

Beaten by rivals for joining party

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Three persons including a Union Parishad chairman, who joined BNP on September 1, were seriously injured when attacked by a group of BNP leaders and activists for joining the party.

The attackers had been opposing joining of the three persons to BNP, party sources said.

The injured are Sheikh Miraj Ali, chairman of Dargapur Union Parishad, Ganesh Chandra Banerjee and Kartik Chndra Mondal, all of Assassuni upazila. They were admitted to Satkhira hospital in a critical condition, hospital sources said.

Quoting local people police said, the three were attacked by miscreants led by local BNP leader Tariqul Hasan in front of Dargapur Madrasha when they were returning home from Baka Bazar in a motorcycle. They hit them with lethal weapons.

Local BNP leader Tariqul Hasan had contested the last UP election and lost to Sheikh Miraj Ali, an Awami League leader. Being defeated, Hasan and his men harassed Miraj Ali on several occasions.

Miraj Ali joined BNP, apparently to take revenge, party men said. Tariqul Hasan opposed his joining but failed.

10 get life for BNP leader murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal on Sunday sentenced 10 people to suffer life term rigorous imprisonment (RI), six of them in absentia, in Chowgachha BNP leader murder case in Jessore.

Tribunal judge Abdus Samad delivered the judgement.

The convicts are Aminur Rahman alias Amin, Feroz, Md Nannu, Minto, Ali, Shariful, Momin, Tito, Alauddin and Belal. Of them, Aminur Rahman, Feroz, Nannu, Minto, Momin and Belal are absconding.

Each of them were fined Tk 50,000, in default, to suffer more three years RI.

The convicts stormed into the house of Chowgachha upazila BNP senior vice president Mokbul Hossain at Hude village on February 20 in 1999.

They opened fire on Mokbul and later hacked him to death.



PHOTO: STAR

Flood affected Charialtoli village in Sirajganj Sadar upazila. Diseases including diarrhoea are spreading in the affected areas as water has started receding.

Land grabbing makes the poor landless

Political clout, muscle power, fake deeds are the weapons, survey report reveals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

The number of landless people in Jamuna shoals in four upazilas of Gaibandha district is increasing as local influentials grab lands of poor peasants by using political clout and muscle power.

This was revealed in a survey conducted by a local NGO.

The influentials, by resorting to 'fake deeds and tricks' have driven many poor peasants from their native shoals over the years. They are now destitute.

The NGO -- Samaj Kallan Sangstha (SKS)-- recently conducted a survey on 300 people who have taken shelter on the Brahmaputra flood cControl

embankment along the western bank of Jamuna in Shaghata and Fulchari upazilas. About 25 per cent of them were dispossessed of their lands by local influentials, 45 percent became landless due to erosion by the river. The rest 30 became landless due to fragmentation of holdings, the survey said.

As per law landowners who become landless due to erosion should own newly emerged lands in the river in his area. But once lands emerge, local influentials grab the lands by any means, the survey said.

Fulchari upazila comprised seven unions earlier. Of those, Fazlupur, Arendabari and

Fulchari Sadar unions and a major part of Gajaria union were devoured by the river over the years. But when lands emerged in the river, those were grabbed by local influentials, making the original landowners landless. About 80,000 in the areas are now fighting land grabbers, the survey said.

The land grabber first prepare fake deeds in connivance with a section of dishonest land administration employees and then capture newly emerged lands of poor and marginal farmers with the help of muscle power. Poor landowners can not go to court for legal help and ultimately turn landless.

This correspondent also talked to some of the victims in remote Khanchapara shoal in Fulchari union who were allegedly evicted from their lands by musclemen of influentials.

"I inherited one and a half bigha land from my father in Char Pepulia. It disappeared into the river. But when the land emerged some influential people grabbed it", said Abdul Kader. He now stays in Khanchapara flood shelter.

Abdur Razzak said he possessed two bighas of land in Char Pepulia few years back. He also became landless in the same way.

It is difficult to take back the grabbed lands from the influentials, said Rasel Ahmed Liton, an official of the NGO.

