



## Jasim Fair begins in Faridpur tomorrow

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A fortnightly fair begins tomorrow at Jasim Uddayan at Ambikapur village in Faridpur marking the 105th birth anniversary of Polli Kobi Jasimuddin.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Ekram Ahmed will attend the program as chief guest while Dhaka Range DIG Md Amiruddin will be the special guest. Faridpur Deputy Commissioner Yah Ya Bhuiyan will be the chair.

Jasim Foundation in Faridpur has organised the fair. All preparations are almost complete to observe the programs, the organisers said.

## Punishment of war criminal demand

RU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion meeting urged the caretaker government to set up special tribunals as soon as possible to try war criminals of 1971.

They also demanded immediate start of the trial.

The demand was made at an Annual Workers Conference and 22nd founding anniversary celebrations of Rajshahi Theater, held on its office premises.

Earlier, Rajshahi Theater held a day-long colourful function and discussion meeting to celebrate its 22nd founding anniversary.

The speakers included drama personality Bodul Alam Bhui and artist Sanjib Chowdhury, and cultural activists Ahsan Kabir Liton, Monowarul Islam Bokul, Maria Sarker, Nitai Kumar Sarker, Bodhazzaman Sopon and Shahin.

With Rajshahi Theater president Kamal Ullah Sarker in the chair, the meeting observed one minute silence in memory of Sidr victims.

## 13 drug smugglers held in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha police in a drive in the early hours yesterday arrested 13 phensidyl smugglers including six women from different areas of Gaibandha district and recovered 57 bottles of phensidyl from their possession.

Earlier, police arrested 19 people on charge of drug smuggling.

Special measures have been taken so that no unbecoming activity takes place in observance of December 31, police said.

## Tk 10 lakh Viagra, banned medicines seized in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a drive on Saturday recovered sex stimulating Viagra tablets and some banned medicines worth about Tk 10 lakh in Jhenidah and arrested two persons.

The arrestees are Aktar Hossain and Dut Kumar.

Rab personnel raided some medicine shops at Chuadanga bus stand in Jhenidah town and recovered the contraband items.

# No let-up in outlaws' bomb attacks in Jhenidah

2 injured on Thursday: 7 including police ASI killed, 46 hurt in 3 years

HOSSAIN SERAJ AND AZIBOR RAHMAN in Jhenidah

There is no sign of let-up in bomb attacks by Janajuddho cadres of the outlawed Puro Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in outlaw-infested Jhenidah despite several anti-crime drives and death of at least 53 cadres in 'crossfire'.

According to police, sources in intelligence agencies and newspaper reports, at least six of bomb attacks took place in Jhenidah district from November 18 to December 27 in which a BNP leader was killed and 10 others were critically injured.

At least 31 incidents of bomb attacks took place in the district from February 2004 to December 2006, in which 6 people including an ASI (Assistant Sub-Inspector) of police were killed and at least 36 were injured.

Janajuddho claimed responsibility for 21 of the attacks. A Janajuddho source claimed that bomb attacks on public representatives, political leaders are on following the directive of the top leader of Janajuddho Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan as he is determined to eliminate 'class enemy'.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Jhenidah Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Nazrul Islam said, "Police is deter-

mined to check outlaws' destructive activities and special drives are on to track down Janajuddho cadres".

In the latest bomb attack on a tea stall Thursday evening at Kachua Bazar in Shailakupa upazila, two people identified were critically injured. They are Abu Taleb and Zahid of Kacherkhole village.

In the previous evening, four people were injured in another such attack at a grocery at Kuthi-Durgapur village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila. The injured are Kawsar Ali, Abu Taleb, Rabiul and Ziaur Rahman.

Abdul Baki, secretary of district bus and minibus owners association, was critically injured when miscreants hurled four bombs at a bus stand in Jhenidah town at around 9-30 pm on December 18.

On December 12, a rural physician--Younus Ali--was injured when miscreants threw a bomb on him at Ghosh Nagar Bazar in Sadar upazila at around 8-30 pm.

BNP leader Abdul Halim of Dhobabila village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila was bombed to death on the night of December 9 when he was returning home on a bicycle. Rajib Ahmed, a Janajuddho leader claimed responsibility for the murder.

On December 18, former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League

Alamgir Hossain and his friend Rabiul Islam were seriously injured when outlaws hurled bombs on them when they were standing in front of fire brigade office at around 7-pm. They were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

Of the bomb attacks in last three years, six took place this year, 8 last year, 12 in 2005 and the rest 11 in 2004.

In 2004, six people were killed in bomb attacks. The victims included ASI Zahidul Islam of Harinakundu police station.

Eight people were injured in the bomb attacks in 2006 that included sadar upazila BNP's vice-president Sharafat Hossain, Shailakupa upazila BNP's publicity secretary Idris Ali and a rickshaw-puller.

