

Costly complexes unused for years in 8 N-dists

RAFIQUE SARKER from Rangpur

Sixty-one Union Council complexes constructed in eight northern districts to improve services of government agencies and gear up development work are lying unused for years.

The complexes were constructed in Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Panchagarh,

Thakurgoan and Dinajpur districts under government's RDP-21 project at a cost of TK 18 crore funded by the Asian Development Bank.

The complexes were supposed to house offices of Public Health Department, Ansar and VDP, Live Stock Department, Education Department, Agriculture Extension Department, Family Welfare Office and Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED)

for better coordination among them to improve their services in rural areas.

The government earlier also asked the departments to open offices in the union council complexes.

The LGRD Ministry issued an order on June 25 asking the Deputy Commissioners of the districts to sanction rooms in the complexes for the departments so that they can start activities from the complexes.

But officials of the departments taking to this correspondent said they are yet to get a guideline on how to run their activities from the Union Council complexes.

Besides, there is fund crisis and inadequate manpower. The offices have not yet been supplied with furniture and other logistics, they said.

Talking to this correspondent Rangpur Ansar Adjutant Khairul Alam said the government sanctioned two rooms at every Union Council complex for two platoons of Ansar-VDP (male and female). This is inadequate. Moreover, rooms are not all that are needed for an office.

"We need furniture and office contingency. How do we meet the expenses?" he asked.

Public Health Executive Engineer Fazlul Haque said he wrote to the Superintendent Engineer for furniture for the offices, but to no effect yet.

Kurigram Upazila Nirbahi Officer admitted that he got the ministry circular, but cannot implement it till the problems are solved.

Chairmen of Tapadhan Union Parishad in Rangpur Sadar upazila said he thinks the complexes can not start functioning in the existing situation. Fund crisis is the main problem. "How can the departments meet the office contingency when government's annual sanction for a UP is only Tk 3 lakh?"

Chairman of Modonkhali Union Parishad in Pirganj upazila apprehended that the UP complexes would meet the same fate as community health care centres. The centres in rural areas are closed because of lack of policy, guideline and logistic support, he said.

7 hotels fined in Comilla for selling stale food

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

As part of a drive against sale of adulterated food launched on July 14, four mobile courts headed by four Magistrates raided different hotels, restaurants, sweetmeat shops and rest house in Shassongacha and Rail Station Road in the district town on Saturday.

A mobile court led by First Class Magistrate Wahidul Islam raided 12 hotels and rest houses.

It fined Bhi Bhi Hotel Tk 20,000, Melody Hotel Tk 5,000, Hossain Bakery and Confectionery Tk 3,000, Shoshi Sweetmeat Tk 16,000, Abedin Rest House Tk 10,000, Abedin Hotel Tk 5,000 and Khawza Hotel Tk 5,000 for selling rotten and adulterated food.



PHOTO: STAR

Children joined a human chain formed in front of Chittagong Press Club yesterday demanding punishment to people making and marketing adulterated food items. It was organised by Jono Udjog, an NGO.

Reforms must for free, fair polls

14- party leaders tell Tangail public meeting

A CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The electoral and caretaker reform proposals have been put forward with a very impartial motive so that all future national elections in the country can be held in an absolutely free and fair manner, Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil has said.

These are aimed at consolidating democracy, he told a public meeting here on Saturday, organised by the 14-party opposition alliance.

Held on the Tangail Shaheed Minar premises, it was addressed by, among others, Workers Party president Rashed Khan Menon, Gono Forum Presidium member Jahirul Islam, Dilip Barua of Sammyabadi Dal, Ganotantri Party President Azizul Haque Khan, AL central leader Dr. Abdur Razzak MP, Shafique Rahman of NAP (M), JSD central leader Ikbal Hossen, Wprkers Party central leader Hazera Sultana, Tangail AL Secretary Fazlur Rahman Khan Faruque, Ataur Rahman Khan

and S Akbar. Tangail AL President Shamsur Rahman Khan Shajahan was in the chair.

The BNP-led coalition government will be forced to accept the proposals through a mass movement, he said and called upon pro-liberation forces to intensify the ongoing agitation.

Rashed Khan Menon said, the reform proposals, if implemented, will free the electoral system from black money and muscle power and allow honest people to come to politics,

which will benefit the masses. Dilip Barua said people will understand the positive sides of the proposals and join the opposition movement if these are explained to them. He urged all opposition forces to mobilise public opinion in favour of the 31-point reform proposals.

