

Khulna Jasas chief sued by party man for 'stealing' wheat

Allotments under Rural Infrastructure Maintenance Programme ‘sold’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Khulna district unit president of Jatiyatabadi Shamajik Shangs-kritik Dal (Jasas) and two others have been sued for alleged mis-appropriation of five tonnes of government wheat.

The wheat was sanctioned in the name of Jasas by the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation for development work under the government's Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (special) Programme.

AHM Mehedi Dipu of West

Tootpara, also a Jasas member, filed the case with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate on Monday, sources said.

The three accused are Khulna Jasas President Shaikh Abdul Halim, Awami League leader and Ward Commissioner Konika Saha and Project Implementation Officer (PIO) in Khulna Sadar Afsaruddin Ahmed.

In the case, Mehedi alleged that the president of Khulna Jasas lifted five tonnes of wheat by forged means on December 20 last year in connivance with the two others.

The complainant also alleged that the accused sold the wheat at Tk Tk 25,000.

He said the principal accused Shaikh Abdul Halim made forged documents including vouchers without utilising the wheat for any development work. He did not submit any report to authorities concerned regarding utilisation of the wheat.

The chief Metropolitan Magistrate directed the Khulna District Anti-corruption Officer to investigate the matter and take legal action.

30,000 marooned in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

At least 30,000 people have become marooned in 17 villages in Teesta shoals and low lying areas in Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas as the river started swelling on Monday following opening of all the gates of Gojaldoba barrage in India.

The water level of Teesta was 52.04 metres yesterday morning, 12 cms above the danger mark, Water Development Board (WDB) sources said.

They said the river swelled as Indian authorities opened all the 44 gates to release reined waters of the river in the upstream.

The situation may deteriorate as there has also been rains in northern

districts of Bangladesh in the last three days, WDB Dalia Division Executive Engineer Atiara Rahman told this correspondent.

WDB officials said they could not take any precautionary measure and alert the people as the Indian authorities did not give them any information prior to opening the gates. The affected people could have moved to safer places had we got any prior information, they said.

Strong current of Teesta water has made vulnerable about 1,00 feet of the Teesta embankment at Holdibari in Jaldhaka upazila, they said. It may collapse any moment. WDB authorities at Dalia is trying their best to save the dam, they said.

If the embankment is damaged,

more areas in Jaldhaka and Dimla upazilas will go under water.

Most of the houses in in Purbo Kharibari, Char Kharibari, Uttar Kharibari, Kisamat Char, Chhatunama, Dohol Para, Pagal Para, Baishpakur, Bhasanirchar, Soptighat, Fokroter Char and Vendabari in Dimla and Bhuvan Char, Gopal Char, Koimari and Sholmari in Jaldhaka upazila have gone under waist deep water.

About 1,000 people have taken shelter on the 'guide dam' and Teesta embankment.

The Dimla Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mesbahul Haque said the administration has taken all preparations to face the situation if the water rises further.

One more businessman abducted for ransom

38 kidnapped in Kushtia since January

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Criminals abducted a businessman after committing robbery in a house at Terail village in Gangni upazila in Meherpur district on Sunday, according to a delayed report reaching here yesterday.

Seven villagers were also injured when the robbers hurled bombs on them.

According to police and villagers, an armed gang stormed into the house of one Kheder Ali of the village at about 2.am. The gang confined the

family members on gunpoint and looted Tk 50,000 and ornaments worth over Tk 60,000.

S the robbers took to their heels, the inmates cried for help, which drew neighbours.

As the people encircled the area, the dacoits hurled three bombs, injuring seven people. While fleeing, they abducted businessman Baharul 27, son of Riaztullah of the village.

Later the abductors on cell phone demanded Tk one lakh for Baharul's release.

The injured are kheder Ali,

Kuddus, Arman, julfikar, Bhasan, Hamidul and Faruk. They were admitted to the local health complex.

A case was filed with Gangni police station.

When contacted, Gngni police admitted the incident and said they were trying to rescue the abducted person.

As many as 38 people were abducted in the district for ransom since January.

Of them 12 were school students, four farmers, seven outlawed party cadres and rest were businessmen.

BIWTC stops sea truck service in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The BIWTC (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation) sea-truck service introduced on the remote Galachipa-Char Montaz route on July 22 was stopped on Sunday in face of alleged resistance by trawler owners on Sunday.

The sea-truck service was introduced in response to demands of one and a half lakh people of six unions of Char Kazal, Char Biwas, Char Montaz, Chotto Baishdia, Baro Baishdia and Rangabali in Galachipa upazila. Over 80 people died in a tragic launch accident in the Buragourango on May 15. Launch service was stopped in the coastal route just after the accident.

