

SNAPS

Memo to PM for food security in N dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Bangladesh Khet Mojur Samity (an association of farm workers) brought out a procession in Nilphamari town and handed over a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner yesterday demanding food security and employment for farm workers. It also held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office. Sreedam Das, district convener of the Samity and Nilphamari president of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) presided over the rally. The memorandum was received by ADC Mohammad Gous.

Student leader held for burning US flag

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) leader was arrested for burning the US flag and leading a demonstration in protest against observance of 'America Week' here on Tuesday. Khulna district Chhatra Union President Benazir Ahmed is now in police custody after being arrested from the Picture Palace cinema hall square. US Ambassador Harry K Thomas opened the week at a city hotel on Monday which will conclude on Thursday.

Left leader Shankar Boshu dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Eminent freedom fighter and an organiser of the language movement Comrade Shankar Boshu died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital Monday afternoon. He was 78.

Boshu was also one of the leaders of Tevhaga Andolon in 1940s in the then undivided Bengal to realise just share of sharecroppers.

He actively participated in movements against the British and Pakistani rulers.

He was a Politbureau member of Communist Party of Bangladesh. He later joined the Gono Forum and was its Rangpur district president till his death. He was born in a noble family in Faridpur on September 27, 1927.

PROTEST AGAINST INDIA'S PLANNED TIPAIMUKH BARRAGE

'Long march' towards Indian border starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) started its 2-day 'long march' from Sylhet city towards bordering Jakiganj yesterday to protest India's planned construction of the Tipaimukh barrage on the Barak river in Manipur.

The march started from the Central Shahid Minar in the city after a rally.

The 'long march' is being led party chief Khalequzzaman, Ex-MP Abdulla Sarker, Bazlur Rashid Firoze, Zahedul Haque Milon, Razequzzaman Ratan, Nurul Islam, Abdul Noor Master, Dr. Moinul Islam and Comrade Humayun Khan, who chaired the rally.

Ganatantri Party chief Arosh Ali and Arif Miah also spoke, among others, at the rally. Addressing the rally, they said India is constructing the barrage on the international river to produce hydro-electricity.

This will dry up the Surma and the Kushiara rivers in Bangladesh and trigger a desertification process in greater Sylhet region and in the entire Meghna basin, they said.

The meandering Barak river passed through Manipur, Mizoram and Assam states in India. It enters Bangladesh at Amolshid in Jakiganj and meets the Surma and the Kushiara.

The Tipaimukh barrage will be a death trap for Bangladesh and millions of people will suffer.

Even Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj and Netrokona districts will be seriously affected, they said. The Indian government is going ahead with implementation of the project ignoring repeated protests by people in Manipur.

It will be another Farakka, they said and called upon the people and the government of Bangladesh to resist it. They called upon all patriotic forces to join the 'long

march'.

The marchers will hold several wayside rallies on their way to Charkhai in Beanibazar upazila, 20 miles off the city. After a brief stop at Charkhai, they will proceed towards Jakiganj upazila headquarters. They will hold several rallies on way. Earlier the BSD held several rallies in the city and in other areas in the district and exchanged views with professional groups in the last few days.

Mentionably, the people of Manipur, Assam and Mizoram also protested the project earlier.

In Manipur, at least 40,000 aborigines will be displaced by the proposed project.

The Indian central government planned the project about a decade ago, but could not go ahead with it in the face of protests by its own people. Tipaimukh Embankment Resistance Committee was formed in Manipur to resist the move.



PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) began its 'long march' towards Indian border yesterday protesting planned construction of Tipaimukh barrage on Barak river in Manipur that will obstruct flow of water into the Surma and the Kushiara rivers in Bangladesh.

Barisal Bidi workers protest anti-smoking Bill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Bidi factory workers brought out a big procession in the city on Sunday protesting any possible anti-smoking law.

A bill was placed in the Sangsad recently suggesting punishment for smoking in public places and restriction on advertisement by cigarette companies.

They demanded creation of job opportunities for about 50 lakh Bidi workers across the country before passage of any such law. Many of the workers will become unemployed if any such law is passed, they said. The processionists carried banners reading slogans demanding alternative jobs for Bidi factory workers.

After the procession, the demonstrators submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner.

ATTACK ON LANDLESS

33 accused, 11 held in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A case has been filed with Kaligonj thana naming 33 people and accusing another 500 unidentified people for evicting landless people from disputed lands in Bairagir Chalk and Chingrikhali in Kaligonj upazila Sunday morning.

The accused include Nalta Union Parishad Chairman Ansar Ali and former UP chairman Shahidul Islam.

Police last night arrested 11 people including Ansar Ali for their alleged involvement in the incidents.

The others arrested are Sheikh Sirajul Islam, Sudev Kumar Das, Saminur Rahman, Abul Kalam, Idris Ali, Hossain Ali, Esadul Haq, Fazlar Ali, Ahmad Hossain and Sheikh Rezaul Islam.

One Haroon Gazi filed the case.

Police Superintendent Abdur Rahim said the situation is under control and police were deployed there.

