

Punish militant kingpins, their godfathers

Families of JMB victims in Netrakona demand

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

Families of JMB bomb victims in Netrakona have demanded capital punishment to militant kingpins Abdur Rahman and Siddikur Rahman alias Bangla Bhai.

Eight people including cultural activists were killed and about 50 injured when JMB suicide bombers basted two bombs in front Udichi office in the town on December 8.

JMB chief Abdur Rahaman and its second-in-command Bangla Bhai are the main accused in two cases filed in connection with suicide bombings.

Talking to this correspondent, families of the victims said the two JMB kingpins on whose orders innocent people were killed deserve the most severe punishment under law.

Shahanaj Begum, wife of Netrakona Udichi leader Khaja Hider said, "I do not want any help from government. I want that the two dreaded criminals be hanged as JMB cadres killed my husband on their orders".

Sunil Chandra Paul, father of cultural activist Sudipta Paul Shelly, also demanded capital punishment



JMB victims (from left) Haider, Yadav Das and Shelly

to Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai.

Similar sentiment was expressed by Sattyan Das, father of suicide bomb victim Yadav Das and Parvin Akter, wife of Raisuddin.

"They should be killed in the way they killed others", Parvin Akter said.

"JMB killed my son, I want JMB leaders Abdur Rahaman and Bangla Bhai be hanged", said Ambia Khatun, mother of another victim Aftabuddin.

The victims families also demanded that political leaders who

sheltered the JMB kingpins be identified and punished. JMB could not have operated without backing of any party in power, they claimed.

The victims' families are also critical of the role of police in investigating the suicide attacks.

Police could not arrest any of the culprits in three months. Instead, they tried to prove that Yadav Dasm, killed in one of the blasts, was a JMB bomber, they said.

Netrakona Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge Samiul Alam however

denied the allegation. "We are probing the incident. We will soon interrogate Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai", he said.

He said court ahas given permission and Sub Inspector (SI) Mohammad Alauddin, investigation officer (IO) of the two cases, will go to Dhaka soon to interrogate Abdur Rahaman and Bangla Bhai.

"We hope to get important information from them, the OC said.

Sec 144 at Harinakundu

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

The administration clamped Section 144 at Harinakundu in Jhenidah as Awami League (AL) and BNP call rallies at the same venue at the same time yesterday.

Sources said AL had called a rally at Harinakundu to protest arrest of Moshir Rahman Joarder, husband of former female MP Rehana Aktar Hira for alleged fertiliser scandal. Joarder however got bail from a court.

After the AL programme was announced, BNP called a rally at the same venue yesterday. The administration imposed Section 144 from morning till evening yesterday to avert any clash, sources said.

Rajpunnah begins in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Rajpunnah, the biggest traditional festival of indigenous Mong people in Khagrachhari, began here yesterday.

Traditionally, the Mong Raja (king) collects revenue from his subjects and meets Headmen (Mouza chief) and the elite on the occasion. This year the Rajpunnah will continue ten days, sources said.

Raja Palia Pru Chowdhury is the 7th Raja (King) of the Mong Circle.

The Rajpunnah began at the tastefully decorated Buddah Bihar with recitation from the holy Triptok and prayers for wellbeing of indigenous people.

About 700 Headmen, Karbaris (village chiefs) and several thousand people from the three hill districts attended the inaugural ceremony.

The festival is being held after 26 years. It was not held so long as Anika Devi, stepdaughter of former king Mong Purue Chaine had field a case, claiming the position. But she lost the case, sources said.

Since the British period, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is divided into three Circles-- Chakma Circle in Rangamati, Bomang Circle in Bandarban and Mong Circle in Khagrachhari.

Of the revenue collected, 42 per cent goes to the King, 38 per cent to Headman (Mouza chief) and 20 per cent to the government.

Qulkhwani of Mizan Chowdhury held

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Qulkhwani of veteran politician and former prime minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury was held at this ancestral home at Puran Bazar in the town yesterday.

The programme included Qurankhani, Milad Mahfil followed by special prayer and destitute feeding.

Local political leaders of Awami League, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, local elite and a large number of his admirers attended the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Cracks have appeared in an Irri-Boro fields at Itakhola village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila for lake of water.

Irri-Boro faces setback in northern districts

No rain for 5 months: Irrigation affected due to load shedding, high price of diesel

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

IRRI-Boro crops in eight northern districts in greater Rangpur and Dinajpur including Nilphamari are facing a setback because of a drought like situation for lack of rain last five months.

In many areas, cracks have appeared on fields due to lack of water.

Farmers say they are facing an unusual situation like the one in 1979 when there was no rain for several months and no humidity in the air.

Because of scorching heat and lack of rain, fields become dry within two-three days of irrigation whereas in the same fields remained wet for seven-eight days after irrigation in previous years, they said.

The dry soil needs more irrigation now, which they can not afford because of high price of diesel and load shedding, farmers in many areas in Nilphamari told this corre-

spondent.

Unlike in previous years, there was no rain in northern districts in October this year, they said. Showers in October increases moisture content in soil, which prevents it from becoming extremely dry and heated in summer, some experienced farmers said.

In previous years, January and February witnessed shower once or twice, but there was none so far this year, they said.

Besides, the dry spell also brings in pest attack on IRRI-Boro fields, they said.

Sources at the local meteorological office said day temperature in the area rises up to 35.5 degree Celsius since the beginning of this month. It will continue to soar if there is no rain, which is unlikely in a fortnight, they said.

There is no rain and the spy remains clear as the westerly cloud-carrying winds skip Bangladesh and

go to Nepal and Bhutan, they said.

In previous years, nor'westers started from mid-February but there is no sigh yet this year, they said.

Buds of the different fruits bearing trees are also drying up in different areas of the northern districts.

Farmer Khairat Hossain in Kundu Pukur village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila said even a slight rainfall increases moisture in soil, which keeps irrigated lands wet for 10-15 days. But now the lands dry up in two-three days after irrigation.

Toyeb Ali of Monthana village in Kishoreganj upazila said his IRRI-Boro lands need frequent irrigation but he can not afford it due to high price of diesel.

Deputy Director of Nilphamari Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Sakhawat Hossain said Irri-Boro in northern districts will suffer a setback if there is no rain in two weeks.

Border guards broker peace

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Border guards of Bangladesh and India at a flag meeting yesterday peacefully resolved a dispute over ownership of 10 acres of land in Kushtia border.

According to BDR sources, the lands in Ramkrishnapur and Munshiganj village in Daulatpur upazila near border pillar No 153

were owned by Bangladeshis. Some days ago, Indian citizens claimed ownership of the lands and threatened to harvest crops forcibly.

Being informed by Bangladeshis, BDR proposed a flag meeting with Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to resolve the matter.

At the flag meeting held at Mahiskundi border point, BDR and

BSF agreed that the lands belonged to Bangladesh.

Nayak Karim Uddin of BDR Mahiskundi BOP and Inspector Manoj Baral of BSF led the two sides, the sources said.

The settlement of the issue fostered peace and cooperation among citizens of the two countries across the border, the sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

A long wait for safe water...Women and children queue for water in a roadside tap in Palashpole area in Satkhira town.

8x3

7x2

8x3