

SNAPS

CID Inspector stand-released

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira  
A CID (criminal investigation department) inspector was stand released here on Monday on charge of corruption and helping women traffickers. CID inspector Abdul Mannan was transferred to Rajshahi Range while inspector Durga Pada Das of Rajshahi Range took over the charge here on the same day.

Villagers damage eyes of 3 'thieves'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna  
Angry people caught three alleged thieves and damaged their eyes at Terokheda upazila Sadar in Khulna district Monday night. Police said the alleged thieves were fleeing after stealing a motorcycle of shrimp trader Sajjadur Latif alias Bhola. Villagers caught them at Rathkhida after a chase, beat them and damaged their eyes with pointed branches of trees before handing them over to police. The injured thieves are now undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital. They are Shah Alam, 38, of Poipara, Abu Bakar, 44, of Shaikhpara and Shohag Bisua, 30, of Banargati under Sonadanga thana of Khulna city. Sajjadur Latif has lodged an FIR with Tero Kheda thana.

One killed by wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna  
A husband was killed allegedly by his wife at Bagare village in Rupsha upazila Monday night. Police said Ajmira Begum, 26, strangled her husband Faruk Shaikh, 30, for allegedly protesting her illicit relation with another man. Ajmir, and employee of a frozen food company has been arrested, police said.

Barisal AL leader arrested on murder charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

An Awami League (AL) leader of Barisal district was arrested by CID police on Sunday on charge of killing an accounts officer of the municipality.

Arrested chairman Mahbub Alam, 50, is also the out-going chairman of Bakerganj municipality and a renowned businessman.

The victim, Manjurul Huq Manju was killed at his house in Bakerganj municipal area on August 12, 2002.

His wife Piara Manju lodged a murder case with Bakerganj police station without mentioning name of accused. The murder case was transferred to CID for investigation in December, 2003. Ten persons were arrested. Police demanded five days' remand while the accused prayed bail to the court. But the magistrate refused both the parties and ordered to send Mahbub to jail and fixed June 13 as next date of hearing.

CID inspector Bazlul Huq who is also the investigation officer of the case claimed that police have enough evidences about the ex-chairman's involvement in the murder.

Mahbub's family sources claimed that he had become a victim of political revenge. Dr Mokhlesur Rahman and Abul Hasant Abdullah, president and secretary of Barisal district Awami League condemned the arrest and demanded his immediate release.

Shrine blast victim's family members quizzed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Family members of a victim of Sylhet shrine blast was quizzed for five hours on Monday.

The officials of a special cell comprising DCFI, NSI, CID and RAB personnel are investigating the grenade blast occurred on May 21.

Jobayer Ahmed Rubel, a masters class student of MC College here is one of three victims killed in the blast.

The officials quizzed Rubel's father Lilfar Miah, 60, who returned home after a day of the blast from Saudi Arabia after being informed about his son's death. They also quizzed Rubel's mother, younger brother Shoaibul Islam, a student of Dargah Madrassah and their neighbours Mamun and Polish.

Lilfar Miah at a press conference on 29 May called upon the authorities concerned to unearth the mystery of the blast. The special cell officials were inquiring about Rubel's political link and the financial condition of their family. In reply, Lilfar told that he had been to Saudi Arabia for 18 years just for the cause of his children, who had been living at a rented house in Dargah Mohalla area, attached to the shrine of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA).

An effort needs govt backup

Country's lone Filaria hospital in Syedpur treats 3000 patients a year, needs expansion: Staff paid from doles

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Sixty-five year-old Jamaluddin of Ranachandi village in Kishoregang upazila was almost disabled because of Filaria in his right leg. He got a new life after about six months' treatment at the Filaria Hospital at Dholagachh on the outskirts of Syedpur town.

Farmer Jamaluddin now leads a normal life after about two years' treatment. He came to the hospital on Tuesday for routine checkup.

Rafiqul of Rangpur, Aleya Begum of Ranir Bandar in Dinajpur and Alamin of Ghoraghat in Dinajpur were among many at the hospital who also came for checkup.

They were all praise for the hospital as it gave them "new life".

Eight to ten patients from different areas of the country stay at the hospital for "intensive treatment".

