

A 16-DAY 'TRADE' BY 8 YOUTHS NGO vanishes with Tk 50 lakh of 500

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A local Non-Government Organisation (NGO) has vanished without a trace with about Tk 50 lakh of its 500 subscribers who deposited money to get 'easy loans'.

Villagers said that about 16 days ago eight youths, led by one Arif Hossain, opened an office under the banner of 'Palli Unnayan Samity', meant a rural development cooperative, at a rented house at Bridge Bazar under Dakua union Galachipa upazila.

The NGO started its work in three unions of Dakua, Chiknikandi and Kalagachia and Arif Hossain identified himself as the manager of the NGO while others as its organisers.

The gang moved from door to door and formed over 100 groups each having five members. For each group the tricksters also nominated a chairperson. They promised a minimum loan of Tk 10,000 and maximum Tk 70,000 on condition that the willing subscriber made 10 percent down payment to qualify for the loan. Hundreds of innocent villagers immediately fell into the trap.

The gang then asked the subscribers to collect the loan from its office on Wednesday and Thursday. But when the villagers arrived at the office on the scheduled days, they found the office locked.

Setara Begum, 45, a housewife of Pardakua village under Dakua union, said that on Monday Arif Hossain, manager of the NGO, visited her house and took Tk 7,200 promising to issue a loan of Tk 70,000 and Wednesday was the day for disbursement of the amount.

"But at about 10:00am when I came to the office of the NGO, there was nobody and the door of the office was locked," Satara said.

Rashida Begum, 40, chairman of a group of Kalagachia village said Rasel, one of the organisers of the NGO, took Tk 26,000 from all five members of her group promising to give them loan.

"I along with all my members came to the NGO office on Thursday and found it locked. My rickshaw puller husband is now scolding me for giving the money without his consent," she added.

Bebak Chandra Das of Chiknikandi said that the tricksters collected Tk 4 lakh from about 80 women of his village.

Contacted, SM Ziaul Haque, OC of Galachipa police station, said he had heard about the matter but said that nobody filed any complaint with the police station in this regard.

"If anybody files a complaint, I will definitely take proper steps after investigation," the OC said.

BSF picks up Bangladeshi cattle trader, quarry worker

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) detained a Bangladeshi cattle trader and a stone quarry worker in Thakurgaon and Sylhet yesterday and the day before.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent reported that Indian border guards picked up cattle trader Khabiruddin, 25, son of Rezaul of Jugihar Harinmari village under Baliadangi upazila from Mondumala border early yesterday.

Officer-in-Charge of Baliadangi Police Station Md Asaduzzaman quoted local people as saying that BSF personnel of Velagachi camp arrested Khabiruddin while he was returning home with some cattle at around 4:00am.

Contacted, Commanding Officer of 30 BGB Battalion Lt Colonel Touhidul Islam said a flag meeting on this issue will be held at 9:00am today.

In Sylhet, BSF arrested a stone quarry worker from Sreepur border in Jaintapur upazila on Friday morning, reports out staff correspondent.

The victim, Jahangir Alam, 26, hails from South Thubang village in the upazila.

BGB sources said the Indian border guards picked up Jahangir from near the zero point of Sreepur border at around 9:00am.

At the flag meeting held at Sreepur frontier yesterday, BSF told its Bangladesh counterpart that they had handed Alam over to the Indian police as he entered the Indian territory without valid documents, sources said.



Large hoardings cover the frontal view of Barisal Ashwini Kumar Hall at the heart of the city, and right, a main thoroughfare of the city gets 'decorated' with colourful lightings, banners and posters as BNP activists have made grand arrangements to welcome party Chairperson Khaleda Zia this evening.



PHOTO: STAR

Khaleda's public rally at Barisal tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barisal

The divisional city now assumes a festive look as BNP activists have made a grand arrangement to welcome party Chairperson Khaleda Zia this evening. Khaleda, also the leader of opposition in parliament and former prime minister, will address a grand rally of BNP-led 18-party alliance at Bell's Park in the city at 2:00pm tomorrow.

It is going to be her second visit to the city as the main opposition leader after the ninth parliament election of December 29, 2008. On May 12 in 2010, she addressed a grand rally on the same venue.

Meanwhile, there are reports of factional clashes among BNP activists in different areas of the region ahead of the party chief's visit to Barisal city.

On Friday night, four people were injured and hundreds of posters torn as the followers of Gournadi upazila BNP President engineer Sobhan and former BNP lawmaker Zahiruddin

Swapon got locked in clashes over setting of posters with their photos and names to greet Khaleda Zia.

In Babuganj, followers of upazila Chairman Sultan Ahmed Khan and upazila BNP President Ishrat Hasan Kochi clashed over erecting welcome gates and placing billboards on Barisal-Dhaka highway on Thursday night, injuring two persons and damaging materials. The intra-party rivals blamed each other for the incidents.

Activists of BNP and its front organisations are now busymaking announcements through loudspeakers, conducting mass contacts, distributing leaflets and handbills, decorating lightings on the streets and giving finishing touches to decorations and gates, and erecting the stage at the meeting venue.

