

SNAPS

1.45 lakh VGF cards for Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The government has sanctioned 1, 45,600 VGF cards for rice distribution among flood affected people in Barisal district.District relief and rehabilitation department sources said 10 kilograms of rice will be given per month against each VGF card, which will continue three months and cover five municipalities and 86 unions in 10 upazilas. Army will supervise the distribution.

Another dowry victim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Pregnant housewife Hamida Begum Chumbali was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry at Konabari Purbapara village in Sharishabari pourasova area in Jamalpur on Friday. Police said the husband, Badal, of the same village was given 10 decimal land as dowry during his marriage with Hamida. But the greedy man demanded more and used to torture his wife for this. On Friday in the evening, Badal asked Hamida to go to her father's house to bring money. When Hamida refused, Badal beat and strangled her and fled away. On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Jamalpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Pirates loot 6 trawlers in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Pirates threw 16 fishermen into the sea and looted at least Tk 30 lakh in cash and goods from six trawlers in the deep sea on Wednesday, police said quoting the victims in Patharghata coast in Barguna. The pirates hijacked one of the trawlers-FB Aminul. Its crew Mahalam and Selim were bullet-hit. Those thrown into the sea were rescued by other fishermen and brought to the coast on Friday. The injured were admitted to a hospital there. The incidents took place near Fairway Buoy in the deep sea, about 100 kilometers south-west of Patharghata coast. The five other trawlers attacked and looted are FB Banoful,FB Alam,FB Badsha,FB Maer Doa and FB Sathi.

A new beginning for jute, not the end

Farmers rejuvenated as yield from new HYV variety is almost double

KM REZAUL HOQUE back from Pirganj

Gaibandha: Golden fibre jute is making a glorious comeback, much to the delight of farmers and with new prospects for the country.

Famed worldwide as an environment-friendly natural fibre, jute was once the main forex earner for the country and a cash crop for millions.

But over the years, it was on the wane as most farmers had abandoned or reduced jute cultivation because of low yield and price, at times due to lack of government patronisation and appropriate policy. They switched over to other crops.

The new prospects are in sight now following cultivation of a newly evolved high yielding variety (HYV) of jute.

It has rejuvenated farmers, thanks to the Directorate of Jute which initiated an integrated HYV jute and jute seed production project in Pirganj in Rangpur district.

Farmers in the project area this year got a bumper production. The yield is almost double the quantity they got from traditional varieties earlier.

The new HYV variety of Tossa jute (O-9897), introduced this year, produced 30 to 35 maunds per bigha (33 decimal land) against 12 to 15 maunds from earlier varieties.

The new Tossa variety also involves lesser cost and the fibre

is superior to the earlier variety, farmers told this correspondent during a visit to the project area.

A total of 200 acres of land were brought under intensive jute cultivation programme in Pirganj this year.

The government initiative has raised hopes among farmers and the new variety is gaining popularity.

Seed of the new variety is being produced on 10 acres of land under the project to spread its cultivation. The seed will be distributed among farmers at fair price, officials said.

Earlier, farmers in the area had lost interest in jute cultivation as inferior quality of Indian seeds captured the market. They did not get even the production cost as the yield was very low due to early flowering, farmers said.

They are happy because the price is also favourable this year. They are now selling the new variety of Tossa jute at Tk 600 to 650 per maund against Tk 150 to Tk.200 earlier.

"Yield was less earlier due to use of Indian low quality seeds. But this time, the yield from HYV jute seed is beyond our expectation," said Moslemuddin of Hasanpur village.

Abul Hossain of Dhulgari village said, "Earlier we produced jute as little as possible because the price and yield were low. We cultivated the crop only to meet household needs and for jute sticks for use as firewood. The



PHOTO: STAR

Farmer Abul Hossain with his ready-for-harvest HYV jute in Dhulgari village in Pirganj Upazila. An official of the project is also seen.

trend will change now".