BIWTA assistant director Md Sultan Ahmed told this correspondent they introduced the service considering passengers' sufferings. Two single decker sea-trucks began to operate in the route. Each passenger's fare was fixed at Tk 50. But from the first day of its operation, influential boat and trawler owners resisted the passengers from travelling by sea-trucks. The passengers were forced to get on board their boats or trawlers resulting in great loss to sea trucks. The BIWTA authorities compelled to stop their service.

Human chain with candles to protest power outage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The Khulna Citizens' Forum (KCF) formed a human chain with lighted candles in hand at Picture Palace Square in the city yesterday evening protesting severer load shedding in the district.

Hundreds of people from all walks of life, including women and political activists from all parties spontaneously joined the programme.

During the human chain, Chairman of KCF told this correspondent that his organisation will sue the power supply authorities if the load shedding is not stopped. He said frequent power outage has made life miserable and affected industries and students as well.

Forged notes recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira.*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man with forged currency notes amounting to Tk 40,000 on Saturday from Satkhira town.

Rab sources said, acting on a tip-off, they arrested Abdul Aziz Sardar from a hotel in Haritila area in the town with 70 forged 500 taka notes and 100 forged 50 taka notes.

He was taken to the Rab Khulna divisional office for interrogation, the sources said.

3 Dinajpur municipal staff held for cheque ‘forgery’

A CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Three employees of Dinajpur municipality, arrested for alleged cheque forgery and trying to draw Tk7.5 lakh from a bank, have been sent to jail.

The arrested persons are Chief Accountant Motahar Hossain, Assistant Accountant Zahidul Haque and employees Hasinuzzaman and Alamgir Kabir Bulbul.

On July 30, Motahar Hossain went to Sonali Bank Corporate Branch to cash a cheque for Tk 7.5 lakh from the municipality's account.

The bank official suspected that the municipal chairman's signature on the cheque was forged. He immediately checked it with the municipal chairman and confirmed



PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous people brought out a colourful rally in Modhupur yesterday as part of programmes in observance of World Indigenous Day.

Indigenous Day observed in Tangail, Rajshahi, CHT

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Indigenous people in Modhupur, Rajshahi and the three hill districts in Chittagong Hill Tracts observed The World Indigenous Day yesterday through various colourful programmes.

The theme of the programmes was 'Indigenous People have the right to self determination'. A Correspondent reports from Tangail:

The World Indigenous Day was observed in Madhupur through various colourful programmes on Monday.

It was jointly organised by Madhupur Tribal Welfare Association, Joinshahi Adibasi Unnayan Parishad, Garo Student Association and Achick Machick Society.

The programme included a colorful rally, discussion meeting and cultural function.

A discussion meeting was held at the Jalchhatra Porpost Christy High School ground with Ajoy Moor in the chair. Indigenous Writer Shubhash Jem Chum addressed the meeting as chief guest.

Among others, the indigenous leader Albart Mankin, Action Aid Country Director Nasrin Haque, its official Manjur Rashid, Executive Director of SUS Tapan Kumar Goon,

Uzin Nokrek, Nisharun Nokrek and indigenous women's leader Jasinta Nokrek spoke at the meeting.

The discussion meeting concluded with a cultural function.

RU Correspondent reports: The day was observed in Rajshahi with a call to the government to take steps for constitutional recognition of rights of indigenous people and protection of their traditional culture.

The day was observed in a festive mood through various programmes including rally, cultural presentation, discussion meeting and prize distribution at Kakonhat College ground.

The programme was jointly organised by Adivasi Unnayan Sangstha (AUS) and Uttal Bangla Adivasi Lahanti Network.

A large number of indigenous people including those from Santal, Pahari and Munda communities from northern districts joined the programme that began with a big colorful procession in Kakonhattown.

The processionists carrying banners and feestons highlighting their demands paraded the town streets chanting various slogans.

The procession began with a Santal song.

The rally adopted a resolution containing the 20-point demand of indigenous people. It was read out by Adivasi Unnayon Sangtha represen-

tative Nogan Murmu.

The demands include constitutional recognition to their rights and right to education through their mother tongue.

AUS Executive Director Bhavabat Tudu presided over the rally, attended by Social Welfare Department Assistant Director Aftab Uddin Sheikh as chief guest.

Godagari Upazila Social Welfare Officer Abdul Khalek, advocate Norandronath Kischu, AUS Advisor Norandro Tudu, Blast Coordinator in Rajshahi Abdus Samad and Kakonhat College Principal Abdul Hannan were present as special guests.

