



PHOTO: STAR

The Rajshahi unit of Bangladesh Women Lawyers Association formed a human chain on the court premises in Rajshahi city on Sunday demanding trial of rape and murder of 11-year old school student Mafroza Begum Mili.

## ATTACK ON PATROL BDR sues 10 in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) has filed a case with Debhata Police Station on Friday accusing 10 people including Kulia Union Parishad (UP) chairman Asadul Haq and his son Babu for alleged attack on a BDR patrol party and trying to snatch away arms and ammunition from the jawans on May 12.

A BDR team led by Captain Mahmud raided various establishments of shrimpy fry agents at Kulia Bazaar to recover fries of smuggled Indian lobster. A group of women resisted them while another group of people encircled the BDR members. They pelted stones on the BDR team and tried to snatch away their arms and ammunition. At a certain stage, the BDR jawans opened blank fire to disperse them. At that time, six jawans were injured, said BDR sources.

Meanwhile, a procession was brought out at Kulia Bazaar alleging BDR attack. A meeting followed the procession which was chaired by Kulia UP chairman Asadul Haq. It was addressed, among others, by Bhomra UP chairman and Jamaat leader Maulana Samsul Haq, Kulia UP BNP general secretary advocate Jahangir Alam and others. They demanded punishment to the BDR jawans involved in the incident.

A complaint was also lodged at Debhata PS on behalf of Kulia Bazar Fish Traders' Association, accusing six BDR sources and 35 unidentified BDR jawans. The BDR sources are Azizul Islam, Abu, Bablu, Mafiz and Subhas Chandra.

## Stop politics on monga

High time to fight it, workshop at Dalia told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

It is high time for all to stop politics on monga and to do something concrete and viable to change the situation.

This was stated by State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and Deputy Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Asadul Habib Dulu at a day-long workshop at Dalia, one of the monga affected areas in the eight northern districts.

High officials, agriculture experts, bankers, farmers' representatives, Union Parishad leaders, NGO representatives and journalists attended the workshop on Emerging Challenges of Monga: Ways to Face It, organised by the North West Crop Diversification Project (NCDP). It was held at the Water Development Board rest house at Dalia on Saturday.

This was the biggest ever workshop on the issue in the northern areas.

The Deputy Minister and the State Minister said there has been enough politics on the miseries of people. Vested quarters are taking chance of the opportunity.

They urged the government agencies, particularly those involved in agriculture and small scale industries and NGOs to work out concrete plans to overcome the situation.

Abdul Majid, Chief Scientific Officer of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in Rangpur region presented the key note paper at the workshop.

He said, during Bangla months of Aswin and Kartik (mid-September to mid-November) people of eight districts of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Nilphamari face acute hardship due to unemployment. They are only 10 per cent of the country's population living in 11 per cent area.

The causes are poor economic condition, repeated floods, river erosion, absence of food grains surplus at family level, increase in the number of landless people and unskilled labour and lack of employment in non-agricultural sectors excluding agriculture. None of these problems are beyond solution if there is will, he said.

Chairman of Rajshahi Krishi Unayan Bank Ruhul Kabir Rizvi was the special guest at the workshop presided over by Ibrahim Khalil, Director General (DG) of Agriculture Extension Department (DAE).

Speaking as chief guest, State Minister for Agriculture said we must create alternative employment opportunities, alongside developing and diversifying agriculture in the monga affected areas.

He said the government wants to

promote agro-based small and medium industries in the region but investors are not coming forth.

They think that investment in this region would not be profitable.

On the other hand, agriculture is not regarded by many as profitable profession now like before.

It is the time to think how agriculture in the region could be made profitable for farmers, he added.

Deputy Minister Asadul Habib Dulu said that 30 years back, labourers from other regions would come to the eight districts for employment. But now the situation is completely reversed.

The BARI Chief Scientific Officer said that in the absence of private sector, the government should come forward with plans for setting up of small and medium industries in the area. Interest-free loans should also be provided to people for setting up of cottage industries.

He said increase agriculture production through crop diversification is possible. He named 30 crops, cultivation of which can create employment during the monga period and change the situation.

Project Director of NCDP Zakir Hossain also spoke at the workshop.

