuda Faruq Ratna were present as special guests.

Acid thrower gets life in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A court here on Monday awarded life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) to an acid thrower.

The convict is Humayun Kabir, 30.

Special Judge of Nari-o-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain (woman and child repression prevention court) Md Abdul Majid also fined him 50,000 taka. The judge acquitted another accused, Abdul Halim, as he was found not guilty.

Humayun Kabir threw acid on his wife, Nayan, 25, at night on April 22 in 2000 during sleep at her father's house at Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute staff quarter.

Humayun Kabir was demanding 20,000 taka as dowry from his father-in-law since his marriage with Nayan two years back. But Nayan's father could not meet her demand due to poverty.

The court also awarded the culprit seven years' imprisonment more in the same case under another section.

Two outlaws held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two outlaws were arrested in Khulna on Monday and Saturday.

Police arrested an armed cadre of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communit Party (PBCP- Janajuddho), Abdul Malek, 32, from Rupsha ferry ghat on Monday.

Two guns were also recovered from his possession.

On Saturday night, detective police arrested a PBCP (J) cadre, Shiplu Bhuiyan, 34, from near Shishu hospital here.

Police also recovered three mobile phone sets from his possession.

Poverty alleviation without bank loan

Monwara and Surjo examples for many in Payerabond, Rangpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Monwara Begum and Surjo Begum are now a source of inspiration for many in Payerabond in Rangpur, the birthplace of legendary Bangalee woman Begum Rokeya.

Begum Rokeya was the torch-bearer in removing women's illiteracy. Monwara and Surjo are alleviating poverty by spreading the spirit of self-reliance.

Following their example, many poor women in the area are now well off and self-reliant by growing vegetables and raising small poultry on backyards.

Both Monwara and Surjo had to remain half fed seven years back. They changed their lot through hard work, sincerity and guideline from local agriculture officials. But they did not take any loan from any NGO.

Monwara is known in the area for producing and selling

compost fertiliser.

"I am happy. I save at least Tk 2000 a month after maintaining my family", Monwara told this correspondent during a visit to the her house at of Chuhor village in Payerabond union in Mithaspukur upazila.

Her husband Abdur Rouf was a day labourer earlier. Now, they work together in their small vegetable garden and in producing compost fertiliser.

About four years back, she had once bought cow dung worth Tk about 200 for use in her vegetable garden. She thought she could save the money used for cow dung if she could find an alternative.

Hamidur Rahman, Block Supervisor of the Department of Agriculture Extension (AED), suggested her to produce organic compost fertiliser. She prepared several stakes of organic compost with hyacinth and cow dung.

After using a portion in her garden, she sold the rest to local farmers. Since then she is a

compost seller.

Shurjo Begum's husband was a hotel waiter at Mithapukur. She started growing vegetables in the backyard of her house at Islampur at the advice of Hamidur Rahman.

Now she owns a hotel at Damdama, run by her husband.

The then state minister for agriculture Mirza Fakrul Alamgir had visited their gardens and small farms in 2001 and praised their efforts.

He had asked local AED officials to help spread the ideas and activities of the two women in the area for poverty alleviation. A large number of women in the two villages now grow vegetables and raise poultry on backyards.

Mithapukur Upzila Agriculture Officer Mostafizur Rahman and Block Supervisor Hamidur Rahman have made their efforts successful.



Monwara Begum making compost fertiliser with water hyacinth at the backyard. She now saves Tk 2,000 a month after maintaining her family by selling the compost and vegetables.

AL man elected Manikganj Poursabha Chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Awami League leader Md Romjan Ali was unofficially declared elected chairman of Manikganj Poursabha in the by-election held on Monday.

He got 8836 votes against 5931 polled by his nearest rival Sudev Saha of the same party.

Four Party Alliance candidate Belayet Hossain Khan got 4731 votes. Belayet is president of Manikganj Poura BNP unit.

BNP leader Nasir Uddin Ahammed Jadu, who contested the polls defying a party decision, got 3471 votes.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Bari, who was the Returning Officer, declared the results in the evening at his conference room in presence of contestants and other officials. A total of 23,103 votes were cast.

In the last pourasabha polls held on January 26, 2002, Romjan Ali was defeated by Md Mosharaf Hossain Babul. The post of Poursabha Chairman fell vacant as Babul was removed following no-confidence by commissioners on September 3 last year.

Forgers take away Tk 46 lakh from Rupali Bank in Barisal One of a gang held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A member of an gang of cheats which siphoned over Tk 46 lakh from Rupali Bank's Swarupkati and Shikarpur branches in the last few days was caught at the bank's Banaripara branch on Sunday when he tried to defraud officials again.

Shahidul Islam alias Sohan, 26, was caught by bank officials when he tried to draw Tk 3.82 lakh by using a false 'credit advice'. The forgery was detected during cross-checking, according to bank officials and police.

During interrogation after arrest, Sohan admitted to police that he was a member of a gang and drew Tk 43.36 lakh from Rupali Bank's Swarupkati Branch and Tk three lakh from its Shikarpur branch by using false credit advice.

His associates escaped when the bank staff caught him.

Banaripara Rupali Bank Manager Moksed Ali lodged a case naming eight accused.

Sohan however named three of his associates during interrogation. They are Aminul Islam Swapan of Hizla, Ripon Talukder of Jhalakati and a guard of Rupali Bank.

Sohan said he worked in a construction firm in Babuganj.

Shahidul Huq, GM of Rupali Bank Barisal Region, when contacted admitted the forgery by a gang and said any bank employee was not involved in it.

Sohan was sent to jail. Police raided some spots in search of his associates, but failed to arrest any one.

