



PHOTO: STAR

Fertiliser dealers, joined by farmers, attacked a vehicle of an insecticide company in Rangpur town yesterday for alleged sale of spurious insecticides.

10 get life for murder of Khulna AL leader Hatem Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ten persons were convicted to life term in Awami League leader Hatem Ali murder case.

The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each, in default to suffer rigorous imprisonment for more one year.

The court acquitted one person Bitu in the sensational murder case as allegations against him could not be proved.

The accused given life term are Daud, Jony, Humayun Kabir, Saeed, Kabir-2, Sohel, Daud-2, Kamrul, Abdur Razzak Khan and Sohel-2.

The verdict was delivered by Khulna District and Sessions judge AKM Ishtiaque Hossain. Sohel-2 was tried in absentia, while others

were on the dock when the verdict was announced at noon.

Hatem Ali was gunned down at about 9 pm on September 6 in 1999 at Haji Faizuddin Road in Khulna city.

His son Babar Ali lodged an FIR as complainant with Sonadenga thana on September 7, 1999, accusing 12 for murdering his father.

Inspector Iddris Alikhan of KMP Detective Branch, who investigated the case, submitted charge sheet on August 31, 2000 against eleven out of 12 FIR-named accused.

The other FIR-named accused left out of the chargesheet is Abdul Hye.

Statements of all the 12 prosecution witnesses were recorded during the trial.

Shibir threatens strike at RU to save Shalehi

RU CORRESPONDENT,

Islami Chhatra Shibir yesterday threatened of an indefinite strike at Rajshahi University from February 26 if the alleged "conspiracy" by police and "media campaign" against RU Shibir President Shalehi "to implicate him" in Prof Dr S Taher Ahmed murder is not stopped.

Shibir made the threat after a sit-in in front of RU administration building.

Tension mounted on the campus following the Shibir announcement.

"We are part of the government. How police can implicate Shibir president Shalehi in the murder", shouted former RU Shibir president and its central office secretary

Rezaul Karim at a rally during the sit-in.

"If we want we can stop anything. There is no other power to stop our strike", he said.

He termed false the confessional statements of three of the accused.

He also warned the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner to stop the "conspiracy" against Shibir, saying, "We will inform the nation about your sandals".

Turning to journalists, Rezaul said, "Don't disturb our peace. If you (journalists) continue publishing false reports, the result will not be good".

Meanwhile, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (CSF) and students of Bangla and Geology and Mining department

jointly staged a sit-in, formed a human chain and held a rally in front of the Central Library demanding arrest and trial of the killers of Prof Yunus and Prof Dr Taher.

Dr. Taher was murdered on February 1. The body was recovered inside a swear behind his house on the RU campus.

RU teacher Dr. Mohiuddin and three others have been arrested in connection with the murder. The three are Dr. Taher's housekeeper Jahangir, his brother Abdus Salam and their relative Nazmul.

Police earlier recorded Dr. Mohiuddin's statement in which he said he had borrowed the revolver used in Taher's murder from Shalehi and gave it back to him after the murder.

POWER, FUEL CRISES IN NETRAKONA Boro yield may fall short of target by 40pc

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Boro cultivation is facing a serious setback as irrigation stopped due to acute crisis of power and fuel in the district.

A huge portion of paddy saplings on 30,000 hectares of land have dried up while about one third of about 48,000 hectares of land remained uncultivated.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and Palli Biddyt Samity sources said the demand for power in the district is 23 megawatt (MW) in peak hours while it is 18 MW at other time of the day. But the power supply has now fallen to 6-7 MW in peak hours and 9-10 MW at other time.

During a visit to different upazilas, this correspondent found many boro lands lying uncultivated.

Sources in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Netrakona, said 1,47,000 hectares of land have been brought under

boro cultivation in 10 upazilas with a production target of 2,94,254 metric tons of paddy this year.

But they feared that the target may fall short by 40 per cent this year.

