



PHOTO: STAR

Paddy growers with the produce wait at Farmhat market in Dinajpur Sadar upazila but lack of customers and declining prices of the crop make them worried about recovery of the production cost, let alone profit.

Factional clash foils Sircar's meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A meeting of BNP standing committee member Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar was foiled due to a clash between three rival groups of the party in the district town yesterday afternoon.

At least 30 people, including two journalists, were injured during the incident.

Among the injured, Kazi Raihan uddin Tuku, former organising secretary of district Jubo Dal, BM Khorshed and Abul Kalam Biswas, district correspondents of Boishakhi TV and the daily Sangbad, were admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital while the rest were given first aid.

The central BNP team led by Sircar, also the former Jatiya Sangsad Speaker, sat with the local leaders at the District Bar Association auditorium in the town at around 4:00pm to chalk out plans to make the party's June 11 grand rally a success.

In his welcome speech, he urged all factional groups to forge unity and make the rally a success.

At one stage, two rival groups—one led by

Monno and the other by Delwar locked in an altercation on the proceedings of the meeting.

Monno group demanded party's senior leader and former president of Satura upazila BNP Moksedur Rahman to preside the meeting.

Meanwhile, the men of late secretary general Khondaker Delwar Hossain proposed former joint convener of the district BNP Jamilur Rashid Khan as president of the meeting.

Following the incident, Jamir Uddin Sircar, MP, decided to chair the programme.

After a few minutes, another Tozammel-Tuku group entered the auditorium while the meeting was underway and placed bouquet to Sircar.

At this, the other two groups started shouting and asked them to leave the venue. Within minutes, a fierce clash ensued over the issue, leaving 30 from both sides injured.

After some time, Sircar left the place, as the meeting witnessed a total chaos.

The three rivals blamed each other for the clash.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Thakurgaon Polytechnic Institute demonstrate in front of the institute yesterday demanding release and withdrawal of cases against the polytechnic students in different places of the country, who took part in agitation programmes during the last couple of days following rumour of degrading the official status of diploma engineers. The demonstrators also blocked Thakurgaon Station Road for about 40 minutes to press for their demand.

Rice price fall worries Dinajpur farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rice price in local markets has continued to fall alarmingly for over two weeks, much to the worry of farmers in the district famous for rice production.

A majority of growers, who had planted popular BR-28 variety of paddy with the hope of getting good prices, are now counting losses despite bumper production of the crop, farmers said.

"I sold off my last stock of paddy at Farmhat rice market in Dinajpur Sadar upazila on Wednesday morning. I got Tk 6,850 for 15 maunds (one maund = 40 kg) of paddy whereas I sold the same amount for Tk 7,100 last week," said Rafiqul Islam, 35, a farmer of Gorea village under Kaharol upazila of Dinajpur.

Rafique, who produced 90 maunds of paddy on three bighas of leased land, said he handed over 42 maunds of paddy as payment to the land owner according to the agreement. He sold remaining 48 maunds of paddy at the

local markets for around Tk 24,000 but the cultivation and harvesting cost him Tk 25,000.

Each 75kg sack of paddy sold for Tk 950 to 1020 at the local market on Wednesday, while the price was around 1,100 last week, he said.

"I sold paddy at Tk 1,200 per sack last year when the production cost was less than this year's," he added.

Sumon Basak, a middleman found at Farmhat rice market, said he purchased 70 sacks of paddy at Tk 1020 per sack this week while it was Tk 1050 last week.

He termed the market price as 'reasonable' compared to last year's.

Zahangir Alam, a farmer of Uttar Shibpur village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila, who cultivated paddy on 13 bighas of land this year, said, "Despite bumper production (41.13 maunds per bigha), I have to incur losses due to high production cost and less price at the local market. I spent around Tk 12,000 for cultivation on each bigha but I am facing loss of Tk 3,000 per bigha."

"We are left at the mercy of a syndicate of traders, particularly the rice mill owners, who are the bulk buyers of this paddy, while the government has not taken any initiative to solve the problem," said Zahangir, who came to Panchbari rice market to sell his produce.

Besides, huge quantities of Indian rice are being imported through Hilli land port for the last couple of months and it has led to fall of rice price in the northern region, sources said.

Due to the price fall, the growers are not being able to realise even their production cost, said local farmers.

In Dinajpur, one of the biggest paddy producing areas in the northern region, around 1.8 lakh hectares of land has been brought under rice cultivation this season with production target of 3.84 tonnes per hectare, said officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension.

The target has exceeded much as production stood at around 4.00 tonnes.



PHOTO: STAR

Rangpur City Corporation Bastabayan Sangram Parishad blocks Dhaka-Rangpur highway near the rail crossing in front of 20-MW power plant in the town yesterday to press the demand for upgrading Rangpur municipality to a city corporation.

Hartal in Rangpur today demanding city corp'n

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Jatiya Party (Ershad) backed Rangpur City Corporation Bastabayan Committee has called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the district today demanding upgradation of Rangpur municipality to a city corporation.

The organisation yesterday brought out a procession in the town and then held a rally in Shala Chatter area.