## ASSAULT ON DOCTOR

Nilphamari BMA demands arrest of UP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Nilphamari district unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) yesterday demanded immediate arrest of Jaldhaka Poursabha chairman who is also the upazila unit president of BNP.

The demand came because of his alleged assault on the Upazila Health Complex (UHC) resident medical officer (RMO), Dr Mahbubul Hasan Lenin.

The BMA leaders said they would go for tougher agitation including work abstention from Saturday if the accused persons are not arrested by Friday.

Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury and his men stormed into the officer's club on the hospital premises on May 1 and charged Dr Lenin for his alleged neglect to hospital duty. At one stage, he assaulted the physician, hospital sources said.

Dr Lenin has filed a case with Jaldhaka Police Station.

District BMA president Dr Mamtazul Haque Mintoo told newsmen that BMA would go for tougher agitation if the accused persons are not punished. He also assured proper action against Dr Lenin if he neglected his duties, but attack on a physician is worth condemning, he said.

When contacted, Chowdhury refuted the allegations against him. He said he did not assault any doctor. He said the health department should take proper action against the irresponsible doctors,' he added.

When contacted, the on-duty officer of Jaldhaka Police Station told newsmen they have sent the relevant papers to the court and necessary steps would be taken after court order.

## 36 chargesheeted in Dumuria double murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The chargesheet of a double murder case of Dumuria Police Station was submitted to court on Saturday. Thirty-six persons were chargesheeted for murdering police constable Mujibar Rahman of Dumuria PS and his wife Fatema Begum on September 18 night in 2003.

Stain Fatema's elder brother Mowla Gazi lodged an FIR with Dumuria PS the next day.

However, 12 chargesheeted persons are absconding.

Meanwhile, Rahila Begum, lone eye-witness of the double murder received death threat from one of the absconders, Yakub Ali on Sunday.

## STRIKE AT RMCH POSTPONED

# 3 arrested but interns term it eyewash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Interns at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday postponed their indefinite strike after police arrested two persons in connection with the physical assault on one of their colleagues and the authorities gave assurance of security at the hospital and on the campus.

But at a meeting with RMCH Director and Bangladesh Medical Association leaders, they threatened a strike again if their five-point demand is not met by seven days.

Their demands include security, restriction on visitors and agents of clinics to the hospital, police vigilance at emergency wards, fixation

of visiting hours and introduction of pass for patients' attendants.

RMCH Director Brigadier Abul Kalam Azad, BMA Secretary General Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, RMC Principal Dr Fazlur Rahman, interns and JCD leader Dr Muktadir Hossain Mridha Subho, Islami Chhatra Shibir leaders Dr Nazmul Arefin and Dr Abdul Matin were present at the meeting.

Sources claimed that most of the interns at RMCH belong to JCD, and ICS, student wings of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The interns went on a wildcat strike Saturday noon, virtually paralysing activities at the hospital, after attendants of a female patient beat up intern Amanullah Chowdhury, allegedly for respond-

ing late to her call. They also paralysed the emergency ward by locking it up, which was unprecedented at RMCH.

Amanullah filed a case with Rajpara police station accusing ten persons, who were her attendants. He named three of the accused.

The arrested persons are Mokhlesur Rahman and Ripon.

The interns however termed the arrests an eyewash and demanded immediate arrest of the principal accused in the case.

Meanwhile, a RMCH press release yesterday said, from now on, visitors and attendants of patients will have to collect pass from ward registrars.

## DELICIOUS MANGOES START POURING IN

# Fazli will remain dear

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Delicious and mouth-watering mangoes have started pouring into markets in Rajshahi with the beginning of Jaistha, the Bangla month of sweet fruits.

According to horticulturists and traders, mangoes have started appearing a bit early this year as their production except that of 'king size' Fazli was by and large good this year in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj districts compared to last year's.

But output of Fazli would be about 70 per cent less this year in Chapainawabganj and 55 per cent in Rajshahi and other districts due to adverse weather for this fruit, they said.

Gopalbhog, one of the good varieties, is now selling at between Tk 1200 and Tk 1400 per maund. Still it is days away when maddening flavour of ripe mangoes will be in the air in Rajshahi, famous for mango trading.

