

SNAPS

Wife killed by husband for dowry

BSS, Rajbari

A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband for dowry in Baliakandi upazila on Thursday.

Police said, the victim, identified as Morjina Khutun, 18, got married to Abdur razzak of village Samuk Khola, a few days ago. But her greedy husband put pressure on Marjina to bring dowry and used to beat her up every day, Marjina's elder brother Julhas said. On Thursday, her husband and in-laws roughed up Marjina, leaving her injured seriously. As her condition deteriorated, she was sent to Rajbari Sadar Hospital, where the doctors declared her dead.

Businessman robbed of Tk 1 lakh in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A businessman was robbed of Tk one lakh at Rifles Club Market in Chittagong city on Saturday.

Four muggers attacked Rabiul Hossain, proprietor of Jimi Bakery and Confectionery, at around 10.30am as soon as he got into his car after drawing Tk 1 lakh and 13 thousand from the United Commercial Bank near Reazuddin Bazar. The muggers snatched the money breaking the window panes of the car. They also threatened the businessman not to file any case, before fleeing the scene.

'Reduce CU admission fee'

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Progressive Students' Alliance (PSA) staged a demonstration on the Chittagong University (CU) campus on Saturday to press its demand for withdrawal of admission fee hike. Later, the PSA submitted a memorandum to the departmental heads.

The demonstration was followed by a rally at the same venue. Speakers at the rally urged the CU authority to withdraw the fee hike.

Seminar held at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong seminar on 'The impact of war on terrorism on the Western media' was held on the Chittagong University (CU) campus on Saturday.

Ronald Chepesiusuk, a Fulbright scholar in the department of Journalism of CU and a teacher of South Carolina University of USA, presented the keynote paper. The department of Journalism arranged the seminar.

Dinajpur coal, hard rock mining

Tk 81cr VAT will cripple projects, officials say

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Imposition of Tk 80.69 crore VAT (value added tax) on the coal and hard rock mining projects in Dinajpur has drawn sharp reaction from the project authorities.

The managing directors of the two projects questioned the basis for imposition of the VAT and termed the amount "imaginary".

VAT should be on civil work only. Even training programmes have been taxed, they told The Daily Star.

They said payment of such huge amounts of VAT when the projects are yet to start functioning will make those unviable and only benefit some dishonest traders.

In two separate notices, the managing directors (MDs) of Barapukuria Coal Mining Project and Maddhapara Hard Rock Mining

Project have been asked to pay Tk 45,80,55,000 and Tk 34,88,44,770 VAT respectively.

The amounts have been estimated at the rate of 4.5 percent on US \$ 175.5 million works in the coal mine and US \$ 133.657 million works in the hard rock project. The works include design, consultancy, shaft sinking, civil engineering, equipment installation, underground road construction, training and commissioning of the two projects, according to the notices.

The notices, issued by Rajshahi Divisional Customs Commissioner Ali Ahmed on May 26 under Section 55 of the VAT Act of 1991, also asked the authorities to pay the VAT within 30 days of issuance of the notices.

Golam Mustafa, MD of the coal mining project, said, "Nearly Tk 80

crore including Tk 500 crore on suppliers' credit has already been spent while rise in dollar rate and taxes raised the project cost by Tk 350 crore. In this situation, payment of the huge amount of VAT is impossible".

Civil works at the coal mining project does not allow the customs authorities to collect more than Tk 14 crore VAT, he added.

Fazlul Karim, MD of the hard rock mining project said the Tk 4000 crore project will be a unviable if Tk 34.9 crore VAT is paid.

They however said they will seek funds from government to pay "reasonable amounts of VAT".

But Ali Ahmed said remarks of the MDs are "improper". The VAT has been imposed as per law, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

The lone ambulance at Lohagara Health Complex in Narail has been lying unused since 1998 for lack of a battery which costs about Tk 5,000 only, while patients suffer.

One jailed for 17 yrs in arms case

UNB, Jessore

A court here has convicted a man and sentenced him to 17 years' imprisonment in an arms case.

According to prosecution, Mofazzal, son of late Sheikh of Narail district, was caught by local people along with a pipe gun and two bullets when he was taking preparation along with his accomplices to commit a dacoity in the town on December 24, 1997.

His accomplices, however, managed to flee the scene.

After examining the records and witnesses, Special Tribunal Judge Mahmudul Kabir handed down the

verdict on June 15.

In another verdict on the same day, the court sentenced a woman to two years' imprisonment for possessing phensidyl syrup.

The court also fined the convict, Kulsum Begum, Tk 1000. She will have to suffer another six months' RI if she fails to pay.

According to prosecution, police arrested Kulsum of Cachra Roypara area of the town along with 16 bottles of phensidyl on March 23, 2000.

After examining the records and witnesses, Additional Sessions Judge Belayet Hossain pronounced the verdict.

Sk Nasser Hospital to be renamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The under-construction 250-bed Shaikh Abu Nasser Specialised Hospital at Mujgunni will be renamed and its unfinished work completed in less than a year, State Minister for Health Md. Mujibar Rahman Sinha said.

