

SNAPS

**Poor govt sanction
embarrasses DAE****OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur**

A meagre amount of money sanctioned by the government for distribution among the flood-affected farmers in five upzilas has embarrassed the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) here.

The government sanctioned Tk 57,630 only to disburse among 55,000 flood-affected farmers of Kaunia, Pirganj, Gangachhara, Pirgachha and Taraganj upzilas, according to the DAE.

A DAE official on condition of anonymity said, "We have decided not to disburse the amount to get rid of farmers' wrath".

4 'hijackers' held**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari**

With the help of local people police arrested four persons after foiling a bid to hijack an auto-van on Nilphamari bypass road at Telipara in Itakhola union of Sadar upazila on Saturday night.

The arrested persons are Azizul, 18, Hamidul, 18, Nahid, 19, and Faridul, 20. The driver of the auto-van, Hasan sustained serious injuries after being hit by the hijackers with sharp weapons. He is undergoing treatment at Nilphamari Sadar 50-bed Hospital.

A case was filed with the Sadar thana.

BOMB BLASTS**Sylhet AL, BCL
demand release of
party men****STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet**

Sylhet district and city units of Awami League held a rally at the Court Point here on Tuesday demanding release of arrested party leaders including SM Nunu Miah, in connection with the blasts including that of August 7.

District AL president ANM Shafique chaired it while Mayor and City AL chief Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, district AL General Secretary Iftekhar Hossain Shamim and city AL General Secretary Advocate Misbahuddin Siraj also spoke.

The Mayor said, the government was not sincere in probing the blasts, this is why investigation of none of the blasts had yet been completed. "We want fair probe", he said.

Chhatra League also brought out a procession and held a rally in the city on the same day to press release of its leaders and activists held in connection with the shrine blast that left the British High Commissioner along with others injured and three killed.

**Ruling party men
drive out lessee****OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari**

A legal leaseholder of a ghat (terminal) of the Charalkata river in Sadar upazila has been driven out allegedly by the ruling party activists.

The victim is Ansar Ali, the authorised leaseholder of Beradanga ghat. On Sunday, he complained to newsmen here he was forced to leave the job when a group of people led by BNP leader Anarul threatened him. Now people are compelled to cross the river by his boat on payment of fare.

Ansar Ali told local journalists further that he had already informed the matter to Nilphamari police and Zila Parishad officials, but to no effect.

Nilphamari Zila Parishad called an auction bid for leasing the ghat during the current fiscal year. Ansar Ali became the winner and legally started working in the ghat. But the aforesaid group created obstacles from the very beginning of his work.

When local newsmen brought the matter to notice of the authorities concerned, they replied they are helpless because what they said due to involvement of district BNP leaders.

**2 BRDB men sued
for corruption
in Patuakhali****OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali**

Two field organisers of Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) have been facing corruption charges.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption has filed two separate cases against them on charge of misappropriating the board money.

One of them one is a woman field organiser of Patuakhali Sadar who distributed Tk 17 lakh short term loan among 14 groups. She recovered Tk 3,24,001 from them. Of the amount she misappropriated Tk 2,22,761 by depositing Tk 1,01,240 in bank.

Another field organiser of Bauphal Sheikh Moniruzzaman distributed Tk 17,74,000 as short term loan among 10 groups and recovered Tk 7,60,343. He deposited Tk 5,73,091 in the bank and misappropriated the rest amount of Tk 1,87,252.

Assistant Inspector of the bureau Khalilur Rahman filed separate cases against them after an investigation on July 29.

Gas supply to Rajshahi by 2006, says GTCL

WGTC negates possibility: People firm on demand for gas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Natural gas will be supplied to Rajshahi city by 2006 and work for laying pipeline under Rajshahi Gas Supply Project will start early next year.

This was announced by senior officials of Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL), an organisation of the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry at a press conference held at the Nagar Bhaban Tuesday evening.

The announcement followed months of agitation in Rajshahi city by different organisations including political parties and citizens' bodies.

GTCL Director (Planning) Khondokar Abdus Salekh, General Manager Rois Siddiki and Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP spoke at the press conference.

"Primary work on the project has already started as funds have been allocated for survey and preparing design, which will be completed within one month", the GTCL Director said.

Work on laying the main 90 km gas transmission pipeline from Nalka in Sirajganj to Bonpara in Natore will begin next year. Another 60 km pipeline will be constructed from Natore to Rajshahi, the officials said.

Three 'base stations' will be built between Natore and Rajshahi this year. Land acquisition has been ordered, they said.

Gas supply to Rajshahi, a long standing demand of the people here, will boost industrialisation of the entire Rajshahi region.

Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP said a 30-megawatt gas-based power station would be built in the city.

