

SNAPS

New York Times report protested

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

A procession was brought out on January 31 by the district unit of Jatayabadi Chhatradal (JCD) protesting the objectionable comments published in The New York Times against Bangladesh recently. Processionists paraded the main streets of the town. While addressing, JCD President Jamilur Rahman termed the comments as an intervention to the internal affairs of Bangladesh. He urged the editor and the reporter to visit Bangladesh to witness the communal harmony prevailing in the country.

S P P 's Bar membership suspended for 'corruption'

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Madaripur Bar Association has suspended the membership of Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) advocate Abdul Hamid for alleged corruption and misbehaviour. The action, effective from January 31, was taken against him following complaints received from various persons. According to the complaints, Hamid received bribes amounting to Tk 25,000 from Ilias Kazi, Tk 70,000 from Julhas Ujir and Tk 70,000 from Shefali Khanam in exchange of bail. However, he failed to bail out the accused persons. When contacted with advocate Hamid, he refuted the allegations saying, 'I am a victim of politics.'

Discussion to mark Short Loan Year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A discussion meeting was held at the Zilla Parishad auditorium to mark the International Short Loan Year-2005 on Monday. Patuakhali unit of Sankalpa Trust organised the discussion. Babul Chandra, Manager of the Sankalpa Trust district unit presided over the meeting. Among others, Molik Moha-mmad Ayub, founder of the trust, Miryasi Khaled, Programme Manager, Monirul Islam, Moniru-zzaman and Abdur Rahim addressed the meeting.

Religious teachings can prevent AIDS

B'baria meeting told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Adherence to religious teachings and awareness can save people from HIV/AIDS, speakers at a discussion meeting here have said.

A discussion on HIV/AIDS, organised by Marie Stopes, was held at Brahmanbaria Government College here on Monday.

It was presided over by its principal Prof Mia Muhammad Idris and addressed by, among others, its vice-principal Md Abdus Noor; Maria Stopes' Co-ordinator of HIV/AIDS Prevention Project AKM Fazle Khudha, Dr. Md. Nazmul Islam and Md. Sahadath Hossain.

They said Bangladesh is very much vulnerable to HIV/AIDS as the disease is spreading fast in neighbouring India and Burma.

They called for building awareness against the disease and said college students can play a vital role in this regard. They also urged students to follow religious teachings.

A woman entrepreneur with a vision

Zohra Begum in Gaibandha employs 60 people and hopes to add wooden furniture to the export basket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

From a small entrepreneur, Zohra Begum is now the owner of a bid timber industry.

She produces export quality door panes, window frame, grooved and fashionable household and office furniture, sign board and decorated wooden items.

She hopes to start export soon. Her products are of international standard but cheaper because of lesser labour cost, she says.

"I Malaysia can export, who not we? My products are not inferior to the furniture imported from Malaysia", she said.

She supplies wood products in other districts and has four show-rooms in Dhaka, Sylhet, Bogra and Rajshahi. The demand is increasing day by day, she said.

"I saw Malaysian furniture in Dhaka some years back. I thought I can also produce such furniture", she told this correspondent during a recent visit to her Jony Auto Door and Furniture at Hashem Bazar along the Gaibandha-Sunderganj road, three kilometres from the town.

Ignoring obstacles from the family, Zohra had started with a backyard workshop with two craftsmen and a capital of Tk 5000 in 2000. Her capital has increased to Tk 14 lakh. All the items are now produced by using sophisticated machinery in her modern workshop.

She now employs 60 people including technicians and carpenters. "Despite this, I can not meet the demand from clients", she said.

After passing the Secondary Schools Certificate (SSC) examina-

tion, Zohra attended a training course on small and cottage industry, provided by Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industry Corporation (BSCIC) in 2000 and decided to set up a wood workshop.

"After some days I realised that this is a viable industry antook a loan of Tk one lakh from Islami Bank".

Honesty is the key to my success, she said. We unable to supply of furniture as per demand. I have with me at least 25 different attrac-

tive designs of main door panes.

"I never use artificial wood. I always use natural timber and make those moisture free by keeping those in a dry chamber. Such processed wood is never damaged by woodworm, she added.