We are trying to create awareness among the people to fight grabbers, he added.

Mystery shrouds death of housewife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushthia*

Mystery shrouds the death of a young housewife in Modern Para in Jhenidah town.

Police yesterday recovered the body of Farzana Ahmed Nila, wife of Tariqul Islam Palash, a rich businessman. The incident has become a talk of the town.

The family of Nila's husband claimed that she committed suicide while her brother alleged that she was murdered by her husband. The couple has a nine year-old boy Angon.

According to sources in the area, Nila, daughter of Mahiuddin of Chuadanga were married to Palash nine years ago. They had an affair.

Recently the couple rented a house and were living there. Bithi, sister-in-law of Nila, told this correspondent that she talked to her Monday noon. Everything appeared to be fine.

"At midnight (1am Tuesday), Palsha phoned me to tell that Nila killed herself by hanging from a ceiling fan", she told this correspondent when contacted over cell phone yesterday.

But Nila's elder brother Nehal Uddin said, "We found a scar on her chin"

Being informed, a police team from the Sadar thana went to the spot and sent the body to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

A medical board yesterday performed autopsy of the body. The report will be available at least after three days, the officer-in-charge (OC) of Sadar police station told this correspondent over cell phone.

When contacted, Jhenidah Police Superintendent Akram Hosain said he will go for action immediately if the postmortem report says it is a murder.

Nehal Uddin has filed a General Dairy (GD) with Sadar police.

Diarrhoea spreads in flood-hit Sirajganj

A CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

Diarrhoea and pneumonia are spreading in the nine flood affected upazilas of Sirajganj district as water has started receding.

Two children died of diarrhoea and another from pneumonia in the last two days. About 200 people have been attacked with the diseases.

The dead were identified as Rahuli Khatun, 4, of Chowhali; Badsha, 2, of Kazipur and Hasna Khatun, 7, of Shahzadpur.

Of those afflicted with the diseases, 20 are in Sadar upazila, 25 in Chowhali, 25 in Kazipur, 20 in Raiganj, 20 in Shahzadpur, 25 in Belkuchi, 30 in Tarash, 15 Kamar Kanda and 20 in Ullapara upazila. They have been admitted to different hospitals and health complexes, health officials said.

Diarrhoea is spreading due to lack of drinking water in the affected

areas, they said. Besides, saline and other medicines used to cure intestinal diseases are in short supply in the hospitals.

Water Development Board (WDB) sources here said the water level of Jamuna marked slight fall yesterday. They hoped it will recede fast as there is no rain in the area and in the upstream.

Over 1.5 lakh people are still marooned in shoals of the Jamuna, Karotoa and Fhulzhar rivers.

Four boys drowned in the district in the current spate of flooding, the third in the season.

The worst affected areas are Meghai, Shuvogacha, Gandhail, Kuralia and Shimanto Bazar in Kazipur upazila; Rantankandi, Bahuka, Shimla, Khokshabari, Songacha, Bahuli and Ranigram in Sadar upazila; Bhuganti, Nalka and Dhangara in Raiganj upazila; Naogaon, Kachikata, Magura-

Bindopur in Challan Beel area in Tarash upazila; Shalanga, Salop, Sreekhola, Mahonpur in Ullapara upazila; Baghabari, Talgachi, Chobila in Shahjadpur upazila; Zoknala, Tamai, Randhunibari, Shahbajpur, Chala in Belkuchi upazila; Betli, Enayetpur, Ghorjan in Chauhali upazila. Areas of Sirajganj, Shahzadpur, Kazipur, Belkuchi and Ullapara pourashava have also reeled under water.

At least 2000 weaving factories have been shut due to the flood. According to district relief and rehabilitation office, at least 8000 houses have been damaged fully or partially by the flood that inundated Aman seedlings on 7,921 hectares of land.

Officials earlier said 43 educational institutions were damaged by the flood.

Rab headquarters open in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) headquarters were inaugurated in Sylhet city yesterday, at the city.

Rab Director-General MA Aziz Sarker inaugurated the headquarters in Islampur along the Sylhet-Tamabil highway by hoisting its flag at a simple function held on its premises.

The Rab Battalion-9 with its headquarters here will cover 13 districts. These are Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Narsingdi, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur and Tangail.

Sylhet Range DIG of Police AKM Mahfuzul Haque, Sylhet Deputy Commissioner Md. Faisal Alam, Rab-9 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Haider, SP Ansar Uddin Pathan and other officials attended the function. Rab started its work in Sylhet

in July last year under Battalion-3 with headquarters in the capital.

Talking to newsmen after the inauguration, Sarker said Rab is being built as a competent force to face the challenge of time. Steps have

been taken to make it a 'really effective force to root out terrorism and other serious crimes.

"For this, we need all out support from the media and the civil society, he said.

To meet the needs, an air wing has been added and a testing laboratory for identifying drugs is being set up.

He also said stern action is being taken against any wrongdoing by any Rab member.

Already, a good number of Rab men have been punished for different allegations against them, the DG said.

ROUNDTABLE ON AIDS Media urged to create awareness

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Speakers at a roundtable here on Tuesday urged the journalists to help create awareness among young people about AIDS.

The roundtable titled, 'Prevention of HIV/AIDS among Youths and Adolescents in Bangladesh' was jointly organised by Padakkhep consortium and a Dhaka-based NGO, Sedab, with funds from Save the Children, USA.

Held at Satkhira deputy commissioner's (DC)'s conference room, the roundtable was presided over by Satkhira civil surgeon (CS) Dr Abu Aziz Al Mansur while it was attended by Satkhira DC Md Ilias as chief guest and Satkhira Poursabha chairman Sheikh Ashrafal Haque as special guest.

Speakers urged the government for inclusion of HIV/AIDS in SSC and HSC syllabuses so that young people can protect themselves from the deadly disease.

No crime recorded in 15 days in B'baria

Weekly review meet proves useful

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

Crime rate has remarkably declined in Brahmanbaria after the district administration started weekly crime review meetings last month and beefed by patrol and vigilance by law enforcers.

No incident of dacoity, piracy, toll collecting, snatching, clash and abduction was reported in the district in the later half of August, official sources told this correspondent yesterday. In the previous 15 days, two incidents of abduction, two incidents of toll collection and snatching, four rapes, eight incidents of dacoity and piracy and some incidents of theft were recorded in the district.

The first weekly crime review meeting was held on August 14. When

contacted, Police Superintendent ATM Tareque said in order to curb crimes, law enforcers held at least 14 meetings with locals in different areas of the district during August.

Police, joined by special teams patrol crime prone areas in the district and keep an eye on 'doubtful persons', he said.

In addition, mobile courts led by magistrates make regular visits to different areas, checking crimes and food adulteration, according to sources in the Additional District Magistrate's office.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Sayedur Rahman said the weekly crime review meeting, held on Wednesday, discusses the crime situation area wise and takes decisions.

4 bank staff sued for 'snatching'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Four employees of Bangladesh Bank's Barisal branch have been sued for allegedly snatching bundles of smudgy notes from a man who went to the bank to exchange those for new notes.

Monu Mia, a trader, filed the case against Ajmeri Begum, Abul Bashar, Mozharul Hannan and Ali Akbar with Barisal Sadar Upazila Magistrate Court yesterday, court sources said.

In the case, Monu Mia alleged that he along with two others went to the Bangladesh Bank's cash counter No.

6 on August 2 to exchange 10 bundles of smudgy notes of Tk 20, Tk 10 and Tk 2 for new notes.

The staff there demanded Tk 50 per bundle. As Monu Mia protested and refused to pay, they called him into a room, beat him and snatched the bundles, amounting Tk 14,000.

Monu Mia went to police but they did not accept any case and suggested him to settle the matter through arbitration.

Magistrate Mumin Hassan ordered the Officer-in-Charge of Barisal Kotwali thana to probe the matter.