

SNAPS

Bomb: BCL leader on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Chhatra League leader Biplob Biswas, arrested with four bombs in the city on Friday, was placed on three days remand on Saturday, Barisal Sadar Upazila Magistrate granted the remand.

4 timber traders buy freedom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Four indigenous timber traders, kidnapped allegedly by activists of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) from remote Sheelchhari in Baghaichhari upazila on Thursday, were released on Friday on payment of Tk 80,000 ransom, sources said. Kaladhon Chakma, Birbahu Talukder, Gunoban Chakma and Biggan Kumar Chakma were abducted on gunpoint by a gang of over 30 UPDF men. They have also pledged to pay more Tk 2,20,000 ransom in two weeks, the sources said. When contacted, police said they got no such complaint.

Seminar on Harijan held in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

FAIR (Friends Association for Integrated Revolution), a local NGO, on Friday organised a seminar on ways for development of the Harizan community in the district. The underprivileged community has about 200 members in the district. FAIR is working for the Harijans with assistance from RIB (Research Initiative of Bangladesh, a Dhaka-based foreign-funded organisation). A good number of Harizan members and other social organisations attended the seminar, held in the town. Economist Prof Anisur Rahman inaugurated the seminar, chaired by FAIR Executive Director Dewan Aktaruzzaman.

BSF kills 4 in 3 months along Satkhira border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Four Bangladeshi nationals were shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in three months.

BDR and police sources said, Rahmat Ullah, 25, of Gol Chatar village in Kalaroa upazila was caught by BSF men from Chohy Gharia in the Sadar upazila Tuesday evening. He was taken to Kajivui outpost across the border and shot dead the next day. BDR sent a letter to BSF to return the body but it was not returned.

On August 28, Saiful Islam, 24, of Karagachhi village in Kalaron upazila was killed by BSF when he was working in the field near the border. The body was returned after a flag meeting.

On July 28, Manirul Islam, 20, of Rau Bhadrapur village in Kalaroa upazila, was shot dead by BSF at Atshikari area in Swarupnagar. The body was returned.

Two days later, Ganesh Chandra, 42, of Kevagachhi village in Kalaroa upazila was killed by BSF in the same area.

6 get life term for Jubo League leader murder

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Six persons have been sentenced to life term for murdering a Jubo League leader in 1998.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Md Iftekhar Rasul Siddiqui handed down the punishment to Abbas Ali, Hazrat Ali, Saiful Islam, Rabiul Islam and Ruhul Sarder, all of of Sultanpur village, and raju ahmed of hamidpur village in the Sadar upazila murdering Tariqul Islam, vice-president of Fatehpur union Jubo League and an alleged activist of outlawed Sharbahara Party, on June 19, 1998 at Chanpara village.

The attackers belonging to a rival outlawed group shot him dead on the spot.

4 of a family kidnapped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Four members of a family were abducted from Parshemari village in Assassuni upazila recently.

Birendra Nath Roy told a press conference at Badhata Press Club that miscreants led by Tamal Roy, Debashish Roy and Swapan Mondal of the same village raided his house in his absence and abducted his daughter-in-law Champa Rani Roy, 20, daughters Kakoli Rani Roy, 12 and Shyamali Rani Roy, 5 and son Shankar Roy, 8. He alleged that urged the authorities concerned to take action against the culprits and rescue them, but to nom effect. At least 19 families have taken

BOU academy opens in Gaibandha

Five lakh students enrolled so far

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The Bangladesh Open University (BOU) opened its 'co-ordination academy' in Gaibandha on Saturday with a promise to remove illiteracy and help build human resources.

BOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Ershadul Bari inaugurated the newly constructed two-storey academy building as chief guest. Gaibandha Deputy Commissioner Tapon Chandra Majumder president over the inaugural function.

"This academic building of BOU will undoubtedly play an effective role in removing illiteracy, spreading female education and to building trained manpower in Gaibandha district," the VC said.

Distant education is gaining popularity in the country. Any one can be educated and develop his career by working in leisure time. Nearly five lakh students have been enrolled with BOU in the country and the number is increasing, the VC said.

The BOU was set in 1992 with its main campus on a 35-acre land in Gazipur in Dhaka.

Its network has been extended all over the country to gear up distant education.

By this time, the university has set up 12 'resource centres' in Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Barisal, Jessore, Faridpur, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Bogra.