Former lawmaker Moshirur Rahman Ranga, also the convener of Rangpur City Corporation Bastabayan Committee, Rangpur Sadar Upazila Parishad Chairman Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa, also the secretary general of the body, and Rangpur municipality Mayor AKM Abdur Rouf Manik addressed the rally.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad at a rally here on April 8 urged the government to upgrade Rangpur municipality to a city corporation by May 15. Otherwise, he threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme in the district.

Ranga in his speech said they called for

the hartal as the government did not meet the demand within the deadline. He urged Rangpur people to make today's daylong hartal a success.

Meanwhile, Rangpur City Corporation Bastabayan Sangram Parishad yesterday blocked Rangpur-Dhaka highway and rail route in the town to put pressure on the government to declare Rangpur town a city corporation through a gazette notification.

The blockade programme continued for an hour from 11:30am.

Different organisations in the district had earlier observed programmes to realise the demand for upgrading Rangpur municipality to a city corporation.

On May 12, local unit of the ruling Awami League under the banner of Rangpur Unnayan Samonnoy Parishad formed a human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club.

The Sangram Parishad led by former lawmaker Sarfuddin Ahmed Jhontu observed a token hunger strike in front of the press club on May 20. The parishad also besieged Rangpur Pourasava office on May 24.

Teacher commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A female teacher allegedly committed suicide at Dhitpur village under Bhaluka upazila early yesterday.

She was identified as Khelon Rani Das, 22, daughter of Jagabandhu Das of Dhitpur and a teacher of nearby Sunbright Kindergarten at Shantiganj Bazar.

Police and family sources said, Khelon Rani took insecticides at her bedroom at around 1 am and fell seriously ill.

Sensing the incident, the family members immediately took Kheton to Bhaluka upazila health complex where the on-duty doctors declared her dead.

The reason behind the 'suicide' could not be known immediately.

Bank robbery in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Robbers looted over Tk. 17 lakh from the vault of Islami Bank branch in Joypurhat town on Friday night.

While fleeing with the booty, they also took away a shot gun and 10 bullets from the spot.

Joypurhat police yesterday arrested four people in connection with the robbery.

The arrestees are Md. Zahurul Islam, 32, and Harun Ur Rashid, 22, night guards of Joypurhat Branch Islami Bank, and Abul Hossain, 22, and Abdur Mojib, 22, workers of Fauzia Super Market at Sadar Road in the district town.

Local and police said the robbers entered the bank located on the first floor of the under-construction market making hole in the roof at dead of night.

Breaking the vault they looted Tk. 17,14,166. Officials apprehend that, the robbers also took away the gun and the bullets.

Around Tk. 14.12 lakh were found scattered on the floor of the bank, they said.

In Sylhet, robbers looted gold ornaments, cash and other valuables worth Tk 10 lakh from a house at Baurbag village in Bianibazar upazila early Friday, reports UNB.

Locals said a gang stormed into the house of Fazlur Rahman breaking open the door at about 2am and took the members of the house hostage at gunpoint.

At one stage the robbers beat the house members indiscriminately leaving owner Fazlur and five others critically injured.

Later, they looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables from the house and fled the scene firing blank shots.

Injured Fazlur Rahman, Shiplu, Shiplu's wife Alema, Habibur Rahman, Sayma Begum and Lebu Begum were rushed to the upazila health complex and later shifted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

SNIPPETS

Jubo Dal factions clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least four activists of Jubo Dal, the youth front BNP, were injured in a factional clash in the city yesterday noon. Injured Rimon, Sohag, Ovi and Rashed were admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. Police arrested four youths -- Russell, Hasanat, Murad and Sumon, in this connection, said Shaheduzzaman, officer in charge of Barisal Kotwali police station. Witnesses said, Jubo Dal activists led by Momen Shikdar and Kamrul Islam Ratan, after observing the party's country-wide demonstration programme in front of their office at Aswani Kumar Hall, engaged in chase and counter-chase. Both groups used lethal and sharp weapons. Among the injured, conditions of Rimon and Ovi were stated to be critical.

Boy stabbed to death

UNB, Bogra

A teenage boy was stabbed to death in front of municipality office building in the district town on Friday night. The deceased was identified as Mamun, 13, son of Mozammel Haque of Chawk Farid Colony of the town. Police quoting locals said a gang stabbed Mamun indiscriminately in the area at about 7:30pm, leaving him seriously injured. The victim was rushed to Bogra Shahid Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where he died at about 9pm.

JCD man held with phensidyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Chhatra Dal leader was arrested along with 350 bottles of phensidyl in Lohakhuchi border area of Aditmari upazila yesterday morning. The arrestee was Rubel Islam, 30, of BNP Colony in the town. He is the publicity secretary of Lalmonirhat district JCD. BGB officials said, a border guard team at Lohakhuchi camp in caught the JCD leader while he was carrying the contraband item by a motorbike in Lohakhuchi border area.



PHOTO: BANGLALION

Banglalion WiMAX was launched in Bogra through a press conference recently. Chief Technology Officer Ryan Gatling, Head of Market Communications GM Faruk Khan, General Manager, Sales, Faisal Bin Rafek, Dealer and Distribution Senior Manager Md Rifat Hossain, Corporate Sales Manager Khondaker Hafizur Rahman and Media and PR in-charge Syed Nasim were present.