To regain the past glory of jute and strengthen the national economy, the Directorate of Jute has meanwhile undertaken a

programme to spread cultivation of the new variety to 100 upazilas in 32 districts, Mahfuzul Alam, Director of HYV Jute Project said.

Criminals flee to CHT from Ctg

Moniswapan apprehends they might be used to rig Rangamati pouura polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Moniswapan Dewan yesterday said he has credible information that criminals, chased by Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) and other law enforcers in Chittagong, are fleeing into the Hill Tracts for safe shelter.

They (criminals) might be used for rigging and creating violence during Rangapati pourasabha polls he said and urged law enforcers to beef up security in the hills.

"I find new undesired faces (criminals) in Rangamati town", he said while presiding over a special meeting of the district law and order committee. Moniswapon is also the minister-in-charge of Rabnamati district.

"Some of them are now trying to take shelter under the protection of political leaders and may work in favor of some candidates during the pourashova election.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Jafar Ahmed Khan, Police Superintendent Md Humayun Kabir and representatives of army, BDR and Ansars and candidates in the polls attended the meeting, held at the DC's office yesterday morning. Moniswapon said the government is determined to hold a free and fair election. "We do not like to fall into an embarrassing situation centring the polls and any no one will be spared for any sort of irregularity".

He also urged the candidates to cooperate with law enforcers in holding a free and fair election.

"I met the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on September 27 and also talk to the LGRD Minister Monday morning and discussed the election", he added.

BDR representative Major Md Saidur Rahman told the meeting that they received an official order to deploy forces during the polls.

Allegations against UNO by UP chairmen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

All the four Union Parishad (UP) chairmen in Jurachhari upazila in a joint statement on Saturday made allegations of irregularities and non-cooperation by Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Saleh Ahmed and Sub Assistant Engineer (SAE) Abdul Khalek of the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) with them in various development activities.

It was signed by Jurachhari UP Chairman Shyamol Kanti Chakma, Bonojugichhara UP Chairman Suresh Kumar Chakma, Moidong UP Chairman Samrat Chakma and Dumdumia UP chairman Rajao Chakma.

They said they have been boycotting meetings of the Upazila Unnayan and Samannya Committee for the last two months due to the alleged non-cooperation, the release said.

They said Tk 1,93,000 government fund disbursed for sanitation programme in the upazila in the last financial year was returned as the UNO and SAE did not initiate any programme.

They alleged that there has been stalemate in VGF (vulnerable group feeding) programme and distribution of government allowances for widows and disabled people.

They said the people of Jurachhari earlier submitted a written complaint to the Deputy Commissioner on August 16 in this regard, but to no effect.

Contacted by this correspondent

yesterday, Deputy Commissioner Dr Jafar Ahmed Khan said he received an allegation against the UNO that Tk 1,93,000 allocated for sanitation was returned.

"I am looking into the matter", he said.

2 children missing from Rajshahi Safe Home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two children went missing from Rajshahi Safe Home for Women in Baya area here since August 25 night.

They are Soleman Mollah, 10, son of Yusuf Mollah of Chilon village in Laksam upazila, Comilla and Sujon, 12, son of Nazrul Islam in Altagada area of Kotwali Thana, Sylhet.

Soleman was brought to the safe home by Government Railway Police (GRP). Sirajganj a year back while a court sent Sujon to the safe custody two months back.

The Home authorities said two women security guards Shahjadi Begum and Nasira Begum Papya - were suspended for their Negligence in duty.

A three-member committee led by Social Welfare Deputy Director Aftab Uddin is investigating the incident.

Assistant Director Mustafijul Haque said a general diary was lodged with police.



PHOTO: STAR

Farm workers of Central Jute Research Farm in Manikganj brought out a procession yesterday demanding payment of arrears salary.

A different scene at jute research instt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Farm workers of the Central Jute Research Farm of Bangladesh Jute Research Institute yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally on its compound at Jagir in Manikganj demanding payment of their three months' arrears.

They also submitted a memorandum to the Director of Jute Research (Agr) at the institute.

