



PHOTO: STAR

SAVAGERY ON INNOCENT CREATURES: A group of unscrupulous locals beat dead this porpoise at Hatiara village in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj district yesterday. Afraid of a possible case by the administration, villagers later buried the aquatic animal at a 'secret' place. *Right*, police arrest six poachers of migratory birds in Bagerhat.

ELECTION FEVER

Netrakona: No BNP man to contest for mayor post

No BNP man is contesting for the post of mayor in the upcoming election to Netrakona municipality while three local Awami League (AL) leaders have submitted their nomination papers for the post, reports our correspondent.

The three mayor aspirants are Matur Rahman, acting president of Netrakona district AL, Nazrul Islam Khan, joint secretary of the district AL and Prashanta Roy, organising secretary of the unit.

Contacted, general secretary of Netrakona district BNP Abu Tahar Talukder said no BNP man is interested to contest for the post of mayor as AL has a strong organisational base in the municipality.

Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru MP, general secretary of Netrakona district AL, said the three AL men are in the poll race as there is no candidate for the mayoral post from any other political party.

Jhenidah: 43 mayor aspirants in six municipalities

As many as 43 mayor aspirants, 269 councillor candidates and 87 candidates for women reserved seats submitted nomination papers on December 15 to contest the elections to six municipalities in Jhenidah district scheduled for January 13, according to our correspondent.

Four candidates submitted their nomination papers for the mayoral post, 48 for nine ward councillor posts and 15 for three women reserved seats in Shaikupa municipality. In Harinakundo municipality, eight filed nominations for the mayoral post, 34 for councillor posts and 15 for the reserved seats.

In Kaliganj municipality, 11 candidates submitted their nomination papers for the mayoral post, 61 for councillor posts and 14 for women reserved seats. Four candidates filed nominations for the mayoral post, 47 for councillor posts and 14 for reserved seats in Moheshpur municipality.

In Kotchandpur municipality, Six candidates submitted their nominations for the mayoral post, 31 for councillor posts and 11 for the reserved seats.

After scrutiny, nominations of one mayor and 16 councillor candidates were declared cancelled.

Pirojpur: Malek lone mayor candidate as rival backs out

Habibur Rahman Malek is the lone mayor candidate in Pirojpur municipality election as his rival Akhteruzzaman Manik has withdrawn his nomination, reports UNB.

Malek will be unofficially declared elected unopposed today, the last day for withdrawal of candidature.

Akhteruzzaman, district Jubo League organising secretary, withdrew his candidature in favour of Malek, brother of Awami League lawmaker Abdul Awal MP.

Nomination paper of BNP candidate for the mayoral post was rejected in the scrutiny.

C'nawabganj: 12 mayor candidates finally pull out of race

Twelve mayor and 31 councillor candidates withdrew their nominations yesterday, the last day for withdrawal of candidature.

In C'nawabganj municipality, AL mayor candidates Erfan Ali, advocate Mizanur Rahman and Kamal Uddin, and 15 councillor candidates withdrew their nomination papers.

After withdrawal of nominations, four are now in the race for the mayoral post, 105 for councillor posts and 28 for the reserved seats.

In Shibganj municipality, mayor candidates Soibur Rahman and Golab Hossain of BNP, Moin Khan of AL, three councillor candidate and one woman councillor candidate withdrew their nomination papers.

Now, three people are contesting the election for the mayoral post, 33 for councillor posts and 16 women for the reserved seats.

In Rohonpur municipality, mayor candidate Md Anis Sheikh of BNP and three councillor candidates withdrew their nomination papers. Six mayor aspirants, 38 councillor candidates and 11 women are now in the poll race.

In Nachole municipality, mayor candidates Mujibur Rahman, Aatur Rahman and Ekramul Haque of AL, Rafiqul Islam of Jamaat and Asgar Ali of Jatiya Party withdrew their nominations. Three councillor candidates also withdrew their nominations yesterday. Now, eight are vying for the mayoral post, 56 for councillor posts and 14 for women reserved seats.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

Children from Aila-hit Dakope and Koira upazilas of Khulna district sit with their books on the street in front of Picture Palace intersection in Khulna city demanding construction of embankment in the affected areas. The photo was taken on Saturday.

