

Naogaon boiler blast kills two

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least two people were killed and six others injured seriously as a boiler of a rice mill went off in Sultanpur area of Naogaon Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Hamdul Islam, 28, son of Abdul Hanif of Laxmanpur village in the upazila and Sayed Hossain, 33, of Kurigram district.

Critically Injured Sadeq Ali, 50, Abdur Gafur, 32, Md Babu, 34, Shahidul Islam, 30, Dulal Mia, and Abdul Bari, 33, of Naogaon Sadar upazila, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Witnesses said eight workers were working inside Tumpa Automatic Rice Mill for heating the boiler.

Around 7:00am, the boiler exploded with a big bang, leaving Hamdul dead on the spot and seven others injured.

The injured were rushed to Naogaon General Hospital where Sayed died around 10:00am.

35 return from Indian jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Twenty-nine Bangladeshi women and six children returned home through Benapole check post on Friday after serving three years' jail in an Indian prison.

They entered Indian territory through several border points of Benapole in 2012, said Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Benapole immigration police.

The human traffickers sent them to India, promising good jobs there. Later, police arrested them from Mumbai in India and filed a case in this connection.

An Indian court sentenced the arrestees to three years' imprisonment each for crossing the border without valid documents.

Two countries of home ministry agree to return them to Bangladesh.



A man sorts famous Haribhanga mango, brought from Rangpur, at his shop at a wholesale fruit market in Dinajpur town.

PHOTO: STAR

Haribhanga mango, fortune changer for Rangpur farmers

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Around 15 to 20 years ago, villagers in Baluamasumpur village - an abode of earthen pottery workers under Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur - started growing mango saplings in broken earthen pots.

They used to discard the seeds of mangoes they had consumed onto broken earthenware pots where the saplings that followed thrived.

Other villagers began collecting these saplings and within a few years the plants were producing fruit at Padaganj village under the same upazila.

The mangoes were very tasty and we locals started referring to them as Haribhanga mangoes after the broken pots where these saplings were primarily raised, says Abdus Salam Sarker of the village.

He was among the first villagers who started paying attention to this particular fruit and started growing the trees on a large scale. Since then Haribhanga mangoes have

reached every northern district area and gained immense popularity amongst mango lovers.

Because of the fruit's distinct flavour and sweetness, it gained popularity beyond the borders of Rangpur. This helped change the economy of Rangpur - once known just for being a Monga area - local say.

Produced almost everywhere in Rangpur today, the largest concentration of Haribhanga is seen in Pirganj, Mithapukur and Badarganj areas.

According to officials of Department of Agriculture Extension in Rangpur, as many as 3,000 mango orchards exist here on 2,950 hectares of land in the district out of which Haribhanga is grown on 1,500 hectares.

Total production target for Haribhanga mango this year is 40,000 tonnes, the current market price of which is around Tk 250 crore, DAE officials said.

Abdus Salam Sarker is a mango grower and owns orchards on 12

acres of land.

'Haribhanga changed the fortunes of many people here, he said adding that one advantage of this mango is that it can be grown on both high and low land areas.

Other orchard owners like Sultan Mia of Moyenpur village in Mithapukur upazila and Joynal Abedin of Badarganj upazila echo Sarker's sentiments. Growing Haribhanga has brought them prosperity.

'I sold each kilogram of Haribhanga mango at Tk 90 to 130 this season,' Joynal said.

Over the last few years younger people have come forward to set up Haribhanga orchards alongside popular varieties like Misribhog, Fazli and Gopalbhog.

Khorshed Alam Upazila Agriculture Officer of Mithapukur said Haribhanga has become a favourite among people for its unique taste, high production rate and late harvest in comparison to other varieties.

'Growers get productions of 13 to 20 metric tonnes of the fruit from each hectare while other varieties roughly yield between seven to 13 tonnes per hectare. Farmers can harvest Haribhanga mangoes at the end of June when most other varieties of mangoes have already been harvested.

District DAE official said this year they will be providing training to nearly 1000 farmers so that they are able to yield a better harvest from mangoes.

Haribhanga mangoes are also being exported through private initiatives, traders said.

'The only challenge here is preserving the fruit after picking as it does not last for more than 3 to 4 days', said Khorshed Alam, a trader.

Local farmers of Rangpur want the government to take initiatives so farmers have access to easy ways of preserving the fruit which will enable them more opportunities to sell their produce.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Imam held on arson charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested an imam of a mosque in different arson cases at Halatari village in Joypurhat Sadar upazila on Friday. The arrestee, Md Kamruzzaman, 28, son of Abdul Kuddus of Tulat village, is imam of Mondalpara Mosque in Joypurhat municipality area. Police said Kamruzzaman was an accused in different arson cases including those for torching buses and uprooting rail lines in the district during the anti-government movement after the verdict against war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayeedi and the violence before and after the January 5 elections in 2014, said Farid Hossain, officer-in-charge of Joypurhat Kotwali Police Station.

Youth jailed for stalking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A mobile court in Brahmanbaria district yesterday sentenced a young man to one year's imprisonment for stalking a schoolgirl. The stalker is Shaheen Miah, 35, son of Abdul Hye of Chandigram village in Sadar upazila. Shaheen is a drug addict, said his father. Family sources said Shaheen used to stalk the girl on her way to school. He stalked and assaulted the victim when she was going to school in Akhura upazila yesterday afternoon. On information, police rushed to the spot and arrested Shaheen. He was later produced before the court, led by Akhura Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Moin Uddin Iqbal, which punished him.

Man arrested with Yaba

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested a man with 100 Yaba tablets in Badarganj upazila of Rangpur on Friday evening. The arrestee is Elahi Barsha, 35, son of Monjur Barsha of Kutubpur village. The arrestee was later produced in a court that sent him to jail, said Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Badarganj Police Station.

