

BCL FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY 10 injured as rivals clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Ten people were injured in a clash between two groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists over establishing supremacy in the town yesterday afternoon.

Marking the BCL's 69th founding anniversary, a large procession led by its district unit President Mahbub Hossain Rony and General Secretary Sanwar Hossain Pulok was brought out from Balaka Cinema Hall in the town, witnesses said.

When the procession reached Thakurgaon intersection, supporters of their rival group led by expelled leaders Mizan and Sourav prevented them from entering the district Awami League office.

At one stage of altercation, supporters of Mizan-Sourav group attacked Rony-Pulok group with sticks and sharp weapons, leaving at least ten people injured.

Of them, Rabbi, Jibon, Mamun and Rony were admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Police fired ten rounds of teargas canisters to disperse the unruly activists.

Contacted, Mahbub Hossain Rony said, "Our committee was approved by the central committee two years ago but the expelled leaders resisted when we tried to enter party office."

Moshiur Rahman, officer in charge of Thakurgaon Police Station, said additional policemen were deployed in the town to avoid further incident. "We will do everything to maintain peace without considering political identity," he said.



A scene of yesterday's clash between two rival groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League in Thakurgaon town. Inset, armed activists in action.

PHOTO: STAR

OPEN RAIL CROSSING Kid killed as train hits car

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A child was killed and two others were critically injured as a train hit their car at an open rail crossing in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga yesterday.

The deceased was Rafiqul Hossain, 4, grandson of Damurhuda BNP General Secretary Anwar Hossain Khokon.

Quoting locals, Enamul Haq, officer-in-charge of Damurhuda Police Station, said the accident took place at Beltola rail crossing where there is no gate or gateman.

When Khokon along with his daughter Marzana Hossain Anny, 28, and Rafiqul was going to the capital in a private car around 10:15am, Dhaka-bound Chitra from Khulna hit the vehicle, leaving the kid dead on the spot and two others injured.

Critically injured Khokon and Anny were rushed to the upazila health complex and later shifted to Dhaka by a helicopter as their condition worsened, said the OC.

Altaf Hossain, a station officer of Chuadanga, said there is no gate or gateman as the level crossing is unauthorised.

Jhalakathi pry teachers' dream comes true

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A number of primary school teachers in Jhalakathi expressed their boundless happiness at fulfilment of their long cherished dream after classes started at Jhalakathi Primary Training Institute (PTI).

With 75 trainees from different primary schools of Jhalakathi and other neighbouring districts, the newly built Jhalakathi PTI started its first ever training courses on January 1, said Prashanto Kumar Saha, superintendent of Jhalakathi PTI.

PTI is established to train up the primary school teachers of the district to develop their teaching skills and one year training is mandatory for all, Prashanto said.

In the past, primary teachers from different upazilas of the district had to face various difficulties as they had to go other neighbouring districts for training, many teachers from different schools said.

"Previously we had to go Pirojpur PTI everyday for our training, which is very far from here but from now on we can obtain our training within the district," said Abu Salek Howlader, an assistant teacher of Rajapur Model Primary School.

"We are much excited and happy for getting the training opportunity in the district," a number of trainees said.

Financed by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the construction work of Jhalakathi PTI was started in 2012 and completed in 2015, said



Jhalakathi District Primary Education Officer Nikhil Chandra Halder.

Jhalakathi PTI, built on the bank of Gabbkhan Canal, will not only provide long term training but also arrange different short term courses to develop the primary education in the district, Nikhil added.

Trees on shrine land felled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Three trees worth over Tk 1 lakh have been felled allegedly by the president of Shah Sultan Mazar committee in the district in the last few days.

Local trader Osman Gani and school teacher Romesh Shil said the shrine was situated on 19 decimals of government land in Majhira union under Shajahanpur upazila. The mazar committee and a local influential political leader sold the trees in the name of development of the shrine, they added.

Tahsildar of the union Saidur Rahman said he had asked the president of the mazar committee Abdul Mannan and local union parishad member Alamgir Hossain not to cut the trees.

Mannan said three trees were cut and sold for Tk 40,000 for the development of the mazar.

Shajahanpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Shafiqul Islam said he was informed about the matter and has ordered the assistant commissioner (land) of the upazila to take action regarding the illegal felling of trees on government land.

Anti-drug crusader beaten mercilessly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An anti-drug campaigner narrowly escaped being shot by some unidentified criminals in Chirirbandar upazila on Tuesday, but was beaten up mercilessly by them.

The victim is Fazlur Rahman, 42, son of Jashim Uddin of Kazipara village, reportedly a stronghold of Jamaat-Shibir, in Chirirbandar upazila of the district.

Fazlur runs Raninagar Shanti Sangha, an anti-drug organisation in the area.

Witnesses said Fazlur was chatting with Ibrahim Ali in a bicycle spare parts shop when two men wearing black masks shot at Fazlur from five feet away, but he was not hit by a bullet.

As the magazine of the revolver became empty, the criminals beat Fazlur mercilessly, breaking his hand, and fled the spot.

Personnel of Chirirbandar Police Station went to the spot at around midnight and recovered six bullet shells. Officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station Anisur Rahman said Fazlur's life was saved as the bullets were defective.

