

SNAPS

VGF rice seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Ashuganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md. Khaled Abu Naser seized six sacks of VGF rice from two shops at Lalpur Bazar in Ashuganj upazila on Sunday, according to officials today.

Acting on a tip-off, the UNO, accompanied by a police team rushed to the market and recovered four sacks of VGF rice from a shop owned by Mastu Mia and two sacks from another belonging to Haroon Mia.

All sacks bore mark and seal of Ashuganj Food Godown.

Police said these rice bags were brought to the shops from Lalpur Union Council Godown on September 2 to sell the rice in the market.

Juri upazila admin starts work next month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Administrative activities in newly formed Juri upazila will start next month after appointment of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and the Officer-in-Charge of Juri thana this month.

This was stated by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman when a team of BNP leaders from Juri led by former chairman of Baralekha Upazila Parishad met him at Moulvibazar Circuit House on Friday.

The minister told them that financial allocation for the upazila administration has been made so that it can start functioning next month.

Batik fashions from remote village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Nipa, Lovely, Fatima and Papy of Khaserhat village, aged between 11 and 15, had left school due to poverty.

They now earn at least Tk 1500 each per month by printing fashionable Batik design on sarees (woman's wear). Nipa is the team leader.

They work at the Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), a local NGO, at Khaserhat in the Sadar upazila, about 15 kilometres from the district town.

Fourteen year-old Nipa said she left school two years back when she was a student of class six. Her father worked in a betel leaf field and earned only Tk 40 to 50 a day, which was not enough for buying even rice for their family with four brothers and three sisters.

She came to the centre and took three months training.

Now she earns Tk 1500 per month and contributes the family income.

The small NGO runs the fac-

tory at its office, where some distressed women also work. Many others want to join them but the scope is limited, Anisur Rahman, an official of the NGO, told this correspondent during a recent visit.

The sarees with Batic block print are marketed in Patuakhali and Barguna districts. Traders buy the sarees from the centre.

Nipa said she gets Tk 15 per sharee for printing. She can print five to six sharees a day.

Lovely was busy printing design on a sharee. "My father Abdur Razzak is a rickshapuller. I stopped going to school due to poverty."

But they have qualms because they are not getting the scope for education though they want it.

The four girls now realise that education is necessary but they do not have the scope. They will go to school if they get the chance, they said.

Anisuzzan said he is thinking how to provide them the scope, either at the NGO office or at any school.



With rapt attention and careful eyes, Nipa, Lovely and Fatima are printing Batik on saree.

PHOTO: STAR

Magura AL splits

2 factions bring out separate processions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Dogged by internal feud for months, the Magura Awami League has finally split into two factions.

The division became public on Tuesday when the two rival factions brought out separate processions in the town protesting the August 21 grenade attack on party chief Sheikh Hasina's rally in Dhaka.

The processions were led by district AL convener Md. Altaf Hossain and local lawmaker Prof Md Serajul Akbar. The processionists paraded different streets in the town, carrying banners.

The internal feud in the party had surfaced in January when two rival factions led by Altaf Hossain and Prof Akbar clashed during party councils at several upazilas and unions as both wanted their men in leadership at different levels, party sources said.

At least 14 incidents of clash took place between the rival groups in the district in last several months, they said.

After the clashes, the party high command had summoned top leaders of the district AL to Dhaka to resolve the dispute.

At a meeting with the leaders at the party central office on March 8, party chief Sheikh Hasina asked them to work together and hold Magura district AL council on March 31. She had also threatened to dissolve the district convening committee for its failure.

But the party chief's order went unheeded. Both the rival groups again started holding meetings separately at different levels, intensifying the in-fighting.

Due to internal feud, committees of eight unions in Sreepur upazila could not be formed, which are

essential for hold the district council.

On Tuesday in the afternoon, Altaf Hossain arranged a 'mass procession' under the banner of Magura district AL. But Prof. Akbar arranged a separate procession under the banner of Magura pourou unit AL.

The division has frustrated dedicated leaders and activists, the party sources said.

"We never want to see a divided Awami League in Magura whereas leaders are doing so", said a dedicated mid-level leader of Magura Sadar upazila AL preferring anonymity.

When contacted, district AL Convener Altaf Hossain said, "Vested quarters in the party arranged the separate procession, avoiding the district AL programme to damage the party image."

NETRAKONA-2 BYPOLLS

AL unlikely to be in race

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Netrakona district Awami League President Samsujjuha has said 'it is quite impossible for Awami League to participate in Netrakona-2 by-election under this government'.

He was addressing at rally in front of Awami League office Tuesday evening, organised to protest the grenade attack on the August 21 AL public meeting in Dhaka.

Free and fair election will not be held under his government because of the over all law and order situation and possible rigging by ruling party men, he said.

The AL leader bitterly criticised the government for what he called its failure to ensure security of people's life and property and urged it to step down accepting the responsibility for the August 21 carnage.

Samsujjuha alleged that the ruling parties are sheltering terrorists and criminals and patronising corruption.

Later, when asked by this correspondent whether he got any decision about Netrakona

by-polls from the party's central leaders, he said, "Though the central body has not made any declaration, I got the impression after talking to some central leaders including General

Secretary Abdul Jalil".