Besides, it has already built 80 co-ordination offices in districts, with nearly 1000 'tutorial centres'. The university curriculum covers 21 formal and 19 non-formal faculties.

These include B Ed, M Ed, Social Science, Humanities, Language, SSC, HSC, Business, Agriculture, Rural Development and Science and Technology.

The inaugural function was addressed by, among others, Md Mohiuddin, Director of Planning; Akhter Hossain, Director, SSS Division; AKM MOrtuzza Ahmed, Regional Director; and Sharif Md Shahbuddin, Assistant Director, Media Division.



BOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Ershadul Bari speaking at the inaugural function.

The Gaibandha BOU academic building has been built on a 33-decimal land at Dhanghara along the Gaibandha-Palash Bari highway at a cost of Tk 51 lakh. It will help expand distant education among people in Gaibandha and adjoining districts.

NOMINATION PAPER LOOT BY BNP LEADER

BCCI official 'forced' to withdraw complaint

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Forced by ruling party leaders and musclemen, the office secretary of Barisal Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI) on Saturday filed a fresh GD (general diary) with police, withdrawing the allegation that former BCCI vice-president Sheikh Abdur Rahim was involved in snatching nomination papers for BCCI election.

Abdur Rahim is joint secretary of Barisal district BNP and secretary of its city unit.

BCCI office secretary Muhammad Ali on Friday had lodged a GD (no. 560) with Kotwali police that Abdur Rahim was involved in the incident.

On Saturday, some BNP leaders and musclemen took him to the Kotwali thana, where Ali filed a fresh

GD (no. 616). He sated in the GD that the description in the previous GD was not correct and Abdur Rahim was not present when the nomination papers were snatched by some unidentified persons Thursday night.

The duty officer at the Kotwali thana later admitted that two GDs were filed within 24 hours, the latter retracting the statement made in the former.

He declined to make any comment but admitted that Ali was accompanied by some people during filing of the second GD.

When contacted, BCCI President Ebaidul Huq Chan alleged that Ali was forced to file a fresh GD. The FBCCI (Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries) in Dhaka has been informed of the matter, he said.

'Return local govt power'

NUPF leaders urge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Local government leaders at a press conference here on Saturday demanded return of their power to lease local markets and handover of government waterbodies, sand quarries and small river terminals to Union Parishad.

This will empower local governments and enhance their financial capability, which will help local development, they said.

The press conference held at Manikganj Press Club was organised by the National Union Parishad Forum (NUPF).

They said that in the subcontinent, local governments had been leasing markets for about 150 years. The previous Awami League government snatched their right. Now these are leased

by local the administration.

This has crippled local governments and also throttled grassroots level democracy.

Bureaucrats, parliament members and ministers now interfere in activities of local government bodies, which affect self-governance, they said.

Parliament members who represent political parties do not let local governments run independently, they alleged.

NUPF Standing Committee member Samsul Alam Khan, its Manikganj unit president Abdur Kuddus Khan Mojlish Makhan, vice-presidents Abdus Sobhan and Nargis Akter bachchu, secretary Nurul Islam, organising secretary Nasirul Haque Khan and Saifuddin Ahammed Firoj spoke at the press conference.



School students formed a human chain in Manikganj town on Saturday marking the International First Aid Day -- 2004. Manikganj unit of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society organised the programme.

16 held in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Army has arrested 16 indigenous youths from Naillyachhara in Kawkhali upazila for their alleged involvement in extortion and seized two homemade guns from their possession.

They are Kaludhon Chakma, Chandra Kumar Chakma, Shyamol Chakma, Judhamoni Chakma, Ching Thoi Mamma, Arobindu Talukder, Anol, Dipon, Gyan Priyo Chakma, Antor Chakma, Roni, Dharma Chakma and Birendra Chakma.

Tipped-off by a villager, army personnel nabbed Gyano Priya and Aontor Chakma Friday night from a thatched house where they were allegedly preparing for dacoity.

Acting on their confession, army arrested the rest 14 on the following morning, army sources said.

"They were taken to Ghagra Zone Headquarters for quizzing and will be handed over to police soon," an army officer said.

Tk 39 lakh for Bandarban small tea holdings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bangladesh Tea Board has sanctioned Tk 39 lakh loans for small tea cultivators in Bandarban hill district in the current fiscal year.

