

SNAPS

Diarrhoea breaks out in Roangchhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Diarrhoea claimed five lives unofficially in the hilly areas of Roangchhari upazila in several days.

However, civil surgeon Dr Mahfuzur Rahman Talukdar denied the reports of death. He said four medical teams are working in Roangchhari. 'The death might have happened due to other reasons', he said.

Three children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaiandha

Three children drowned in two separate incidents in Sadar upazila here on Monday.

In the first incident, Jari Begum, 2, daughter of a day labourer, Akkas Ali and Anonda, 2, son of Madhu Mia were playing on the bank of a pond near to their houses at village Boali. While playing they fell down the pond and drowned. Their bodies were found floating in the pond.

In another incident, Habib, 2, son of Hafizur Rahman of village Narayanpur drowned after being slipped in a pond. At that time he was playing on its bank.

Faruque's release demanded

RU CORRESPONDENT

Seventy-five teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) including a former vice chancellor, journalists, cultural activists and civil society members in a joint statement on Saturday demanded immediate release of Proshika and ADAB chairperson Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed and withdrawal of false cases against him and other Proshika employees.

Among the signatories are former vice chancellor Prof Abdul Khaleque, Prof Sayedur Rahman Khan and former Islamic University vice chancellor Prof Qais Uddin, Rajshahi University Teachers' Association president Prof Khalequzzaman, Sammilito Sangskrit Jote president Abul Hossain and general secretary Dr Syed Shafiqul Alam, Rajshahi Union of Journalists president Mustafizur Rahman Khan, general secretary Jamilur Rahman, cultural personality Amaresh Roy Chowdhury and Shamsuzzaman.

Mock budget session aims at transparency in local govts

A different day for hundreds of people at remote Bhetkhalibazar village near Sundarbans in Satkhira

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

It was a day with a difference for the people of a remote village in Romjannagar union of Shyamnagar upazila.

Hundreds of enthusiastic people from all walks of life took part in a daylong mock budget session at Bhetkhalibazar village near the Sundarbans on Sunday.

The budget session unique of its kind was aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in local government bodies.

Local non-governmental organisation (NGO) Agragati Sangstha organised it in collaboration with Manusher Jonney, a major NGO working for people's welfare.

The entire session was presided over by Romjannagar Union Parishad chairman Sheikh Alamgir Haider. Lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam MP, was present as chief guest. Former Dhaka University teacher Professor Dr Badiul

Alam Majumdar (Ph D), ex-Principal of Satkhira Government College Principal Professor Asit Kumar Majumdar and director of a citizens' body, Nagarik Udjog, Zakir Hossain were present as special guests.

Abdus Sabur, director of a local NGO, Agragati Sangstha, also spoke.

The chief guest said the budget session would bring people and administration closer by ensuring transparency and accountability in local government institutions.

'This will go a long way in the establishment of good governance,' he said.

In his address Professor Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar said the large gathering proves that people are serious to ensure their rights. Union chairman's accountability to public is a precondition to strengthen local governments, he told the meeting.

Zakir Hossain told that peo-

ple's participation here proved that they would launch an agitation for greater allocation to local government bodies from the national budget. It is their demand because it will help local government bodies to undertake development projects independently, he opined.

Principal Asit Kumor Majumder said people will be aware about their rights by taking part in such budget session. Citizens will demand their budgetary allocation proportionately, he told the participants.

UP chairman Sheikh Alamgir Haider presented last year's budget at the session. He also submitted his plan for the coming year.

Earlier, Agragati Sangstha director Abdus Sabur, narrated various aspects of the project which was aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability of local government institutions.



A partial view of a mock budget session at Bhetkhalibazar, a remote village near the Sundarbans in Shyamnagar upazila, Satkhira. Local NGO Agragati Sangstha organised it in collaboration with Manusher Jonney, a major NGO, aiming at ensuring transparency and accountability in local government institutions.

Officials asked to make foodgrains procurement drive a success

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon on Sunday gave a directive to the district food department officials to launch a massive drive to make this year's IRRI-Boro procurement drive a complete success.

Milon who is also the Minister-in-Charge of Nilphamari district

was visiting the local LSD (local supply depot) godown on the Station Road to see for himself the progress of the drive. He was accompanied by prominent BNP leader and Prime Minister's nephew Engineer Shahrin Islam Tuhin, also the secretary general of the Engineers' Association of Bangladesh (EAB), the deputy commissioner (DC) of Nilphamari and other high district officials.

The state minister also directed the authorities concerned to purchase rice and paddy directly from the growers. He asked the food officials to ensure fair price of foodgrains so that farmers are not deprived like the previous years.

'By strengthening the farmers' backbone we can strengthen our national economy,' Milon said. He advised the food department officials to improve their standard of service.

EAB secretary general who is also the Nilphamari district unit president of ruling BNP in his address said that this year a bumper production of IRRI-Boro was achieved. For greater benefit of farmers he suggested enhancement of foodgrains procurement target in the district so that local farmers can get fair price of their produce.

The state minister assured that on his return to the capital he would discuss about the drive with the Food and Natural Disaster Management Minister.

The foodgrains procurement drive started in the district on May 26. Here the target of this year's rice procurement drive is 17,419 metric tons and that of paddy is 2,467 metric tons. The official price against per kilogram of rice is 13.25 taka and that of paddy per kilogram is 8.40 taka.

It was learnt from the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Nilphamari that IRRI-Boro production exceeded the target this year.

Sherpur BNP body approved after 8 months of election

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Sherpur

NETRAKONA: A 101-member committee of Sherpur district BNP was approved by the party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, also the Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives on Saturday.