Fake army major held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A fake army Major was arrested red-handed while extorting a man at Arappur in the town yesterday. The arrestee was identified as Saiful Islam, son of Lutfor Rahman of Kamalpur village of Jessore district. According to a Rab official, on a tip-off, a team of Rab-6 raided a house at about 2:00pm and held Saiful red-handed while he was taking Tk one lakh from the owner assuring him of managing a job for his son. Saiful introduced himself as army Major. He took money from many other people in the area cheating them in different ways, the official said.

Teenage boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Body of a teenage boy was recovered from a wheat field on Saturday morning at Dabarbhanga village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh. The victim was identified as Anisur Rahman, 17, son of Foyezuddin of the same village. Officer-in-charge of Boda police station Kawser Ali Khan told this correspondent over cell phone quoting the victim's family members as saying that Anisur Rahman went out of his house on Friday evening and did not return home. On Saturday at about 10:00am the villagers found Anisur's body in a wheat field a few meters away from his house. On information, police went to the spot and recovered his body and sent it to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Victim's father Foyezuddin filed a murder case with Boda police station accusing two persons of the same village.

Seminar on youths in Sylhet

A SUST CORRESPONDENT

Youths are the driving force of a nation. The South Asian youths must work together for ensuring sustainable development in this region. This was told at a seminar on "Empowering Youths for Effective Social Change and Sustainable Development" on Thursday in Sylhet. It was arranged by South Asia Youth for Peace and Prosperity, a South Asia based international organisation. The seminar began with the inaugural speech of CU teacher Sazzadul Haque who urged the students to work for brightening the future of the country. Anam A Chowdhury, eminent newspaper columnist, was present as chief guest while Harunuzzaman Chowdhury chaired the function. Urging the youths to empower themselves to fight social evils, Anam emphasised on deep cooperation of South Asian youths for regional development. "South Asian people have similarities in their culture and lifestyle. Youths of this region can easily come to a common platform for sustainable development," said key note presenter Mahjarul Islam, Associate Professor and former chairman of Anthropology Department, SUST.

Man killed by wife, children

UNB, Gazipur

A man was murdered allegedly by his wife and offspring at Ketua village in Kaliganj upazila early Friday. The deceased was identified as Billal Hossain, 55, of the village. Police said gambler Billal asked his wife Halima to arrange Tk 3,000 for gambling and on her refusal he became angry and at one stage hit her with a billhook at dead of night. Hearing the hue and cry, their daughters Sabina, 24, and Salma, 18, and only son woke up and they with the help of their mother strangled Billal. On information, police rushed to the spot and arrested Halima, and her two daughters in this connection. A case was filed.

Press club executives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Faridpur Press Club's annual election was held on Friday. Habibur Rahman Habib, editor of local Bengali daily Bhorer Runner and Layekuzzaman, a roving correspondent of Manob Zamin have been elected president and secretary respectively. Two panels headed by Habibur Rahman Habib and by Munshi Harun or Rashid contested in 18 posts. Eight posts including that of president were captured by Habib panel while 10 posts including of secretary were elected from Munshi's panel. Habibur Rahman Habib was elected president with 40 votes while his nearest candidate Munshi Harun got 35 votes.

Stop land commission activities in CHT

Agitating hill people also demand removal of justice Khadem as LC chief

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Indigenous people in Rangamati and Khagrachhari yesterday demanded immediate postponement of the ongoing activities of Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDRC) and removal of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury as its chairman.

Hundreds of ethnic people with banners, placards and festoons joined a human chain in Rangamati town yesterday demanding stoppage of land commission activities, reports our Rangamati correspondent.

They also sent a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner of Rangamati in this regard.

CHT Nagorik Committee, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Jum Aesthetic Council, MN Larma Memorial Foundation and Movement for Protection of Forest and Land Rights in CHT for Indigenous People organised the 'human chain' in New Court Building area of the town.

Although a meeting chaired by land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira in Rangamati on October 10 decided to bring about some changes to the Land Commission Act-2001 before resolving land disputes, the land commission (LC) chief on December 13 issued a letter requesting its members to attend the hearings on appli-

cations of the affected people on December 27 and 29, the ethnic leaders said.

After his appointment as the chief of the commission in July 2009, Justice Khademul held only one meeting with the members of the commission, they said.

But ignoring four members of the commission, he held a number of meetings with the local administration and took unilateral decisions for carrying out cadastral survey in CHT, circulated public notice for submitting application by affected people about disputed lands and continued campaign in favour of the ongoing activities, they said.