Tea Board sources said the amount will be distributed among 31 of the 50 farmers in the Sadar upazila in the first phase. The rest will get loans later.

The government took an initiative last year for tea cultivation in small holdings in hill districts with

financial assistance from the European Union.

The Tea Board has selected 46850 hectares in the hill region for tea cultivation. A total of 11050 hectares will be brought under plantation in the first phase, the sources said.

These include 6325 hectares in four upazilas in Khagrachari, 3475 hectares in three upazilas in Bandarban and 1250 hectares in three upazilas in Rangamati. The project will involve Tk 4.62 crore, the sources said.

Kuatata police station opens

Tk 70 cr sanctioned for road repair, Altaf says

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A police station at Kuakata sea beach was opened on Friday. Commence Minister and Minister-in-charge for Patuakhali district Altaf Hossain Chowdhury opened the station as chief guest.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) SM Sabbir Ali, local official and political leaders were present at the function presided over by Patuakhali Police Superintendent Awanjeb Mahbub. Altaf said the police station has

been opened at the sea beach to ensure safety of tourists, local people and fishermen. He said the government is trying its best to development the Kuakata sea beach and make it more attractive to tourists. An amount of Tk 70 crore has been sanctioned for repair of the 72 km Patuakhali-Kuakata road, he said.

Additional Tk 43 crore will be sanctioned for construction of three bridges to replace ferry services at three points on the Kalapara-Kuakata road, he said.



The newly constructed Kuakata police station.

BOMB THREAT

Security tightened for Rangamati, Khagrachhari pouira polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

In the wake of a bomb threat for suspension of Rangamati and Khagrachhari municipal polls, Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Moniswapon Dewan has directed the local administrations to gear up security for holding the polls peacefully.

"Extra security measures will be taken if necessary to check sabotage", Rangamati BNP Secretary M Jahir Uddin said on Saturday quoting Moniswapon.

"The minister (Moniswapon)

directed the Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent to beef up security till the election is complete". The election must be free and fair, he added.

Municipal polls in Khagrachhari and Rangamati are scheduled for October 6 and 6 respectively.

On September 9, one Iqbal Murda, identifying himself as 'commander' of an unnamed organization, in a letter demanded suspension of Rangamati and Khagrachhari municipal polls.

He threatened to kill ruling BNP MP Wadood Bhuiyan, Khagrachhari

DC, all journalists working in Rangamati and to blow up important government and non-government installations if his demand is not met.

"Be it a real threat or a hoax to create terror, we must remain vigilant", the BNP leader told The Daily Star on Saturday.

When contacted, a mid-level police official in Rangamati seeking anonymity said, "We have taken measures including vigilance at residential hotels to ensure peaceful polls".

Barisal port terminals shifted twice in a week

Emergency dredging in off-season as numerous shoals virtually halt navigation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Numerous underwater shoals have emerged in the Kirtankhola river near the Barisal port, obstructing navigation.

Launch and steamer terminals at the port were shifted twice in a week, but there is no respite from the problem, BITWA sources and vessel operators said.

The BIWTA has started dredging of the river on an emergency basis.

They said a big underwater shoal stretching about half a kilometre is threatening navigation near the port. The port might be threatened if it is not removed immediately before the water level falls further.

BIWTA sources said, medium

size vessels like double-decker launches need at least 14-feet deep water and smaller ones need 8-feet water.

But the water depth is only two to three feet during high tide near the port.

Vessels are now plying with risks through a narrow channel.

BIWTA sources said dredging is done routinely every year before or after the dry season. But this year dredging has been started in the monsoon on an emergency basis because of seriousness of the problem.

But shortage of dredgers and funds are affecting the work. "We have acute shortage of dredging vessels, manpower, and budget", a

BIWTA official told this correspondent seeking anonymity.

Azizul Huq Akkas, vice-president of Barisal Launch Owners Association and its representative to BIWTA dredging supervision committee said dredging of the Kirtankhola near the port should have been done last year when formation of the shoals was in primary stage.

"Now the work has become costly, time consuming and difficult". But there is no alternative to continuation of dredging at any cost to save the port and keep it navigable round the year, he said.



A BIWTA dredger in operation in the Kirtankhola near Barisal port, snapped yesterday.

8"x3 col