

SNAPS

Art exhibition opens at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

A three-day art exhibition organised by Anandan, a cultural organization, began at Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday. A total of 75 paintings by 10 painters who participated in the workshop organized by Anandan in this connection will be on display at the Zahir Raihan auditorium.

One killed as truck plunges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

One persons was killed and six people were injured when a truck fell into a road side ditch along the Dhaka-Sylhet high way near Rampur village in Brahmanbaria Sadr upazila yesterday. Abul Kasem, 35, died on the spot. The six injured persons have been admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. They are Jamal Uddin, 32, Hanis Mia, 20, Abu Mia, 45, Jahangir Alam 18, Rasel Mia, 20, and Ahad Mia 18. All the seven were on the truck and going to Sylhet from Brahmanbaria, police said.

50 hurt in B'baria clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups at Chatalpar village in Nasimgar upazila in the district on Sunday. The groups led by Monir Member and Kamal Mia had previous enmity, police said quoting local people. Nine of the injured including two women were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. The rest other were given first aid at Nasimgar Upazila Health Complex.

# BFIDC to sell out prime Kaptai unit

## CBA leaders say vested quarters eyeing Karnaphuli Timber Extraction and Processing Unit for long

MONIRUL ALAM, back from Kaptai

The Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC) is going to sell out the Karnaphuli Timber Extraction and Processing Unit, a prime project with about Tk 200 crore assets despite protests by its employees.

Its employees and CBA leaders claimed that the 'mother project' is being eyed for long by some vested quarters. Some high officials of BFIDC and the forest ministry are behind the "conspiracy", they claimed.

The decision to sell out the unit, taken at meeting held at the ministry in Dhaka, will be implemented by this month, they claimed. The meeting was attended by Forest and Environment Minister Tariqul Islam.

Its employees, numbering 204 including officials, had urged the authorities to reconsider the decision and to properly equip it with appropriate equipment for better functioning.

Talking to this correspondent during a visited last week, some of the CBA leaders and officials said the government is selling out the unit on a false that that it is loss-making. The unit, set up in 1960, is now in a run down condition because of lack of appropriate machinery, they said.

Yet it earned a revenue of Tk 31 lakh in the last financial year from supply of processed timber and sized logs to other industrial units of BFIDC.

It has Tk 13 crore bills outstanding with different BFIDC units, they said.

They said they also proposed a 'golden handshake' for its employees, but it was ignored by the authorities.

Only purchase of two bulldozers, one crane and repair of some vehicles could make the unit fully operational, they said.

The unit was set up to extract timber from forests in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and supply processed timber to different government and

non-government organisations as per need.

The processing unit collects trees felled by storm and indigenous people to made land suitable for Jhum cultivation.

They blamed some top officials of BFIDC and the ministry for the decision, allegedly made in connivance with some vested quarters.

"Instead of making the unit fully operational, they are selling it and displacing the employees", said CBA Secretary Anwarul Islam.

"Records showed that it is a profitable unit," said another CBA leader Abul Kashem.

He however admitted that the employees are unpaid for eight months.

"We do not realise bills. We are not paid as BFIDC is not realising the bills and paying us", he said.

The CBA leaders said the unit has no bank liability and can be made highly profitable with a small investment.

## Mujahidin involved in bomb attacks

### Interrogation reveals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Jamaatul Mujahidin has organisational network in Shaghata, Sundarganj and Sadullapur upazilas in Gaibandha district and was involved in bomb attacks in the district, according to confessions made by the arrested activists during interrogation.

The 15 activists, arrested last week are on remand now. Some of them were interrogated in presence of the Gaibandha Police Superintendent, police sources said yesterday.

They said during interrogation, Habibur Rahman alias Jubaye Ali, one of the arrestees, claimed himself to be a 'regional commander' of Jamaatul Mujahidin.

Dr. Galib, arrested from Rajshahi, is their central leader, he said.

"I was assigned to organise units in Gaibandha", Habibur told police.

He also said the party had a plan to stop all anti-Islamic cultural activities and its activists were involved in bomb attacks. But he denied his involvement in any of the bomb explosions in Gaibandha, police said.

Habibur hails from Saduria village in Shibganj upazila in Bogra.

Habibur also confessed that Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and Dr Galib use to visited them several times in the last two years to see organisational activities in Gaibandha.

Last week, police in a series of combing operations arrested 15 persons suspecting them to be members of a religious extremist outfit.

The sources said all inmates have left Borokona Kawni Madrasa in Shaghata upazila following the arrest of Mujahidin activists.