"The power plant project was approved by the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) on August 15", he said. Many big companies including TATA of India may invest in the region, if gas is supplied and the power plant built, he added.

GTCL Deputy General Manager Anwar Hossain, Eco-Survey Limited official Shamsul Alam, Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Chief Executive Officer Shirajul Islam and its Chief Engineer Sarit Dutt Gupta were also present at the press conference.

Of late, Rajshahi city virtually turned into a city of agitation in demand for pipeline gas supply.

Demonstrations are being held almost every day. People of all classes irrespective of political affiliations are

taking part in those with a common demand-- immediate pipeline gas supply.

Confusion was prevailing among people because of conflicting government statements on the issue.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Mosharraf Hossain told BBC on July 28 that the government had taken up a Tk 220 crore project for gas supply to Rajshahi.

The costly project involving foreign exchange was pending with the ECNEC and it would take two years or more to begin the work, he had said.

Hossain emphasised gas supply through cylinders instead of pipeline and said pipeline gas supply to households needed reconsideration because it involves huge expenditure.

The State Minister's statement angered the people.

To quell agitation, a government agency last week said that the Tk 650 crore Rajshahi Gas Supply Project was included in the 2004-5 Annual Development Plan.

It said the project would begin at the beginning of fiscal 2005-06 with funds from ADB and internal resources.

The agency explained that a 30-inch transmission pipeline would be laid

from Nalka to Bonpara at a cost of Tk 425 crore and another 20-inch pipeline from Natore to Rajshahi at a cost of Tk 220 crore.

But a top administrative official in Rajshahi told The Daily Star that there was not any possibility of gas supply to Rajshahi by 2006.

"Plan for gas supply to Rajshahi was not submitted this year though it is among 14 priority projects of the Prime Minister for Rajshahi".

Sources in the Western Gas Transmission Company preferring anonymity said it is not possible to take up any new gas supply project as two major projects are being implemented in Pabna and Bogra.

Talking to this correspondent earlier, Mahtab Uddin, conveyer of Rajshahi Gas Andolon Parishad, a citizens' forum aligned with ruling BNP, said, "We want to know government's position on our demand immediately so that we can take our next course."

Zamat Khan, Conveyer of another citizens' body Rajshahi Raksha Sangram Parishad had said, "We will continue our movement till our demand is met".

BARISAL ATTACK ON ETV FANS, JOURNOS

10 get 'permanent bail'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Ten media men, political and cultural activists, accused in two cases in connection with an attack on a gathering of ETV fans in Barisal in 2002, were granted permanent bail by a court here on

Tuesday.

They are Z I Mamun, Kawsar Mahmud, Shamsuddin Haider Dalim and Badal Mustafiz--all former employees of ETV (Ekushey Television) now working with satellite channel ATN Bangla and ntv--; Shawkat Milton,

Senior Staff Reporter of daily Jugantar; Barisal Awami League leaders Golam Masud Bablu and Munir Hossain; Syed Dulal, editor of local daily Ajker Paribarton; Shamim Ahmed, Barisal Correspondent of UNB news agency and daily Khabor Patro and cultural

activist Mintu Basu.

They were sued under the Explosives Act.

They appeared before the court of Barisal Sadar Upazila Magistrate and sought permanent bail in two cases filed against them.

Magistrate Md. Ibrahim granted them permanent bail and also allowed five of them to appear in court through their advocates.

The court fixed September 9 for next hearing of the cases.

The two cases were filed by local BNP leader advocate Anwar Hossain Bhulu and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Shakhawt Hossain Rumman after a gathering of media men, cultural activists and members of local elite in front of Aswani Kumar Hall organised under the banner of 'Amra Ekushey Television Dekhte Chai' (we want to see Ekushey Television) was attacked allegedly by some JCD activists on September 2, 2002.

Over 20 persons including journalist Shawkat Milton, Belayet Hossain Bablu, Shamim Ahmed, Mintu Basu, Akter Faruk Shahin were injured in the attack.

The 10 accused were granted interim bail from the High Court on September 10, 2002. The HC also ordered them to seek permanent bail from a lower court.



The 10 newsmen, cultural activists and political leaders leaving court premises after bail on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt using JMJB to suppress left forces: Menon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Culprits involved in bomb explosions in Sylhet and other places can not be nabbed as ruling party men are sheltering them, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon has said.

The law and order is not improving as Four-Party Alliance is patronising terrorists and fundamentalists, he said while addressing a rally at Uzirpur Bandar Bazar, organised by his party in observance of 'anti-terrorist day' on August 17. Menon was seriously injured in an attack by terrorists in Barisal on August 17, 1991.