However, the conference was held on October 2 last year.

The office-bearers are: President-Advocate Shaiful Islam Kalam, Senior Vice President-Firozuddin, vice-presidents-Advocate Sirajul Islam, Md Fazlul Haque Lavlu, Advocate Abdur Roiuf Mia, Abdul Khalek, Md Raja Mia, Abdus Salam, Mosharaf Hossein and Nurul Amin, General Secretary-Md Mahmudul Haque Rubel MP, jointsecretaries-Fazlul Haque Lutu, Md Abdul Awal Choudhury, Lutfur Rahman Manik and Abdul Motalab. Organising Secretary-Md Hatam Ali, assistant organising secretaries-Md Abdul Hannan and Md Fazlur Rahman, Office Secretary Shafiul Alam, Chand, Assistant Office Secretary Abdul Hamid, Publicity Secretary-Samiul Islam Atahar, Assistant Publicity Secretary-Hasan Ripon and Treasurer-Md. Amir Hossain.

River erosion wreaks havoc in Netrakona

300 families in 3 upazilas become homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

River erosion wreaked havoc on three upazilas in the district in recent days.

About 300 families became homeless and 700 acres of land were washed away by the rivers Sumeshwary, Kongscha and Mogra in Durgapur, Barhatta and Atpara upazilas.

A vast tract of land in Sunajur, Najirganj bazaar, Gonjar bazaar, Modhukhali, Norbatkhila and Deoshree of Atpara upazila and Khamarkhali bazaar, Shibganj bazaar, Dakumara in Durgapur upazila went into the gorge of

rivers.

Local people dumped sand-bags, bamboo and timber to protect the area from erosion. But all of their attempts went in vain due to strong current of rivers.

Sadhon Sarker, 45, of village Dakumara in Durgapur upazila told this correspondent the Sumeshwary devoured his house and cropland turning him a beggar. Homeless Sadhon has migrated to the neighbouring Ranikong village.

Erosion made a well-off farmer, Iman Ali, 42, of village Fakirer bazaar in Barhatta



Villagers dismantling a house at Shibganj bazaar in Durgapur upazila, Netrakona where river erosion has taken an alarming turn in recent days.

Woes of a village policeman

Abdur Rashid Bakshi, a Gram Police (village policeman) of Alinagar union in Bhola faces a hard time.

Economic hardship has turned him apathetic. He is even unable to treat his ailing wife due to abject poverty.


In 1980, life became miserable due to continued unemployment. In desperation, he prayed for a job to the then newly elected chairman of Alinagar union. The chairman tried to mitigate his sufferings by employing him as a Gram Police in his union. But to utter dismay his condition improved little.

As a Gram Police he is supposed to receive 700 taka per month. But actually he receives only 350 taka, half the amount from the Upazila Parishad. The Union Parishad has been depriving him of the rest 350 taka for years together. This is the reason of his misery.

A Gram Police like him has to maintain family with a meager amount. 'UP chairmen and members get elected spending lots of money,' Rashid says. But they give him a lame excuse of fund shortage in the UP. 'The entire amount was spent in various development activities. Under the circumstance, how shall I pay you the amount,' the chairman asks him.

Despite all odds, 65-year-old Rashid has to do a lot of works as a Gram Police. According to job

description he has to maintain the law and order in his area, protect fellow villagers from the clutch of criminals, inform the thana authorities timely about incidents of murder, rape, robbery and dacoity. He also helps police nab criminals, escorts criminals to



Abdur Rashid Bakshi

courts. It is his duty to submit the weekly report of his area to the Sadar thana every Monday.

He even spends money from his pocket for the same purpose. If his pocket is empty he has to walk down all the way to the Sadar thana.

Moreover, he maintains the birth and death register, keeps the list of blinds, beggars and distressed people. He is responsible

for sending chairman's notice and members' mails to the addressees. But nobody inquires about his welfare.

Eid usually brings joy for all. During the Eid season government employees get festival bonus, but a Gram Police does not get even his remuneration.

While narrating misery tears rolled down the cheeks of Abdur Rashid. 'Eid comes for chairman and members, not for us', he lamented.

Rashid Chowkider also faces physical torture while arresting any influential in the area as per chairman's order. As he did not attend any training course, he is not skilled enough to protect himself from criminals' attack. Sometimes they overpower him and escape safely.

As the Union Parishad do not supply him umbrella, raincoat or torchlight, he suffers a lot.

Rashid is not at all aware about the well-being of 42,000 gram policemen scattered all over the country. But he has many demands before the government. His first demand is regular payment at a time, not bit by bit. He says beggars live by begging, but he has to wait for a long time for his dues although he works the whole day.

Rashid burst into tears while narrating his woes, but who cares?

--Mass-line Feature.

2 'outlaws' remanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Two alleged activists of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML-Red flag) who were arrested at Syedpur on Friday night were remanded for five days for interrogation on Sunday.

Quoting Naogaon police, a police source in Syedpur informed local newsmen that the arrested appeared before a court in Naogaon on Sunday. Police appealed to court for seven days' remand for massive interrogation to the accused of sensational

Naidhighi Six Murder Case. But the court granted remand for five days.

The arrested included the Second-in-Command of 'KA' area of Purbo Banglar Communist Party, Rabiul Alam Tarek, 32, of Panchu-pur village in Atrai upazila of Naogaon district. 'KA' area of PBCP consists of Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore and Chapainawabganj. The other arrested is Rezaul Karim Sukur, 32, of village Amirpur in Raninagar upazila of Naogaon district. Both of them were arrested at Syedpur railway station on Friday night.