

# Pay toll or die, Khulna outlaws making calls

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

The Deputy General Manager (DGM) of Agrani Bank at its corporate branch at Sir Iqbal Road in the city has been threatened with death for not paying a toll of Tk five lakh, allegedly demanded by 'an extremist'.

The death threat was given to Kazi Mahbub-e-Alam, over phone at 10-30 am on Thursday at his office.

The caller identified himself as an armed cadre of Janajuddho faction of outlawed PBCP (Purba Banglar Communist Party).

Talking to this correspondent, the DGM said had received a call over the same phone at 3-30 pm on June 6, demanding Tk five lakh. The

caller had demanded payment by June 8. The caller had identified as a member of the same outlawed party.

DGM Mahbub-e-Alam filed a general diary with Khulna thana at 2-30 pm on Thursday seeking security.

In another incident, the Demonstrator at Forestry Department at Khulna University, Mohammad Fazlul Huq, received similar death threat five days ago from an 'armed cadre' of PBCP Janajuddho, also for delaying in payment of Tk 10,000 as toll. He did not file a general diary with Khulna thana fearing reprisal.

"We are aware of sudden rise of extremists in Khulna city who are

demanding tolls from bankers and businessman, contractors and fish traders, physicians and engineers", said Akbar Ali, Deputy Commissioner (HQ) of Khulna Metropolitan Police.

"We are checking and rechecking information", he said.

He claimed that tolls are being demanded and death threats given by Shoiab, Shumon and Haroon, three top leaders of Khulna-Bagerhat regional unit of PBCP Janajuddho faction.

A shrimp exporter told this correspondent that extremists have demanded Tk one lakh from him, to be paid by June 13, or to be ready to die.

Extremists have also demanded

Tk 50,000 from an eminent physician at South Central Road under Khulna thana, sources said.

Sources in intelligence agencies confirmed an information that contractors have to pay tolls to extremists after cashing their bills to avoid death threat.

"I do not believe that extremists are demanding tolls. Their names are being used by other persons", said Khulna Police Superintendent Habibur Rahman.

He did not want to clarify who are these 'other persons' using names of extremists for tolls.

## GAIBANDHA POSTAL SCAM

### All 5 accused on HC bail

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

All the five postal employees here, accused of defalcation of depositors' money, got bail from the High Court.

Their bail was rejected by the District and Sessions Judge's court here earlier.

Sources said the High Court in separate orders granted them three months' interim bail on condition that they would appear before police once every week.

The five were sued for involvement in defalcation of over Tk one crore from savings accounts and savings certificates in Gaibandha Head Post Office. The defalcation was detected by postal probe teams earlier.

They are Post Master In-charge Golam Nabi Sarker, Assistant Post Master Rafiqul Islam and postal operators Habibur Rahman, Md Rafiqul Islam and Solaiman Ali.

Earlier, the postal authorities filed a case with Gaibandha police station accusing six persons for the defalcation. One of them was found innocent and released.

The probe is on but the team yet to reach a conclusion over the defalcated amount as the accused persons allegedly destroyed important papers and documents at the post office.



PHOTO: STAR  
**KNOW LOCAL FRUITS:** School children trying to identify local fruits at an exhibition held at DC Hill in Chittagong city yesterday.

# Coalition govt did nothing for farmers, says Motia

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh**

Awami League Presidium member Motia Chowdhury yesterday said the BNP-led four party alliance government has done nothing for development of country's agriculture and betterment of farmers in last four years.

The government steps went against the interest of farmers, she said while addressing the triennial council of Mymensingh unit of Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL), peasant front of AL. The council was held in the town.

The farmers are not getting fair prices of their products but those of inputs are rising.

Now, diesel, the main input for irrigation, is being sold at Tk 26 per

litre, which was Tk 15 during AL rule, she said. Prices of fertiliser have also increased, she alleged.

The government has minimised the subsidy on agriculture, thereby throttling its development.

The former agriculture minister said the country attained food autarky during the rule of AL government because of appropriate policies.

Criticising the extra-judicial killing by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Motia said, life and property of people are not safe now because ruling party men are protecting criminals on the one hand and various elite forces are being used against opposition parties on the other hand, Motia added.

They are killing AL leaders and workers to liquidate the party. She

demanded trial of all killings by elite forces.

Presided over by Md Mozaffar Ali Khan, BKL district convenor, the council was also addressed by BKL and AL central leaders Dr Abdur Razzaq MP, Abdul Mannan, Md Motahar Hossain Mollah, Samir Chandra and Shafiqur Rahman, and local leaders including Principal Motiur Rahman, Abdul Motin Sarker MP, Advocate Khandaker Shamsul Haque Reza, Advocate Shah Md Ashraf Haque, and Eshaq Ali Sarker. Dr Mirza Jalil, president of BKL central body, inaugurated the council.

Motia urged all to come forward to launch a movement to 'free the country from the clutch of evil forces'.

# Declare June 10 as Land Rights Day

## Thousands demand at rally in Ghughudah

**PORIMOL PALMA, from Santhia, Pabna**

About 30,000 landless people yesterday celebrated the Land Rights Day at Ghughudab Beel in Bishnapur with a call to intensify the on-going agitation to establish landless people's rights to government land.

Ignoring scorching sun, boys and girls, men and women of all ages from some 20 districts in the Padma and Jamuna basins gathered near the Beel (marshy land). They danced, sang and spoke to renew their vow to realise the right to land.

They also demanded of the government that the June 10 Land Rights Day be declared a public holiday and be observed at national level.

