

SNAPS

'Top' criminal held in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A notorious criminal having close link with PCJSS (Parbatya Chhatta-gram Jono Sanghaty Samity) was rounded up by army from south bank of the Karnaphuli Bazarhat area in Chittomrom union of Kaptai upazila on Wednesday. The criminal is Provat Bikash Chakma, 35, alias Rajon, son of Birendralal Chakma in Balukhali of Rangamati Sadar upazila. A foreign made pistol, a powerful mobile set and cash amounting to Tk 74,999.50 were recovered from his possession. During interrogation, Rajon disclosed he led a 17-member team of special operatives in Chittomrom, Rajosthali, Chandraghuna and Kaptai consisting about 200 irregular armed members. Interrogators suspected that all of them possess sophisticated firearms like AK-47. Most of the areas are inaccessible for hilllocks and dense forest. He exports about Tk 1 cr from the area each month, mainly from big and small traders.

Upazila magistrate court opens at Mirjaganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Commerce Minister and Minister-in-Charge of the district Altaf Hossain Chowdhury on Saturday opened the Upazila Magistrate Court at Mirjaganj as chief guest at a formal ceremony. Patuakhali Deputy Commissioner (DC) Prasanta Bhusan Barua presided over the opening ceremony. The chief guest in his address said the general people are getting justice from court. The government has set up the Speedy Trial Tribunal aimed at ensuring fair justice. Among others, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Bhola Nath Dey and Upazila Magistrate Md Saidur Rahman addressed the meeting.

Army team replaced for beating fish traders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An 11-member army team engaged in construction of an Ashrayan project (cluster village for landless people) in Golachipa was replaced with another team on Saturday after two of them beat two fish traders at a local market in a quarrel over price.

The team housed at Galachipa School has been sent to Jessore cantonment after the incident on Thursday. Another team is now engaged in the project work, according to Galachipa Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Mezbah Uddin.

After Thursday's incident, an officer from Jessore cantonment visited the spot on Saturday and ordered replacement of the team, he said.

Social afforestation to begin in CHT at last

PCJSS chief agrees on condition that it will benefit indigenous people and take into account 'reality in hills'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The social afforestation programme, opposed in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) for long by leaders of indigenous people, will now be implemented following an understanding between them and the government.

They have reached an understanding that the programme with some "basic changes" will not affect the indigenous people and their life in any way and take into consideration the "reality in hills".

The decision came at a close-door fruitful meeting of PCJSS chief Jiotirindriya Bodhipriyo Larma alias Santu Larma, State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury and Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moniswapon Dewan, held recently at Ranga-mati Deputy Commissioner's office, highly

placed official sources told this correspondent yesterday.

CHT Affairs Ministry Joint Secretary Sahjahan Mojumder, Environment and Forest Ministry Joint Secretary Mihir Kanti Mojumder, Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman Dr Maniklal Dewan, Khagrachhari Hill District Council Chairman Nokhyatralal Dev Burman and some high officials were also present at the meeting.

As per the decision, a Tk108 crore social afforestation programme will be launched in the three hill districts soon.

Twenty percent of the about 14.50 lakh acres of forestland in the three hill districts will be initially brought under the programme.

In the first phase, afforestation will begin in the reserve forests, many of which are now stripped of timber trees, the sources said.

The entire region will be covered

by 2015.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC), three hill district councils (HDCs), chiefs of Chakma, Bomang and Mong Circles and Headmen in tribal villages will be involved in the scheme to benefit the hill people.

Besides, saplings will be planted along 600 km roads, and bamboo and cane clusters will be raised in 750 hectares. Nurseries will be arised in each of the 25 upazila headquarters for free distribution of 10 lakh saplings among local people.

Santu Larma had earlier opposed the programme during previous

Awami League rule saying, "Jumias (indigenous people) would become landless afresh in the name of social afforestation".

The PCJSS (Parbatya Chhatta-gram Jana Sanghaty Samity) He has

changed his position on condition of change in some terms and conditions in the programme, the sources said. The changes are being made, the sources said.

"We (indigenous leaders) are not against social afforestation but the project and its implementation strategy should be very clear and it must benefit indigenous people and protect their interests", one official quoted him as saying.

"The scheme must be designed in keeping with the reality in hills so that it does not affect their (indigenous people) livelihood in any way", Larma said.

Jafrul Islam Chowdhury told the meeting that the programme will not affect the hill people in any way. Rather, it will create employment opportunity for them and help reduce poverty.

"We sincerely hope to utilise the great potential in the CHT hills", he said.