Speakers at the rally said that they have a distinctive culture and heritage, but those are fading away due to lack of government patronisation and "aggressive" activities by sections of local Bangalees. Earlier, a memorandum containing the demands, addressed to the Prime Minister, was handed over to the Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi.

After the meeting, atristes from Santal, Worao and Pahari communities presented traditional Danta, Dasha, Baha and Doshai dances. Prizes were given to best performers.

In Rajshahi city, the Adivasi Sangskritik Sangstha, Jatiya Adivasi Parishad and Rajshahi University Adivasi Students Association jointly formed a human chain at the Zero

Point to press for acceptance of indigenous people's demands.

The Rajshahi University Adivasi Students Association also formed another human chain in front of Central Library premises to press the demands.

It held cultural function on the Central Shaheed Miner premises.

Our Bandarban Correspondent reports:

The day was observed in Bandarban yesterday though rallies, processions and cultural programmes highlighting the indigenous people's demands.

Some local NGOs organised the programmes. In one such rally held at Baghmara Bazaar in Bandarban Sadar, speakers called upon the government to take steps to establish peace in the hills by giving constitutional recognition to the rights of indigenous people.

Anannya Kallyan Sangstha (AKS), a local NGO, in cooperation with Care, Bangladesh, organised the rally.

It was addressed by, among others, CHT Regional Council member KS Mong, AKS Executive Director Donai Prue Neil, teacher Kya Shwe Prue, journalist Monirul Islam Monu, Buddha Joyti Chakma, Headmen Mong Pu Marma, Thwai Ching Prue and Kheyang.

Jamuna erosion displaces 4000 families, devours schools

Sirajganj town threatened, say WDB officials

A CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

Erosion by the mighty Jamuna is playing a havoc in five upazilas of Sirajganj district, devouring educational institutions, homesteads and displacing people.

The river, during the current monsoon, has so far made homeless about 4,000 families.

The worst erosion affected areas are Monsur Nagar, Chagrish, Khas Razbari, Natuarpra Takani, Nishchintapur, Shubhgacha, Maizbari, Gandail, Polashpur, Sreepur, Ghorachora, Raghunathpur and Rangagari in Kazipur upazila;

Bhatirari, Simla Khkhshbari, Sailabari, Khalishakura, Ranigram, Panchthekri, Aminpur and Shaydabad the in Sadar upazila; Betli, Enayetpur, Shohagpur, Randhunibari, Kezimorh, Azugara and Suborna Sara in Belkuchi upazila; Kaizuri, Sonatola, Guthibari and Beltail in Shahzadpur upazila and Khash Kawlia and Ghorzan in Chowhali upazila.

Over 20 primary schools, two colleges, six madrasahs, 10 mosques and three Union Parishad offices are now threatened, official sources said.

About 900 metres of Water Development Board (WDB) embank-

ment in Suilabari in Sadar upazila have collapsed into the river, according to WDB sources.

In Chowhali, upazila office complexes are threatened, creating a panic among local people.

Many people in Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi and Chowhali upazilas are shifting their homes.

When contacted, WDB Executive Engineer Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan in Sirajganj said erosion by Jamuna has taken a serious turn near Sirajganj town. Protection measures can not be taken due to lack of funds, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Local people trying to retrieve bricks and other construction materials of Shoilabari Government Primary School that collapsed into the Jamuna in the Sadar upazila.

Jamaat blames BNP for Plabon murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

Plashbari upazila unit of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Chhatra Shibir at a press conference blamed the ruling BNP for the June 13 murder of Plabon, a meritorious student who got GPA-5 in this year's SSC examination.

At the press conference held at Gaibandha Press Club on Monday, Jamaat-Shibir leaders alleged that BNP was trying to divert the case to save its men.

They announced their six-point demand. The demands include charge sheet of Plabon Murder Case, its trial under Speedy Tribunal Court and withdrawal of false cases lodged against Jamaat leaders. He also

blamed the.

Refuting the BNP allegations against Jamaat-Shibir at a press conference held on August 5, Plashbari Jamaat 'Amir' Ruhul Amin said, "this is not Jamaat-Shibir who created anarchism in Palashbari, rather the 'criminals' of BNP. Jubo Dal, JCD held hostages the people in the upazila," he said. Many of them were sued under 'Explosives act,' he said.

Plabon's father Azadul Huq Sarker was also present at the press conference. He said his 'only son' Plabon was killed by the BNP 'criminals' on his refusal to pay them Tk 20,000 as illegal toll. He alleged that the BNP 'criminals' are threatening him to withdraw the case or 'face death.'