



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

One of the enthusiastic women voters, taking her baby in arms, waits in a long queue for her turn in front of a polling centre during election to Rangpur City Corporation yesterday.

Robber ringleader killed in Noakhali 'shootout'

UNB, Noakhali

A ringleader of a robbers' gang was killed in a 'shootout' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Charbata village in Subarnachar upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nizam, 35, son of M Ruhul Amin, a resident of Shiba village in Ramgati upazila of Laximpur.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-11 raided a betel nut garden of one Azharul Islam of the village where Nizam along with his cohorts took position to commit a robbery at about 3.00am, said Lieutenant Colonel Nawrose Ahsan, who led the drive.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the gang opened fire on the elite force. The Rab members also fired back in retaliation, triggering a gunfight in which Nizam got killed while his accomplices fled, added Nawrose.

The body was handed over to the police at Charjabbar PS who sent it to Noakhali Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Rab also seized a foreign-made pistol, two bullets, one light gun and six cartridges from the spot.

Sub-inspector Rabiu Islam of Charjabbar police station filed two separate cases -- one for arms and another robbery -- against the cohorts of Nizam.

Nizam had been unleashing a reign of terror with his

robber gang in the coastal and forest areas of Companiganj, Subarnachar and Hatiya upazilas of Noakhali for long, said officer in-charge Mosharraf Hossain Tarafder of the police station.

Basically, Nizam's terror gang could rule the area because of the bad communication system in the district, which is surrounded by many rivers and stray forests, the OC added.

Even Hatiya police station alone has 11 cases against Nizam while other police stations have many more, the OC said.

General people heaved a sigh of relief after the news of his death and distributed sweetmeat, victims and villagers in the upazila said.

Wetland leased from WDB being filled up to set up market, park

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR
TOPU, Pabna

Ignoring objection from locals, Bera municipality authorities have started development work on a vast tract of cultivable land beside the flood protection embankment on the Hurasagar River, much to the grievance of affected people.

For this purpose, Water Development Board (WDB) handed over lease of huge cultivable land to the municipality authorities while the latter has started the process of acquiring a large area of private-owned cultivable land, said officials and locals.

At a press conference held in Pabna Press Club on December 13, affected villagers warned of tougher agitation programme if the authorities do not stop 'taking' riverside cultivable land.

In the first phase the municipality issued work order to fill up 16.5 acres of low land of WDB beside the embankment at Brishalikha in the upazila and the contractor concerned started filling up the land there last month, municipality officials said.

"According to a lease agreement signed between Bera municipality and Bera Division of Water Development Board on March 11, 2009, the municipality authority is permitted to fill up the vast tract of water body belonging to WDB beside the embankment for development work, on condition of keeping the embankment and river safe," said Md Kabirul



PHOTO: STAR

The contractor engaged by Bera municipality authorities has continued dredging to fill up this low land at Brishalikha on the Hurasagar River as the authorities initiated a development work there, harming agriculture and ignoring the environmental issues. Inset, the signboard marks the spot of a proposed children's park in the area.



Rahman, executive engineer of WDB, Bera Division.

"Now we are filling up WDB's land according to agreement. After completing the acquisition of private-owned land in our project area through the deputy commissioner, we will start setting up the wholesale market and children's park beside the embankment at Brishalikha according to a Tk 50 crore master plan," said Khandaker Firozul Alam, engineer of Bera municipality.

"The government

acquired land from the people here in 1972 for building the flood protection embankment. Villagers, most of them land donors, continued cultivating crops and growing fish on lease basis in the land that remained after the embankment construction. But suddenly the vast cultivable land was given to the municipality," said Md Abdul Hamid, former president of Bera upazila unit of BNP, also affected due to the project.

"On November 27 this year, a petition on behalf of the affected people was

submitted to the Executive Magistrate's Court-2, seeking stoppage of the ongoing work beside the river. The court issued Section 144 on the day and asked the officer in charge of Bera police station to investigate the matter. Denying the court order, municipality contractor Md Nazrul Islam, also an influential ruling party leader, has continued filling up the land," said Md Abur Rob Sarkar, another 'victim' of the project.

"Bera municipality Mayor Md Abdul Baten, also the younger brother of a state minister, influenced the local administration to start occupying the vast tract of cultivable land including our inherited property beside the river," said Abdur Rob Sarkar Rauj, also former secretary of Bera upazila unit of Chhatra League.

Contractor Md Nazrul Islam, also secretary of Bera municipality unit of Awami League, denied getting any court order and said, "According to the municipality work order we are filling up the land with sand lifted from the Jamuna River with a dredger."



PHOTO: STAR

Ro Ro Ferry Shah Poran with vehicles on board had to wait at Daulatdia ferry terminal for around 10 hours from 11:00pm on Wednesday as the BIWTC authority halted ferry service on Paturia-Daulatdia route for poor visibility caused by dense fog. Ferries on Mawa-Kawrakandi route also experienced the same situation.

ATTACK ON POLICE, ARSON ON WEDNESDAY 6,077 Jamaat-Shibir, BNP men sued in Pabna, Bogra

STAR NATIONAL DESK

As many as 6,077 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men have been sued on charges of attack on policemen and torching a cotton-laden truck in Pabna and Bogra on Wednesday.

Our Pabna correspondent reported that Sub-inspector Fazle Elahi of Pabna Sadar Police Station filed a case against 6,000 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP activists with the police station concerned following a series of clashes between police and the opposition activists at different points on Dhaka-Pabna highway on Wednesday night.

Of the accused, 77 are identified while the rest unnamed.

In the case statement, the complainant stated that over 6,000 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men put up barri-

cades at Jafra bazar, Bangabari, Goyeshpur, Modhupur and Pushpopara points on Dhaka-Pabna highway under Sadar upazila and clashed with the law enforcers for two hours from 6:30pm.

At least 10 people, including three cops, were injured in the clashes, the complainant added.

The injured cops are Officer-in-charge (Investigation) Nur-e Alam, Sub-inspectors Mohammad Mahfuz and Tarikul Islam of Sadar Police Station. OC Nur-e Alam and SI Mahfuz were admitted to Pabna general Hospital while SI Mahfuz was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

During hartal enforced by Jamaat on the day, AL men vandalised Jamaat Pabna district office in the

Bangladeshi found dead in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

A Bangladeshi national was found dead inside the Indian territory opposite to Hakimpur frontier early yesterday.

The deceased is Md. Delwar Hossain, 38, of Nandipur village in the upazila, according to Lt Col Khasru Sabbir Ali, commanding officer of Joypurhat-3 Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The body was found at Dakkhin Attor village in Dakkhin Dinajpur under Paschimbanga district of India, the BGB officials said, quoting their counterparts.

Family members said, Delwar went to a fair at Dakkhin Attor village Wednesday afternoon. The village is opposite to Mongla border outpost (BOP) under BGB's Basudevpur camp in the upazila.

But later they came to know that Delwar was found dead near the fair premises, the BGB sources said.

Heartiest Welcome



**HE Ms Yingluck Shinawatra
Hon'ble Prime Minister of Thailand
to Bangladesh**

from



**President, M A Momen
Board of Directors,
and all Members of the Bangladesh
Thailand Chamber of Commerce
& Industry (BTCCI)**