"I have offers to set up industry in Dhaka and Selhet but I refused. I want to employ people in my area", she said.

"My product are not beyond the purchasing capacity of middle class

people. Price of a single door is Tk 5,000 to Tk 5,500 whereas a similar product costs Tk 9,000 in Dhaka or Selhet.

Her husband AJM Saleheen is a banker.

"It is really hard for a woman to set up an industry in out society. But my husband extends all possible cooperation to me" she said.

She said she is hopeful that women will come forward in large numbers in entrepreneurship.



Zohra Begum supervising fine groove work on a piece of wood to make a decorated door pane.

PHOTO: STAR

More protests against bomb attack on Khulna newsmen

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Journalists of Patuakhali and Madaripur on Monday continued protests against Saturday's bomb attack at Khulna Press Club.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent reports: Journalists here condemned the attack by holding a meeting at Patuakhali Press Club. The meeting was presided over by the club Vice President Abu Jafar Khan.

While addressing, the speakers demanded immediate arrest and punishment to culprits.

Among others, Foyzur Rahman, Sankar Das, Jalal Ahmed, Abdur Rashid Badal, Mezbah Uddin and Sapan Banerjee addressed the meeting.

A Correspondent from Madaripur reports: A protest meeting was held here on the day under the auspices of Sangbadik Kalyan Samity.

The meeting was presided over by Golam Mowla Akond. It was addressed, among others, by Moinul Islam (Prothom Alo), Forkan Ahmed (Inquilab), Subal Biswas (Janakantha), Jahangir

(Janata), Bazlur Rahman Khan (Amar Desh), Belal Khan (Observer), M R Mortuja (Ajker Kagoj), Samsuddoha (Sangram), Nitya Halder (Sangbad) and others.

Start OMS of rice, Rangpur traders demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Shop Owners' Association President Kazi Mohammed Zunnun on Tuesday urged the government to begin Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice here immediately to save the poor people.

In a memorandum to the Prime Minister (PM), Zunnun told that the sufferings of poor people, specially day labourers multiplied due to soaring prices of rice beyond their capacity.

He told that rice is being sold at between Tk. 19 to 22 per kilogram (KG) in the markets. As a result, poor people are passing their days unfed or half-fed, he said.

Union-level BNP conference in Rajshahi today

BSS, Rajshahi

The sixth union-level conference of BNP leaders and workers will be held here today as part of the party's mobilisation campaign at the grassroots.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will inaugurate the conference at Rajshahi Stadium as the chief guest with Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP and Chief Coordinator of the conferences Tarique Rahman in the chair.

A total of 2,187 representatives, including 1,075 from union level and 883 from Pourasabha ward level of three districts -- Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi -- will take part in the conference.

Tight security measures have been taken ahead of the conference with deployment of extra police while the city was decorated with welcome arches, colourful festoons and banners inscribed with BNP slogans and huge portraits of

President Ziaur Rahman, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman.

The meeting will begin at 9am and continue till 5pm. It will discuss the country's socio-economic scenario and the tasks of the party men in the days to come.

Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP has been coordinating all activities of the conference.

Party sources said all the representatives will be given an audio cassette and five books each containing party-founder Ziaur Rahman's speeches, party philosophy, information about Bangladesh politics, country's agricultural development and prospects, government's role in alleviating poverty and opposition's 'negative' programmes hindering government activities.

Tarique Rahman with other senior party leaders arrived here yesterday after holding the fifth conference in Natore.

Fake doctor in Satkhira chargesheeted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A fake doctor has been chargesheeted for cheating patients by impersonating a highly qualified doctor.

Su-Inspector Jhanagir Talukdar submitted the charge sheet with a magistrate court at Satkhira on Monday against Bazlur Rahman, who had no degree from any medical institution but was using MBBS, FCPS and Md degrees on letter head pad.

He had a well furnished chamber at Skylab Medical Centre at Palashpole in the town.

Police charged him under sections 467/468/471 Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC).

The name of Bazlur Rahman and 11 other 'fake doctors' were published in the Daily Star on July 30, 2003.

