

Toxic gas kills two

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Chapainawabganj

Two masons died and four others fell sick after inhaling 'toxic' gas inside a newly-built septic tank of a mosque at Roshknagar village in Shibganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abdus Salam, 45, son of Noman Ali of the village and Mohammad Arif, 28, son of Ezabul Haque of the upazila town.

The injured are Tashik Ali, 16, son of Kabir Ali, Mohammad Babu, 25, son of Ayesh Uddin, Abdul Khalek, 50, son Mohammad Luthu and Abdur Rashid, 45, son of Tajel Ali of the village.

Salam and Arif got into the septic tank for its renovation at around 12:00pm and fell sick, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge at Shibganj police station.

To rescue them, Babu, Khalek and Rashid entered the tank only to fall sick like their fellow workers.

Of the duo, Salam died on way to a local clinic while Babu breathed his last at the upazila health complex.

Fire destroys 51 houses in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

At least 51 houses were gutted in a devastating fire at Gargaon village in Pirganj upazila of the district on Monday afternoon.

Fire-fighters and locals said, the fire originated from an earthen oven at one Mojidul's house at the village at about 3:00pm and soon engulfed the adjacent 50 other houses.

The victims claimed that the fire damaged properties worth Tk. 20 lakh while the fire-fighters estimated the loss at Tk. 5 lakh.

The fire made at least 200 people homeless. They are now living under the open sky and waiting for necessary help.

Criminals kill student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Criminals killed a student of a non-government polytechnic institute at a student mess in Haripara area of the district town on Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Nahid Parvez, 20, son of Abdul Mannan of Pirob village in Shibganj upazila.

He was a student of textile department at the Institute of Information and Technology, Bogra.

Police said, the gang swooped on the mess of Parvez and tried to take away his laptop and other valuables.

As he resisted, they attacked him with sharp weapon, leaving him critically injured.

He was rushed to Mohammad Ali Hospital where doctors declared him dead.



PHOTO: STAR

Once profusely flowing Dhaleshwari River in Sadar upazila of Tangail district now hardly gives the impression of a water body as the riverbed is used for large-scale crop cultivation during dry season. Due to massive siltation, encroachment and pollution, and decreased flow upstream, most of the rivers in the district, including Jhinai, Bonshai, Louhajang, Elengjani, Punglee and Bairan, are heading towards virtual death, badly affecting fishing and traditional businesses dependent on water transport. The photo was taken at Par Bahulee a few days ago.

Speedy disposal of vested property cases remains a tough task

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The tribunal and the district committee, formed to return the vested properties to the genuine owners, are struggling to deal with the enormously large number of applications submitted by the claimants.

Of around 22,500 applications submitted from June last year till February this year, the tribunal comprising the District and Sessions Judge and Additional District and Sessions Judge-1 and the district committee led by the additional deputy commissioner (Revenue) disposed only 513 cases till March 5.

Of 45,167 acres of land vested property in the district, 2,547 acres belong to schedule 'ka' (under the government possession or on lease) and 42,620 acres to schedule 'kha' (not under the government possession), said district administration sources.

The number of the applications for 'kha' category vested property is likely to see a great increase as the committee concerned will receive the applications till April 24, they added.

The last date to submit application for 'ka' category vested property ended on February 14, but there is demand to extend the time as many people could not submit it by the time.

As per the existing law, the person or institution claiming the ownership of the vested property under 'kha'

schedule has to submit application to the president of the district committee (led by ADC) or the tribunal (led by Judge) with relevant papers and documents while claimants of any vested property under schedule 'ka' have to submit application to the tribunal only.

The applications have to be disposed within 300 days of submission and additional 60 days can be given under special considerations.

As many as 7,385 applications for vested property, including 1080 for schedule 'ka' and 6350 for schedule 'kha' were submitted to the tribunal till March 5, said sources in Vested Property Return Tribunal in Tangail.

Of the 113 cases disposed, all but five have gone in favour of the applicants, they said.

The District Vested Property Return Committee disposed only 400 cases till March 5, out of around 15,000 applications submitted to it till February, committee sources said.

Shoyeb Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) of Tangail, and president of the District Vested Property Return Committee, said it will not be possible for the lone committee to dispose the large number of cases within the scheduled time.

Increasing the number of such Tribunal and Committee is a must to dispose so many vested property cases within the



PHOTO: STAR

Applicants claiming ownership of vested property crowd the office of the additional deputy commissioner (ADC-Revenue) of Tangail. They, however, do not know how long they will have to wait for disposal of the cases.

scheduled time and mitigate the sufferings of the people concerned, said Sadhan Chakroborty, convener of the Committee to Prevent Vested Property Law Misuse in Tangail.

UNB adds: The Cabinet on Sunday approved a proposal for amending the 'Vested Property Return Act, 2001' to ensure speedy disposal of cases and petitions on return of vested property.

An ordinance will be promulgated in this regard to make the amended version of the law effective, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told reporters after the regular weekly Cabinet meeting held at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in

the chair. Under the proposed amendments, a provision has been kept to increase the number of tribunals and committees on vested property return to ensure justice, the secretary said.

Under the existing law, the cases and petitions on vested property under government possession or on lease are disposed of at tribunals headed by district judges or equivalent judicial officer and appeals on the cases of the tribunals are disposed of at the appellate tribunals headed by the High Court judges.

The amendment now proposes to set up tribunals at district level headed by judicial officers equivalent to senior assistant district

judge, joint district judges and additional district judges while the appeals would be disposed of at the appellate tribunals headed by district judge.