New MUJ executives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Ataul Karim Khokon, bureau chief of Dainik Jugantor, and Mir Golam Mustafa, staff reporter of The Daily Samakal, were elected president and secretary of the new executive committee of Mymensingh Union of Journalists (MUJ) on Friday. A total of 42 voters cast their votes that continued till 4:00pm at Mymensingh Press Club auditorium. Senior journalists Abdul Hashim and Abul Kashem conducted the election as election commissioner and its member respectively.



PHOTO: STAR

A child takes vitamin-A capsule at Surjer Hasi Clinic at Beutha Road in Manikganj town yesterday after the authorities inaugurated a programme for giving the capsule for 1.73 lakh and 549 children in the district. Similar programmes, aimed at preventing blindness among children, are being conducted in different districts across the country.

Student electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A college boy was electrocuted in Bagri area of Rajapur upazila on Friday. The deceased is Shuvo Das, 19, son of Shankar Das of Gopalpur, and a first year honours student of Government BM College. Locals said Shuvo was working with his laptop at a shop in the area. He was electrocuted when he went to unplug charger of the laptop unconsciously from an electric point. He was rushed to the upazila health complex where on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Kid raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A four-year-old girl was raped allegedly by a youth at Gozana Boroitola village in Sherpur upazila on Friday. Police said when the victim was playing with other kids at their courtyard, Al-Mamun, 19, of the same village, took her to a nearby maize field and raped her. Hearing screams, locals rescued the girl from the spot and sent her to a hospital.

Land feud kills one

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A youth was killed and seven others were injured in a clash over a disputed land at Raghunathpur village in Sadar upazila. The deceased is Shaheb Ali, 32, son of Abdul Latif of the village. Locals said there was a long-standing conflict between Shaheb and Khokon Mia of the area over the land. When Khokon along with his men came to the land yesterday noon, Shaheb and his associates strongly protested it that triggered a clash. Shaded sustained serious head injuries during the incident and died on the spot.



PHOTO: STAR

Jano Udyog and Adivasi Chhatra Parishad form a human chain in Gaibandha town yesterday demanding return of indigenous people's ancestral land, now under Shahebganj sugarcane farm, and end of harassment of the original land owners there.

Return our ancestral land from Shahebganj farm

Indigenous people demand at human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Hundreds of locals including ethnic minority people yesterday formed a human chain along DB Road in Gaibandha municipality demanding return of their forefather's landed property acquired decades ago for Sahebganj sugarcane farm under Rangpur Sugar Mills in Gaibandha.

The participants at the programme, organised by local NGO Jano Udyog and Adivasi Chhatra Parishad's Gobindganj upazila unit, demanded that police stop

harassment of indigenous people in the name of eviction from the sugarcane farm and withdraw false cases against them.

During the Pakistan period, the then government acquired 1842 acres of land from indigenous people and local residents of Shahebganj in Gobindganj upazila to set up an agricultural farm for supplying sugarcane for the mill, speakers said at the programme.

But most of the farmlands are now under local influential people and used for cultivating paddy, jute

and other crops instead of sugarcane and so, the land should be returned to the original owners, they said.

They also demanded treatment and rehabilitation of local people, who received injuries during last week's eviction drive by police.

Lasen Khan Rintu Golam Rabbani, Riktu Proshad, Probir Chakravarti, Mathias Marji, Muku Bembra, Indro Mohan Mardi and Sumita Rabidas spoke on the occasion.

Earlier they brought out a procession in the town.

ANOMALIES

Filling station sealed off

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A mobile court yesterday sealed off a petrol-refuelling station at Gobindanagar in Thakurgaon municipality.

Following complaints from motor-bike owners, the court conducted a drive at the re-fuelling station titled 'Surma Filling Station', Executive Magistrate Mahbubul Rahman, who led the mobile court, told this correspondent over cell phone.

As anomalies were found in primarily investigation, the court sealed off the station and collected sample for sending it to BSTI for quality test, he said, adding that legal steps will be taken if the people concerned are guilty.

MYMENSINGH 1 AND 3

By-elections tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The by-elections to Mymensingh-1 (Haluaghat and Dhobaura) and Mymensingh-3 (Gouripur) constituencies will be held tomorrow.

Preparations have already been completed to hold elections in a peaceful manner.

Sufficient number of law enforcement agencies-police, Rapid Action Battalion, BGB and ansars will be deployed in the polls, said District Election Officer Md Alimuzzaman.

The constituencies fell vacant as former state minister for social welfare advocate Promode Mankin, MP, Mymensingh-1, died on May 11 and former state minister Mujibur Rahman Fakir, also ruling Awami League lawmaker from

Mymensingh-3, passed away on May 2.

On June 9, the authorities of Election Commission (EC) announced the schedule.

In Mymensingh-3 (Gouripur) constituency, five candidates are contesting the by-election.

They are advocate Nazim Uddin Ahmed (AL), Md Shamsuzzaman (JP-Ershad), Azizul Haque (independent), Abu Taher Khan (Islamic Oikya Jote) and Abdul Matin (NAP).

In Mymensingh-1 (Haluaghat-Dhobaura) constituency, three candidates-Jewel Areng (AL), Selima Hossain (independent) and advocate Sohrab Uddin (JP-Ershad) are in the election race.

District election office sources said the election will be held in 220 centres of the two seats.



Students and locals put barricade, felling logs and setting fire, on Dhaka-Pabna highway at Dulai in Sujanagar upazila under Pabna district demanding nationalisation of Dulai Dr Johurul Kamal Degree College as the agitation continued for the second consecutive day yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR