

Kalapara radar can't see weather for 8 months

Five main equipment out of order

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Kalapara radar station is virtually inoperative while the country passes through a season of storms.

Its five main instruments -- antenna, microwave link, monitor, recorder system, balloons and transmitter receiver are out of order for about eight months and so it can not make any weather forecast.

But its 11 employees are drawing salary virtually without any work.

The radar station was built in 1967 on eight acres of land. It started functioning in 1976 with Russian equipment. But it did not function properly. Instruments were brought from Mitsubishi Company of Japan and installed in 1988 with a ten-year warranty period, which expired much earlier, its officials told this correspondent during a visit on Monday last.

Foreign experts have also declared the instruments unfit for use.

The station in Kalapara was set up along with three others in Cox's Bazar, Rangpur and Dhaka under one project.

The Kalapara radar station has a range of 400 kilometres, covering the Bay of Bengal. It could send weather report with pictures to the Agargaon station in Dhaka within five minutes.

"We can now send reports only on rainfall, wind speed, humidity and temperature", said Prodip Kumar, now in charge of the station.

Several lakh people in the coastal areas including fishermen are now deprived of weather forecast from the station, he said.

A new project has been taken up to replace the radar station but the

work yet to start, he added.

The vital post of Electronics Engineer at the station is vacant since March this year.

On the other hand, the massive building housing the station is

without renovation for long. Plaster often falls from roofs and walls. During wet season, rainwater trickles through the roof at some places. Condition of five staff quarters is also the same.



The massive but mute Kalapara radar station.

PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds protest extortion in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Hundreds of people, joined by police, at a rally at the Biswa Road crossing near the town on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday vowed to resist toll collectors at the point.

It was organised at the initiative of Budhal Union Parishad Member Md Mizanur Rahman.

Md Billalur Rahman presided over the rally, addressed by, among others, Brahmanbaria Sadar thana OC Md Ismail, Sariat thana OC Md Rafiqul Islam, Brahmanbaria sadar thana BNP Secretary Noor-e-Alam Siddiki, Tolshahar East Union Parishad Chairman Md Kamal Ahmed, Mazlishpur UP Chairman Subed Ali, AKM Nurul Hosan Alam, Budhal UP member Md Mirzanur Rahman, Akter Hossain, Hira Mia, Dr. Abu Zaher, Md Abdur Rahman, Mowla Burhan Uddin, Md. Bahar Choudhury, Md Abdur Rahman, Muhammad Ali, Abu Chan and Md Rahid Uddin.

Organised gangs had been collecting toll from traders and vehicles and cheating passengers and passers-by at the Biswa Road crossing for long.

At the rally, the police officials urged the local people to give them a list of toll collectors to take action against them. They said police will help them in all possible way to check the crime.

Nor'wester hits 15 Gaibandha villages: 12 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A severe nor'wester lashed 15 villages in two upazilas here on Saturday morning.

Twelve persons sustained injuries due to house collapse and 700 dwelling houses raged to the ground.

Power supply was disrupted as five towers collapsed due to impact of the storm. Local PDB sources said, three 33 KV towers between Palashbari and Gaibandha and two other 11 KV poles of Rural Electrification Board collapsed plunging entire area in darkness. It will take at least 48 hours to restore power supply, according to sources in the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). BPDB workers have been working round the clock to restore power, the sources added.

Ten villages in Palashbari upazila and five villages in Sadullapur upazila were badly affected by the storm.

Workshop on education held

STAR NATIONAL DESK

An orientation meeting for teachers on improvement of quality of primary education was held at Shreepur Upazilla Parishad in Gazipur recently.

It was jointly organised by the local office of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Shreepur unit of Plan-Bangladesh and the local Upazilla Education Office.

With Uapzaila Education Officer M Abdur Rezzak Siddiqui in the chair, speakers at the meeting said improvement in quality of education needs only dedication by teachers.

It was addressed by among others, M Ehsanur Rahman, Deputy Executive Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission; Md. Habibur Rahman, Liaqot Ali; Municipal Commissioner Kamruzzaman Monol and freedom fighter Nur Mohammad Fakir.