## One more grenade recovered in Dinajpur

A CORRESPONDENT, DINAJPUR

One more grenade and a locally-made shot gun were recovered from a paddy field at Mallicapur village in Pirganj upazila in Thakurgaon district on Sunday.

Abul Kashem had gone to irrigate his paddy field in the morning. He saw an iron-made heavy material beside his irrigation pump. He informed Thakurgaon police.

ASP (circle) Subroto Hawladar and Pirganj thana OC Shahidul Haque rushed there with a team and recovered the grenade.

After searching the area, they also found a shot gun, left nearby.

Thakurgaon police on February 12 recovered three powerful grenades from a paddy field in the same upazila. Those were defused by army from Rangpur Cantonment.

## Cop's body recovered in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police recovered the body of a constable from a narrow lane beside New Cross Road in Guptapara area in Rangpur town Sunday morning.

Kotwali thana OC Noor-e-Alam said Rafiqul Islam, 50, along with two other constables were on patrol duty in Rangpur town Saturday night. The two others went back to Nababganj police barrack under Kotwali police station at dawn after duty, but Rafiqul Islam did not go back.

Rafiqul had gone to respond to the call of nature. He died of a stroke there.

# Join tomorrow's Dhaka rally, intensify agitation

## AL leaders Motia, Mohiuddin Alamgir, Asaduzzaman Noor tell public meetings in Madaripur, Rangpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Awami league Presidium members Motia Chowdhury and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir have said the sooner the government is dislodged, the better it is for the people.

They called upon the people to intensify the on-going anti-government agitation and to join Awami League's 'grand rally' in Dhaka tomorrow in a massive way to express their no-confidence against it.

They were addressing public meetings in Madaripur and Tangpur on Sunday.

**A Correspondent reports from Madaripur:** Price hike of essentials and fertiliser, grenade attacks and bomb blasts are gifts of the alliance government for the people, Motia Chowdhury said at the public meeting held at the Sadar Jam-e-Masjid ground.

People's life and property are not safe under the rule of the government she said and urged the people to join the anti-government agitation.

"Whenever BNP comes to power, prices of fertiliser and rice soar", he alleged. "Because this is not a pro-people government".

She said IRRi-Boro cultivation is being affected throughout the country

due to high prices of fertiliser and fuel, the former agriculture minister said.

The ruling party men are sheltering fanatic Islamist groups, who are creating violence in the country in the name of Islam, she alleged, saying, this is tarnishing the image of the country abroad.

She claimed that the ban on JMB (Jamaatul Mujahidin) and JMBJ (Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh) is a hoax by the government. "How the government which sheltered them for three years can try them now?"

These fanatics are misleading the people in the name of Islam and establishing Islamic rule in the country, she claimed.

With Madaripur district AL President Ferdous Jamader in the chair, the meeting was also addressed by, among others, Shahjahan Khan MP, Syed Abul Hossain MP, Col (Retd) Showkat Ali MP and Jahangir Kabir.

**Our Rangpur Correspondent reports:** Awami League Presidium member Mohiudin Khan Alamgir called upon the people to be unite once again as during the Liberation War to unseat the "failed government".

He was addressing a public meeting, held at GL Roy Road in the town.

It was addressed by, among others, AL Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman

Noor MP, Mostafizur Rahman MP, Sarfuddin Ahmed Zhontu, Elias Ahmed, Mosaddique Hossen Bablu and Moazzem Hossen Lovelu. Sha Abdur Razzak presided.

Alamgir said people want peace and development, which the alliance government has failed to provide.

Referring to the murder of AL leaders SAMS Kibria, Ivy Rahman and Ahsanullah Master, he said his party does not expect trial of the murders during the tenure of the government. People will try the killers after the government is dislodged, he said.

He called upon the people to join tomorrow's Awami League rally and intensify the agitation to hasten fall of the government.

Losing people's confidence, the ruling parties are now utilising state forces to suppress the opposition to cling to power, he alleged.

But this will not be able to suppress people's agitation, he said.

Asaduzzaman Noor said so-called Islamic militants under the direct patronization of the BNP-led coalition government are killing Awami League leaders and pro-liberation forces. Journalists are also not spared.

# Netrakona AL virtually split

## Two rival factions hold separate programmes

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

The rift in Netrakona Awami League has widened, making mid-level party workers frustrated at a time of hectic political activities by the party in the country.

The two rival factions are now holding separate programmes. The serious disagreement and conflict between the two rival factions may lead to clashes any time, many leaders and activists this correspondent talked to said.