Filaria is a common disease in northern districts. Unofficial survey done by NGOs says around one per cent of the country's population is affected with the disease, spread by mosquito. The percentage is many times more in Nilphamari. A Filaria attacked person is a burden to the family and the society. The affected part of the body swells unusually and the person becomes disabled. Usually legs, hands, scrotum of male, breast and ovary are attacked.

If not cured, it may lead to

death.

The lone Filaria hospital in the country that treats about 3000 patients annually from the dangerous disease has drawn the attention of many home and abroad, but not of the government.

The doctors, nurses and others at the hospital raise hopes in many. But they are in despair.

They do not know whether they will get their salary after the current month.

The hospital in the outcome of a laudable initiative by an NGO-- Institute of Allergy and Clinical Immunology of Bangladesh (IACIB).

The government has a Filaria Eradication Programme, but that is limited to supplying DEC (Diethyl carbamazine) and Albendazole tablets, which is a preventive measure.

Initially, IACIB had launched the hospital at in a rented house at New Babupara at Syedpur town in 1995 with two doctors and two nurses.

Being impressed, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) came forward with assistance. The hospital was shifted to its present two storied building at Dholagong in 2002.

The eight-bed hospital with modern treatment facilities has four doctors, four nurses and five staff now. Patients now come from different areas of the country.

A Netherlands-based donor organisation SIMABI supplied equipment and is also providing salary to the staff.

Talking to this correspondent, the hospital's Co-ordinator Ismail Jabiullah said a serious patient may take six months to three years for full recovery. Operation is done only in critical cases.

He said the hospital also trains nurses of government hospital and takes part in government's Filaria Eradication Programme.

"We supply to people DEC (diethyl carbamazine) and Albendazole tablets under the government's Mass Drug Administration (MDA)".

When contacted over phone in Dhaka, government's Filaria Eradication Programme Manager Dr Moazzem Hossen said the Syedpur Filaria hospital is doing a "commendable job".

Besides treating patients, it is supporting government's Filaria programme, he said.

Newly elected chairman of Syedpur municipality Akhtar Hossen Badal said the hospital is doing a remarkable job in treating Filaria patients coming from different areas of the country. "We are proud of having such a hospital here."

But a worried Jabiullah told a sad story. SIMABI provides salary to the hospital staff under a grant agreement, which will expire this

month. If the agreement is not renewed, they will not get salary from next month, he said.

The rush of patients is increasing. The hospital should be expanded to a 50-bed one and treatment facilities improved further. There is no staff quarter, no boundary wall. All these need finance.

"The government so far gave only Tk20,000", he said.

Health and Family Planning Secretary ASM Sarwar Kamal visited the hospital on March 11 this year and assured all possible help.

JICA Country Director Takasi Shakamoto also visited the hospital on May 22 and assured of all possible help, Jabiullah said.

Canadian High Commissioner David Preston, Turi Koeami of HRDRH of Japanese, Dr Goutom Biswas of WHO (Geneva), Dr EA Padwasini of WHO (South East Asia) visited the hospital and expressed their satisfaction.

Nilphamari Civil Surgeon Nazrul Islam said two nurses from each upazila health complex are being trained on Filaria treatment at the hospital. "We are also sending doctors to the hospital on deputation."

He expressed optimism that the hospital would be further modernised.



A partial view of the Filaria Hospital at Dholagachh in Syedpur, Nilphamari, left, and two filaria patients.

PHOTO: STAR

No party can ignore Islamic forces, says Amini

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Islami Okya Jote Chairman Fazlul Haque Amini MP has said any party willing to come to the power or stay in power will have to take the help of Islamic forces.

It is not possible to do politics now ignoring Islamic forces, he said addressing a biennial conference Netrakona Islami Ain Bastobayan Committee (committee to implement Islamic law), held at an auditorium in the town Tuesday evening.

Crimes including violence and corruption will be eliminated if

Islamic law is introduced, he said.

"Criminals arrested in the morning are freed in the evening now. This will stop if Islamic law is introduced".

He called upon party workers to unite to establish a society based on the Quran and Sunnah.

"There will be no force to resist us if we unite", he told the conference.

Presided over by Maulana Ahamed Hossen, Convenor of Netrakona unit of the party, it was addressed by, among others, Maulana Abdul Kaitum, Maulana Junaed Al-Hadi, Abdul Bari.

