

# CORRUPTION AND OTHER CRIMES

## 31 Pabna AL, BNP leaders on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Thirty-one leaders of Awami League and BNP in Pabna including two former lawmakers are on the run to evade arrest, top police officials said.

They are among 40 people on the list of law enforcers, wanted for alleged involvement in corruption and sheltering musclemen, the sources said. The list also includes some Union Parishad chairmen.

Nine belonging to both AL and BNP were arrested on April 10 and 11 and are now in jail on 30 days' detention, police sources said. After arrest of the nine, the rest on the list are on their heels, the sources said.

"We listed 40 political leaders including two former lawmakers for their alleged involvement in corruption and sheltering terrorists and musclemen", a police official told this correspondent on Sunday. "We arrested nine of them and the rest are absconding. Law enforcing agencies are trying to nab them", the official said seeking anonymity.

He declined to name the leaders but said the two former lawmakers from AL and BNP are on top of the list.

"One of them obtained an anticipatory bail from court but the official letter is yet to reach us", the official added.

Joint forces recovered government relief CI sheets from a poultry farm owned by one of the former lawmakers on February 17. The former lawmaker and his son face cases filed with Chatmohor police station in this connection, he said.

Joint forces also raided the former lawmaker's residence on February 17 but he escaped, he added.

"I heard that he (the former lawmaker) obtained anticipatory bail from High Court last week. We are yet to get any official letter in this regard", Officer-in-Charge of Chatmohor police station Zahidul Islam said.

Police sources said joint forces on February 18 seized 412 pieces of CI sheets from an educational institution set up by another former lawmaker. A case was filed in this connection with Sujannagar police station. Pabna Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) is also investigating the case, OC of Shujanagar police station Md. Tarikul Islam said. When contacted, ACC Director

SM Rashidur Reza also admitted that they are probing a case against the former lawmaker for alleged misappropriation of CI sheets.

Many of the UP chairmen facing corruption charges do not attend regular meetings on law and order as they are absconding. Shujanagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shohel Imam Khan told this correspondent.

The persons arrested on April 10 and 11 are Pabna district AL president and former lawmaker from Pabna-4 constituency Shamsur Rahman Sharif Dilu, district BNP president and former lawmaker Sirajul Islam Sarder, Pabna municipality chairman and Pabna district AL organising secretary Kamrul Hassan Mintu, Ishwardi pourasava chairman and BNP leader Mokhlesur Rahman Bablu, central vice-president of AL's labour front Samik League Rashidullah, Pabna Sonali Bank CBA president Abul Ehsan Bappi, Bharara Union Parishad chairman and AL leader Abu Sayed, BNP leader and former chairman of Hemayetpur Union Parishad Alauddin Malitha and former UP chairman Shafiqul Islam Shafi.

## FLAG MEETING

### Joint border patrol in B'baria agreed upon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A battalion commander level flag meeting between BDR and Indian BSF was held at Kashba railway station ground in Brahmanbaria yesterday.

The meeting discussed ways to stop cross-border smuggling, drug peddling, trafficking and other crimes, BDR sources said.

To enhance vigilance against the crimes, BDR and BSF officials agreed to start joint patrolling along borders of the two countries, the sources said.

BSF also agreed to stop hemp cultivation in areas near Tripura border in India.

A five-member BDR team was led by Lt. Col. Sayed Raihanul Haque, Commanding Officer of 33 BDR Battalion while the four-member Indian team was led by AK Sarma, Commanding Officer of 22 BSF Battalion.

The flag meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere and concluded with a fruitful result, the source said.

## 2 Jubo Dal leaders held in Kurigram

A CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Kurigram Sadar police arrested district Jubo Dal joint secretary Shahannur Ashraf Juel and vice-president of its municipal unit Ahsan Kabir Likhan in the town yesterday.

Police said a case was filed against them under Section 54.

Besides, police in last 24 hours arrested 13 others from different areas of the district on various charges.

## Training for crew begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A two-day training course for crew of water vessels, ansars and fire fighters began at Barisal port yesterday.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) organised the training.

BIWTA director (Operation and Transport) Motahar Hossain presided the opening ceremony of the training course where participants were being imparted training on safe navigation of water vessels and related issues.

More than 3,000 lives were lost in 46 major launch accidents since liberation of the country.

The training was organised as part of BIWTA's new initiative by to impart training on navigation to at least 1,500 crew at 12 ports across the country, said BIWTA officials.