A leader with folded hands appeal for calm at the noisy first meeting of the convening committee of Chittagong City BNP, held at its Nasiman Bhaban office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

PROTESTERS OF MILI MURDER THREATENED? Hartal in Rajshahi now June 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The half-day hartal, called earlier in Rajshahi city on May 30 demanding proper and speedy trial of schoolgirl Mili rape and murder case, has been shifted to June 2.

The hartal was called by Mili Murder Trial Movement Council, a newly formed civic body.

The date has been shifted on account of former president Ziaur Rahman's death anniversary, its leaders told a press conference at Barnamala School in the city yesterday.

But sources close to the Council said the date was shifted as its leaders were threatened by some quarters over telephone to withdraw the hartal call.

Eleven year-old Mafroza Begum Mili, a student of class V at PN Government High School, was gangraped and strangled to death at their rented house in the city on May 3 morning. The incident created public anger, followed by days of protests.

The protests turned into street demonstrations, joined by students, human rights activists and different organisations as the investigation into the case by Rajshahi Metropolitan Police drew flak from local people.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) then took over the case following a government order.

Mili's father Mansur Rahman Mollah, an instructor at Rajshahi Postal Academy, filed the case accusing the house owner's son Fazle Rabbi Rion, his relative

Saiduzzaman Minar, relative of Rion and their neighbour Fazlur Rahman, an employee of Power Development Board.

Police arrested all the three accused persons and interrogated them on remand, but could not make any clue to the gruesome incident.

DIG Shamsul Islam, during his visit to Rajshahi on Friday, told

They said, police kept the arrested killer-suspects at the police barrack instead of thana custody and entertained them with home-supplied food as their families have relations with the ministers.

Denying the allegations, RMP Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed told newsmen that police "acted independently and attained mentionable success".

The press conference was attended by, among others, Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad Conveynor Zamat Khan, Advocate Khairul Alam, teacher Tanzina Khatun, engineer Mahabbat Bin Hakim, child rights activist Rajab Ali, Nokkon Shilpi Gosthi President Hasib Panna, social worker Moniruzzaman Bablu, Barnamala School Director Humayun Kabir, Manjoor Ahsan and Shafiqur Rahman.

Their other programmes include exchange of views with different organisations and daily protest meeting.

Bangladesh Chhatra League formed a human chain and held a rally at Shaheb Bazar protesting the murder.

The Movement Council leaders handed over a memorandum to Jatiya Oikya Mancha Convener Dr Kamal Hossain during his visit to Rajshahi on Thursday. Dr. Kamal told its leaders that h would submit the memorandum the Prime Minister.

"We will go to court if any action is not taken within 24 hours", he said at his public meeting in the city on Thursday.



Mafroza Begum Mili

newsmen that there would speedy and proper probe into the incident.

The Home Ministry has put the case on the list of sensational cases, he told newsmen.

At the press conference, the Movement Council leaders criticised police as it could not make any headway in the investigation.

They quoted speakers at Dr Kamal Hossain's public meeting on Thursday to say that two BNP lawmakers from Natore and Naogaon are influencing the investigation.

Secular and scientific edn policy stressed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Speakers at a meeting to exchange views with the civil society members stressed the need for a democratic, secular and scientific education policy in the country.

The meeting was organised here by Shikha Andolon Mancho yesterday.

Dr Syed Momunur Rahman presided over the meeting held at Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry auditorium.

Termining the existing policy impractical and unscientific, the speakers proposed for placement of eight-point demand before the authorities concerned. They stressed on building a strong movement by conscious citizens from a united platform for fulfillment of the demands.

The demands included combined education policy from primary to intermediate level, combined and organised curriculum, democratic management, adequate teachers in all educational institutions and a separate examination hall in every upazila.

Among others, Rajshahi University (RU) teacher Prof Shahidul Islam, Notre Dame College teacher Prof A N Rasheda and secretary of the Mancho Ashraf Uddin Akash, former principal of Rangpur Carmichael College Prof Dr Md Rezaul Hoque, Rangpur Medical College teacher Prof Abdur Rouf and Dr Mafizul Islam addressed the meeting.