After publication of the news, health officials Satkhira district unit of BMA (Bangladesh Medical Association) investigated the matter and detected the 12 fake doctors including Bazlur Rahman.

Satkhira Civil Surgeon then submitted a report to higher authorities to take action against them.

Police arrested Bazlur Rahman on July 17, 2004 from his chamber.

The charge sheet was submitted after investigation, SI Jhanagir told this correspondent.

Tale of two govt schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Academic activity is being greatly hampered in Government Jubilee High School and Government Girls' High School due to shortage of teachers. In Jubilee High School, 17 posts of teachers including two posts of assistant headmaster, 15 posts of assistant teachers are lying vacant.

In Government Girls' School, 24 posts of teachers including that of headmistress, two posts of assistant headmaster and 21 posts of assistant teachers have been lying vacant, according to official sources. Accommodation problem is behind the shortage of teachers.

5 BDR men closed for 'helping' smugglers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Five BDR personnel including a Habildar of Chanduria border outpost (BOP) in Lalaraa upazila were 'closed' to 12 Rifles Battalion headquarter at Satkhira on Monday allegedly for helping smuggling, BDR sources said.

Acting on a tip off, Commanding Officer (CO) of 12 Rifles battalion on Saturday seized a huge quantity of bronze wire and 12 gas cylinders worth about Tk six lakh from a boat on Sonai river near the Chanduria BOP while those were being smuggled out.

BDR sources said that on investigation, it was proved that the five BDR personnel had helped the smugglers.

The BDR personnel including Havildar Shah Jahan were then closed to the Battalion Headquarter.

Cop jailed for marriage without wife's consent

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

A police personnel was awarded six months rigorous imprisonment (RI) for his second marriage without consent of his first wife.

The police personnel is Sub-inspector (SI) Mostafa Faruk. He was also fined Tk 5,000.

While working in Faridpur, SI Mostafa married for second time without permission of his first wife Shahnaj Sultana, according to court sources. Sultana filed a case with the court of first class magistrate, Jasimuddin Khan accusing her husband.

The magistrate delivered the judgement on January 30.

12 get 4-year RI each for gouging eyes of three

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Twelve persons on Monday were sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment (RI) by a court here for gouging out eyes of three persons due to previous enmity.

The convicts are Monowar Hossain, Dulal Howlader, Motaieb Master, Mujaffar Hossain Bepary, Atahar Hossain Bepary, Kader Howlader, Abdul Gani Gazi, Sultan, Atahar Howlader, Sona Mia Howlader, Jasim Howlader and Omor Faruque.

Each of them were fined Tk 2,000, in default, to suffer six months more RI.

Eusuf Howlader, Haider and their brother-in-law Abdur Rab were waiting for a launch at a passenger shed at Titkata launch ghat (terminal) in Sadar upazila on July 4, 1988. Observing them the convicts kidnapped them due to previous enmity. They took them to Ayala Char where they gouged out their eyes.

Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Monjur Alam Bhuiyan sentenced them.

Vital govt establishments in SW dists under security blanket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Security has been tightened in key government installations and important public places in ten districts of Khulna division in the wake Saturday's bomb attack at Khulna Press Club.

Police superintendents (SPs) in the 10 districts have been asked to monitor security arrangements to check any "attack by outlaws". DIG Soharb Hossain is supervising the steps.

"Security has been beefed up so that untoward incidents do not occur any more", Soharb Hossain told this correspondent.

Security in important government installations including TV and radio stations, power stations, bus stand, sea port, EPZs and different historical places are being monitored, he said.

The DIG on Thursday visited some of the establishments in Kushtia.

Other police sources admitted that outlaws are now "out to take revenge" after at least 140 alleged outlaws belonging to different parties were killed in "crossfire" in the 10 districts since June last year.

Leaders of seven outlawed parties

held a secret meeting at a place in Kushtia on Wednesday.

A top leader of an outlawed party confirmed holding of the meeting but declined to be named or give details.

On December 22 last year, leaders of the seven parties held a meeting in Jhenidah town and reportedly formed 'several killing squads' for operations in the ten districts, sources said earlier.

