

A unique gift on Pahela Baishakh

Aziz gives away 20,000 fruit saplings for free among people in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Every Pahela Baishakh (Bangla New Year), a large number of people including women and children come to the house of Abdul Aziz for fruit saplings.

He gives away those for free as his New Year gift.

This year, on Monday, he distributed 20,000 fruit saplings from his nurseries at Shalabaha village in Ghatali upazila in the district. These include 17,000 lemon saplings and 3,000 of Saudi date, grape and others. He also entertained all with panta bhat (wet rice) and early variety of jackfruits, produced at his orchard. He has more 10,000 saplings for distribution.

Noted litterateur Dr Ashraf Siddiqui and prominent dramatist Mamunur Rashid, secretary of Peshajibi Samonay Parishad Dr Kamrul Hassan Khan and poet Ferdous Salam along with their family members joined Pahela Baishakh celebrations at the orchard of Aziz.

They also addressed a function, largely attended by people from far and near.

Abdul Aziz said he distributed over 1 lakh fruit saplings including lemon, guava, banana, star fruit, Saudi date and mango among people including and educational institutions for free in last few years.

Abdul Aziz, a former truck driver, introduces himself as 'Chasha (farmer) Abdul Aziz'. Local people call him 'Aziz Company'.

One day, about 20 years ago, Aziz had bought a ripe mango from Sadarghat in Dhaka. He sliced it and was surprised. The mellow mango was not ripe inside and tasted sour. He later came to know that traders ripen fruits by using harmful chemicals.

This small incident changed his



Abdul Aziz distributing fruit saplings as Bangla New Year gift at his nursery at Shalabaha village in Ghatali upazila.



Slow Loris killed in Baralekha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A rare species of monkey has been electrocuted in Baralekha.

It came in contact with live wire in front of the Upazila Health Complex gate as it came out of the forest to search food on April 11, sources said. Emdadul Haque, an official of the Center for Natural Resource Study of Coastal and Wetland Bio-diversity Management Project under the Department of Environment said, such rare monkey was not seen in Baralekha forests before.

Wild life experts identified it as Modest Monkey. Its face is like a 'black faced monkey' (Honuman) but the colour of its body is white.

TRAIN ATTENDANT MURDER Arrestees name killers, one remanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Two persons arrested in connection with the killing of train attendant Md Shamsul Haque on March 12 have disclosed the identities of the killers.

Sujat Khan, 35, and Nasima, 19, in their confessional statement before a judicial magistrate's court in Brahmanbaria on Monday also admitted to their involvement with the train robbery incident that led to the murder.

They told police the names of two killers who are still at large.

Babu was produced before a court, which placed him on five days' remand.

According to Sujat Khan and Nasima's judicial confession, gang leader Rakib, Babu, Shahin, and two absconding killers bought five tickets from Chittagong Railway Station and got on a compartment of Dhaka-bound Chittagong Mail train Up 1 on March 11 in the guise of passengers. After the train had passed Comilla Railway Station at around 2:30am on March 12, they started looting money and valuables of the passengers.

They killed train attendant Md Samsul Haque, 54, by slitting his throat and put the body in the toilet of the compartment.

20 kg chilli for one kg rice

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A farmer has to sell 20 kilograms of chilli to buy one kilogram of rice.

Vegetables are selling at throw-away prices in different wholesale markets of Lalmonirhat. Chili is selling at Tk 1.5 to Tk 2 a kg and Brinjal at Tk 2 to Tk 2.5 per kg.

Farmer Afzal Hossain of Mogholhat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said he grew chili on three bighas of land, spending about Tk 25,000. So far, he sold 20 maunds of chili for only Tk 1,000. He said he will lose at least Tk 20,000 by growing chili. "Today I brought one maund of chili and sold it at Tk 60. My wife told me to purchase two kilograms of rice, fish and soyabean oil and my daughter asked for a Bangla grammar book. How can I buy those?" he said.

He said last year he earned about Tk 40 thousand from chili.

The arrestees gave them clues to previous murders on trains on the same zone and it suggests the gang's possible involvements with other murders and criminal activities on the railway route, Md Wahiduzzaman, investigation officer (IO) of the murder case filed with Government railway police (GRP) at Akhaura Railway Junction, said.

The clue to Shamsul Haque murder came to light after Rapid Action Battalion on Saturday night arrested three suspected killers from different places of the district.

Law enforcers later arrested two others in this connection.

The arrestees are Sujat Khan, 35, of Punyout village of Brahmanbaria

Trader's body found

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Police recovered a trader's body from an insurance office at Hasara of Srinagar upazila in Munshiganj on Monday, the first day of Bangla New Year.

Body of the victim, Russell Kazi, 28, was possibly hung after his killing, police said, adding that they sent it to the morgue for autopsy.

Family sources said Russell was missing since Monday morning.