September 14 is the last date for submitting nomination paper for Nnetrakona-2 by-polls and September 22 is the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

Presided over by Samsujjuha, the rally was addressed by, among others, Netrakona district AL General Secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, Organising Secretary Nur Khan Mitu and party leader Islam Uddin Kala Miah.

Earlier a procession led by Samsujjuha protesting the August 21 incident was brought out in the town.

A little effort changes lives

Tk 18,000 irrigation machine raises hopes in 70 families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Unbelievable though, only a shallow irrigation machine costing Tk 18000 has raised hopes for a better life among about 70 families in a remote shoal in the Jamuna basin in Fulchari.

Most of them are day labourers, share croppers and marginal farmers with land holdings up to two bighas in Char Pepulia.

Earlier they had moved to banks and government agencies for this small assistance without collateral, but were denied.

It was in March last year when a field worker of local NGO Samaj Kallan Sangstha went there out of curiosity. Witnessing their interest and the prospect, he arranged for them the small irrigation machine with finance from Oxfam and organised them into a 'producers group'. Oxfam gave the assistance under

its River Basin Programme, that covers some other shoal areas in Gaibandha district.

This enthused the farmers. They cultivated jute and maize. With proper irrigation, the yields were almost double the earlier.

They got 20 to 25 maunds of maize per bigha against only around 8 maunds earlier without irrigation. The HYV maize seeds were procured for them by the NGO official from the government's agriculture department.

They are very happy now as jute price is also higher this year.

"Thanks to Oxfam for providing us with an irrigation machine that was really very much essential for," said Nurun Nabi, a leader of the 'producers group'.

"Last year we move from door one bank to another for loan but they denied to provide loan to shoal people", Nurun Nabi said while

talking to this correspondent during a recent visit.

"Using irrigation facilities we produced over 200 manund of jute from 25 bighas of land and we expect a better return as price of jute is rising", said its member Kantu Bepari.

"Jute was hardly cultivated in chars (shoals) earlier," said Mohiuddin Mondal.

Rashida Begum, a female member, said "In the ensuing Rabi season we will cultivate HYV maize on 25 bighas. We will produce chilly, early variety Boro, potato and vegetables on the fertile char lands.

"We will have good harvests and change our lives by the grace of God", a she said.

"Our men used to work as day labourers elsewhere. Now we work on our own lands", she said.

ARMS RECOVERY IN 2002

Abul Hasanat chargesheetd

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Detective Branch police on Tuesday submitted charge sheet against former Chief Whip and Awami League central leader Abul Hasanat Abdullah in the case filed in October 2000 in connection with recovery of arms from his Barisal city house.

Abdullah's three sons-- Sadek Abdullah, Moin Abdullah and Ashik Abdullah-- who were accused in the case, where dropped from the charge sheet.

DB Sub Inspector Burhan Reza submitted charge sheet.

According to the FIR of the case and the charge sheet, army searched the house of Abul Hasanat

Abdullah during the Operation Clean Heart in October 2002 and recovered a Six Shooter Gun, one DBBL gun, one abandoned gun barrel, 174 bullets, Tk 6.13 lakh, 355 blank Freedom Fighter certificate, two hand mikes and gold ornaments.

Only a caretaker was at the house during the search, led by Maj Akbor and Maj Shariar.

After the raid, police filled a case with Kotwali thana accusing Hasanat and his three sons.

Immediately after the raid, Hasanat's family claimed in press statements that all the guns were licensed.

OC assaulted by BNP lawmaker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Bauphal thana Officer-in-Charge Kazi Haniful Islam was allegedly assaulted by BNP lawmaker Shahidul Alam Talukder at the police station Tuesday night.

BNP and Jobu Dal activists brought out a procession in the thana headquarter and held a rally yesterday demanding removal of the OC for police failure to arrest criminals.

The party activists claimed that he was assaulted as police did not arrest criminals who snatched a motorcycle from a Jobu Dal activist on Tuesday.

A gang had attacked Bauphal Upazila Jobu Dal Secretary Giasuddin in front of the Degree College and snatched his motorcycle.