The meeting followed the "killing" of Mofakkar Hossain Choudhury, founder of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

The other parties are Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), PBCP-Janajuddho, PBCP-Red Flag, Jashod Gono Bahini (JGB), Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF), Biplobi Anuragi and Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSP).

After the December 22 meeting, a leader of GMF -- Sabuz -- in a press statement blamed BNP- Jamaat government for the 'killings' in 'crossfire' and said those were violation of human rights.

In Kushtia, all the police stations and 22 outposts have been put on alert, police sources here said.

PDB official assaulted by CBA leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A PDB (Power Development Board) official here was assaulted by BNP-backed CBA (Combined Bargaining Agent) leaders on Sunday.

The Deputy Director (DD) of Administration, Nurul Haque was assaulted by CBA leaders led by its general secretary Gazi Ayub at his Bidyut Bhavan chamber in Agrabad Commercial Area. They assaulted him for 'not promoting their men of choice' as storekeepers, according to witnesses.

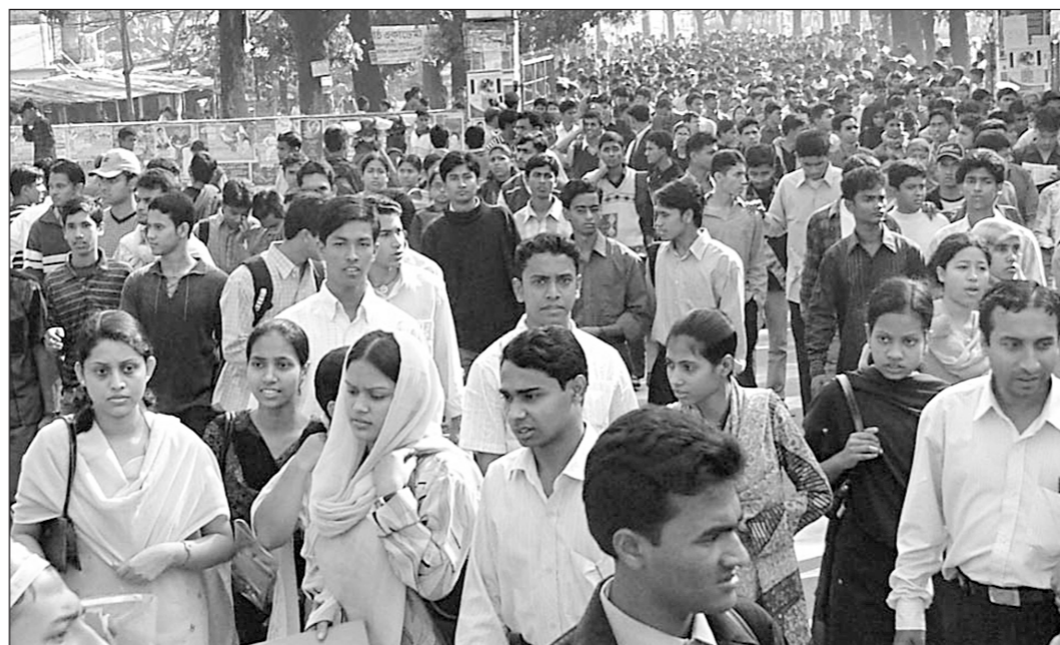
In reply to their charges, the DD told them that everything had been done 'as per government rule and he had nothing to do with promotion', witnesses said further.

Probably his reply did not satisfy them. They abused and gave him a good blow. At one stage other PDB officials came to his rescue.

When contacted with Nurul Haque, he told this correspondent, "The matter was trifling and the incident happened due to a 'misunderstanding' which was already settled down".

However, the acting Chief Engineer of PDB, Saiful Haque told The Daily Star the matter was informed verbally to the higher authorities of the board and the ministry concerned.

Previously, similar incidents occurred several times. Virtually the PDB officials are hostages to labour leaders, according to relevant sources.



This is neither a big procession nor a rally. This is a partial view of the huge number of students who came to Chittagong University yesterday to appear at admission test.

PHOTO: STAR