A centre to impart short course training to crew will be established in Barisal in near future, they disclosed.

Sunil Kanti Bose, chairman of BIWTA, Bijon Kanti Sarkar, divisional commissioner, Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiya, addition deputy inspector general of police, Lokman Hakim, deputy commissioner of Barisal Metropolitan Police, Golam Mawla, district president of district launch owners' association and vice president of central launch owners association, Nasimul Alam, former president of Barisal Journalists' Union and Reporters' Unity addressed the inaugural ceremony.

About 60 crew, ansars and fire fighters are participating in the training course.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Tree bent with mouth-watering lychees at Kalipur in Banskhal (left) while the seasonal fruit (inset) is being sold at exorbitant price in Chittagang city.

# Tea prospects better with favourable weather

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet.

With favourable weather conditions, prospect of tea production seems better this year than that of last year, according to tea experts and producers.

Official of Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) at Srimongal said, after last year's low production due to drought, this year's target was fixed at 60 million kilograms.

Last year's production was 53.27 million kg, which was about 7 million kg behind the target, they said.

The yield declined last year mainly due to poor rainfall in major tea growing areas in Moulvibazar and Sylhet during the peak production season. The inadequate

rainfall accompanied with high temperature had an adverse effect on the tea sector, they said.

Besides, tea gardeners suffered due to lack of rain also in October-November.

In 2005, the country had the highest production of 60.14 million kg in several years due to a very favourable weather condition and average rainfall during almost the whole production season.

"This year, the tea producing region has been experiencing more rainfall from the beginning of March, which is still going on", Md. Shahjahan Akond, manager of state-run Sombhag Tea Estate at Juri valley told the Daily Star yesterday.

The distribution of rainfall is very good and temperature and

sunshine are also favourable, which are very important for the sensitive crop. "But delayed supply of fertiliser is our major concern now", he said.

He however said since the rainfall is enough now, there is an apprehension of less rainfall at the end of production season in September-October. "If that happens, the crop may suffer a little", he said.

The situation was very bad last year when rainfall was less and also not evenly distributed in the region, the senior tea official said. Temperature was also too high for the crop, he added.

Fertilisation in time, which is very important, could not be done in most of the gardens due to lack of rain last year, he said.

Numan Haider Chowdhury, General Manager of Khadim Tea Estate in Sylhet said, tea is a very sensitive crop which needs uniform rainfall and sunshine during March-October.

"The crop position is good so far this year", the tea planter said. The situation is better in Moulvibazar region than in Sylhet.

Numan is also Circle Chairman of Bangladesh Tea Association's North Sylhet valley.

There are 160 tea gardens in the country, most of them located in Moulvibazar district. The production varies from 55 to 60 million kg. Around two-thirds of this is consumed at home and the rest is exported.



PHOTO: STAR

The spillway at Madhutula Eco-Park in Sherpur.

# Madhutula Eco-Park becoming attractive tourist spot

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Madhutula Eco-Park in Sherpur district has become an attractive tourist spot with sufficient breathing spaces and scopes for amusement.

The eco-park covering 380 acres of land in Sameshchura and Puragaoan under Madhutula Forest Range in Nalitabari upazila is the first man-made park for tourists in greater Mymensingh.

Madhutula, a frontier upazila in Sherpur, is bestowed with natural beauty with small hills. Hundreds of tourists visit the park every day during dry season, according to official sources.

To develop the Madhutula Eco-Park, the forest department took up the Madhutula Eco-Park Project—First Phase in 1999-2000

financial year covering 100 acres of forestland.

The project included a feeding place for birds and animals, plantation of rare varieties of trees and decorative and medicinal plants.

The Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) constructed a rest house, office and residential accommodation for officials and employees.

The LGED set up sculptures of elephant, alligators, tigers, deer, mermaids, snakes and frogs, dug lakes, constructed a watch tower atop a hill and a spillway. There are paddle boats in the lakes.

The first phase was completed in June 2004 at a cost of Tk. 1.64 crore, official sources said.

Work on the second phase was started in 2005-2006 financial year involving Tk 4 crore and will

be completed in FY 2008-2009.

The second phase work includes constructions of a mini zoo, children's corner, mural of animals and plants at the main gate of the park, creation of more picnic spots, information centre, display models, parking zone, steel made umbrellas and benches for visitors, said Md. Akbar Hossain, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Mymensingh.