PBCP splits again?

Rival factions 'expel' opponents, give death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The M-L faction and the Janajuddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) are facing split.

Self-styled 'central secretary' of PBCP Dr Mofakkar Chowdhury has sent a fax message to local newspapers stating that two armed cadres of his party -- Mintu alias Khokon and Hafiz alias Akash -- have been expelled for helping police arrest Abdur Rashid Shaikh alias Tapu of Rupsha upazila and Swapan of Fakirhat upazila.

Both Tapu and Swapan were killed by police after arrest, Mofakkar said, branding the expelled cadres as "traitors".

"My party (PBCP M-L) has decided to physically liquidate Mintu and Akash by June 30", Dr Mofakkar said in the message sent on June 6.

On the other hand, another fax message sent to local newspapers Monday night with signatures of Mintu and Akash said Dr Mofakkar Chowdhury and Harun have been expelled from the party.

Mintu and Akash mentioned in their fax message that Dr Mofakkar and Harun alias Jewell will be physically liquidated by first week of next month (July) for embezzling party fund, buying palatial building in Dhaka in false name and running transport business and poultry farms in the south western region of the country.

Similar allegations are being made against some top leaders of Janajuddho faction of PBCP. They

are being accused of helping police nab Amit Hasan.

Meanwhile, both outlawed factions have expressed their firm determination to "continue armed attacks on joint forces for killing at least 51 of their armed cadres and top leaders in last five months in the S-W region".

New body of handloom board officers' assoc

STAR NATIONAL DESK

S M Ehsanul Huq and AKM Abdur Rashid have been elected president and general secretary respectively of Bangladesh Handloom Board Officers Association for a two-year term (2004-2006).

Others office bearers are Hafiz uddin (Senior Vice-president), Md Abul Khair (Vice-President), AM Mojharul Islam (Finance Secretary), Md Badruzzaman (Office Secretary), Md Matior Rahman (Welfare Secretary), Daulatuzzaman Khan (Cultural and Sports Secretary) and Tapan Kumar Dhar (Organising and Publicity Secretary).

The elected Executive Committee member are Dr MA Azim Jahangir, S Mostafa Kamal, Md Shafi Uddin Siddique, Shamsul Alam, AKM Shaha Alam, Dipon Kanti Das and Rafiqun Nabi, according to a press release. The election was held recently.

BURIMARI LAND PORT

Labour unions mull tougher programme for wage hike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

About 600 workers at Burimari land port are continuing agitation to realise their demands including enhancement of wages.

Twelve labour groups at the port have formed an organisation styled Burimari Land Port Workers Oikkyo Parishad to press their demands.

They have been holding processions and meetings almost every day, demanding fair wages from clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents.

They have also urged the government department concerned to take steps to "compel" C&F agents to pay them Tk 40 per ton for loading and unloading against Tk 20 per ton fixed in 1995. The C&F agents are also deceiving them in many ways, some leaders of the Oikkyo

Parishad told this correspondent during a visit to the port on Tuesday. The present rate is too inadequate as cost of living has increased many times.

Actually C&F agents pay them Tk 10-15 per ton though they (C&F agents) realise Tk 20 from importers, they alleged.

Only a few of the 96 C&F agents at the land port pay them at the fixed rate, they said.

Repeated complaints to the authorities did not yield any result, they said. Whenever they complained, the C&F agents divided them through various tactics and foiled their movement, they alleged.

They will announce tougher programmes if their wages are not enhanced, they said.

7 get life in Babuganj triple murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Seven alleged dacoits were given life term yesterday for murdering three of their gang members in Babuganj in the district in 2002.

Abdul Motin Mia, Judge of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, delivered the verdict. Nine others accused in the case were acquitted.

The seven Abed Ali, Ali Akbar, Kawl Howlader, Delwar Hossain, Shajahan Khan (absoconding), Swarup Ali and Pintu (absoconding), Shajahan Khan and Pintu are absoconding.

Those killed were Sohrab, 35, Salam, 42 and Abdul Khalek, 45.

According to the prosecution story, the three were murdered and their heads separated following a conflict at a preparatory meeting of the dacoits, held at North Bherudia on the night of June 6, 2002. The beheaded bodies were later recovered by police.

