

Attack on mayor sparks protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Patuakhali municipality Mayor Dr Shafiqul Islam came under attack by a gang of criminals in the town at midnight on Wednesday.

Protesting the incident, employees of the municipality yesterday observed strike, brought out a procession and submitted memorandums to the deputy commissioner and the police superintendent demanding immediate arrest of the culprits.

Police said a gang led by Mazharul Islam Rinku of College Road area in the town intercepted Siddiqur Rahman, manager of Health Care Clinic owned by the mayor, in the gymnasium area near the clinic at around 11:30pm and demanded Tk one lakh from him.

As Siddique refused to oblige, the gang beat him up and snatched Tk 6,000 from him. Hearing screams, Mayor Shafiqul, who was staying inside his clinic, rushed to the spot where he also came under attack.

Hearing the news, locals came out of their houses and shops, chased the gang and caught Rinku while the other gang members managed to flee. They later handed over Rinku to the police. Siddiqur Rahman, manager of Health Care Clinic, filed a case with Patuakhali PS yesterday.

Rinku is the main accused in Mayor's nephew Mahmudur Rahman Polish murder case. Recently, he was granted bail from a court. Local Jubo League leader Polish was killed on July 11, 2005.

Police yesterday produced Rinku, also a member of Patuakhali Bar association, in a court that sent him to jail.

In the memorandum signed by SM Sahin and Nazrul Islam, president and secretary of Patuakhali Poura Karmachari Union, demanded arrest of the other attackers within the next 24 hours. Otherwise, they threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme.

# GK Project comes as a boon for farmers in 4 districts

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Farmers in four southwestern districts will now be able to cultivate their land three times a year as Ganges-Kobadak (G-K) Irrigation Project will ensure water supply.

The water supply for the new season, known as Kharif-3 from December to March, has already started.

According to sources, the authorities had been supplying water for two other seasons -- Kharif-I (March to June) and Kharif-II (mid-July to November) from the beginning of the project in 1961.

With the new initiative, about 3 lakh tonnes more rice are expected to be produced in about 1.16 lakh hectares under the project area.

Talking to the correspondent, a number of farmers in the area said they are now happy as the move would open up the opportunity to cultivate their lands three times a year.

"I hope to produce about 30 maunds more paddy by cultivating my two bighas of land in the new season," said Abu Bakkar, a farmer in Kushtia.

"With the additional rice, I will be able to run my fam-

ily at a little ease."

Officials at the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) here hope that the new move would add a new dimension to paddy production in the southeastern districts of Kushtia, Jhenidah, Magura and Chuadanga.

"Farmers in the districts have been cultivating tobacco instead of paddy due to lack of sufficient water supply during the season," said Lutfor Rahman, deputy director at the DAE regional office in Kushtia.

"Now they will move toward paddy cultivation," he said expressing hope.

More than 22,000 hectares of land undergo tobacco cultivation in Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga during the December to March season.

"We hope that the farmers in the region will now give up harmful tobacco cultivation as they will get the water needed for rice production during the season," said Obaidur Rahman, director of the G-K project.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found that the farmers in the project area



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers at work at a paddy field in Mirpur of Kushtia district. The area was brought under cultivation recently due to introduction of a 'new season' by GK Irrigation Project.

have already opted for paddy cultivation in the new season.

The lands under the project area are the main sources of rice production in the districts, agri officials said.

Sources in the G-K project said, 15 pumps have been installed to lift water from River Padma and bring it to the fields through a channel.

The possibility of uninterrupted supply of water, however, depends on the water flow in the river, they said.

It also depends on discharge of water by India in the upstream at Farakka, they pointed out.

"We need to dredge up to 1.86 lakh cubic metres of silts from 850-metre stretch of canal near the Hardinge Bridge a year," said Md Abdus Sattar, executive engineer at the G-K Project.

The project failed to ensure smooth supply of water several times in the past due to drastic fall in

water level of Padma.

It could not supply water to the lands under the project area from the year 1992 to 1996, officials said.

The project became operational again after a water sharing treaty between Bangladesh and India in 1996.

However, the quantity of water often goes down as India withdraws Ganges water at Farakka, said an official of Water Development Board in Kushtia.

## Exam centre shifted 12 km away!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) students of two colleges in Mohimaganj on Wednesday protested shifting of examination centre 12 kilometre away from the local centre.

Following the decision to shift the examination centre to Gobindaganj upazila, the students of Mohimaganj Degree College and Mohimaganj Girls' College brought out a procession and blocked a train for about two hours.

During the protest, they said the decision caused untold sufferings to female students who had to take the examinations at such a long distance.

The angry students also threatened to go for further agitation programme if the decision is not cancelled immediately.

As per recent directive of education ministry, no candidate can sit for HSC examinations at their local centre, said ATM Motiur Rahman, principal of Mohimaganj Degree College.



PHOTO: STAR

Agitating students blocked a train at Mohimaganj railway station in Gaibandha for about two hours yesterday protesting shifting of examination centre 12 kilometres away.

## Ban on catching fish fry in Meghna

UNB, Laxmipur

The government has imposed a two-month ban on catching fish fry, including jatka (hilsa fry), from March 1 to April 30 in the Meghna River, aiming to boost fish output.

District Fisheries Officer Mosharrif Hossain urged the fishermen to refrain from netting fish fry till April 30 during the peak hilsa breeding season.

He was speaking at a meeting held with fishermen on Wednesday at Majuchowdhury Hat in

Meghna Ghat of Sadar upazila.

To stop jatka catching, the government announced the Chandpur to Alexander stretch of the river as sanctuary for hilsa.

According to researchers, hilsa develops 2-2.5 centimetres in length a month and starts moving towards the sea after reaching 15-17cm in length.