The Tk 132 crore hospital will have to be renamed for drawing more attention of the government, he told a divisional conference of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) in Khulna on Friday.

Presided over by Dr. Rafiqul Huq Bablu, central vice president of BMA, the conference was addressed by, among others, Whip Ashraf Hossain, VC of Khulna University Prof Abdul Kadir Bhuiyan and BMA President Dr. MA Hadi.

The hospital was inaugurated in 2000 by former prime minister Shaikh Hasina and named after Shaikh Abu Nasser, younger brother of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Shaikh Mujibar Rahman.

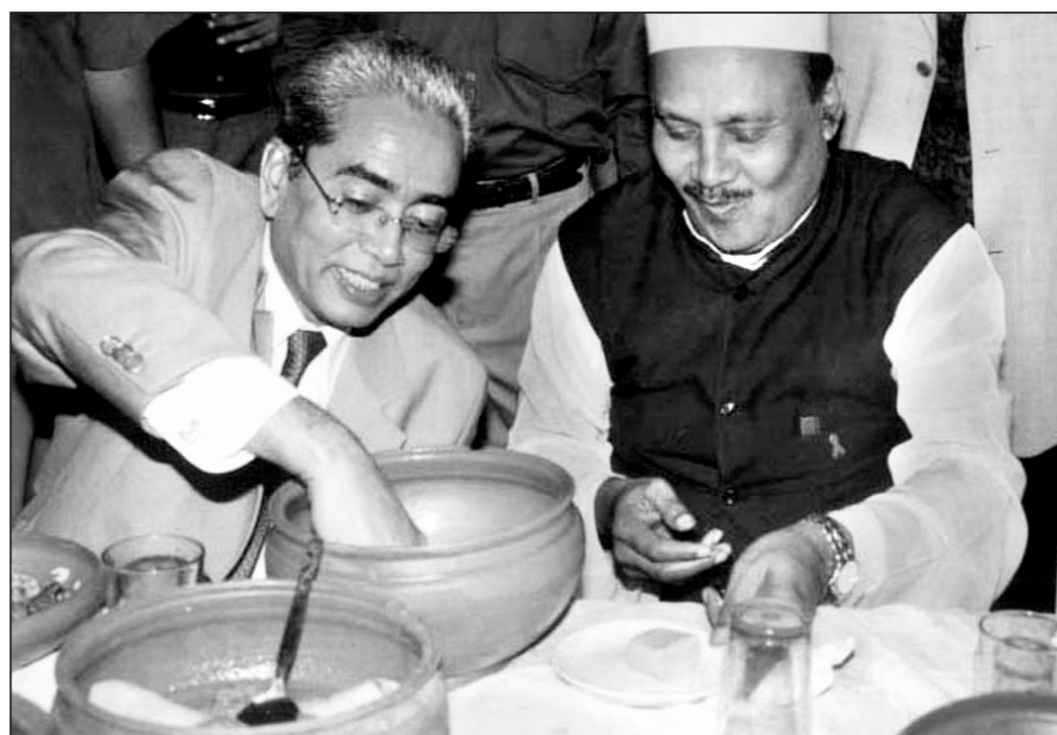


PHOTO: STAR

Amity towards political opponents is rare in Bangladesh. But such gesture can bring about changes in political environment where animosity rules. A traditional mehan (feast) was arranged at Dampara in Chittagong following the inauguration of a CNG station on Saturday. After the feast, Awami League leader and Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury helps State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain wash his hand.

Wild elephants' onslaught Rangamati admin seeks govt help to protect villagers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The Rangamati district administration has sought government help to protect people in hilly areas from frequent attacks by wild elephants that left five persons killed and 20 injured in last one month.

"We have sent fax messages to the minister for forest and the hill tracts affairs minister seeking protection from attacks by wild elephants",

Rangamati Deputy Commissioner Dr. Jafor Ahmed Khan told The Daily Star.

The situation is really alarming in vulnerable hillside villages. Hundreds of panic-stricken villagers in Rajastoli and Bangalhalia areas under Kapatai upazila of Ranhgamati moved to safer places and took shelter in school buildings

and temples fearing further attacks.

"We have distributed Tk 60,000 and eight tonnes of rice among the affected villagers", the DC said.

He said Kapatai, Longadu and Kaoakali are the most vulnerable areas where wild elephants frequently rampage villages, killing people and damaging houses.

In the latest incident on Wednesday in Rajastoli area, three villagers including a minor girl were trampled to death and 10 others injured, forest officials and police said.

In Rajastoli, a vigilance team comprising forest guards and villagers is trying to keep wild elephants away by beating drums, exploding crackers and showing flames, they said.

Wild elephants came to villages from forests in search of food mainly jackfruit and banana-- because

human habitations have destroyed forests and created a food crisis for them, said Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ratan Majumder at Rajastoli.

Most of the villagers are now passing sleepless nights fearing attacks from wild elephants, said Noresh Malakar of Bangalhalia in Rajastoli area.

Move to close Rangpur Sugar Mills protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A human chain was formed in Gobindaganj upazila, followed by a public rally, demanding withdrawal of an alleged decision to close down the Rangpur Sugar Mills, the lone heavy industry in Gaibandha district.

People from all classes took part in the programmes, organised recently by Gobindaganj Nagorik Committee.

Speakers at the meeting said several thousand workers and employees of the mill will lose their jobs and several lakh sugar cane growers will be affected if it is closed. They alleged that the mill is being closed due to inefficiency of its management.

The rally presided over by Abdul Matin Mollah, Convener of Nagorik Committee, was followed by a huge procession.

Bus plunge kills 3 in Durgapur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Three people were killed and 25 others injured when a bus fell into a roadside ditch at Jaria udner Durgapur Upazila of the district on Friday night.

The bus was going to Durgapur from Mymensingh, but it suddenly skidded off the road as the driver lost its control over the steering.

Ten seriously injured passengers were admitted to Mymensingh Medical college Hospital.

Two of the dead were identified as Dulal Mia, 27, and Arif.



PHOTO: STAR

Four upazilas in Magura district witnessed bumper production of jackfruits this season. But the growers fear that they will have to sell the fruits at a low price as there is no preservation facilities.

Two women brought for push-in 'raped' by BSF members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, KHULNA

Two Bangla-speaking women brought from Mumbai city for push-in were gangraped by BSF (Border Security Force of India) personnel near Bongaon border.

According to sources, five policemen of Mumbai city handed over the two women to BSF personnel on Friday last at Haridaspur border with a view to pushing them into Bangladesh through Benapole border.

They were picked up from Powala sium in Mumbai three months ago and lodged in the jail without any specific charge.

The sources said BSF personnel

made an attempt to push the two married women into Bangladesh through Petrapole border on Friday night. But their attempt was foiled by BDR.

One of the two women stated in her written complaint to Bongaon thana officer-in-charge (OC) that two BSF men raped them several times in a fallow land near Petrapole border on Friday midnight.

The alleged rapists had assured them of help in crossing the Petrapole border.

The alleged rapists also looted 400 Indian rupees from them, they stated in their complaint.

The two women were rescued by some men of Pirojpur village under Bongaon thana and handed over to police.

"We were working in Mumbai as housemaids", one of the women told Bongaon thana police.

The victims wanted to remain unidentified, the sources said.

Bus strike in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The divisional city's bus links with Jhalokathi and Pirojpur have been snapped since Friday due to conflict between bus owners associations over time schedule of buses.

Local BNP leaders lead the associations in the districts.

The sudden suspension of bus services, second time in a month, has caused great inconvenience to passengers. People travelling to Dhaka, Khulna, Bagerhat and Jessore from greater Barisal are also suffering due to this.

Exhibition on A-level resource materials

CU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong 'Open House Exhibition on A-Level Resource Materials' was held at Sunshine Grammar School and College in the port city yesterday.

Prof. Mohit Ul Alam, chairman of English department of Premier University, inaugurated the exhibition.

Apart from A-level resource materials, a rare collection of books and other course related materials were put on display.

A large number of students from the English medium schools visited the exhibition.

Among others, Principal Safia Rahman and Chittagong bureau chief of The Daily Star Nurul Alam were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Tree fair begins in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A week-long tree fair began on the old collectorate building premises in Jhenidah yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner ABM Shahjahan inaugurated the fair jointly organised by the district administration, Department of Agriculture Extension and Department of Forestry.

Mohammad Hakim Uddin, deputy director, Department of Agriculture Extension, presided over the inaugural ceremony while Delwar Hossain, divisional forest officer, and Azizul Hakim, upazila nirbahi officer, were present as special guests.

The deputy commissioner urged all to plant more trees, including herbal, fruit and timber trees.

Plaintiff in rape case fighting for life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A complainant in a rape case is now fighting for life at Rangpur Medical College Hospital following attack by the rapists.

Moslem Uddin, 35, had lodged a complaint with Pirgacha police against four persons for raping his sister-in-law last month. The accused are Shawkat, 35, Mahbubar, 28, Abul Kashem, 30 and Shah Alam, 26.

Two of them were arrested but were granted bail by a court.

The four then threatened Moslem Uddin to withdraw the case or to face death.

Last week, the four caught him and attempted to kill him. His screams drew people nearby and the rapists fled away leaving him with multiple stab injuries.

The rapists are now threatening to kill his family members. Moslem Uddin's told this correspondent at the hospital.

Dacoity at RMC students' hostel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A dacoity was committed at Mukta hostel of Rangpur Medical College (RMC).

About 12 armed miscreants broke open the door of room No. 1 and looted goods and money at about 9-30 pm on June 15 when the inmates were out, according to an FIR lodged by hostel superintendent Prof Khalequzzaman with Kotwali thana.

Other boarders did not resist the dacoits as they were armed, the FIR said.

After the incident, the RMC law and order committee at a meeting with principal Dr Abdus Sobhan in the chair reviewed security of students on the campus.

Meanwhile, students staged protests and demanded security of life and property on the campus.