CHT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Allegations of ignoring Bangalee areas being probed

MONIRUL ISLAM MONU, Bandarban

Investigation into alleged sidelining Bangalee inhabited areas in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in development projects under United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) is going on.

Bandarban Hill District Council (HDC) requested for the probe after a complaint was made earlier this month by the Bangalee Somo Adhikar Andolan Parishad, a body of Bangalees in the hills.

The Bangalee Somo Adhikar Andolon Parishad in its complaint to the HDC and the UNDP local office had alleged that though Bangalees comprise about half of the population in Bandarban, the projects under UNDP and ADB ignored areas inhabited by them and also avoided recruiting Banagalees for projects.

This has created resentment among Bangalees, it said in its complaint.

The Bandarban HDC sent letters to the UNDP project office in CHT last week, termining the matter 'sensitive' and requested it to supply all information about its development projects in Bandarban and criteria

for recruitment of manpower for their implementation.

After the complaint, Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan, Director of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facilities (CHTDF), paid a three-day visit to Bandarban from May 24.

He visited the UNDP local office and also talked to Bandarban HDC Chairman Ma Mya Ching during his visit. He will submit his report to the UNDP office in Dhaka.

Talking to this correspondent, he said, "UNDP can not deprive any cast, community or nation as it is an organisation of the United Nations. We consider the matter (allegation by Bangalee Somo Adhikar Andolon Parishad) seriously. Action will be taken if the allegations are found true".

After the CHT peace agreement in 1997, the UNDP took up projects involving about Tk 500 crore in the CHT for development of the areas and improvement in life of hill people. One component of the project is being implemented. It will be implemented in four phases.

UNDP sources said a new project proposal (PP) was submitted to the government. It got Planning Commission's approval in March. But a final decision from the government is yet to come.

SNAPS

One killed, 15 hurt in Netrakona clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

One person was killed and 15 others were injured in a clash between two rival groups at Soair village in Mohonganj upazila on Wednesday. The victim is Abul Kashem 35. The clash ensued when two persons named Hakku Mia and Liakat Ali exchanged hot words over trifling issue. While contacted, Mohamud Jamaluddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohonganj Police Station told Hakku Mia fired three rounds of bullets from his country made gun to save his life.

Tk 11.5 cr Dinajpur municipal budget

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Dinajpur Poursabha chairman Shafiqul Haque on Monday announced a surplus budget of over Tk 11.50 crore for 2005-06 fiscal year. The total expenditure was estimated at Tk 10, 26,32,000. Over Tk 4.19 crore will come from revenue earnings while Tk 3.34 crore has been earmarked as expenditure in this sector. At a press conference held at Dinajpur Hall, the poura chairman told that it has been planned to construct roads, markets, bridges, culverts and drains and for planting saplings, set up sanitary latrines and supplying pure water.

Card phones out of order

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Ten card phones installed in different places of the town and important business centres in the district in 1992 have become out of order due to lack of maintenance for a long period. A tussle between Bangladesh Telephone and Telegraph Board (BTB) and Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) is also responsible for the situation.

Nilphamari govt doctors continue work abstention

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Doctors in all government health complexes in upazilas in the district yesterday extended their one-hour work abstention by another week to press their demand for arrest of Jaldhaka municipal chairman and local upazila BNP president Anwarul Kabir Chowdhury.

They had begun the programme on May 21 at the call of Nilphamari district unit Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) protesting the assault of Jaldhaka Upazila Health Complex Residential Medical Officer (RMO) Mahbulul Hasan Lenin by Anwarul Kabir on May 9.

The assaulted doctor filed a case with Jaldhaka thana on May 10. District BMA President Dr

Momtajul Islam Mintoo and General Secretary Dr Khorshed Alam in a joint statement yesterday said the programme has been extended as police did not arrest the attacker in seven days, their deadline.

Allegations have it that after the 11am -12 noon work abstention, doctors leave upazila health complexes, causing suffering to the patients.

Some newsmen visited Jaldhaka upazila health complex after 12 noon on Monday. They did not find any doctor there.

Dr Abul Hasan and RMO Mahbulul Hasan Lenin were found seeing patients at their private chambers after 12 noon. They had no answer when the newsmen asked about negligence in official work.