Bhola-Laxmipur ferry service this month

Announcement by communications minister likely in Bhola tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Ferry service between Bhola and Laxmipur through the turbulent and risky Meghna estuary, a long felt demand of people of southern districts, is going to be introduced this month, according to official sources.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda is likely to announce introduction of the service in the 23 km route from Ilisha in Bhola to Maju Chowdhury Hat point in Laxmipur during his visit to Bhola tomorrow.

This will establish a risk-free road link between 12 southern districts and Chittagong and reduce the travel time to around eight hours from 18 hours now. This will also facilitate road communication from Mongla to Chittagong.

Selection of places for ferry pontoons and other installations at both ends are now at a final stage, they said. High officials of communication ministry and the Road & Highways (R&H) Department are holding hectic meetings now to finalise things, R&H Executive Engineer in Bhola Bulbul Islam told

this correspondent yesterday.

Construction of the Barisal-Bhola-Laxmipur road was started during Jatiya Party rule. After the changeover, BNP government had continued the work. Awami League government constructed the road from Lahar Hat in Barisal to Bheduria in Bhola and introduced ferry service.

Now, people cross the mighty Meghna estuary by BIWTC sea truck or private launch.

Only one sea truck plies the route once a day. The government earlier banned small launches on the route during the season of storms from April to September after several disasters that claimed hundreds of lives.

In last five years, at least 450 people drowned in eight launch mishaps in the Meghna during April-September period.

The Daily Star published a report in April this year on the plight of passengers and the necessity of ferry service on the route.

ATTACK ON JALDHAKA UNO OFFICE

Work abstention by govt employees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Officers and employees of all government offices here on Saturday abstained from work protesting Friday's vandalism at Jaldhaka UNO office by a group of miscreants.

Partial strike was also observed in the offices on Sunday.

Appointment of a computer teacher at Pantapara Dhakhil Madrassa in Jaldhaka triggered the attack. The attackers continued their orgy for three hours. They confined the UNO, Saodagor Mostafizur Rahman and two members of the recruitment committee. They detained the madrassa superintendent inside the office of a political party for the whole night and snatched all important papers relating to the teacher's recruitment.

While talking to newsmen on Saturday, the UNO held Jamaat lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury MP, responsible for the attack. The Jamaat MP's wrath came when he ignored his undue pres-

sure for appointment of Jaldhaka Jamaat Amir's son-in-law Shahiul Islam in the same post. At his directive, Shibir workers launched the attack, he disclosed

On contact, the Jamaat lawmaker categorically denied all the allegations, rather he brought counter allegations against the recruitment committee members of taking bribe from six candidates. He also denied involvement of Jamaat or Shibir or himself in the incident.

Police have been deployed at the UNO office, his residence and on the upazila complex premises. High officials of administration and police visited the spot.

Meanwhile, Upazila BNP President Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury condemned the attack.

A local BNP leader told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, the hoodliganism led by the Jamaat MP would tarnish the image of the government. He said that they already advised the UNO to sue the responsible persons.

No case was filed till filing of the report at 12:30 pm on Sunday.

Rise against violence, corruption

Ershad tells Gaibandha rallies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The main agenda of Jatiya Party is people's welfare. So, people are now with us, party chief HM Ershad has said.

Jatiya Party will go to power in the coming general election by the grace of God because they are fed up with the two major parties, he said at two public meetings here Saturday night.

He came here leading a 'long march' to protest violence, anarchy, bomb attacks and other crimes.

The 'long march' started from Dhaka Saturday morning and will terminate in Panchagarh.

Ershad said people no longer want to see two parties (Awami League and BNP) in power. They got nothing but violence, misrule and corruption during the rule by the two parties in last 14 years, Ershad said.

If placed in power, Jatiya Party will remove crimes in society. There was no incident of bomb throwing in the country during the rule of Jatiya Party, he claimed.

These two parties can not curb

crimes because their men are sheltering terrorists to do politics.

He called upon the people to rally round his party to rise against crimes, violence and corruption.

Ershad said the Jatiya Party government had set up many mills in the country, but many of those have been closed or have become sick in the last 14 years due to corruption.

He said he had initiated construction of the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge. It was completed during the rule of Awami League.

On his way from Dhaka, Ershad addressed a numbers of public meetings at different places.

Ershad accompanied by party leaders former minister ABM Rhu Amin Hawlader, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Amjad Hossain, Shafiul Alam Proddhan, Shawkat Hossain Nilu and a large number of party men.