The proposed law also has a provision for constituting seven divisional committees to settle the appeals against the decisions of the existing district-level committees on the listed vested property which are not under government possession.

The divisional-level committees would be headed by additional divisional commissioners and appeals against the decisions of the divisional committees would be disposed of at the central committee headed by the Chairman of Land Appeal Board.

SHARING OF ILLEGAL TOLL MONEY BCL man killed in Magura infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Magura

An activist of Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL) was shot dead while three others were seriously injured as two rival groups of the organisation clashed at Parnanduali in the district town yesterday.

Party insiders said, a feud over sharing of 50 thousand taka illegal toll collected from local sub-registry office was brewing between district BCL vice-president Ruhul Amin of Barunatail village and human development affairs secretary of the unit Rubel Hasan of Parnanduali village.

District unit BCL president Sheikh Mohammad Rezaul Islam called a meeting at his residence at Parnanduali at around 11:00 am yesterday to mutually settle the dispute between the two leaders.

During the meeting, both groups locked in a scuffle and at one stage, supporters of Ruhul hacked BCL district unit's religion affairs secretary Sazzadur Rahman, leaving him critically injured.

It triggered a violent clash

that continued for about one hour.

Both the groups equipped with firearms, bombs and sharp weapons locked in a fierce clash near the BRAC office in Parnanduali area.

Abul Kalam Azad, an activist of BCL belonging to Rubel group, was hit by bullet when the party rivals fired two gun-shots and exploded at least seven homemade bombs.

Azad, later succumbed to his injuries at Magura Sadar Hospital at around 2-30 pm while undergoing treatment there.

Police lobbed four teargas shells to disperse the clashing groups.

Meanwhile, party rivals also hacked Mushtak Ahmed, elder brother of Ruhul Amin, at Keshob Square in the town at around 2:45 pm, leaving him critically injured. The attackers also set fire to his motorbike.

Mushtak was rushed to Magura Sadar Hospital from where he was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Body found in truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police recovered the decomposed body of an unidentified man from an abandoned truck in Delduar upazila yesterday. According to police, an empty truck had been lying near the Shanbari graveyard in Elasin area on Monday. Getting bad smell from the truck, local people informed the matter to police in the morning. Police searched the truck and recovered the body of a man, age about 35, from under the driving seat. They suspect that the man might have been strangled and dumped there. Chand Miah, officer-in-charge (OC) of Delduar police station, said as per the papers found in the truck, it was going to Feni from Dinajpur.

Highway robbery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Robbers looted a number of vehicles on Bogra-Natore Highway at Kundarhat-Jamadarpukur point under Shajahanpur upazila at around 9:00pm on Monday. Locals said, a gang blocked the highway by felling trees and committed robbery for an hour. They looted valuables, cash money, jewellery and cell phones from the passengers of 7-8 vehicles.

Agitation at MMC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A section of 'promotion-deprived doctors' of Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) staged an agitation on the campus on Sunday. The agitating physicians belonging to Mymensingh Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad locked the main gate of college in the morning, causing immense sufferings to the patients. During the protest, the students, employees and other doctors were not allowed to enter the college. No classes were also held due to the agitation which started at 9:00am and continued for about five hours, sources said.

Youth found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Police recovered the body of a youth from a maize field at Sahebpara village under Satoria upazila in the district on Sunday. He was identified as Ali Hossain Ketu, 27, son of Wajjuddin of the village. On information, police recovered the body at around 12:00 noon and sent it to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said officer-in-charge of Satoria police station Fazlul Haque. 'We are yet to be ascertained whether it was case of murder,' said the OC.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals found some newborn owls in a hole of a dead palm tree at Goiyatola village in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali district on Friday and set them free. Photo shows a villager releases a baby bird.

60 kg hemp seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Rab at Bhairab camp recovered 60 kilograms of ganja (hemp) and arrested five people in this connection from Bhairab railway station Sunday noon. Acting on a tip-off, a team headed by Major Mohammad Mahfuz-ul Amin Noor, commanding officer of Rab-9 Bhairab camp, raided the station area. They arrested five people from the platform and recovered 60 kilograms of ganja from their possession.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

The slope of around a 300-metre area of the recently repaired flood protection embankment at Ramnabad in Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district that was washed away under the pressure of tidal surge during the last couple of days. The photo was taken on Saturday.

People of 10 villages worried as newly-built dyke in Kalapara under threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Over one lakh people of 10 villages in Kalapara upazila are passing their days amid fear that the newly built flood control embankment on Ramnabad river may collapse any time.

The villages include Charipara, Nowapara, Chowdhuripara, Nayakata, Chotopajnon, Munshipara, Kolaipara, Gazir Khal and Banatipara.

Locals demanded immediate reconstruction of 300 meters of the dyke at three points by putting concrete blocks to save their croplands from invasion of saline water from the Bay of Bengal.

Last year, about 7.10 kilometers of the dyke became damaged due to tidal surge and washed away by the river, said an official

of Water Development Board (WDB).

The authorities reconstructed the damaged portions of the embankment last month but its slopes at three points collapsed a few days ago.

If immediate steps were not taken to repair the damaged parts, the entire embankment would be devoured by the river in the coming rainy season, feared the villagers.

We could not cultivate our land in the last one year as saline water entered the croplands during the rainy season, Abdul Majid, farmer of Charipara village.

Contacted, Abul Bashar, sub-divisional engineer of WDB, Kalapara, said they have already sent a letter to the higher authorities, seeking fund.