Holding Justice Khademul responsible for working in favour of a vested quarter, they alleged that the LC chief has received applications from settler Bangalees who grabbed lands owned by indigenous people and he himself is doing everything including sorting of applications submitted by affected people.

Member of CHT Nagorik Committee Prof Moung Shanu Chowdhury, Convener of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, CHT unit Prakriti Ranjan Chakma, President of Jum Aesthetic Council advocate Mihir Baran Chakma, President of MN Larma Memorial Foundation Mongal Kumar Chakma and Secretary of CHT Forests and Land Rights Movement Sudatta Bikash Tangchangya spoke on the

occasion.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent adds: Leaders of four indigenous forums yesterday formed a human chain in front of Khagrachhari Press Club demanding removal of Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission Chairman Justice (rtd) Khademul Islam Chowdhury for his 'controversial initiative' to start hearings on applications of the land dispute on December 27 and 29.

At a protest meeting at noon in front of Khagrachhari Press Club with Jumma Saronartha Kalyan Samity President Pravakar Chakma in the chair, they urged the government to amend the controversial sections of CHT affairs Land Commission Act-2001 before start of hearing or resolving disputes.

Ignoring the decision of October 10 meeting at Rangamati to bring some changes to the Land Commission Act-2001 before resolving land disputes, LC Chairman on December 13 issued a letter requesting its members to attend the hearings on the two days, speakers said at the meeting.

President of Khagrachhari Karbari Association Romesh Tripura, General Secretary of Khagrachhari Headman Association Swadesh Prity Chakma and Parbatya Chattagram Nagorik Committee President Nirapod Talukder spoke among others.

Banana bonanza in Natore

BULBUL AHMED, Natore

Cultivation of banana is gaining popularity in six upazilas of the district.

The farmers, like other northern districts, are cultivating banana on a large scale on their lands and earning huge profits by selling the fruits in different markets of the country.

This year about 645 hectares of land have been brought under banana cultivation and the area is expanding every year.

Expecting a bumper banana production in the district, Delwar Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Natore, said "The growers have so far exceeded our target of 500 hectares".

In 2007/2008 around 475 hectares were brought under banana cultivation. The figure rose to 495 hectares in 08/09 and more than 500 hectares in 09/10 season, officials said.

Farmers are likely to har-

vest 28,000 to 30,000 tonnes of yield this season, as both the soil and the climate here are favourable for producing banana.

"More than 4,000 farmers are engaged in commercial cultivation of this crop, which is estimated to fetch them around Tk 20 crores as the fruit is sold at around Tk 5,000 per tonne," said Delwar.

Traders purchase almost 90 per cent of the banana produced in Natore and transport those to different markets across the country for domestic consumption, Delwar added.

At least 10 varieties of banana, including sagar, sabri, anupam, gerang, champa and kanch kala are produced in the six upazilas of the district.

The main cultivation areas include Bangabaria, Ruyerbhag, Chandrakola, Dulerbhag, Chaugachi, Bonpara and Lochangori while Natore, Bonpara Bazar, Habidpur Bazar and Tokia are some of the busiest points in the district for transporting

banana.

Azadul Haq of Bangabaria area under Sadar upazila is one of the many farmers who have changed their lot cultivating banana.

He once used to grow sugarcane in that area but now he is fully engaged in banana cultivation. For the last five years he has been making considerable profit from the item.

"Today I earn Tk 80,000 to 90,000 a year from each acre, at a production cost of Tk 25,000 to 30,000", said Dulu Mia, another banana grower in the area.

Shafiqul Islam, also a farmer, said he is earning Tk 2000 to 5000 on an average by cultivating banana on the lands around his homestead. The market price and demand for banana is very good. Sagor item is the best for profit although manik, sabri and champa are also cultivated widely in this area, said Mofiz Ali of Dolerbhag village.

Sukur Ali, another banana farmer in Chandrakola vil-

lage, said banana cultivation is very simple and easy as it needs no use of chemical fertilizers and little care.

Last year some farmers incurred loss as a nor'wester hit the orchards and damaged most of the banana trees. But this year there was no such incident. So the farmers are expecting a high yield and good profit, locals said.



PHOTO: STAR

Truckloads of banana from Bonpara Haat in Natore district being taken for transportation to different areas of the country yesterday. More people in the area are now turning to the profitable cultivation of the popular fruit.

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