After a break of about 10 months, the Janajuddho cadres again started to make bomb attacks from November 2007, that left a BNP leader dead and 10 others injured critically.

According to police and intelligence sources, Janajuddho operatives are sheltered by both the major political parties in the district.

"Most of the outlawed activists are sheltered by the two major political parties to use them in parliamentary elections", a high ranking police official in Jhenidah said preferring anonymity.

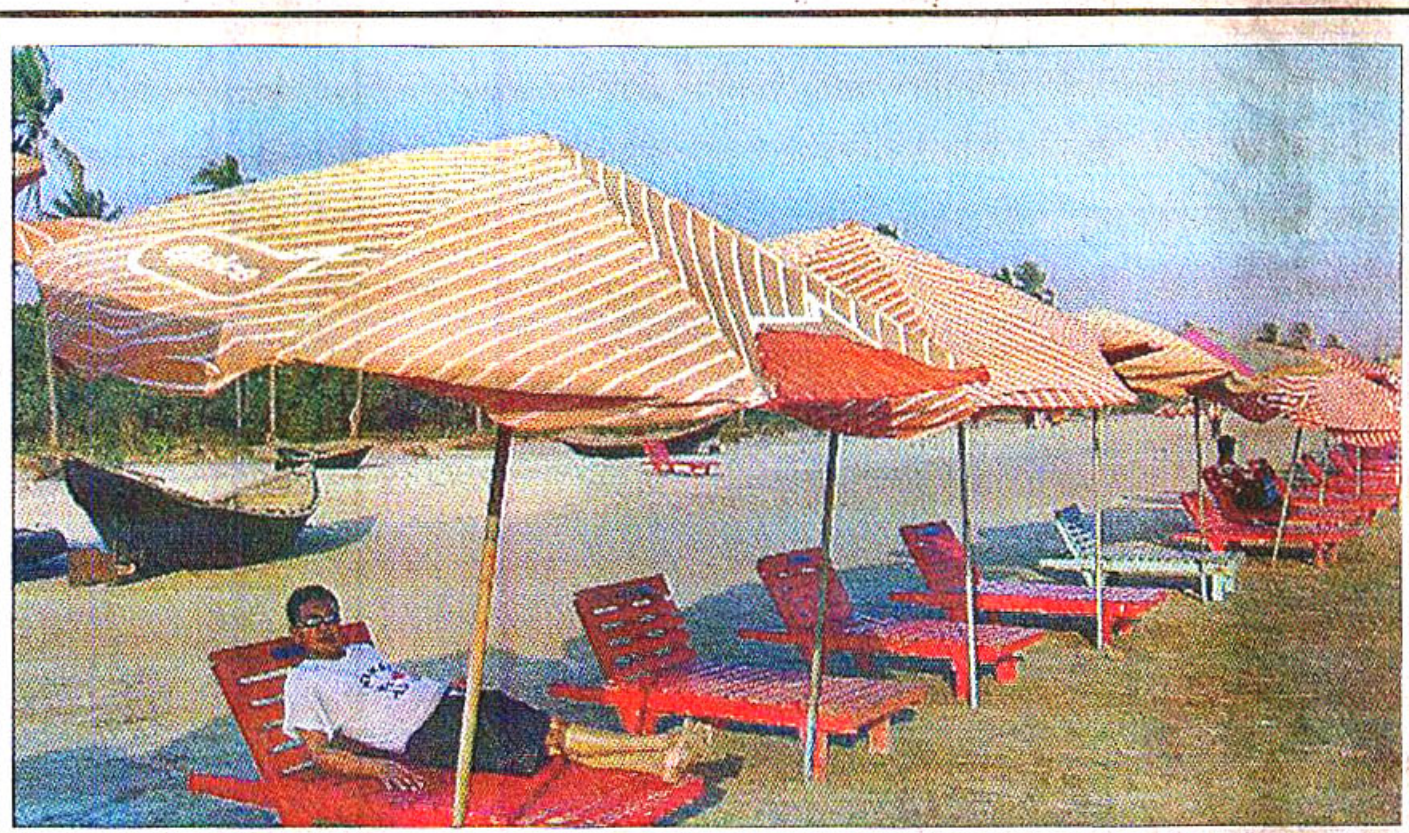


PHOTO: STAR

Almost empty Kuakata sea beach a day before the 31st night (night of December 31).

## Kuakata desolate at prime tourism time

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Unlike in previous years, attractive Kuakata tourist spot with a vast sea beach is almost empty now. There is no tourist here this year even on the eve of 31st night.

The sea beach and greens around are almost desolate as cyclone Sidr demolished many spots like tamarisk garden, coconut garden, dry fish zone.

In previous years, the beach remained full of tourists from home and abroad to welcome the New Year. The main attraction was the last sunset of the year in the Bay of Bengal.