Traders said, prices will fall when the supply will increase in a week.

But prices of Fazli will remain higher this year due to less output, they said.

"It is an exception this year. I never saw so low output of Fazli in 30 years. Fazli used to grow in plenty even in off-years", 65 year-old fruit seller Rahmatullah from Natore said.

Experts at Chapainawabganj Mango Research Centre told this correspondent that mango output increases in alternate years. This year is an 'on-year', they said.

Output of all varieties like Langra, Kirsapat, Gopalbhog,

Mohonbhog and Ranipasand is good this year.

"We are surprised at the unusual low production of Fazli. It may be due to prolonged cold during the fruiting period", said Shafiqul Islam, Senior Scientific Officer at Rajshahi Fruit Research Institute.

Besides, at least 15 per cent Fazli mangoes were damaged by storms, he said.

Agriculture Extension Department sources said, on an average, around 2.15 lakh metric tons of different varieties of mango grow in about 27,000 orchards on 1.06 lakh acres of land across the country.

More than half of it comes from Rajshahi region where nearly Tk 100 crore mangoes are traded in a year.

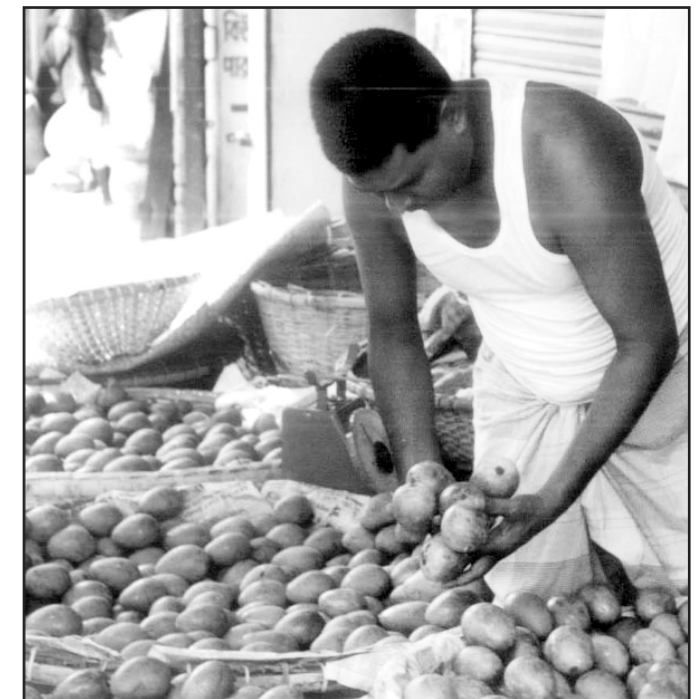


PHOTO: STAR

Mangoes have started pouring in in Rajshahi city markets but prices are not yet within the reach of commonman.

8.5x4

## MUGGERS INJURE 3 IN RAJSHAHI

# Truckers barricade highway for 3 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Truckers went berserk and kept the Dhaka-Rajshahi highway barricaded at Bhadra crossing in the city for about three hours Sunday night after their clash with muggers left three of their leaders injured.

The injured are Rajshahi Truck Workers Union President Mukitir Rahman Mukhta, its Vice-president Shamsul Alam Foni and Assistant General Secretary Alal Uddin. Foni was critically injured in the head and admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The clash erupted at around 9 pm as the muggers took away a cow from the truck in which one Shamsul Islam Babu was taking cows for sale in Dhaka.

Hearing the news, district truck workers leaders rushed to the scene and witnessed an attack by local muggers.

The truckers instantly barricaded

the road.

They truckers and muggers exchanged brickbats and fought duels, keeping the road blocked for about three hours.

Later, at around 1 am, Rapid Action Battalion members went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The truckers, at a press conference yesterday, alleged that mugging at Bhadra area has become rampant due to inaction by police of Talaimari outpost. They alleged that police did not respond to their call.

The truckers' union president Mukitir Rahman filed a case with Boalia police station, accusing ten persons including Hira, Sujon, Lutfar, Shamsur, Rumi, and Shamiul.

Police said they could not arrest any one till filing of the report yesterday evening.

5x2

3x4