More than 700 gates are being erected and thousands of banners and billboards will be placed on the way to welcome of Khaleda Zia, the organisers said, adding that party activists offered voluntary labour and donations for the purpose.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Man's tendons cut off

UNB, Magura

Criminals cut off tendons of both legs of a man at Atharkhoda village in Sadar upazila on Friday noon. The victim was Babul Mia, an activist of the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal district unit. Police said a gang attacked Babul and cut off the tendons of both his legs while he was going to the town from his house at around 2:00pm. He was admitted to Sadar Hospital. Police suspect that the incident was a sequel to political rivalry in the area.



PHOTO: APOLLO HOSPITALS

Dr Prasad Muglikar (third from right), director, medical services of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka, opens the eighth Apollo information centre at RS Bhawan at 69 Jail Road in Jessore town on November 15.

College girl 'abducted'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A college girl was allegedly abducted near the district town's railway station yesterday morning. The victim is a resident of Nawdanga village in Phulbari upazila in Kurigram district and a student of HSC first year at a local college. Quoting family members, Lalmonirhat railway police said the girl came to the station in the morning following a family feud. The girl's father said that his daughter told him over mobile phone at around 1.00pm yesterday that she was abducted by a gang but she could not identify the location.

18 held from border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members arrested 18 people, including children and women, from Putkhali border while crossing the border illegally early yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a BGB team raided the area and held four children, seven women and seven men when they were crossing the border without passport. The arrestees hail from Chittagong, Noakhali and Dhaka districts, BGB sources said. Later, they were handed over to Benapole Port police.

AL Thakurgaon confce held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Amidst festivity, the tri-annual conference of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila unit Awami League was held yesterday at Zila Parishad Auditorium in the municipality area after nine years with a call to resist Jamaat-Shibir for ensuring the trial of war criminals. AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, MP, addressed the conference as chief guest while Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen, also president of the district unit AL, inaugurated it.

12 injured at Kuet as BCL, JCD clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least 12 students were injured as the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) clashed at Khulna Engineering and Technical University (Kuet) in the city on Friday night.

The injured were identified as JCD leaders and activists and second year students at Kuet.

Of the injured, Arafat Rahman Razu, 20, organising secretary of JCD Dr. MARashid dormitory unit, Prince, 21, and Wasiqul Bari, 20, vice president and general secretary respectively of Fazlul Haque dormitory unit and Fahim Towkir, 21, president of Khanjahan Ali dormitory unit were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) while the others were treated at local clinic.

Locals said, leaders of

Kuet unit BCL asked 14 JCD leaders and activists to be present in front of central library on the campus for holding a meeting around 11:00pm on Friday.

At one stage of their discussion, the BCL leaders and activists, equipped with lethal weapons, swooped on the JCD activists, leaving 12 of them injured.

Officer-in-charge of Khanjahan Ali police station Shahidul Haque said there was a longstanding rivalry between BCL and JCD units of Kuet over establishing supremacy on the campus.

As a sequel to that, both the groups locked in a clash around 11:30pm in front of Kuet auditorium, leaving four JCD activists injured.

None came to the police station Saturday evening to lodge any complaint, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Dharla continues to devour homesteads, farmlands and orchards at five villages under Mogholhat union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. This photo was taken from erosion-hit Chawratari village a few days ago.

Dharla renders 265 families homeless in last 10 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

At least 265 families in five villages of Sadar upazila became homeless due to erosion by the River Dharla in the last 10 days.

The erosion-hit villages are Chawratari, Bosuniyatari, Majhipara, Mogholhat and Kurul.

About 700 bighas of cropland, over 10 orchards, two mosques, an Eidgah and two madrasas in the areas were devoured by the river.

Besides, around 500 families and a few government and non government offices, including Mogholhat BGB camp are under threat of the erosion, said locals.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities remained indifferent to the on-going erosion, alleged Habibur Rahman Habib, chairman of Mogholhat Union Parishad. During a recent visit, this

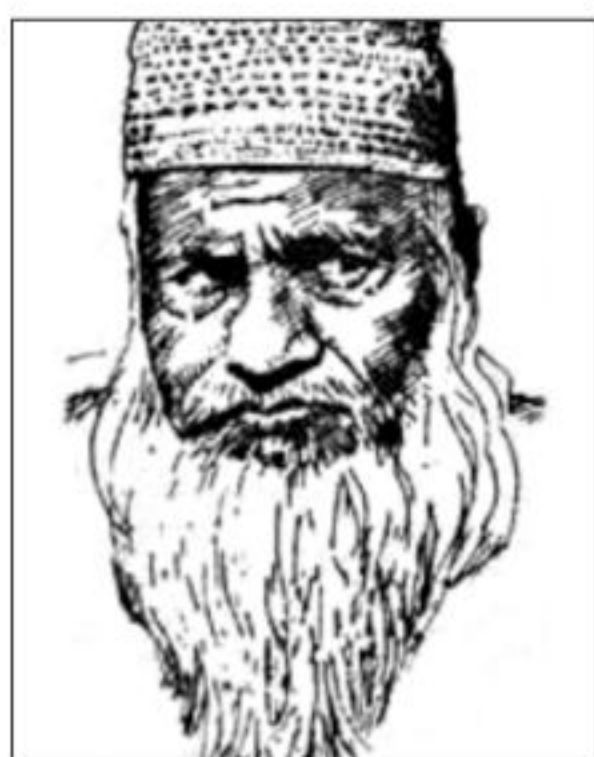
correspondent found many villagers leaving their homesteads and shifting to safer places along with households in fear of further erosion.