All hotels, motels and tourists lodges were jam packed with visitors in previous years. But their owners and other service providers lament now for tourists.

Talking to this correspondent, Farukuzzaman, manager of Kuakata Motel of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), said, "Winter and spring are prime periods for tourism. But it is a different scene this year. We are facing hard days in the current winter as arrival of

tourist has fallen drastically. Tourists from home and abroad are now scared after Sidr."

Scores of tourists from different areas of the country used to crowd Kuakata and we had good business this time of the year.

"We earned over Tk one lakh during the occasion last year but there is no tourist this year," he said.

"We receive phone calls from home and abroad. They (tourists) ask about the post-Sidr situation and do not book hotel rooms," he said.

This correspondent visited Kuakata yesterday and saw no tourists in the beach.

This will also affect cottage industries because tourists are their main buyers.

Hotel owner Mahbub Hossain said, "The Sidr feared is yet in their minds. Moreover, many tourists spots have been damaged and the beach looks battered".

Government has an important role now to help rebuild the structures as soon as possible, he said.

## Salary hike won't reduce corruption

It depends on changing mindset, ACC chief says in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) chief Lt. Gen. (Retd) Hasan Moshud Chowdhury has said corruption can not be rooted out by raising salaries and allowances only.

It depends on mentality. Referring to the past two governments, he said, both raised salaries of officials and employees but that did not bring any change. Rather corruption increased, he noted.

"Every one should feel it necessary that corruption should be removed. Otherwise, we will not be able to change things and make a better future for the nation".

He was addressing a view exchange meeting with local elite at the city's M Saifur Rahman Auditorium yesterday afternoon.

Gen. Chowdhury said, anti graft issues have already been included in the curriculum of intermediate classes and will be included soon at secondary level.

He called upon all to bring a major change in mindset through discussions at family and other levels.

"We may not be able to root out corruption totally from society, but we will have to bring it under control," the ACC chief said.

Gen. Chowdhury said government alone by enacting tougher

laws will not be able to reduce corruption unless a mass awareness is created. He called upon all to launch campaign against corruption.

Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Aziz Hasan, Acting DIG of Police SM Ruhul Amin, Principal of Schoarshome School and College Brig. Gen. (retd) Zubayer Siddiqui, Sylhet Imam Samity chief Moulana Matiu Rahman, Swami Chandra Nathanandaji of Ram Krishna Mission, Bela's Field Manager Ayesha Chowdhury.

Sylhet Chamber president Zunnun Mahmud Khan, senior lawyer Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, Sylhet Press Club president Muktabis-Un-Nur, District Bar general secretary Ruhul Anam Chowdhury Mintu and a university student Shamim Quddus Bhuiyan also spoke on the occasion.

The ACC chief is on a three-day visit to Sylhet.

Later on the day, he addressed students and teachers of Sylhet International University and visited divisional office of ACC at Bagbari in the city.

The ACC chief is scheduled to address a view-exchange meeting at Shahid Abul Hossain Auditorium at Sunamganj today. He will also address separate meetings at Moulvibazar district headquarters and at Habiganj district headquarters tomorrow.

## US Senator given warm reception in ancestral village

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

American Senator Hansen Clarke was given a warm reception at his ancestral village Sridhara in Beanibazar yesterday afternoon.

Several thousand people thronged the reception venue at Sridhara Primary School as he reached there. Youths riding on a convoy of over 100 motorbikes received him at Sheola bridge and took him to the venue.

The upazila headquarters was decorated with festoons, banners and arches were erected on the road.

Ehsan Takhim, Dr. Shafiqul Hossain, Kamal Rahman and Aziz Khondker, who accompanied Clarke spoke on the occasion.

On behalf of locals, Lion Kazi Matiu Rahman, Prof AKM Golam

Dacoity at expat's house in Chhatak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Armed dacoits looted a British passport and valuables worth about Tk 5 lakh from the house of an expatriate in Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj Saturday night.

Over 10 dacoits armed with deadly weapons entered the house of Mubibur Rahman at Saidaigan village at about midnight by cutting grills. They tied up all inmates including the expatriate's wife Mahmuda Khatun and her son Mizan. They took away 20 ounces of gold ornament, Tk 15,000 and other valuable worth a total of Tk 5 lakh, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

US Senator Hansen Clarke speaking at a reception in Beanibazar.

Kibria, Prof Shamsuddin and Lion Abul Hasnat, Nurul Alam and Ataur Rahman also addressed the colourful function.

In his short speech Hansen said, he was proud to be in his native village in Bangladesh.

"I am very much delighted to be here, though it is late. I was waiting for long for this day."

He also expressed his desire to be involved in development of the area.

After the reception, Hansen visited the graveyard of his forefathers and spent some time with family members at their ancestral village home.