Babuganj police filed a case. After investigation, police Inspector Sulal Chandra Pal submitted charge sheet against 16 persons on December 1, 2002.

All gang members were from Bakerganj upazila in the district. Twenty witnesses were examined during the trial.

3 'outlaws' killed in factional clashes in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Three persons including a Union Parishad (UP) chairman were killed in factional clashes among outlaws within a span of 10 days in the district.

Two factions led by Kamrul and Zia were engaged in frequent clashes to establish their dominance in the areas.

On June 4, Khokon Sarder, 26, a regional 'Sarbahara' leader of Zia group who was also a Jubo Dal leader of Batajore union in Gouranadi upazila and a listed criminal was shot dead by rivals.

The most sensational killing occurred in the early hours of May 22. Aboni Bhushan Baroi, 45, a popular UP chairman of Jalla union in Uzirpur upazila, also a prominent leader of outlaw Zia group was y chopped and shot dead by Kamrul group's gunmen.

On May 26, Sultan, 26, a carpenter and a member of Kamrul group was killed by the cadres of Zia group in Agarpur area of Babuganj upazila after being abducted from Sarikal in Guranadi.

Police camp closed in Bhola

Pressure from local ruling party men alleged: Ilisha people feel insecure

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Ilisha police camp in Bhola Sadar upazila was closed abruptly on Tuesday and all policemen withdrawn, ignoring local people's demand for an outpost there.

Local people and police sources in Bhola said the camp was withdrawn following pressure from some local ruling party men.

It was withdrawn on orders from higher authorities, police sources in Bhola said when contacted over telephone yesterday.

The camp was set up in November last year by the then Bhola Police Superintendent Mallick Eakhrul Islam after two murders in the area over paddy harvest.

Killings during harvest due to onslaught by hired armed men and toll collection by mastans was a regular phenomenon in the area.

The law and order had improved significantly and there was no serious crime since setting up of the camp, the police sources and local peoples said.

Bhola police Superintendent

Motiuur Rahman when contacted over phone however said, "It is a temporary withdrawal considering safety of policemen and their arms". It will be re-established after the ongoing construction of the police investigation centre is complete, he said.

The camp was manned by one Sub-inspector, one Assistant Sub-inspector and 18 constables.

It was set up at the under-construction building that houses the police investigation centre.

Akabbur Howlader a local man in Ilisha said, "This (withdrawal of policemen's security) is not correct".

"When the camp was established, policemen first stayed in an old school building which had no door and window." After 6-7 months, they were shifted to the building (housing the police investigation centre). The building is safe and secure".

The police sources admitted that a vested quarter in the area did not want the police camp there.

One source said, "All of them are leaders and workers of the ruling

party. They had tried to stop setting up of the camp but did not succeed. After 2-3 months, they requested the then SP Mallick Fakrul Islam for withdrawal of the camp. But Mallick did not agree.

"After the new SP (Motiuur Rahman) took over, they tried again but failed.

"On June 6, Range DIG of Barisal Golam Mostofa came to Bhola.

The vested quarter complained to him that the policemen of Ilisha camp were corrupt and took bribe from local people and request him to close it immediately.

"The DIG ordered the SP to close the camp", the police source claimed.

Local people alleged that after setting up of the camp, the influential group could not do their illegal activities in the area. Their toll collection and land grabbing had stopped for one year.

Their mastans will now return to the area and toll collection, harvest of paddy by force and other crimes will resume, they said.

More farm subsidy demanded

Speakers at pre-budget workshop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at an advocacy meeting held at Satkhira Sadar upazila auditorium on Monday stressed on sanction of more farm subsidies in agriculture sector to face the challenge of rich nations.

The pre-budget meeting titled 'Agricultural Agreement in World Trade Organisation and Agriculture in Bangladesh, Perspective South Bengal' was jointly organised by an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), Incidin Bangladesh chapter in collaboration with a local NGO, Swadesh.

They called upon the government to take up eco-friendly projects for sustainable development in the southern region.

Advocacy chief of Incidin

Bangladesh, Nasimul Ahsan who presented the key note paper told that developed countries assured the developing countries to reduce farm subsidies gradually, but they betrayed the developing countries increasing farm subsidies.