Shomser Ali Mollah, 48, of Chawratari village, said, "The river devoured my homestead, 15 bighas of cultivable land and a bamboo cluster during the period."

Another victim, Ayesha Begum, 45, of Kurul village, said she lost her homestead and a fruit orchard on one bigha of land last Friday due to the erosion.

Subedar Abdul Bashed, company commander of 31-BGB camp said they sent a letter to Water Development Board (WDB) authorities to check the erosion.

Contacted, Kurigram WDB executive engineer Abu Taher said they also wrote to the higher authorities for fund to cope with the situation.



Bhasani's death anniversary observed

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Tangail

The 36th anniversary of death of veteran political leader Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani was observed here yesterday.

Maulana Bhasani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) vice-chancellor Prof M Nurul Islam and family members of the deceased placed wreath at the grave of the veteran leader in the morning.

To mark the day, different political, social and cultural organisations arranged various programmes at his grave at Santosh.

Bhasani Foundation organised five-day programmes to pay homage to the legendary leader.

BNP organised a discussion meeting on the grave premises which was addressed by its secretary general Mirza Fakrul Fakrul Islam Alamgir.

Krishak Shramik Janata League (KSJL) president Abdul Kader Siddique Bir Uttam along with his party men also placed wreaths at the grave.

Born in 1880 at village Dhangara in Sirajganj, Bhasani dedicated his entire life for establishing the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden.

KPI LAND 'GRABBING' IN MAGURA

Area measured but no action in about 2 weeks

HOSSAIN SIRAJ, Magura

Dilly-dallying in taking action against illegal construction and land grabbing in the restricted area adjacent to the four-vent Nabaganga regulator, a Key Point Installation (KPI) in the country, has given rise to question about the role of the administration.

In late September, Rajab Ali Majnu, a businessman in Magura town, constructed a tin-shed structure in the restricted area and then continued earth filling work there although the Water Development Board (WDB) officials in Magura served two notices on October 1 and October 2, asking Majnu to remove the illegal structure.

But Majnu, known as an adherent to ruling Awami League (AL), ignored the notices and WDB authorities filed a criminal case with Magura Sadar police station on October 6, accusing Majnu for violating KPI Act that does not allow any structure within 150 metres of it.

As police did not record the case even after 17 days of its filing, Mohammad Faruk Bhuyan, executive engineer of Magura WDB, submitted a petition to the deputy commissioner (DC) in Magura on October 23.

On November 5, a team led by the ADC (Revenue) Gautam Chandra Pal and Magura Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mohammad Tabibur Rahman measured the land.

But the team is yet to submit the measure-

ment report to the DC for taking action as of yesterday, said sources in the DC office and WDB.

Such inaction is actually facilitating the alleged land grabber, said civil society leaders in Magura.

"The measurement team's role is already under question as they did not settle the matter of the illegal structure built by Majnu although the KPI Act prohibits construction of any structure within 150 metres of the installation," advocate Islam Ali Sardar, former president of Magura district lawyers association, told this correspondent.

Captain (rtd) Khalilur Rahman, joint convener of Nagorik Committee, a citizens' body in Magura, said, "The mysterious role of the district administration over giving the decision about the illegal structure now leads us to suspect that they are the party to the illegal act done by Majnu."

When contacted, ADC Gautam Chandra Pal said, "The allegation of being party to the act of Majnu as a baseless one. Preparation of the land measurement report is delayed as the UNO in Magura Sadar was very busy during the last few days. Lawful step regarding the issue will be taken within a few days."

If any multi-storied building is constructed on the land adjacent to Nabaganga regulator on Magura-Dhaka highway, the KPI will face the threat of collapse and the communication between Dhaka and 10 south-western districts will be disrupted, said sources in Magura WDB.



PHOTO: STAR

Officials measured the land around Nabaganga Regulator near Dhaka Road bus stand in Magura town on November 5 but a tin-shed structure, illegally set up by an alleged land grabber just beside the key point installation in late September, is yet to be removed.

BDR mutiny convict dies in Feni jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A former member of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) who was convicted in the mutiny trial, died in custody allegedly due to illness early yesterday.

Deceased Sepoy Nazrul Islam, 28, was son of BGB Subader Md Golam Mostafa of Kanchara village under Bhugpur police station in

Chittagong district.

Nazrul was on duty at BDR Headquarters under 12 Rifles Battalion during the mutiny in 2009.

He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and fined Tk 100 in the mutiny case.

Nazrul was shifted to Feni jail from Kashimpur jail a few months ago.