Giasuddin went to the than to

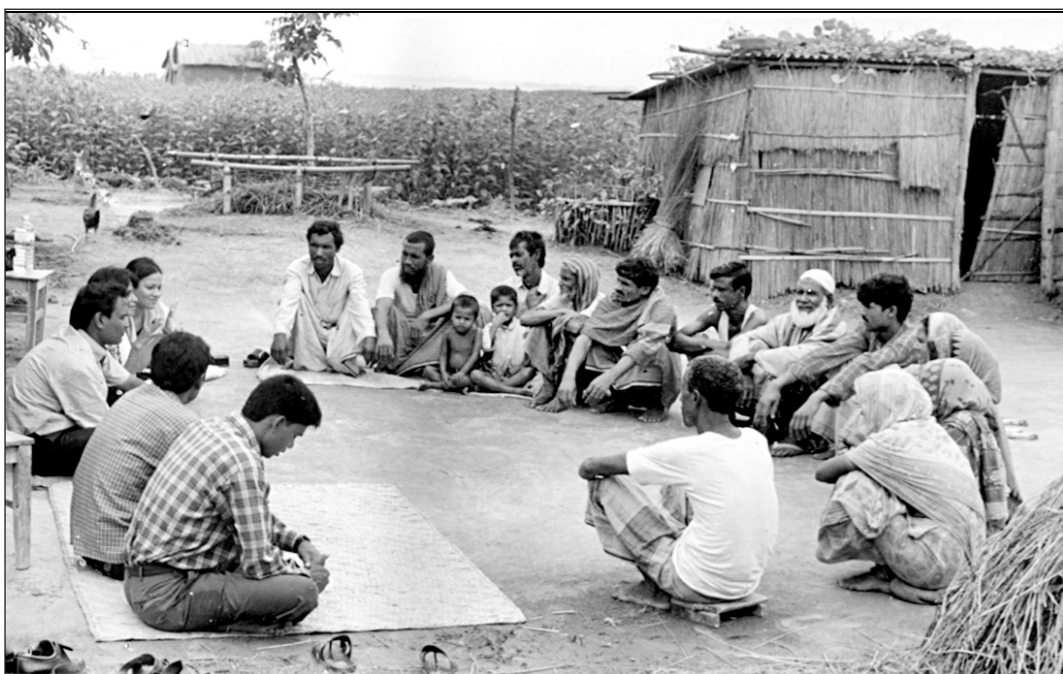
filed a case but police refused to record it without investigation, it was alleged.

BNP lawmaker and upazila BNP Secretary Shahidul Islam Talukder, accompanied by about 50 party activists went to the thana Tuesday evening and allegedly assaulted the OC.

Police then recorded Giasuddin's case in which five persons have been accused.

When contacted later the BNP lawmaker said he did not assault the OC. He however said police harass his party activists but can not arrest criminals.

Meanwhile, OC Haniful Islam left Bauphal. The duty officer at the thana said the OC has gone to Kalapara for election duty. Election of Kalapara municipality will be held today.



Officials of Samaj Kallan Sangstha, an NGO, with farmers at Char Pepulia, recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Jessore AL leader held with arms

Four unnatural deaths in a day

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Jessore district Awami League leader Shahrul Islam in the small hours Tuesday and recovered a pistol, two bullets and a cocktail from his possession.

Jessore Kotwali police said, acting on a tip-off, RAB raided the house of Shahrul Islam in Bhekutia village in the Sadar upazila and arrested him.

Police produced him to court, which placed him on three days' remand.

In other separate incidents, two women and a young man allegedly committed suicide and another middle-aged man was electrocuted in the district on the same day.

Haziron Nesa, 85, wife of Sekender Ali of Shajiali village in the Sadar upazila, allegedly hanged herself while Pipi Begum, 25, wife of Ashrafal of Alamnagar died at Jessore 250 Bed Hospital after taking poison following a quarrel with her husband.

Bikash Chandra Shaha, 28, son of Binoy Krishna Shaha of Bijpara

area in the town allegedly committed suicide by taking poison.

Mason Alauddin, 40, electrocuted while working at the house of one Shahidul of Arabpur area in the town Tuesday noon.

Bank branch shifted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The Chadright branch of Rupali Bank has been shifted to Chdright bus stand area in Moulvibazar town. Syed M A Mukhtar, Director of the bank, inaugurated banking activities at the new office through a simple function.

Local Awami League lawmaker and Md Azizur Rahman, Moulvibazar Pourasava Chairman Fayzul Karim Mayun, other officials and elite of the town attended the function, presided over by Siraj Uddin Ahmed, Regional Assistant General Manager of Ruprali Bank.

A hoax that troubled thousands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Monday's bomb scare on a Dhaka-bound liner MV-Surovi-6 from Barisal ultimately proved a hoax but it panicked over 2000 passengers on board and drew several thousand worried relatives and police to the terminal.

In was an unprecedented and chaotic situation at the BIWTA terminal, with many of the relatives waiting apprehending the worst.

Barisal police had a tough time in controlling the situation at the terminal. All senior officials including the Police Superintendent, Detective

Branch officials rushed to the terminal.

Panic spread in the whole city as many of the passengers informed relatives about the bomb scare over cell phones.

Police used mikes to control the crowd and allay fear from passengers' relatives.

The passenger liner had had left Barisal at 8:50 pm Monday and returned to the terminal at 10:20 pm.

As the vessel touched the terminal several thousand people rushed to board it. Police had to charge batons to keep them away. Police cordoned the whole terminal and did

not allow any one from the crowd to board the vessel.

Keeping the passengers on board, police boarded the vessel and after a search came out with the suspected bombs kept in a bucketful of water.

After a thorough search and checking all the passengers and luggage with metal detectors, the vessel sailed again for Dhaka.

Owner of the vessel, Golan Maoula, a former chairman of Barisal Pourasabha, when contacted yesterday said some vested quarters created the hoax to damage his company's reputation.



A partial view of the worried crowd of relatives (left) and police with microphone at Barisal BIWTA terminal in the early hours of Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