AL leader Dr Abdur Razzak MP criticised extra-judicial killings by Rab, Chitah and Cobra. They do not touch ruling party bigwigs who are sheltering criminals.



PHOTO: STAR

The unutilised Topobon Union Council complex in Rangpur.

Wife killed for resisting second marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Jahangir Alam, brother-in-law of slain Jahanara Begum, yesterday confessed that he and his brother were involvement in her murder.

Jahanara Begum, 42, mother of four daughters and wife of Mujibar Rahman of Ramjibanpur village in Shyamnagar Upazila, was slaughtered on the night of June 29.

Jahangir Alam was arrested next morning on suspicion when he went to the police station to inform that his sister-in-law committed suicide.

Jahanara's maternal uncle filed a case with Shyamnagar thana on the same day, accusing her husband Mujibur Rahman and his two brothers Jahangir Alam and Shahjahan. Shahjahan is in custody but Mujibur

rahman is absconding.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub Inspector Nuruzzaman and Shyamnagar thana OC Kanchan Mahmud said Jahangir made the confession before a First Class Magistrate.

Jahangir said his elder brother Mujibar Rahman used to beat his wife Jahanara as she objected to his second marriage. So they decided to kill her.

At dead of night on July 29, they took her near the latrine, tied her hands and legs and slaughtered her with sharp weapon. They kept the body there and informed neighbours that a group of miscreants raided their house at dead of night and slaughtered Jahanara Begum.

Deadlock at Benapole continues as talks yield no results

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Export-import through Benapole land port remained suspended for the 11th day yesterday as port users continued their indefinite strike to realise their 12-point demand.

On Saturday, the port users' representatives held a meeting with customs authorities. The four-hour meeting from 4 pm yielded no result.

Acting Customs Commissioner Atiqur Rahman, Joint Commissioner Hossain Ahmed and other officials and Clearing & Forwarding Agents Association leaders Shamsur Rahman, Nuruzzaman, Mofizur Rahman,

Khairuzzaman Modhu, Mohshin Milon attended the meeting held at the Customs House.

Another meeting convened was going on when the report was filed yesterday evening. The port users went on strike on June 29.

Activities at the land port was disrupted earlier as Indian truckers went on strike at Petrapole land port on the other side of the border for release of four trucks seized by the Benapole customs and the BDR on July 21.

They called off the strike on Saturday as three of the trucks were released after a meeting between Bangladesh and Indian officials.

5 fishermen out of 14 missing in Bay rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Five of the 14 fishermen who were missing in the Bay since Friday were rescued on Saturday night by another fishing boat.

Shahid Majhi, 45, Abu Zafar, 27, Nabi Hossain, 40, Ansar Ali, 32 and Kabir, 34 were rescued from off-shore areas in Pathorghata in Barguna district.

They were brought to Kuakata Pathorghata Sunday morning, police and sources in the fishermen's association said. The rest fishermen are yet untraced.

Fishing boat FB Fatehpur with 16 fishermen on board capsized in the rough sea on Friday. Two of them were rescued by another fishing boat.



PHOTO: STAR

Photojournalist Fakhrul Akhand injured by BNP activists during professional work now under treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Photojournalist assaulted for snapping scuffles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A photojournalist was injured seriously when he was performing professional duty at a BNP meeting, held at a community centre in the district town Saturday night.

Fakrul Akanda, Photo Journalist of local daily Ajker Khabor and Dhaka-based national daily Ajker Kagaj is now undergoing treatment at Ward No 6 at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). Fakrul is office secretary of Mymensingh unit of Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA).

According to sources, a meeting of Mymensingh (south) district BNP Executive Committee was being held with its president former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain MP in the chair.

At the meeting, rival groups started wrangling and blamed each other over various issues including sacking of AKM Mosharraf Hossain, defeat of BNP district secretary

Manjurul Haque Manji in the last Mymensingh municipal election, formation of Bhaluka upazila BNP committee and less contact between district BNP leaders with grass-roots leaders and activists.

At one stage, the rival groups went on the rampage, breaking chairs. They were locked in scuffles.

Fakrul was hit in the head by party men and his camera was snatched as he took snaps. In the meantime, the meeting was suspended and Mosharraf Hossain left the venue.

Fakrul was rescued by Jubo Dal leaders Liton Akanda and Tanna and rushed to MMCH.

Local leaders BPJA and journalists associations have protested the attack on Fakrul and demanded arrest of the attackers.

Mymensingh journalists associations and leaders of local BPJA in separate statements have demanded arrest of the attackers.

8X3

12X3