Bangladesh Coastguard and Bangladesh Navy and police will conduct separate drives in the areas to check catching of hilsa fry during the ban period.

### SNIPPETS

#### City corporation demanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

People of Rangpur demonstrated yesterday demanding Rangpur City Corporation. Samaj Paribartan O Unnyan Forum of Rangpur organised the programme in Kachharari Bazaar area in the town. The speakers at the programme called upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to declare Rangpur City Corporation (RCC). They said that the Prime Minister had announced the decision for RCC at a huge public rally at Rangpur Zila School ground on 8 January 2011. Rangpur City Corporation is now a people's demand, they said.

#### 'Protect Moulvibazar Haors'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Haor Rakkha Sangram Committee, a body to protect water bodies, yesterday submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner (DC) of the district, demanding implementation of its 7-point demand to protect haors in the district. Earlier, a big procession was brought out from Central Shaheed Minar premises which paraded the main streets of the district town and concluded at the DC office premises. A brief meeting was also held there with Advocate Gajnafar Ali Chawdhury, convener of the in the chair. Motiur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner (ADC), received the memorandum from the protesters. The 7-point demand include cancellation of lease of all water bodies and modernisation of Kashempur Pump House at Kawadighi Haor.

#### Human chain in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Hill people yesterday formed a human chain in the town demanding amendment to the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDR) Act 2001 and submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner. They also demanded removal of CHTLDR Chairman Justice (retd) Khademul Islam Chowdhury and appointment of a "competent person" to the post. At the programme, the speakers urged the government to resolve longstanding land disputes in the hill areas by amending the act. Among others, Prakriti Ranjan Chakma, convener of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, CHT unit and Goutam Dewan, president of CHT Citizen's Committee, addressed the programme.

#### Fake Rab man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benopole, Jessore

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested a fake Rab member from Asha Enterprise at Mujib Road in Jessore town on Wednesday night. The arrestee was identified as Arif Hossain of Churamankati area of the town. Local people said Arif used to cheat shopkeepers while purchasing commodities in the area identifying himself as a member of Rapid Action Battalion. Arif took some saris worth Tk 75,000 from Asha Enterprise in the town on the day saying that the price would be paid later. Suspecting his behaviour, the salesman of the shop informed the matter to Rab-6. Later, a team of the elite force rushed to the spot and arrested him at about 8pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalists under the banner of Pabna Press Club, Munshiganj Press Club and Faridpur Press Club observe token hunger strike in the district towns yesterday as part of a countrywide programme demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of Sagar Sarowar, news editor of Masranga TV, and his wife Meherun Runi, senior reporter of ATN Bangla. Criminals killed the couple at their rented house at West Rajabazar in the capital last month.

# Jute seed workers besiege office demanding pay rise

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 1,200 workers of Jute Seed Production Centre at Nashipur in Dinajpur Sadar upazila yesterday besieged the office of the joint director to press for their nine-point demand including job regularisation.

The other demands are regular payment of daily wages, overtime allowance, wage hike, job security, payment of arrears, disbursement of wages from cash section of the centre, year-round job for women workers and accident allowance.

Before laying siege to the office of the joint director at the seed production centre under Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADCO), the workers gathered there. They then took out a procession and paraded the area.

Addressing a rally in front of the centre, the workers urged the authorities con-

cerned to increase their daily wages to Tk 200 from

Tk 180 and pay the arrears for the months of January and February by March 3.

The also threatened indefinite strike if their demands were not met by the deadline. Md Abdul Jabbar, President of

Nashipur Jute Seed Production Centre workers' Union, presided over the rally.

Earlier on February 29, the workers submitted a memorandum to he chief of centre. They also submitted a copy of the memo to the deputy commissioner of Dinajpur.

Contacted, Joint Director Md Abdur Rashid Khan said they could not clear the workers' arrears due to fund shortage. "We will get a fund by Sunday and start payment of arrears as early as possible," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Jute Seed Production Centre at Nashipur in Dinajpur Sadar upazila demonstrate in front of the joint director's office yesterday demanding payment of last two months' arrear dues, pay rise and job regularisation.

## One killed, 10 injured in Sherpur clash

UNB, Sherpur

A youth was killed and 10 others were injured in a clash between two groups over a piece of disputed land at Jangaldi village at Balairchar union in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead is Babul Mian, 25, son of late Azar Uddin of Jangaldi Nayapara.

Locals said, there was a longstanding conflict between Babul Mia and neighbour Enamul Haque over the land.

They said Enamul and his men engaged in an altercation with Babul and at one stage attacked him, triggering a clash between the two groups on Wednesday evening.

Both the groups used lethal weapons in the one and half hour long clash which left 10 injured, some of them severely. The injured were rushed to Sherpur Hospital.

Critically injured four including Babul were shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where Babul died yesterday morning.

### UNICEF Vacancy Announcement

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is seeking applications from Bangladeshi Nationals to fill the following position. For detailed Job Descriptions, please visit our website: [www.unicef.org.bd](http://www.unicef.org.bd)

1) ICT Consultant (2 positions); Level: GS-5, Duration: 6 months; Duty Station : Dhaka

2) ICT Assistant, Temporary Appointment, GS-4, (7 positions), Duration: 1 year  
Duty Stations: Dhaka, Barisal, Sylhet, Khulna, Bogra, Mymensingh, Chittagong.

Last date of receiving applications: 12 March 2012

Please mark on the envelope the post applied for. Only short listed candidates will be invited for written test/interview. Any attempt to unduly influence UNICEF's selection process will lead to automatic disqualification of the applicant.

Application with CV and a copy of filled in P-11 form should be sent to the Chief, Human Resources, BSL Office Complex, 1 Minto Road, Shahbag, Dhaka.

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