He called upon the government to purchase agri-products from farmers directly by opening purchasing centres to ensure fair price of their produces. This is because the farmers are deprived of fair price during harvesting period every year. He emphasised on formulation of an integrated plan for development of livestock and forest.

"For development of growing shrimp cultivation and its processing in the southern region, the government should take appropriate measures to protect shrimp cultivation, Nasimul Ahsan said.

AKM Ali Azam, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer in his inaugural speech stressed the need for a planned way of shrimp cultivation to protect environment. He urged all to plant trees on embankments in shrimp cultivating areas.

Other speakers suggested for subsidy in shrimp sector. They urged the government to halt pollution of environment due to unplanned shrimp cultivation in the region.

Shrimp cultivator Abdul Gani, trade union leader Sheikh Azhar Hossain, The Daily Star journalist Prof Abu Ahmed, Prof Shamima Nargis, Rifat Amin, Alhaj Din Ali, and Shudhansu Shekhar Sarkar were the discussants while Swadesh executive director Madhab Chandra Dutta moderated the working session.

Rift in Satkhira BNP widens

A faction terms selection of new body "undemocratic"

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Internal conflict in Satkhira district BNP has taken a new turn after announcement of its new committee by the central leadership.

The new committee announced on Monday was formed through selection after dissolution of an elected committee, party sources said.

This has widened the gap between the two groups led by lawmaker Habibur Islam Habib and former general secretary of Satkhira BNP advocate Syed Iftekhar Ali.

The group led by Syed Iftekhar is opposed to the new committee, welcomed by the Habib faction.

Moreover, discontent is brewing among dedicated leaders and workers over composition of the new committee, allegedly selected without consulting them, the sources claimed.

Habibur Islam Habib, Abdul Jalil and Rahmatullah Polish have been made president, senior vice-president and general secretary respectively of the new committee.

In the last council of Satkhira district BNP held in 1997, a 101-member committee was elected with advocate Monsur Ali and advocate Syed Iftekhar Ali as president and general secretary respectively. After the death of Monsur Ali, senior vice-president Abdul Jalil was made acting president of the

district unit.

Leaders and activists belonging to Habib faction distributed sweets to welcome the new body shortly after the announcement in the town.

On the other hand, supporters of Syed Iftekhar criticised the new committee as "undemocratic".

Kaliganj thana BNP brought out a procession led by its president Prof Khoda Baksa welcoming the new district committee. Assasin thana Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal also brought out a procession hailing the new body.

Sadar thana BNP President Abdul Alim and General Secretary Shahidul Islam, district Jatiyatadabi Jubo Dal President Abul Hasan Hadi and General Secretary Maroof Khan Mithu, Kaligonj Press Club President Prof Tamizuddin and General Secretary Saiful Karim in separate statements welcomed the new committee.

But a prominent leader while talking to this correspondent seeking anonymity termed it "undemocratic" and called for formation of a new one through a council. He also sought party BNP chief's intervention in this regard.

Party insiders told this correspondent that the strife among district leaders has frustrated grassroots level workers and supporters that will weaken the party.

Rally of landless in Pabna today

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A mass rally of landless people will be held today at Ghughudaha in Khetupara union of Santhia upazila, Pabna.

The rally is being held on the concluding day of the eight-day programme marking the Land Rights Day.

The Land Rights Day National Observation Committee chalked out the countrywide programme which began on June 3 in Dhaka with a working lunch for the journalists of national and local newspapers. Other programmes included press briefing in Dhaka on June 4, press briefing in different districts on June 5, mass rally and submission of memoranda to deputy commissioners (DCs) of different districts and upazila nirbahi officers (NIOs) of various upazilas on June 6, seminar on Land Rights Day in districts on June 7, gathering of landless in Rajbari on June 8, national seminar on Land Rights Day in Dhaka on June 9 and today's concluding programme of mass gathering of landless people in Ghughudaha, Pabna.

The Land Rights Day is being observed by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations including peasant and landless organisations in memory of the long struggle of landless people to establish their rights on government khas lands.



Nepalese Ambassador in Bangladesh Bhagirath Basnet addressing a view exchange meeting with leaders of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Sylhet on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR