

Take common stance against India's river inter-linking plan

Goutam tells Farakka Day meeting at Tangail

A CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakraborti has called upon the people to take a 'common stance' irrespective of political affiliations' against Indian's river inter-linking plan.

"We have repeatedly requested India to resolve the crisis politically, but they did not respond," the State Minister said while addressing a seminar here on Monday, organised in observance of Farakka Day marking the 'long march' towards Farakka, led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashahi.

"We are ready to hold talks with India any time also on sharing waters of common rivers", he said.

Water sharing and India's planned river inter-linking project

are vital national issues for Bangladesh and these should be kept above party politics, he said.

India is unilaterally obstructing flow of almost all the rivers by constructing dams or spars in the upstream, creating water crisis in dry season and floods in the monsoon, affecting the ecology and environment. Many regions in Bangladesh, particularly the northern and north-western districts, are showing signs of desertification, he said.

Now they have planned a river inter-linking project, which will create a havoc for Bangladesh.

Other speakers at the discussion meeting said India is showing an apathetic attitude towards Bangladesh's plight, resulting from control of flow of rivers in the

upstream.

The discussion meeting held at Tangail Public Library auditorium was presided over by Khandakar Nazim Uddin, president of Maulana Bhasani Foundation.

Vice-chancellor of Maulana Bhasani University of Science and Technology Dr Mohammad Khaliur Rahman and former secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association Prof Ferdous Hossain attended the function as special guests.

It was addressed by among others, Syed Infarrul Bari, Bulbul Khan Mahbub, Hamidul Haque Mohan, Prof Enamul Karim Shaheed, Prof Mahmud Kamal, Prof Yousuf Ali and Harunur Rashid.

FAMILY REJECTS BELAL MURDER CHARGE SHEET 'Move on to damage case merit'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Family members of slain journalist Sheikh Belaluddin yesterday rejected the charge sheet in the murder case and accused Khulna Metropolitan police of "miserable failure to arrest the masterminds and killers" despite assurances by several ministers for an impartial probe.

The charge sheet under Explosive Substances Act submitted to court is "nothing but an eye-wash", they said in a press conference held here yesterday.

Mohammad Shamsuddin Doha, younger brother of Shaikh Belal, alleged that there has virtually been no progress in the investigation of the murder.

"So, we question sincerity of police officials in revealing the motive behind the murder", Doha said.

"We have information that a vested group, in connivance with police officials involved in the investigation, is trying to damage the merit of Belal murder case", he said.

He regretted that the investigation officer (IO) of the case visited Belal's family only once in last 96 days from the date of the bomb attack, which clearly indicates his lack of interest in the case.

"We are quite afraid of the mastermind and the killers (of Belal), who are moving at large", he said.

The press conference was attended by Belal's father Modasser Ali, mother Alhaj Mannujan Nesa and wife Prof Tanjila Begum.

BAGERHAT BOMB ATTACK 2 more held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two more suspects were arrested on Monday in connection with the bomb attack at the circus pandal of a fair in Bagerhat stadium on Saturday.

The arrested persons are Faruk Hossain Badal, 37, and Tutul Shaikh, 26, two alleged bomb manufacturers, according to sub-inspector (SI) Masud Hossain who is investigating the case.

Khulna Sadar police took four persons who were arrested earlier on three-day remand.

Meanwhile, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Bagerhat Sadar Police Station Abdul Matin was transferred to the detective branch (DB) of police for his failure to protect the area where the fair was being held.

Mollahat Police Station OC joined yesterday as the new OC of Bagerhat Sadar PS while the OC of Chitalmari PS joined as the new OC Mollahat PS. The OC of DB joined the Chitalmari PS as its OC yesterday.

Demand for safe road



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Oaesis International School in Bogra formed a human chain in the town on Monday demanding safe road to and from school , after their school mate Rakib Hasan Tanvir was killed by a truck on Saturday.

Destruction of papers slows Gaibandha postal probe

Accused plan to move HC for bail as police 'inactive'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The team probing the defalcation of funds from depositors' accounts at Gaibandha Head Post Office is making slow progress as the culprits destroyed all relevant documents.

They have to procure copies of documents from the central record store of the postal department, according to sources in the team.

On the other hand, the role of police in arresting the six accused postal employees is being questioned by different quarters. None of them could be arrested while police say they are absconding.

Police sources say the Anti-corruption Commission should probe the matter. But police nei-

ther transferred the cases to the ACC nor arrested any of the culprits.

Some sources claimed that they are planning to move the High Court for interim bail.

Probe team sources said organised gangs with their accomplices in other post offices in greater Rangpur were involved in the scam since 1989.

The gangs damaged all relevant documents after defalcating funds in a planned way before the probe started.

The defalcated amount may reach Tk five crore, they said.

Led by Additional Post Master General Amanullah Majumder, the five-member team is examining postal saving accounts, saving certificates and money order transactions.

The gangs tempered accounts to misappropriate funds. Citing an example, a team member said that while verifying ledger book No. 42 in the saving bank, the balance in account No. 8562 was found at Tk 5.25 only. But it was shown at Tk five lakh by tempering and the total amount was then drawn.

In account No. 2560, the balance was Tk one lakh 35 thousand. The miscreants drew Tk one lakh by tempering the ledger balance.

The accused persons are Post Master Gaolam Nabi Sarker, Assistant Post Master Rafiqul Islam, CBA leader Habibur Rahman and postal operators Solaiman Ali, Golam Mostafa and Rafiqul Islam.

3 statues found in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Three valuable antique statues of a Hindu god Shiva have been found in a pond in the compound of the Deputy Commissioner's residence.

Some day labourers while digging the pond on Sunday found the three statues, one measuring three feet in height and made of white stone and the rest two made of bronze, but smaller in size.

They informed the administration.

Some sources claimed that a touchstone statue of Hindu goddess Kali was also found by the labourers, but that is missing.

A large number of curious visitors thronged the DC's residence after the news spread in the town.

A magistrate on condition of anonymity told this correspondent that the statues were preserved at the government treasury.

MISAPPROPRIATION OF GOVT FOOD GRAINS

Bandarban Poura chairman asked to refund Tk 15.7 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry has ordered Bandarban municipal chairman to refund Tk 15.70 lakh to the government as the food grains worth this amount, allotted for development projects, were allegedly misappropriated.

The order reached municipal chairman Mizanur Rahman Biplob on may 6, sources said.

The order was given after investigation by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry. A team led by a Joint Secretary probed the alleged misappropriation after all the ward

commissioners of Bandarban municipality lodged a complaint to the ministry in March.

The food grains were allotted under two heads, one for purchasing rickshaw vans to create self-employment involving 100 tonnes and the other for various development projects in the pourasabha area involving 100 tonnes of food grains.

The team investigated the rickshaw van project during several visits in April and found gross irregularity. After its report to the ministry, it asked the municipal chairman to refund Tk 15.70 lakh, which is equivalent to the price of 100 tonnes

of food grains.

The other component (100 tonnes) of the dole for implementation of 48 development projects is being investigated, the sources said.

The sources also claimed that the municipal chairman in a written representation to the probe team admitted misappropriation of the food grains.

Mizanur Rahman was elected under Awami League banner. Recently, a proposal was sent to the party high ups for disciplinary action against him. No decision has been taken yet, party sources claimed while talking to this correspondent.

Tk 72 lakh pension money defalcated in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An official of the Bogra District Accounts Office has been suspended for alleged misappropriation of funds from pension bills of government officials.

Sources said the Chief Accounts Officer was suspended after defalcation of about Tk 72 lakh was detected. He has been replaced by Mina Parveen, who said Tk 71.73 lakh was misappropriated during the tenure of his predecessor by showing fake bills. The accused official admitting his

involvement in the defalcation, said he misappropriated only Tk 20 lakh. A processes is on to file a case, Mina said.

The incident was detected after a pension holder had a quarrel with Sekendar Ali recently.

The pension holder then filed a general diary with Bogra Sadar thana and complained to higher authorities for inquiry.

During inquiry it was revealed that he used to prepare false bills and misappropriate money.

Procession, rally for khas land in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A large number of landless people held a rally, brought out a procession and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner yesterday demanding government lands and withdrawal of Debhata Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

The rally was held at Shahid Abdur Razzak Park with Ohab Ali Sarder, president of Debhata-Kaliganj Bhumihin Sangram Committee, in the chair.

Advocate Abdur Rahim was the chief guest at the rally, addressed by, among others, Md Nazrul Islam, Prof Abu Ahmed, advocate Syed Iftekhar Ali, Mustafa Lutfullah, advocate Abul Kalam Azad, Saifullah Laskar, Kawsar Ali, Shafiq, Shahadat Hossain, Rashi, Jahangir, Polash, Faizullah and Mahbub Alam.

They alleged that a group of landgrabbers with the help of a section of local officials are hatching conspiracy so that the landless do not get government lands in Debhata and Kaliganj upazilas.

They alleged that the Debhata UNO Ali Kadar, ignoring the Prime Minister's order, submitted a report which went against the landless people.

They demanded withdrawal of the Debhata UNO and threatened of tougher agitation for non-compliance.

They claimed that the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia, now prime minister, had promised at a public meeting at Devishahar football ground on August 8, 1998 that government lands would be allotted among the landless. The promise is yet to be fulfilled, they said.



The Rabidas community in Gaibandha held a congregate of its members and a discussion meeting at Gaibandha Kalibari Nat Mandir recently. It was organised by the Gaibandha Rabidas Kalyan Sangha and Bangladesh Guru Rabidas (Dham) Mission.

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