Presided over by Lutfar Rahman Chowdhury, the first meeting in Gaibandha district was held at Gobindganj Shaheed Miner and the second one at Palashbari High School ground. They left for Rangpur at 10-30 pm.



Jatiya Party Chief H M Ershad, on a 'long march' to Panchagarh, addressing a rally at Sherpur bus stand at Bogra Saturday night.

Luck from litchis

Abdul Hamid earns over Tk 2 lakh a year from litchis and grafted saplings

RAFIQUE SARKER back from Lalmonirhat

Rangpur: Poor Abdul Hamid had started with only three litchi plants on the homestead. Now he earns a profit of over Tk two lakh a year from his two-acre orchard in Kodalkata village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upzila.

He is now a big litchi farmer in the district and encourages others to grow the sweet and delicious fruit.

In 1974, RDRS Rangpur office gave him three grafted litchi saplings. He planted those in the homestead. When the small trees bore fruit, those tested exceptionally good. He sold the litchis in local markets.

The fruits were tasty and so acclaimed by people.

Encouraged, Hamid gradually extended his garden.

Now there are 166 litchi trees on

his two-acre garden.

"I earned Tk 90,000 last summer," Hamid told this correspondent during a recent visit to his garden.

"On an average I earned Tk 75,000 every summer in the last five years. The crop never fails but prices vary".

He said he could not feed his family members two meals a day ten years back due to poverty. Things began to change in 1986 when his three small litchi trees bore fruit. Soon litchis of his garden became very popular.

He set his mind to raise a litchi orchard beside his house.

"I purchased the lands between 1986 and 1996".

Besides selling the fruits, he produces grafted litchi saplings. People even from other districts come to him to buy saplings.

"Selling saplings is more profit-

able. I earned about Tk 1,20,000 by selling saplings so far during the current tree plantation season".

He said he always encourages others to raise litchi orchard.

"I go to buyers' house to advise them on growing plants so that their interest is not lost."

Lalmonirhat Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials gave him initial support, he said.

DAE official Hamidur Rahman said Abdul Hamid encouraged many people in the district and outside in growing litchi plants. "We give all support to those who want to raise orchards like Abdul Hamid".

DAE Block Supervisor Afsar Ali has been assigned to take care of Abdul Hamid's orchard, said Hamidur Rahman.



Abdul Hamid (bearded) at his litchi orchard in Kodalkata village selling grafted saplings to Joynal Abdin. Lalmonirhat AED official (middle) is also seen in the photo.

RHDC gives 2 MT rice for Kawkhali victims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Rangamati Hill District Council (RHDC) has given two tonnes of rice for the indigenous people who took refuge at the Ghagra community centre after fleeing homes in remote Kawkhali villages due to terror created by activists of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF).

About 450 people are now having a subhuman life at the community centre since mid-September due to scarcity of food, medicine and other essentials.

The rice was allotted after two of their leaders --Shanidralal Karbar and Fonindralal Chakma -- met RHDC Chairman Maniklal Dewan on Thursday and narrate their plight to him, sources said.

The displaced people also got Tk1000 per family, promised earlier by Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moniswapon Dewan, Shanidralal Karbarly told this correspondent.

Diarrhoea spreads in Rangpur

One killed, 300 treated at hospitals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Doarhoea has spread to different areas of the district including the town in last four days, killing one child and afflicting about 300 so far.

Five year-old Shakhil died on Saturday in Jummapara area on the outskirts of the town, three hours after he was attacked with the disease. About 50 people in the area were attacked with the disease in last 36 hours ending Saturday evening, local people told this correspondent.

The seriously affected patients were sent to Rangpur Sadar Hospital and Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Chairman of the Rangpur Municipality Abdur Rouf Manik and Civil Surgeon Dr Joynal Abedin visited the diarrhoea affected people in Jummapara Saturday morning.

A source at the Civil Surgeon's office said diarrhoea has broken out in Gaighanta, Mornea, and Chhoto Rupai in Gangachara upzila; Kalianathpur in Mithapukur upzila; Ishwarpur, Haridevpur, Panbazar and Paglapir in Rangpur Sadar upzila.

About 300 patients including women and children were given treatment at different hospitals in the last four days, they said.

An employee at Rangpur Contagious Disease Hospital said that 51 diarrhoea patients were admitted there during the period.

An attendant to a patient at the Contagious Disease Hospital claimed that there was scarcity of intravenous saline there.

An official at the Civil Surgeon's office on condition of anonymity also admitted that there was scarcity of intravenous saline in upzila health complexes.