Project to develop eunuchs' life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Non-government organisation Losauk has undertaken a project to bring about some changes in the lifestyle of hijras (eunuchs) residing in Khulna city and elsewhere in the district.

The Norway-funded project aims at providing the eunuchs with facilities for schooling, job and social rights. There are about 2,000 eunuchs in Khulna city.

Losauk has introduced non-formal education for the hijra community at Khalishpur.

Bomb attack kills shrimp farmer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A shrimp farmer was killed when some outlaws threw bombs on him at Gachha village in Tala upazila Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Mahadev Kumar Sarkar, 30 son of Basudev Kumar Sarkar, of village Gachha in Tala upazila.

Quoting local people, police said Mahadev Kumar Sarkar was returning home in a motorcycle from his shrimp enclosure at Gachha Beel at night. The miscreants who waylaid him tossed there bombs on him, killing him on the spot.

The victim is cousin and a close associate of Shub Pada Sarkar, son of Shukdev Sarkar of Gachha village, who is a local leader of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBPC-Janajuddha), police said.

Shub Pada Sarkar, a charge-sheeted accused in Satkhira district BNP vice-president ABM Altaf Hossain murder case, was released recently on bail granted by the High Court, police said.

They said rivalry between two outlawed parties could be behind the murder.

Satkhira Police Superintendent Mirza Abdullahe Bakri visited the spot last night.

A case was filed with Patkelghata police station but none could be arrested.

Minor brother, sister drown in Dakatia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Two children drowned in the Dakatia river Monday evening as their boat, hit by a trawler, capsized boat capsized at Dherora in Hajiganj upazila.

Victims Rana Pal, 6, and Mita Pal, 8, were returning home at Natahara village along with their father after selling earthen dolls at a Boishakhi Mela at RG Govt Primary School at Bolakhal. Others on the boat except the two kids swam ashore.

Police and Fire Brigade personnel from Hajiganj and Chandpur recovered their bodies in the early hours of yesterday.

KHULNA MAYOR

Verdict in arms case April 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Third Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge yesterday fixed April 22 for delivering judgement in arms case against detained Khulna City Corporation mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman.

Tayebur Rahman, arrested from Dhaka on November 2 last year, is facing 13 cases including eleven for extortion.

The joint forces on November 3 night last year and seized from there a locally made shutter gun, a single barrel gun, a 25-inch-long sword, a 12-inch-long dagger, a nine-inch-long knife, 23 gun cartridges, and a butt of shotgun from the mayor's Khulna residence and Sub-Inspector Golam Rabbani filed an arms case with Khulna Sadar Police Station the next day.

SI Shubh Prasad Dutta of Khulna Sadar Police Station, who investigated the case, pressed charge sheet to court on December 25 naming the



Sheikh Tayebur Rahman
detained mayor as the lone accused and 15 others as prosecution witnesses.

The court recorded statements of all the 15 prosecution witnesses including twelve policemen of different status.

This is going to be the first judgement in the cases filed against Tayebur.

Power cut hampers tea processing in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Tea processing in several gardens in Baralekha and Juri upazilas of Moulvibazar district is being hampered as electricity supply that was cut during Sunday night's storm, could not be restored as of yesterday evening.

Plucked leaves are rotting as tea factories have remained non-functional due to power cut for three days, tea garden sources said.

The affected gardens are Dhamal, Shilua, Sagorni, Fultola, Kapnaphar, Sunarupa, and Atiabag under Juri upazila and Chhutalekha, Adnabad, Shahbagpur under Baralekha upazila.

About one lakh kg of raw tea leaves in Dhamal, Sunarupa, and Atiabag gardens have rotten in last three days, said Jahangir Alam, manager of Dhamal tea garden.

Power Development Board (PDB) officials said they are trying to restore power supply by repairing the electric wires and posts that were damaged during the cyclonic storm on Sunday night.



Two militant suspects at Brahmanbaria Sadar Police Station after their arrest on Sunday. (Story on page 1)

Public Notice on behalf of Westmont Power (Bangladesh) Limited.

That being instructed by my client Westmont Power (Bangladesh) Limited, House No. 7/A, Road No. 124, Gulshan, Dhaka 01212, I the undersigned do hereby giving this public notice for general information to the public at large for clarification that some of the national daily news papers and one weekly magazine on 7th and 8th April, 2008 have given four separate news reports against my client Westmont Power (Bangladesh) Limited with misleading information and deliberate intent to malign, vilify and defame my client. The news reports published under the captions as under: The Daily Jugantor have published the news about "Power Forgery by the Westmont Company, more than 3 (three) hundred crore taka has been snatched by 9 years." The Daily Naya Digantha have published the news about "300 crore taka has been snatched by Westmont." The Daily Shamkha have published the news about "Huge forgery in capacity test/324 crore taka has been snatched by corrupt group in Bagabari Power Plant." The Weekly Sheersha Kagoj have published the news about "Forgery of Westmont Power Company/1000 crore taka has been snatched smuggled in abroad/Fake bill of 250 crore."