Md Khobir Uddin, president of Central Jute Research Farm Workers Association presided over the rally,

addressed by, among others, its secretary Md Poran Ali and leaders Abdus Salam, Lal Mia, Ibrahim Mia, Kabel Uddin.

The workers are also abstaining from work since September 28 to press their 6-point demand.

Speakers at the rally said they will continue their strike until their demands are met.

They said 30 regular and 35 irregular workers are working in the farm for about 12 years but they are deprived of their lawful benefits and rights.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalists joined by people in Bogra town protest murder of Dipankar Chakrabarty (left) and in a unique protest, Zahangir Alam Akash, staff correspondent of Daily Sangbad in Rajshahi stand on a road island with eyes and face covered with black cloth and hands tied behind. The photos were taken on Sunday.

How many more journalists to die?

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Journalists in Rajshahi and Gaibandha on Sunday protested the brutal killing of Dipankar Chakrabarty, a senior journalist and vice-president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) in Bogra on Sunday.

Our Rajshahi Staff Correspondent reports: Local journalists staged demonstrations on the streets.

In an exceptional demonstration, journalist Zahangir Alam Akash remained standing for two hours without any pause. His eyes and mouth were fastened with black cloth while his hands were tied up behind with rope. He displayed a big list of journalists killed by miscreants. He posed a question who is

the next target?

He also addressed briefly before ending the demonstration.

Rajshahi Sangbadik Samaj brought out a big procession from Alupotty crossing and held a rally at Zero point.

Among others, the Editors' Forum Convener Liaqut Ali, senior journalists Abdul Quader, Hasan Millat and Mustafijur Rahman Khan Alam spoke. Jatiya Sangbadik Shangstha, Rajshahi Journalists' Union, Metropolitan Press Club, Rajshahi Press Club and a few NGOs protested the killing holding separate meetings and statements.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reports: Gaibandha Press Club in an emergency meeting condemned the killing of the senior journalist.

Speakers expressed deep shock at the killing. They also expressed their grave concern at the increasing trend of killing media persons.

Presided over by Gobinda Lal Das, President of Gaibandha Press Club, the meeting was addressed, among others, by journalists KM Rezaul Hoque, Nurul Alam Jahangir, Abu Zafar Sabu, Abedur Rahman Shawpon, Nuruzzaman Prodhan, Shahbul Shaheen Tota and Amitav Das Himun.

Speakers further demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits and asked the government to restore law and order in the country.

Processions and meetings are being held till filing of the report on Monday noon.

Elderly allowance shared by UP leaders!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Elderly Zobed Ali and Bachhi-ruddin of Kashiram Belpukur union in Syedpur upazila were returning home with Tk 1800 each they got as government's elderly allowance.

They were happy that henceforth no one would demand a share from the doles.

Earlier on the day, ruling party MP Amzad Hossen Sarker who was chief guest at the allowance distribution ceremony at Syedpur asked the 568 recipients not to bribe any one to get the elderly allowance.

But their happy mood disappeared when they reached the Rangpur-Dinajpur road. Their Union Parishad member Badsha burst forth all of a sudden and demanded half of the money they got, reminding them that their names were included in the list of recipients on condition of a fifty-fifty share.

As they refused, Badsha snatched Tk 700 from Zobed Ali. Bachhiruddin had handed over the money to somebody else for safety. As he had no money, Badsha snatched his elderly allowance card. The incident happened on Wednesday.

Next day, Zobed Ali, 75, file a case against Badsha with Syedur thana. Police arrested him on that night from Hazrat Hat.

This opened the Pandora's box. Many elderly people who got elderly allowance in the union are now demanding return of the amounts taken by UP leaders as share or bribe or to face Badsha's fate.



PHOTO: STAR

Surprised visitors... Poor street children at an exhibition of paintings done by children like them, opened at Chittagong Shilpakola Academy on Saturday. Aparajeyo Bangla organised the paintings by poor street children.