The eco-park is 221 kilometers from the capital and 30 kilometer off Sherpur town. Sherpur is only about four hours' journey from Dhaka.

Akbar said the eco-park will be a great attraction for tourists when the project work will be completed.

It will also be a source of revenue for the government.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Flash floods have washed away about 700 metres of the under-construction dam at Aainapur of Jhenaigati in Sherpur district.



PHOTO: STAR

Tomato allures anybody but buyers at Sheikhpara market in Dinajpur.

# Tomato rotting in Dinajpur

## Poor preservation, transportation blamed

KANGKAN KARMAKER, Dinajpur

At least 50 mounds of tomato are rotting in wholesale markets Dinajpur a day due to lack of preservation facilities and poor transportation system.

Cultivation of the vegetable is increasing in the district but farmers are becoming disheartened as there is no facility to preserve and sell the perishable commodity, according to farmers and Dinajpur Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials.

Tomato grown in Dinajpur has already drawn attention of traders from different districts but they face transportation problems, farmers said. Tomato produced in Dinajpur meets around 40 per cent of the country's demand, AED officials

said.

Several wholesale tomato markets have sprang up at Sheikhpara in Dinajpur Sadar upazila, from where it is supplied to Dhaka, Rajshahi, Natore, Netrokona, Sylhet, Noakhali and some southern districts, traders said.

Around 100 trucks carry tomato from Dinajpur to other districts every day, they said.

The AED officials said around 9888 acres were brought under tomato cultivation in Dinajpur this year with a production target of 35 lakh maunds. The production exceeded the target, they said.

While visiting some wholesale markets, this correspondent found shrimps selling tomato at Tk 50 to Tk 120 per mound.

Last year, the price was Tk 750 to

Tk 1000, traders and farmers said.

This year, the yield was far better with 350 to 400 maunds per acre, farmers said.

Tomato grower Radhesh Chandray Roy from Uttar Gobindrapur village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila said, this year he earned a profit of only Tk 2,000 from 27 maunds against Tk 27,000 from 21 maunds last year.

Several hundred maunds of tomato were seen piled up in the wholesale markets. The rotten tomatoes were also polluting the environment.

Farmer Bipul Sarker of Sheikhpara union said Tk 28,000 to Tk 30,000 was spent to produce tomato in one acre this year, which was higher than last year's.

Plaintiff Alok Majumdar alleged

# Satkhira BNP man sued for 'land grabbing'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A case has been filed against detained Sadar upazila BNP president and Labsa Union Parishad (UP) chairman Abdul Alim allegedly for grabbing 21 bighas of land of a minority community by forcing the land owner to sign a deed. Five others were also sued in the case.

Alok Kumar Majumdar of Gopalpur village in Tala upazila, son-in-law of the Nitai Charan Biswas of Magura in Sadar upazila, filed the case on Saturday. He claimed that his father -in-law

Nitai Charan Biswas owned the lands.

Five others were also sued in the case. They are Shahadat Hossain, head clerk of Sadar upazila land registration office and BNP leaders Kashem Muhuri, Zia, Shahin, Nilkomol Biswas and Rabindra Nath Biswas of Magura village in Labsa union in Sadar upazila.

Earlier on April 18, two other cases were filed against Abdul Alim and six others with the same police station for allegedly looting shrimps from enclosures, extortion and illegally felling trees.

One of the cases was filed by Maniruzzaman, a shrimp cultivator in Katia in Satkhira town. He complained that Abdul Alim looted shrimps worth about Tk 3 lakh from his enclosure and demanded a toll Tk 5 lakh from him in October 2005.

Abul Hossain of Magura village in Labsa union filed the other case accusing Abdul Alim and two others for felling timber trees worth Tk 20,000 from the compound of his house on February 10 last year.

Abdul Alim was arrested by joint forces on April 9.

Plaintiff Alok Majumdar alleged

that on June 25, 2003, Alim abducted his father-in-law Nitai Charan Muhuri who was a clerk of a lawyer at judge's court.

On the following day (June 26, 2003), Alim confined Nitai Muhuri at a house place, forced him to sign a deed and then grabbed the 21 bigha land of his father-in-law.

On August 27, the land brags beat the family of Nitai Muhuri out of their house and occupied the lands, the complaint alleged.

On contact, Sadar thana officer-in-charge (OC) Safiqur Rahman confirmed filing of the cases.