Rejoinder

1. Westmont Power (Bangladesh) Limited commissioned two (2) units of world famous brand new Westinghouse W251BII Gas Turbines in June 1999. The Gas Turbines have a rated electricity generation Capacity of more than 98 MW at ISO Conditions. We was facing very severe power crisis, especially in the West Zone and was done within one year of signing of the Power Purchase Agreement and Implementation Agreement.

2. Throughout the last 9 years we have been a most responsible corporate client and have provided maximum cooperation to the Government in fulfilling our obligation as per the Power Purchase Agreement. However, we have paid heavily for this as we have operated our Power Plant under very difficult conditions including unstable grid, fluctuation in frequency and low grid voltage which has been frequent occurrence in the system. The problem is more severe in the West Zone, especially during the years 2006 and 2007 when the Plant suffered more than 100 Base Load Trips due to Grid problems. This is equivalent to more 25,000 running hours of life for the Machine.

i.e. about 3 years of operation and as per our Equipment Manufacturer this is a most abnormal and extraordinary situation. The damage to the Machine during a Trip is most severe as the Machine is running at 7,000 RPM and at high temperature of 1,000°C.

3. Our International Equipment Manufacturer warned us on operating the Machines outside the recommended parameters as spelt out in the Power Purchase Agreement. However, in national interest we chose to continue the Plant operations and operate outside recommended operating practices although we had the choice to discontinue Plant operation, as per the terms of the Power Purchase Agreement. We continued operation of the Plant despite Voltage as low as 9.3 Kv, in national interest and have never claimed a single Taka of compensation from the Government for the serious, costly and premature damages that our Machines have suffered.

4. The Yearly Capacity Test of the Machines are conducted as per the terms of the Power Purchase Agreement, i.e. within one month of major overhaul of the Machines and as per the Operating procedures as set out by the Equipment Manufacturer. The Capacity of the Machine considers many factors including temperature, humidity, environmental conditions, grid voltage and stability. These factors are ever changing and are never constant. It is impossible for any form of irregularity during the Capacity Test as all readings are recorded by the Machine.

5. The Capacity Test conducted in December 2007 was not conducted in proper manner and in accordance with the Power Purchase Agreement and this matter has now been referred to an Independent Expert for opinion and decision and we will abide by whatever decision made according to the provision of the Power Purchase Agreement.

6. Claims made for payment by the Company to BPDB for electricity generated and sold is based on a sealed meter reading every month. It is therefore impossible and absurd to allege that the Company has over billed and claim monies in excess of its entitlement. The allegation against the Company and BPDB are unfounded and are made with evil and ulterior intention by person or persons having a grudge against the Company and with a view of blackmailing and extorting money from the Company.

7. It is for the kind information of all concerned that the Westmont Power Plant at Bagabari is now generating more than 85 MW to the Grid. The allegations made of the Plant generating only 60.7 MW is absurd and cannot be relied upon and we are open for any form of enquiry and verification of the present generation capacity of the Power Plant.

8. The repairing work of the plant could not be possible for its continuation for a long time successively, as such the production of the plant is supposed to be reduced a little, or this though the capacity of the plant is reduced provisionally, the capacity of the plant would be more than 90 MW if the repairing work is done. At present, the season of the IRRI is going on, as such the plant could not be closed considering be done shut down the plant provisionally. For this the capacity would stand more than 90 MW. But at the current time the capacity was more than 85 MW on average. Though the report tells about giving of letter by the taskforce, actually the taskforce did not give any letter to the WPBL, even we or the press authority are not supposed to know about the matter that the taskforce gave any letter to anybody or not openly or secretly.

9. Those who have technical knowledge, are supposed to know that like the capacity test as to the high technical matter there is opportunity of deceit. Besides during the capacity test, many executives of PDB and outside of PDB be present. An independent expert engineer also be present. There is opportunity of deceit in the presence of so many experts. For this there has been no forgery of the capacity test and normally no excess bill is given by the PDB and it is not possible to accept the excess bill by the WPBL. On the other hand, although remaining the opportunity to send money through the banking channel, why the WPBL will consume it is not apprehended. For this, it is burlesque of consuming more than three thousand crores of taka.

10. The allegations against the Company and the Government are made by some elements with a view of smearing the name of government institutions. We are requesting the appropriate authorities to take severe action against the culprits who are creating such stories for their own gain."

That in the year 1996, the Government of Bangladesh opened private investment on ownership of power plant and accordingly my client was awarded the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) dated 10.06.1998 and signed the Implementation Agreement. Thereafter my client installed the Barge Mounted Power Plant at Bagabari, Sirajganj, Bangladesh and started simple cycle operation in 1998 with capacity of 90 MW. My client was required to commission the combined cycle to add another 40 MW. In this process my client as the foreign investors have involved and participated in the development program process of Bangladesh and since then have been trying to contribute and resolve power generation problems of the country.

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