The DAE officials said, the worried farmers have nothing to do but to wait and wait for irrigation water. They are watching silently how their paddy saplings are dying in the fields.

Abdul Hamid, a farmer at Bamonkandi village in Kalmakanda upazila said most Boro saplings on his lands have already dried up due to lack of water. "I am certainly going to miss cultivation if the situation persists, he lamented.

Meanwhile, hundreds of irrigation pumps have become inoperative due to lack of electricity. Most of the farmers in the district switched over to diesel-run irrigation pumps. At least 2,100 diesel-run pumps have been installed in the district as an alternative to

electricity, DAE sources said.

Abdul Kadir, a solvent farmer at Gaokandia village in Durgapur upazila said he had installed a deep tube-well in the beginning of the ongoing boro season to irrigate his 50 hectares of land. But he is unable to run it for more than two to three hours a day due to acute power crisis. Later, he installed two diesel-run shallow pumps, but now he cannot run these too for scarcity of diesel.

Many other farmers, Ramzan Ali of Rahimpur village in Kalmakanda upazila, Abdul Ali of Gopalpur village in Atpara upazila, Abul Kashem of Bishiura village in Sadar upazila echoed Abdul Kadir's version.

Some farmers said they did not get diesel although they were ready to pay higher price for it.

Netrakona DAE Deputy Director Fazul Karim, admitting frequent power outage said the miseries of farmers multiplied due to fertiliser shortage.

10 BCL activists hurt as JCD attacks procession

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

At least 10 Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists were injured when armed cadres of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) attacked a procession on the Netrakona University College campus yesterday.

Witnesses said, the BCL activists brought out the procession protesting naming of a newly-constructed women's hostel after Prime Minister Khalada Zia by the college authorities. BCL was demanding to name it Shaheed Titas Chhatra Nibash.

The injured BCL activists are Rokon, Sumon, Aklas, Alam, Titu, Ishtiaq, Jewel, Anqar, Mamun, Hira and Milon.

Netrakona District AL president Samsuzzoha and general secretary Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru condemned the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Rabindra Sangeet Sammilan Parishad, a cultural body, performing at an Ekushey programme (left) and the stall of The Daily Star Readers Forum at a book fair organised on the occasion at Syed Ator Ali Public Library in Magura.

PARLIAMENT, HILL DIST COUNCILS Reserved women seats for CHT demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Speakers at a workshop here yesterday demanded three seats for women in parliament from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and three 'women reserved seats' in each of the three Hill District Councils in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

They also demanded direct election to women seats in the JS.

The day-long workshop on 'National Women Development Rules and Women Rights' held at the RHDC auditorium was organised jointly by the Institute for Environment and Development (IED), Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS) and local Sangbi Mohila Kalyan Samity (SMKS).

"We need the seats to ensure women's rights in the CHT", said Shaktipad Tripura, Coordinator of Jabarang, an CHT based NGO.

"As the administrative structure in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region is somewhat different, the rules should also be different to ensure women's development here", he added.

Women leaders from different indigenous communities in three hill districts attended the workshop

and supported the demands.

The government amended the National Women Development Rules 1997 in 2004, bringing changes in important clauses, without consulting women leaders, the speakers alleged.

"We protest it and demand reintroduction of 1997 rules as that was prepared in consultation with leaders of women rights bodies", said Dilara Rekha, Assistant Coordinator of IED.

Madhobilata Chakma, Councilor to the CHT Regional Council and president of Parbatya Chattagram Mohila Samity; Tuku Talukder, coordinator of HIMAWANTI, Bangladesh Chapter and secretary of Stop Violence Against Women; HTNF Secretary Nai Pru Marna Marry; the GSKS Executive Director Sagarika Roaza, Arumita Chakma of BLAST, Municipal Commissioner Monwara Jasim and Sajeeb Chakma, Secretary of Jumma Lekhok Forum addressed the workshop, among others. Mrinal Kanti Tripura was in the chair.

10X4

6X2

12X2