Police sources said, the evicted people have returned to their homesteads and are living under the open sky.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Abul Kalam Azad, when contacted, said a group of landless people led by one Ashraf Ali occupied the government lands (vested property) there about a year back. They raised thatched houses and were living there.

Some sources claimed that a group of influential shrimp cultivators were behind Sunday's attack.

Combing operation in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Jhenidah police have launched a 'special combing operation' in the district to hunt down outlaws.

A gang of 25 outlaws entered the district in mid-January with powerful bombs purchased from an Islamist militant group in Chittagong and they are now hiding, police sources said yesterday.

Police came to the conclusion after last week's recovery of 12 powerful bombs from a pond in Jhenidah town and postponement of District Women Affairs' fair scheduled to be held on February 22 following a bomb threat. The bombs were wrapped

with polythene.

"We are working hard to track a down the outlaws. There is nothing to be worried. Combing operation is on to crush the terrorist", said a high-ranking police official in Jhenidah when contacted over cell phone.

The bombs were kept in the pond by extremists for use in destructive activities to avenge the "killing" of many of their leaders in crossfire.

The sources said Janajuddho faction of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) recently formed a bomb squad to avenge the killings.

They said police intelligence reports say all PBCP factions

have united and prepared a 'hit list' to kill several politicians, police officials and journalists in Khulna region.

Jhenidah Police Superintendent Akram Hossain talking to The Daily Star over cell phone did not deny the report on formation of a bomb squad and entry of its members into Jhenidah district.

Apart from alerting all the six police stations and 23 outposts, security measures have been tightened at vital installations including TV and radio stations, power supply stations and in public places like bus stations in Khulna region, he said.

One killed in Bhola BNP factional clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A BNP activists was killed and two others critically injured in clashes between two rival factions of the party at Khayerhut market in Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola on Monday.

Police have been deployed in the area fearing further clashes as tension mounted and shopkeepers downed their shutters.

Police said the clashes took place between supporters of Siraj alias Siraj Dacoit and Abdul Huq, both known as toll collectors and for their anti-social activities.

There has been rivalry between the two groups for long over possession of local BNP office and supremacy in the area for toll collection.

Mainuddin, 40, belonging to Siraj group was declared dead when he was taken to Bhola Sadar Hospital.

Two other leaders of the faction-- Mintu, 35, and Shukkur alias Jamai Siraj, 40-- are in critical condition at the hospital, doctors said when contacted over phone.

Police quoting witnesses said Abdul Huq's supporters attacked Moinuddin, Shukkur and Mintu when they went to the market in the morning.

Talking to local journalists later on the day, Abdul Huq claimed that 15 members of "notorious Siraj

dacoit gang", after taking shelter at the local BNP office, were preparing to loot the Agrani Bank branch at Khayerhut Bazaar at about 8-15 am on Monday.

Local people came to know their plan and laid a siege to the BNP office. Siraj gang members fired shots and hurled bombs from inside the BNP office, Huq claimed.

The agitated people then chased the them and caught three including Siraj. The three were beaten and hit hammers and lethal weapons.

Being informed, police from Borhanuddin and Daulatkhan thanas rushed to the spot at about 9 am.

Local people however gave different versions.

Agrani Bank manager M A Majid said there was no attempt by any body to loot the bank and he opened the branch at 8-45 Monday morning as usual.

Meherjan Begum, 70, mother of injured Mintu, and Amena Khatun, 35, wife of Siraj, said Siraj used to commit dacoity earlier along with Abdul Huq, former chairman of Gangapur Union Parishad. He has given up dacoity, they claimed.

Siraj and his son Bahauddin had earlier occupied local Awami League office and converted it into a BNP office.

'Crossfire killings' are only to save godfathers

AL leader Nasim claims at Gaibandha public meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Front ranking Awami League leader and former home minister Mohammad Nasim on Monday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat government is killing Awami League leaders in a planned way to eliminate political foes to stay in power.

None of the killings are being tried as the killers are sheltered by leaders of ruling parties, he alleged at a public meeting, held at Mohumaganj Bazaar in Gobindganj upazila.

"They have innovated the crossfire formulae to justify killings in custody", he said. The crossfire murders are only to save the ruling party godfathers behind criminals, he claimed.

The former home minister said outlaws contained during Awami League rule have become active again taking the advantage of ruling

parties' shelter to so-called Islamist militants.

Banning Bagla Bhai's JMB and Jamaat-ul-Mujaheed will not contain violence by the militants unless religion-based politics being done by Jamaat-e-Islami is banned, he said.

The alliance government has also made the country a free market for foreign commodities after closing down mills and factories one after another, said Nasim.

The Mohimaganj Sugar Mills has been closed rendering several thousand people jobless. He demanded reopening of the mill.

Nasim called upon the people to intensify the on going agitation to oust the "failure government".

The meeting was also addressed by, among others, former state minister for information Prof Abu Sayeed, AL central leader Fazlur Rabbi, Mohammed Faku and Abdul Jail.