One faction of the party is led by former lawmaker Fazlur Rahman Khan, also a former president of Netrakona district AL. Former chairman of Netrakona Pourasava Matir Rahman Khan, Jubo League leader Omar Faruk and district Chhatra League President Mazibur Rahman Hira are with him.

The other faction is led by former lawmaker Jalaluddin Talukder, along with Netrakona district AL President Shamsujjuha, General Secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru and Organizing Secretary Nur Khan Mitu.

The rift has also affected the party in almost all the ten upazilas.

Leaders and activists belonging to the Shamsujjuha group took part in the party's recent anti-government agitation but those aligned with Fazlur Rahman did not go for any such programme.

The conflict is long-drawn. I surfaced during the last general election when Shamsujjuha had urged the

party central leaders not to nominate Fazlur Rahaman, who was a lawmaker at that time.

The party then nominated Abdul Momin, taking him to be a neutral man. But the conflict intensifies during the last district council of the party held on January 27 last year, when Fazlur Rahman Khan lost to Shamsujjuha in the race for the post of president of the district unit.

Recently, the group led by Shamsujjuha held a meeting at the party office protesting the murder of party central leader and former finance minister SAMS Kibria in Habigonj.

Fazlur Rahman group held a protest programme at Chandranath High School ground in the town.

Since then, the rival factions are holding programmes separately, often

accusing each other.

When contacted, Shamsujjuha and Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, president and general secretary of the district committee, said they have been elected by party councilors and so enjoy support of the rank and file. "They (Fazlur Rahman group) are conspiring against the party", Shamsujjuha alleged.

Fazlur Rahaman Khan said they are holding separate programmes because many of the workers do not like them (Shamsujjuha and Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru).

Some mid-level leaders and party workers said central leaders should intervene immediately to resolve the conflict for the greater interest of the party.



PHOTO: STAR

Artistes performing at the cultural function organised jointly by CCD and BASA at Rajshahi University yesterday to create awareness against AIDS.

# AIDS awareness programmes held at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Centre for Communication and Development (CCD) and Bangladesh Anti AIDS Students Alliance (BASA) jointly organised a session of Baul songs (folk song) and held a drama at Rajshahi University station market Sunday evening to create awareness about AIDS and HIV.

They also organised a cultural

function, a debate, a film show and a painting exhibition on the University campus on the occasion. CCD Executive Director Golam Murtoza was present as chief guest at the session of folk songs.

BASA's RU unit held the debate on AIDS at the Institute of Business Studies.

RU Vice-chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki inaugurated the

debate as chief guest.

RU Pro VC KAM Shahadat Hossain Mondol and Students Advisor Prof Zahid Hossain Milky was present as special guests.

Speaking on the occasion, the VC said adherence to religious teachings can contain spread of aids in Bangladesh. He said Bangladesh is vulnerable to the incurable disease as this is spread-

ing rapidly in neighbouring India and Burma.

The Pro VC advised students to hold such programmes every month on the campus to create awareness about AIDS and HIV.

At least 75 students from 19 educational institutes will take part in the two-day debate.

# Local govt leaders vow transparency

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

It was a different experience for the townspeople. They saw over 1000 representatives of local governments marching streets, carrying banners vowing transparency and accountability in local governance and demanding government steps to empower the grassroots level bodies.

Chairmen and members of all the 79 Union Parishads, including females, gathered at Shahid Abdur Razzak Park Sunday morning, held a rally there and brought out a procession in Satkhira town.

The rally was addressed by, among others UP chairmen Sheikh Alamgir Haidar (Romjan Nagor), GM Anisuzzaman (Kashimari), Prof Rafiqul Islam (Jalalpur), Gazi Shah Jahan Siraj (Kaikhal), Abdus Sabur and Amit Bannerjee.

They said strengthening local governments is vital for development, good governance and utilisation of government resources.

They also called for more budgetary allocation for local governments and local development projects.

If local governments are empowered, poverty reduction and development of the country will be faster and democracy will be institutionalised, they said.

They also called upon local governments leaders to maintain transparency and accountability in all activities. Political affiliation should not influence any leader in selecting development projects and distributing government resources including grants like relief, they said.

They also demanded return of their power to lease local markets, Water bodies and ferry terminals.

A large number of people coming

from different areas along with the UP leaders also joined the procession that terminated in front of the collectorate building.

They submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner to press their 13-point demand, which includes power to lease markets and water bodies, non-interference in their activities by the local administration and political leaders and enhancement of their remuneration.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Union Parishads brought out a procession in Satkhira town on Sunday demanding government steps to empower local governments.