Police are investigating the incident, the OC said, adding that they sent Fazlur to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Fazlur alleged that local drug traders carried out the attack on him.

He used to work as journalist of local a daily in Dinajpur but stopped when his house was vandalised on the night war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah was hanged, he added.



Poor children dig rat's cave to collect paddy in a harvested field at Uttar Saptana village under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Rats' deposit their seasonal earning

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

During the harvesting period, a good number of people, especially kids from ultra poor families, are seen moving in fields in search of rat holes to dig out paddy deposited by the rodents.

"Rats deposit paddy in their nests, and we collect it after digging," said Nur Alam, 11, son of Jamilur Rahman at Uttar Saptana village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

"From each nest, we collect 5-10 kg of paddy. A team comprising 3-4 members can dig 5-7 nests daily," he added.

"Sometimes we have to walk 2-3 kilometres in search of rat holes as they are not always found easily. Sometimes we kill rats when they are found in the holes. Collecting paddy from rats' nests is also our hobby," said Misty Akhter, 10, daughter of Mobarok Hossain of the village.

"My father also collects paddy from rats' nests," said Hamidul Islam, 9, son of Hasanul Islam at the village.

Hamidul Islam, 42, another local, said he has been doing the job for the last 15 years.

"We are ultra poor people. I have no

farmland but I have paddy at home during this time as I can collect 40-50 kg of paddy from rats' nests daily. I do this work for around a month every harvesting season," he said.

"Our children also go to the paddy field for collecting the crop from rats' nests during harvesting as their annual examinations are over," said said Jamilur Rahman, 46, of Uttar Saptana village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Farmer Shamsul Islam, 55, at Fulgachh village in Lalmonirhat Sadar said rats do harm by taking away huge paddy to their nests, but the matter brings luck to landless people as they collect it by digging.

Enamul Haque, agriculture officer in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said a good number of poor people and their kids are seen in the harvested paddy fields for collecting the crop from rats' nests during this season.

Rats snatch away paddy from farmers' field for their future, but their future is snatched away by poor people, he said jokingly.

New date

FROM PAGE 2
her visit will be negotiated very soon," Akbar added.

In Dhaka, foreign ministry officials hinted that they were working for the visit which might take place in mid of February. An inter-ministerial meeting was held at the ministry on Tuesday, which discussed about the tentative dates for the visit as well as the agenda for summit level meeting, deals to be signed and other host of issues.

Hasina was to visit India in December last year but the event was postponed as the two countries could not agree on the dates. Hasina last visited India in January 2010 and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Dhaka in June 2015 when an agreement was signed to implement the landmark land boundary deal.

Asked about the prospects of Teesta river water-sharing issue being on the agenda of Hasina's talks with Modi during her proposed visit to Delhi, Akbar admitted "yes there are issues involved in the Teesta" but said negotiations were on between the Indian government and West Bengal government for working out a consensus.

"We are negotiating an internal consensus on the Teesta issue and we hope that there will be an agreement between the Centre and West Bengal government on it," he remarked.

Akbar, who was accompanied by another Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (retd) VK Singh, said Teesta "is probably one of the few outstanding issues left between the two countries. The leaderships of the two countries have worked very hard to remove many of the obstacles in the bilateral relationship and one has to just look at what happened in the last two years."

He said the people of India and Bangladesh have helped remove the obstacles with their spirit and so have prime ministers Modi and Hasina. "We are sure the spirit of Modi and Hasina will prevail," Akbar added.

Bumper lemon production in Srimangal

Indigenous farmers say they have been cultivating the citrus fruit since Pakistan period

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Indigenous farmers of the hilly areas in Srimangal upazila of the district got a bumper production of lemons, which are well-known in the country for their taste and juiciness.

According to statistics of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), lemons were cultivated in the upazila on 1,625 hectares of hilly land this year, and on 1,608 hectares last year. The yield was 44,883 tonnes this year and 42,697 tonnes last year.

The most popular varieties of lemon are kagoji, jara, jhuta, china, elachi, beej-shunya, and sharboti, and most of the total demand for lemon of the country is met from the upazila.

Growers said they have been cultivating lemon at Tipracherra,

Jerin, Harincherra, Biddabeel, Alubari, Kalacherra, Fulcherra, Longlia, Modonmohonpur, Sisilbar, Kanlenji villages since Pakistan period.

Farmer Nibash Nayek, 29, of Harincherra tea garden in the upazila said he has expanded his lemon cultivation after getting very good profit last year.

Jonok Tripura of Tipracherra is known as a good lemon-grower in the area. "People, especially marginal farmers, are being benefited by lemon farming in this area," he said, adding that lemon cultivation is his traditional work started from the time of his forefathers.

Locals said traders from outside the district are coming to the village every

day to buy lemon. At present, 1,000 lemons are sold for Tk 1,200 and Tk 2,000 in the wholesale market in Srimangal Puran Bazaar.

Chairman of Rajghat Union Parishad Bijoy Bunarji said a lot of farmers have become solvent within two or three years. Many have built houses, many have bought more land and many are sending their kids to school.

Deputy Director of DAE in Moulvibazar Md Shahjahan said though small in size, the locally produced lemon is very tasty, adding that the DAE is providing necessary assistance to the growers to make lemon cultivation a success, he added.



A farmer plucks lemons from a plant at his garden in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR