

None of 16 polls pledges fulfilled in Khulna

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

None of the 16 commitments made by has so far been implemented which BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia to the people of Khulna during her last election campaign in Khulna-2 constituency has been fulfilled.

She was elected from Khulna-2 in the last national election held on October 1, 2001. The seat however fell vacant as Khaleda Zia resigned from Khulna-2 (Khulna Ssadar Sonadanga thana) seat.

Later, Ali Asgar Lobi was elected from this seat in a by-election.

Her election commitments included establishment of Khanjahan Ali airport, modernisa-

tion of Mongla Port, creation of WASA in Khulna city and setting up of a water treatment plant, pipeline gas supply to the area, setting up of an IT (information technology village in Khulna city, elevation of Khulna Medical College Hospital to a 500-bed hospital, setting up of an international tourist centre, establishment of a cadet college, nationalisation of two high schools, development of the divisional women's complex, construction of a modern park, construction of residential buildings for workers of jute mills, allocation of funds for development of communication, uninterrupted power supply through setting up of a power plant and steps to improve of living of slum people in the city.

However, Khulna city Mayor Shaikh tayebur Rahman claims that some of Khaleda Zia's election commitments have been fulfilled.

He said work on setting up of a water treatment plant is progressing. Work is also underway to supply gas through pipeline within a year, the Mayor said.

Secretary General of Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee Shaikh Ashrafuzzaman said many mills and industries have been closed in Khulna during last four years' rule of four-party alliance government headed by Begum Khaleda Zia. Many others are on verge of closure.

Shaikh Ashrafuzzaman further claimed that there was no new

investment in Khulna due to absence of infrastructure. Mongal port now exists in name as it is beset with manifold problems. Foreign ships are reluctant to come to Mongal port due to lack of facilities and rise in piracy. The port has gone in the hands of a Mafia ring , he alleged.

Trade and commerce are quite disappointing in Khulna as none of the 16 commitments have been fulfilled, he claimed while talking tot this correspondent on Thursday.

Ali Asgar Lobi MP, elected from Khulna-2 constituency in the by-election, could not be contacted to know what steps he has taken to fulfil the election commitments made by his party chief in the last election.

Body of Hindu priest recovered in Narsingdi

Two statues stolen from temple

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Shibpur police yesterday recovered the body of a Hindu priest--Gopal Barman, 60,--from Haridhoa river near Arshinagar bridge in Narsingdi town.

Unidentified miscreants had abducted the priest of Adi Shakti Kali Mandir at Noadia village and took away a touchstone statue of lord Bishnu and a brass statue on Tuesday (October 18) night.

Some local Hindu people field a general diary with the Shibpur police in the following morning.

Some people saw a body floating on the river near Arshinagar bridge yesterday morning.

On information, police recovered the body. A case has been filed and the body sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, police said.

Police said they trying to arrest the culprits. The incident has created a sensation in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous people brought out a procession at Sundorpur village in Kakonhat in Rajshahi on Thursday to press their demands. They had gathered there to observe the 26th death anniversary of their leader Sargram Mazi.

Protect indigenous people's rights

26th death anniversary of Sargram Mazi observed in Rajshahi

ABU KALAM back from Kakonhat

Rajshahi: The 26th death anniversary of indigenous leader Sargram Mazi was observed here on Thursday with a call to the government to take steps for constitutional recognition to rights of indigenous people and protection of their traditional culture.

Sargram Mazi, a great indigenous leader, was an MLA in erstwhile Pakistan. He fought for land rights of indigenous peoples in northern districts and established a large number of educational institutions and libraries for their development.

Several thousand indigenous people from Kakonhat and other areas in northern districts gathered at Sundorpur village on Thursday to participate in various programmes in observance of his death anniversary.

The programmes were organised by Adivasi Unnayan Songstha (AUS).

A large number of indigenous men and women from about 30 communities including Santal, Orao, Munda, Rai and Paharia joined the programmes which began after offering Puja (a religious rite) for eternal peace of Sargram Mazi's soul.

This was followed by a big procession. The processionists paraded different roads in Sundorpur village, chanting various slogans and carrying banners and festoons highlighting their demands.

A rally was held marking the occasion. It was presided over by AUS Executive Director Bhagabat Tudu.

Pakri Union Parishad Cchairman Jalaluddin, former chairman of Gogram UP Shamsul Alam, indigenous leaders Bishownath Tudu and

Banjamin Hasda and freedom fighter Nurul Islam Sarker addressed the rally. They recalled the life and contributions of Sargram Mazi for development of indigenous people in the country.

They urged indigenous peoples to unite to realise their rights and resist encroachment of their lands by local influential Bangalee leaders.

They also demanded government steps to ensure indigenous children's right to education in their mother languages.

After the rally, Shantal, Oraio, Munda and Rai women jointly presented a 'prayer song' dedicated to the memory of Sargram Mazi.

A large number of journalists from northern districts, NGO workers, foreigners, local government leaders and elite also attended the programmes

Train robbery in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Robbers looted over Tk one lakh in cash and valuables from train passengers near Gouripur station, injuring five of them, one critically, Thursday night.

When the Mymensingh-bound train coming from Bhairab reached Gouripur station, a group of robbers numbering 15 boarded the train in guise of passengers. As the train started moving, the criminals mainly teenagers, started looting the belongings of passengers. On refusal, they attacked the passengers with sharp weapons.

One of the passengers, Md Abdul Awali 35, son of Sohrab Hossain of Char Gobindapur village, also secretary of No 2 Gouripur Union Parishad received multiple injuries. He is undergoing treatment at Ward No 8 of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

Mymensingh railway station master and the officer-in-charge (OC) of Government Railway Police (GRP) here could not be contacted after repeated attempts.

Wife murder for second marriage: 10 chargesheeted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Investigation authorities yesterday submitted charge sheet against 10 people including four women in the sensational Jahanara Begum murder case.

The Home Ministry's Monitoring Cell at a meeting had put it on the list of sensational cases and asked the authorities to send it to a speedy trial court.

The charge sheeted accused are Jahanara's husband Mujibar Rahman; father-in-law Abdul Gafoor; in-laws Jahangir Alam, Alamgir Hossain Tokon, Firoza Begum, Rizia Begum and Afroza Begum; Shahina Kashem; Shahjahan Kabir and Zulfikar Ali (associates of Mujibar).

Police charged them under Section 302/109/34 of the BPC (Bangladesh Penal Code).

Of the accused, Abdul Gafoor, Firoza Begum and Alamgir Hossain Tokon were released on bail. The other accused are absconding. Police submitted charge sheet yesterday before to a Magistrate court after five months' investigation.

Jahanara Begum, mother of four daughters, was slaughtered on June 30 night at her husband's house at Ramjibanpur village in Shyamnagar upazila as she did not agree to her husband's second marriage.



PHOTO: STAR

PDB officials tore down kaleidoscopic lights from posh shopping mall VIP Tower in Chittagong city and smashed those under feet on Thursday. The PDB had appealed to shop owners not to go for illumination because of power crisis but this was ignored to attract customers ahead of the Eid.

CHAR LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME IN GAIBANDHA

British HC happy over project work

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury has expressed his satisfaction over development activities under the Char Livelihood Programme (CLP) for the ultra poor in Gaibandha shoal areas, funded by his government.

"I am pleased to see the uplift work under CLP, but it will give more pleasure if I see 100 percent implementation of the programme", he told officials during a visit to some shoal areas in Brahmaputra basin covered by the CLP.

"I am also a son of this soil. I have come to the remote shoal in Gaibandha district to see the development you have done", he told officials and local people.

The British High Commissioner visited the area on Thursday to see the on going development activities under the CLP.

He was received by Gaibandha Deputy Commissioner Mujibur Rahman and other officials when he flew to Ujangari shoal in Sunderganj upazila in a seaplane.

He first visited the Lifebouy Friendship, a floating hospital on the Brahmaputra for treatment of ultra poor and destitute people in the shoals.

Expressing satisfaction over performance of floating hospital, Anwar Choudhury asked the authorities of the hospital to upgrade the medicare facilities and assured them of his government's all possible help in this regard.

The hospital is treating the poor shoal people in the area for te alst five years.

He then visited infrastructures created under the Char Livelihood programme at Purbo Khatiyamari shoal

in Fulchari upazila.

The government has undertaken a massive Char Development programme with a fund of Tk 500 crore to help the poor people change their life.

The programme began in 2003 with assistance from DFID of British government and will continue till 2011.

The aim of the programme is to reduce the level of poverty in the area by 50 percent by providing livelihood security.

The programme includes construction of roads, bridges and culvert; infrastructure development for setting up of cottage industries to crate employment under self-help basis through motivation.

The programme covers five northern districts of Gaibandha, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Bogra and Jamalpur. Priority

has been given to 149 unions in 28 upazilas in the districts in Teesta-Brahmaputra-Jamuna basin areas.

The British envoy also talked to some of the beneficiaries.

Solaiman Ali and Abdul Quddus of Khatiyamari shoal said that they have been provided with houses, drinking water and sanitation facilities for free under the CLP.

"We have completed infrastructures under the CLP in Fulchari upazila", said Kabir Anwar, upazila co-ordinator of the programme.

British High Commissioner was accompanied by Runa Khan, Executive Director, Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital; Roland Handson, team leader of CLP; David Wood and SL Sen.

He flew back to the capital in the afternoon.



PHOTO: STAR

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury talking to a beneficiary of the Char Livelihood Programme during a visit to a Brahmaputra shoal in Gaibandha on Thursday.

KNM reopening to remain a far cry!

Raw materials sold at half the prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Raw materials worth about Tk three crore stored at Khulna Newsprint Mill (KMP) warehouse are have reportedly been sold to Karnafully Paper Mill at almost half their purchase rates.

This was done at a time when people of the area were planning to launch a fresh agitation for reopening of KNM. Sources claimed that the KNM could be reopened and run commercially with a fresh allocation of only Tk 30 crore.

The sources claimed that are raw materials, chemicals, spare parts and furnace oil worth about Tk six crore were stored in the mill.

They claimed that 200 tonnes of pulp have so far been sold to Karnaphully Paper Mill at Tk 25,000 per MT. This was purchased at Tk

46,820 per MT and its current market price is about Tk 60,000 per MT, they claimed.

Besides, 154 MT pulp purchased at of Tk 44,180 per MT were sold to Karnafully Paper Mill at only Tk 19,000 early this year, they said.

When asked, KNM Manager (production) told The Daily Star that pulp was sold as per value. "There is no scope to sell anything of the mill at cheaper price. We are selling it at the price it was purchased", he said.

Managing Director (MD) of the mill, MD Shamsul Huq, when contacted, admitted sale of raw material to Karnaphully Paper Mill but refused to make any more comment. "Nothing is being done without permission of higher authorities of BCIC", MD Shamsul said.

LOAD-SHEDDING IN KHULNA, SATKHIRA

Power station, REB office attacked

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Severe load-shedding has made people's life miserable in Khulna and Satkhira districts, according to our correspondents.

Angry protestors attacked Miredanga power sub-station under Khanjahan Ali Police Station in Khulna due to power failure during Tarabi prayers Sunday night.

Devotees from seven mosques took part in the attack causing serious damage to the sub-station.

Police rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control.

In Satkhira, hundreds people including political party workers yesterday laid a siege to Satkhira Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS) office in Tala upazila.

They brought out a procession and held a rally protesting severe load-shedding and demanding smooth power supply.

In Patkelghata, leaders and activists

of major political parties brought out a procession and laid a siege to the Rural Electrification Board (REB) office and held a rally in front of it.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Abul Kalam Azad Milon presided over therally.

Among others, district JSD general secretary (GS) Obaidus Sultan Bablu, Tala Awami League (AL) president Sheikh Nurul Islam, BNP leaders Sohrab Hossain Dablu and Sheikh Abul Kashem, Workers' Party leader Aditya Mallik, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Prof Abdul Malek, Biswas Abul Kashem, Sirajul Islam, Moslem Uddin addressed.

Speakers blamed a group of unscrupulous REB staff for harassing the consumers.

They threatened that they would launch a greater agitation programme if their 5-point demand are not met within a week.

Later, they submitted a memorandum to the REB general manager.