On June 10 in 1985, some 20,000 landless men and women, with sticks and iron rods in hand, gathered at Ghughudah and established their right on some 1000 acres of government land after supreme sacrifices by many.

The Land Rights day is celebrated every year to commemorate the event. This year the programme was organised by Bhumi Odhikar Dibosh Uddjan Parishad-2005, the land rights day celebration committee.

"It is day for us to strengthen our movement and spread it throughout the country; and we are sure, we will reach our goal," said Azmat Ullah 75, one of those who fought for land in 1985.

Receiving a crest from Samata (an NGO) for playing a 'significant role in the movement'. Azmat Ullah in his old but strong voice said he will support and do whatever he can to establish the right of landless people.

The tussle between influential landgrabbers and the landless poor for government land (khas land) is unending. Thousands become landless every year due to erosion by the Jamuna and the Padma, he said.

Supreme sacrifices by landless

Imtaz Ali, Lokman Hossain, Lal Mohan, Haider Ali and Kalimuddin made no progress in achieving their goal till June 10, 1985 when they united to establish their rights, Azmat Ullah said.

After 1985, the government in association with Samata, distributed some 1,000 acres of land among 1500 landless families in the region who are now living on those.

Kharun, one of the 11 honoured with crests, said, "Though I lost my husband, I am happy that hundreds of landless people have got their right to land and are living well." Kharun's husband was killed in the clashes on June 10, 1985.

The Ghughudah Beel is one of many areas where there are vast khas lands. According to government statistics, there are about 40 lakh acres of khas land in the country while some 57 per cent of the population is landless.

Engineer Shaidullah, convenor of the Movement for Protection of Country's Oil, Gas and Port, speak-

ing as the chief guest at the grand rally, said most of the khas lands are grabbed by influential people, who have both money and muscle. Only unity of landless people can foil their design, he added.

Presiding over the rally, Khushi Kabir, Coordinator of Nijera Kori, an NGO, called upon the landless people to consolidate their movement and make best use of the lands under their possession.

Santosh Singh, an organiser of Ekota Parisahd of India, said 43 per cent people in India are landless.

"Let us unite once again to establish our rights to land and a good living," he said.

Samata Executive Director Abdul Kader, Barrister Sara Hossain, Association of Land Reform and Development Executive Director Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Alliance for Development Support and Cooptation Executive Director Shamsul Huda also spoke at the rally.

4X2



PHOTO: STAR  
**Contractors joint by their employees and workers put up a demonstration in front of REB office in Barisal city yesterday demanding payment of bills.**

# Frustration in Satkhira AL as committee not formed

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

Frustration has gripped Satkhira Awami League (AL) leaders and workers as a district committee has not been formed even two months after its triennial council though party central leaders had told the council that a full fledged committee would be formed within 10 days.

This is also hampering party activities, sources in the party said.

Satkhira AL council was formed on April 8 after nine years.

Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and SM Nazrul Islam were elected president and general secretary respectively. After the election, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil asked the district AL leaders to form a full fledged committee within 10 days.

Earlier, at the district council held in 1996, a district committee was formed with Syed Kamal Bakht and Monsur Ahmed as president and general secretary.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina dissolved the committee headed by Kamal and Monsur for their 'anti-people and controversial role' in Debhata Kaligonj landless people's movement in 1998. Later the AL chief formed a 54-member district AL convening committee headed by Kamal and Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1999.

Kamal died in 2000 and Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was made acting convenor.

However, when contacted, the newly elected general secretary of district AL Nazrul Islam said, a full fledged committee is expected to be formed by June 15.

## BSF takes away gas cylinders from Bangladesh territory

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel entered into Bangladesh territory at Sultanpur village in Kalamou upazila on Wednesday and took away about 200 gas cylinders from a jute field.

BDR authorities sent a protest letter to BSF, asking for a flag meeting. But the meeting is yet to be held, BDR sources said.

BDR and police sources said, some smugglers had kept about 400 gas cylinders in the jute field in the village with a motive to smuggle those to India.

A BSF team of Gobindapur border outpost in North 24 Pargana district in India while patrolling the border saw the gas cylinders in the jute field. They (BSF) entered into Bangladesh territory near pillar No 16 and took away 200 gas cylinders worth Tk 6 lakh.

Lt Col Moninur Rahman, Commanding Officer of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident.

# REB contractors agitate for bills

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Contractors of Rural Electrification Board (REB), joined by their employees and workers, staged a demonstration in front of the REB office at Nimntoli in the city on Thursday demanding payment of arrears bills.

They alleged that they completed the works five to six years back but their bills are yet to be paid in full. Their security deposits are also not being returned, they claimed.

Moreover the local REB authorities have filed a case involving 12 contractors who did the works in 12

REB distribution lines.

They also submitted a memorandum to the REB Chairman through the Superintendent Engineer, REB's Barisal zone.

They however said that a section of employees and officials at the Barisal office are responsible for the situation.

The authorities also stopped payments against ongoing line construction projects since last March, they alleged. As a result, they said, they can not continue works. They threatened that they would stop all work if their bills are not paid within 10 days.

# Fisherman killed by tiger in Sundarbans

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

A fisherman was killed by a Royal Bengal Tiger on Wednesday at Tulshikhali area in the Sundarbans.

The victim has been identified as Abdul Gafoor, 42, of Pakhimara village in Shyanugar upazila.

Quoting local people police said, Abdul Gafoor and five others went to the Sundarbans to fish, taking permission from Forest Department officials on Monday.

While they were catching fish in Tulshikhali canal, a Royal Bengal Tiger swooped on him and dragged Gafoor into the deep forest. Later other fishermen recovered the body.

6X2

6.5X4