'Ban smoking in public'

World No Tobacco Day observed at B'Baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The World No Tobacco Day this year at least created an awareness among people against drugs and smoking.

This view was expressed by many people this correspondent talked to. But most of them said smoking in public places should be banned to make some real success in the drive against this.

"This (banning smoking in public) will help reduce smoking", said rickshawpuller Ramjan Ali.

He was impressed seeing a big signboard erected at Brahmanbaria railway station on Monday in observance of the No Tobacco Day in the small town as elsewhere in the country.

"Smoking spreads among people when non-smokers, specially teenagers, see others smoking", said college student Sumon Akhter.

"Anti-smoking campaign creates awareness but I do not think

this can reduce smoking. What is the harm if smoking in public places is banned?" has said.

The small town witnessed a flurry of campaigns including holding of street corner rallies, discussion meetings, drama and erecting banners and signboards at public places and prime points on the occasion.

Officials, cultural activists and members of the civil society joined the programmes, organised by the Zila Dhumpan O Madak Birudi Sangathan" (district anti-drug and anti-smoking organisation).

In the morning, Police Superintendent ATM Tarek unveiled a big anti-smoking signboard at the railway station in presence of members of the anti-drug body and a big crowd.

The anti-drug body held a discussion meeting on the Brahmanbaria Poursava Market premises with its president Tanvir Bhuiyan in chair.

Speaking as chief guest there,

the SP said police have already launched a drive against drug trading in the district. He sought cooperation of all to check it.

The SP said that children of a non-smoker father can not be a smoker or a drug addict. He urged parents to give to smoking.

The meeting was addressed among other by Mawlan Sayedur Rahman, Additional SP Md Jahangir Hossain, ASP (circle) Abdul Mabud, Brahmanbaria sadar thana OC Md Ismail, freedom fighter Jamal Uddin, Md Hanife, Md Jasim Uddin Jamsed, Md Tajul Islam Babu, Minhajul Islam, Nuruzzaman Laskar, Sirajul Islam, Abdul Basir, journalist Riaz Uddin Zami, Md Shah Alam, Mustafa Jamil Molla, Sajrul Haque Sujan and Md Ifteker Uddin Swapan.

The Regional Youth Development Centre here held a discussion meeting on 'The role of youth in making a non-smoking and anti-drug society' with Md. Mahbubur Rahman in the chair.



Will the signboard dissuade people from smoking unless it is banned in public places? Brahmanbaria Police Superintendent ATM Tarek unveiled the signboard at the railway station on Monday marking the World No Tobacco Day.

Maize replacing paddy, wheat on field

Area shoots up to 1,675 hectares from 50 in 1997 in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Maize is replacing rice and wheat on croplands in Gaibandha

because it is more profitable for farmers.

Its cultivation increased from about 50 hectares in 1997 to 1,675

hectares this year. With a bumper production in the current season, the acreage may be doubles next year, agriculture officials say.

Favourable weather yielded 12,562 metric tons this year, more than double the target of 5,500 tons.

The average yield per acre was also good. It was around seven tons per hectare.

Maize cultivation is gaining popularity in the district mainly due to an assured market, the officials said. Moreover, it needs less irrigation and nursing.

Out of the seven upazilas, 975 hectares were brought under maize cultivation in Gobindaganj, 350 in Palashbari, 297 in Fulchari and 53 in other areas.

The production was 3,000 tons last year against a target of 3,800 tons.

This is also changing people's food habit. More and more people are taking maize instead of wheat now.

Abdur Rouf, Deputy Director of the Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said farmer can harvest 25 to 30 maunds of maize from his one bigha of land at a cost of around Tk 2,500 and earn Tk 7,000 easily. Paddy cultivation brings Tk 4,500 at a cost of Tk 3,000 and wheat around Tk 3,000.

Maize has an assured market as it is also used as a poultry feed and the leftover is uses as a fodder, Rouf said.



A view of a workshop organised to strengthen and ensure democracy at grassroots level by a development organisation, Gram Bikash Shohayak Shangstha, at Ganasadan auditorium in Munshiganj on Saturday.

200 illegal structures removed in Syedpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The Roads and Highways Department demolished about 200 illegal structures from both sides of Syedpur-Parbotipur road at Choumuhoni Bazar near Syedpur town on Monday

R&H sources said notices were given to the encroachers through the Nilphamari district administration earlier to remove their illegal installations. But they not pay heed to the notice.

Lawyers want UNO's transfer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Lawyers of Gobindaganj upazila court brought out a procession and held a rally on Monday at the upazila headquarters demanding transfer of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) for his alleged interference in the judiciary.

The rally was addressed by, among others, Alauddin Sarker, ABM Khairul Alam, Abu Musa and Abdur Razzak.

They also demanded shifting

Attack on Kolaroa AL: 13 BNP men sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A case was filed with a magistrate court here on Monday accusing BNP for ransacking houses and shops of Awami League men at Batra village and Batra Bazar.

Local Awami League leader Moshir Rahman filed the case with the court of Magistrate Shahabadt Hossain.

Moshir told this correspondent that the case was filed with the magistrate court as Kolaroa police declined to record the complaint.

The accused are Abdul Ahad,

Abdul Karim, Kamrul Islam, Arijul Islam, Rejaul Islam, Nazrul Islam, Azharul Islam, Liakat Hossain, Tutul, Abdus Samad, Mozaffar and Mainul Hasan of Batra village in Kolaroa upazila.

According to the case, a group of ruling party men allegedly led by Abdul Ahad and Arijul Islam attacked their shops at Batra Bazar on May 28 night. The attackers then swooped on residences of AL leaders at Batra village on the same night.

They damaged 14 shops and 13 houses and looted goods and valuables, it has been alleged in the case.

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