His father Mozaffar Ali Hashim migrated to the USA in 1930s and married American lady Telma. Hashim died in 1965 in the USA.

Clarke was elected a Senator in Detroit city in Michigan in 2005.



PHOTO: STAR

Women Union Parishad members at the day-long workshop at Rangpur yesterday. At least 102 UP members from 8 northern districts attended the programme.

## Female members ignored in local bodies

Speakers allege at Rangpur workshop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Female Union Parishad (UP) members from eight northern districts at a workshop in Rangpur yesterday raised their voice against alleged discrimination against them and disparity in all development programmes taken by their respective Ups.

They claimed that they are being avoided and neglected in all activities of Ups only because being females.

They said such gender discrimination is a serious threat to devel-

opment at grassroots level in northern districts.

A total 102 female UP members and 26 female RDRS federation members took part in the day-long workshop organised by RDRS at its auditorium.

Sayedra Nourin, Programme Co-ordinator of Aiyun O Shalish Kendra, an NGO, was the chief guest at the workshop presided over by Co-ordinator of RDRS Woman Rights Programme Monjurree Saha.

The female UP members alleged that they can not play any role in

selecting people for benefits under VGF (Vulnerable group feeding) and VGD (vulnerable group development) programmes, elderly allowance and allowance for the physically challenged.

Aziza, a member of Haribhasa Union Parishad in Thakurgaon told the workshop that the chairman of her UP does not think it necessary to take consent of female members in any matter.

The workshop adopted ten recommendations for empowering female UP members.

## Honey yield falls for lack of buyers.

Apiculturists have no processing facility while large quantities imported

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Though an exceptional venture, honey production has drawn many enterprising youths in Tangail and some other districts who are producing hundreds of tonnes of pure and good quality honey every year.

The honey producers, however, are losing interest in apiculture due to lack of processing and marketing facilities.

Honey production declined this year as a large quantity is lying unsold just for lack of marketing facilities, which is threatening the prospective sector having good export potential, some apiculturists said.

Over 1,000 mounds of pure honey are lying unsold with commercial apiculturists only in Bhupur, Gopalpur, Madhupur and Sakhipur upazilas in Tangail district.

The honey was produced since November last year in mustard fields and orchards in different areas of the upazila, the apiculturists said.

Last year's yield is unsold as

they could not market it while big buyers including pharmaceutical companies and food processing industries import honey from abroad.

Apiculturists knocked different pharmaceutical companies and food processing industries in Dhaka and Gazipur but they did not show any interest to buy local honey, said Dulal Miah, secretary of Bhupur Upazila Apiculture Cooperative Association.

The bulk buyers earlier wanted processed honey. Though three processing units have been set up in different places in Dhaka, Gazipur and Manikganj by some NGOs, now the big buyers are not showing any interest about the locally produced honey, Dulal said during a recent visit to the area.

The big buyers import most of the honey from India and Australia.

Nurul Islam, director of Bangladesh Institute of Apiculture (BIA) in Dhaka, when contacted could not specify the quantity of honey imported annually. "If (the imported quantity) is several hun-

dred tonnes", he said.

"There are at least 25,000 apiculturists including 1,000 commercial producers in the country. They produce at least 1,200 tonnes of good quality honey a year. The demand for honey in the country is around 2,000 tonnes annually," he added.

Honey, the best food item gifted by nature for humans, is used for producing medicines and food items.

This correspondent found about 60 mounds of honey stored at Dulal's farm in Bhupur.

He said he had supplied 75 mounds to two parties in the capital on credit last year but they are yet to pay him.

Abul Hossain, director of Apiculture Development Organisation, said though a huge quantity of locally produced honey remains unsold, Bangladeshi companies import it.

Over 500 apiculturists including 50 commercial producers produce at least 100 tonnes of honey at 12 upazilas in Tangail district, he said.

Apiculturists Ariful Haque of

Bhutia village in Gopalpur upazila said he produced over 100 mounds of honey during mustard season last year but most of it is still unsold.

Among others, Faruque Miah and Ashraf Ali of Agterilla village, Babul Miah of Balarampur village and Jewel Miah of Betua village in Bhupur upazila; Sakhi Charan and Abu Taleb Miah of Taktarchala village in Sakhipur upazila; and Abdul Hye of Rashulpur village, Abdus Salam and Nausher Ali of Ambaria village in Madhupur upazila also have stocks of honey.

Commercial apiculturist Abu Taleb of Taktarchala village in Sakhipur claimed that as a large quantity of honey remained unsold, its production declined over 50 percent last year in litchi orchards in Iswardi upazila in Pabna and Kapasia upazila in Gazipur.

Spraying insecticides in orchards also accounted for the fall in production as use of insecticides killed millions of honeybees, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Honeybee boxes of apiculturist Nur Alam at a mustard field at Torabgaj in Tangail Sadar upazila.