Menon alleged that fundamentalists are creating chaos in the country. They and the cadres of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) led by 'Bangla Bhai' are patronised by the government to

suppress 'left progressive forces', he said.

"Those who tried to kill me on August 17 thirteen years ago have not yet been nabbed. Moreover, Comrade Babu Lal Shil, Dr. Hiralal Shil and some other left politicians have been murdered in the last few months", Menon said.

The Workers Party president alleged that the government has not only failed in flood disaster management but is also using the calamity to serve vested interests.

Corruption and nepotism are going on in the same of relief and rehabilitation of the flood affected people, he alleged.

He demanded interest-free loans and free seeds and fertilizers for flood affected people including betel leaf planters, weavers and fish farmers and suspension of loan realisation.

He said the government assurance of free distribution of 5 kg Aman seeds and 25 kg fertiliser to each affected farmer is a hoax. These are yet to reach most of the farmers, he claimed.

Menon also demanded immediate steps to control erosion by Sandhaya, Sugandhya and Arial Kha rivers of the region.

The meeting was preside over by WP leaders Ishaq Sharif and addressed by Abdus Sattar, Nazrul Huq Nilu, Bazlur Rahman, Bishwajit Baroi, Chhatra Moitri President Rafiqul Islam Sujon, Union Parishad Chairman Abul Kalam Azad Badal, Tipu Sultan, Zakir Hossain Farahin, Farid Hossain, Shamim, HM Harun and Anwar Hossain.

Class boycott in Patuakhali

UNB, Patuakhali

Students of Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute have been boycotting classes for the last six days demanding removal of its principal for his alleged involvement in corruption.

They submitted a memorandum containing 11-point demand to the deputy commissioner.

The principal could not be reached for his comment.



PHOTO: STAR

BRAC's Manikganj Sadar area office distributed saplings along with relief goods including rice, lentil and edible oil on Tuesday.

3 cops among 50 hurt in Kushtia AL-BNP clash 11 blank shots fired: Police van attacked, 10 houses damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 50 people including a police sub-inspector and two constables were injured during a clash between supporters of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League (AL) at Khazanagar village in the Sadar upazila on Tuesday.

Police fired 11 blank shots and arrested 27 people, claimed by Awami League leaders to be their men.

A police van was attacked during the clash. At least nine houses belonging to AL men were damaged, allegedly by BNP men.

Sources said the clash was between supporters of local BNP leader and former Union Parishad member Abdul Majid Bablu and Kushtia district Awami Jubo League Labour and Manpower Secretary Enamul Haq over supremacy in the area. The two are rivals for long.

According to police and local people, AL activist Anwar had filed a case against some persons including BNP activist Mahir alleging that they had snatched Tk 1.30 lakh from him on August 12.

Police picked up Mahir but found the complaint false. Police then picked up Anwar.

Police later picked up UP

Chairman Enamul and allegedly implicated him in a false case.

This angered AL men who gathered at Khaganagar Bazar on Tuesday and brought out a procession.

Clashes ensued when it was attacked allegedly by BNP men, the sources claimed.

On information, Sadar thana police rushed to the spot. A reinforcement was also sent, which quelled the violence.

Sub-inspector Masiur and two

constables were injured, when they came under attack during the clash.

Seven of the injured were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital. They are Akul Hossain, Abdus Salam, Amirul Islam, Akas, Abul Hossain, Katha and Faraj. The rest took treatment at private clinics.

High police officials visited the spot. A tense situation is prevailing in the area.

Police filed a case against some men for damaging their vehicle.



PHOTO: STAR

One of the houses damaged allegedly by BNP activists

Bus, trawler robbed in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Highway robbers snatched Tk five lakh in cash and valuables from passengers of a Gaibandha-bound bus from Kushtia on the Bogra Rangpur road Tuesday night, critically injuring five of them.

Police said 10 robbers boarded the bus (Dhaka JA-141699) in the guise of passengers when it stopped at Gobindaganj at about 9 pm. As it left Gobindaganj, they stabbed driver Nur-e-Alam and fell upon the passengers, stabbing some of them. They got down at Goshaijan on the Palashbari Rangpur highway.

The injured persons are Mozammel, Ruhul Amin, Nazrul, Saleheren and Nur-e-Alam. They have been admitted to Palashbari Health Complex. Police arrested bus supervisor Rafiqul.

In another incident on Sunday night, armed pirates beat people on board a trawler on the Brahmaputra at Chowmohon shoal in Fulchhari upazila and looted over Tk three lakh.

Ten of the 25 passengers were injured.

Police said the trawler had sailed from Bharatkali cattle market.

Police arrested eight persons including Ruhul Amin, Nawshad Mia, Sheikh Farid Akanda and Nurun Nabi from nearby Kaiyer bazaar on Monday.

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