NATIONAL

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SNÄPS

licences cancelled **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

The Barguna district administration has cancelled 648 licences of firearms due to various reasons under Section

18(A) of the Fire Arms Act 1924.

648 firearms

Nilsagor no more attracts guest birds

Roosts ruined in the name of developing picnic spot

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Out of those, licences of 178 firearms were cancelled from Barguna Sadar thana while those of 237 safe winter abode. firearms from Amtali upazila, 103 from Patharghata, 68 from Betagi and 62 from Bamna upazila. Now 507

firearms have valid licences in Barguna 30 houses looted by outlaws in one

night

OUR **CORRESPONDENT**, Barisal. The outlawed Sarbahara Party cadres committed armed robberies in 30 houses in one night at Jalabari village under Sarupkathi upazila of Piroipur on Tuesday.

According to police and locals, outlaws numbering 15 to 20 equipped with firearms and lethal weapons looted cash and valuables worth Tk 10 lakh from the houses. They also beat up inmates of the houses. Separate cases were lodged, but none were

Ahmedul Kabir's death condoled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh meeting was held at the Mymensingh Press Club auditorium to condole the death of Ahmedul Kabir, Chief Editor of the Bangla daily 'Sangbad'.

The meeting was chaired by Dr K.R Islam, vice-president of the club. 'Sangbad' Editor Bazrul Rahman was the chief quest. Among others, Md Mosharraf Hossain, secretary of the club. Sultan Uddin Khan, secretary of the Reporters' Unity spoke

Stand-off over **BRTC** service in Sylhet STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

Agitated people of three upazilas again foiled the authorities' move on Thursday to take BRTC buses back to the capital and stop its service in greater Sylhet.

As on Wednesday, when BRTC buses were rolled out of the Jaintapur depot to take those back to the capital, several thousand people kept the depot under siege for three hours.

Dialogue on local govt at Comilla They put up road barricades, snatched and tore the official order for taking the four buses back to the capital from Jaintapur. Several thousand people

and 20 years. The trees have been felled by the authorities, he said. The birds used to start arriving Guest birds no more come in flocks to the historic Nilsagor, once their from early November and staved till March-April. Their chirping on

trees, dips in the clear water move-Chirping of thousands of birds ment in large flocks thrilled hune not heard and big flocks in the dreds of visitors from home and sky are not seen. abroad. Numerous birds used to come

Few tourists come here now as from far away Siberia and Europe to escape chilling winter cold the place has lost its charm, he This correspondent was shocked to find only a small num-

tourist spot

At least 10,000 birds used to ome earlier but the number is less ber of guest birds. than 500 this year, its caretaker Enchanted by its beauty and ood road links, the then minister Sushil Roy told this correspondent during a visit on Tuesday. Maidul Islam in President Ziaur Rahman's cabinet in 1978 ordered Their resting places have disap-

peared as most of the around 5,000 age-old fruit-bearing, medicinal and forest trees in the 53.90 acre area have been felled.

Consequently, in 1979, the then Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Nilphamari, Abdul Jabbar Khan, The over 20 acre lands around ie 33 acre water body were dotted with century-old mango, jack-fruit and banyan trees. But Sushil could renamed the water body Nilsagor and took steps to improve the show this correspondent only a infrastructure. In December 1999, the then handful of trees aged between 15

State Minister for Land Rashed Mosharraf visited the area. After his visit, a project was undertaken to develop Nilsagar into a bird sanctuary and Tk 80.05 lakh was granted for the purpose.

This is the beginning of the destruction, Sushil said.

The project implementing authorities drastically felled age-old trees without considering the aspect of ecological balance, he

Five years ago, noted bird watcher and specialist Dr Zakin Hossain, had cautioned at a meeting not to plant saplings of foreign origin. Guest birds prefer local and familiar trees to alien unfamiliar ones as their shelters. Birds also development of the area into a consume insects growing on local trees, he had said.

But his warning went unheeded, resulting in an ecological imbalance.

During 2001-2002, the then district administration who was the custodian of Nilsagor, turned it

almost barren by felling a large number of trees, Sushil lamented. Felling of trees went on

unabated despite newspaper reports However, when contacted, a

former Union Parishad chairman of the area, Rafiqul Islam, claimed that live trees were not felled 'Only dead trees were removed" hesaid

Amid the claims and counterclaims, the area has lost its scenic beauty and bird sanctuaries.

A recent survey also revealed that menace of insects growing in nearby croplands is also one of the reasons for decline in flow of guest birds.

The most shocking incident is that the name of princess Binnabati, daughter King Birat who dug the lake, is now being forgotten after the renaming. King Birat had named the lake Binnadighi after his daughter.

Some local people said they like to call the lake Binnadighi.



A partial view of Nilsagor lake where a few guest birds could be spotted on Tuesday. No old tree is seen in the picture.

Step down for snap polls, Suranjit asks govt

Jamaat harbouring a dozen fundamentalist groups, Mannan tells Satkhira AL council

ment for indemnifying law enforc-

ers' activities during the operation.

get exposed".

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Awami League (AL) Presidium member Suranjit Sengupta MP has Clean Heart" last year. asked the government to step

down paving the way for a mid-tern election 'to end misrule, terrorism and corruption'

"In view of the present suffocat ing situation, I do not think there is any option other than holding snap polls", he said while addressing a council of Satkhira Poura Awami League on Thursday.

He was the chief guest at the council held at the Shahid Abdur Razzak Park. Suranjit bitterly criticised the

government for what he called its total failure in running run the country"

He held the BNP-Jamaat govnate it", he said

ernment responsible for the "kill-Being freedom fighter, former president and BNP's founder Zaiur ing of at least 58 people by law Rahman patronised "collaborators enforces in the name of Operation of Pakistan occupation army", he He also criticised the governsaid.

Presided over by Satkhira Poura Awami League Prsident Sheikh Ashruaful Haq, the council was The veteran parliamentarian addressed by, among others, forsaid AL wants to join parliament mer state minister Talukdar Abdul but the government "does not want Khalegu, SM Kamal Hosain, former to see the Opposition in the House MCA Mamtaz Ahmed, engineer lest their misdeeds and corruption Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, former MP Monsur Ahmed, Nazrul Islam, Kazi Kamal and Insur Ali

Addressing the council, AL Organising Secretary Abdul The council formed a 67 Mannan alleged that ruling coalimember Satkhira Poura Awami tion partner Jamaat-e-Islami is League committee headed by "harbouring over a dozen funda-Sheikh Nurul Haq and Firoz mentalist groups" in the country. Ahmed as its president and general "These trained armed men have secretary respectively. targeted Awami League to elimi-

Communication Minister Nazmul Huda has said it is time to ban 'hartal' by enacting new law as it is destroying the country's economy.

CU CORRESPONDENT

should come forward to create a platform to foster national unity to get rid of this undemocratic and destructive practice, he said.

reunion of ex-students of Chittagong Medical College, held at the college playground in the port city on Thursday.

Every conscious citizen opposes hartal but can not resist as it is imposed by armed political activists, he said.

Chowdhury's idea of launching a civil society platform.

Chittagong Medical College Former Students Association

organised the two-day reunion. Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman and Commerce Minister Amir Khoshru Mahmud Chowdhury were also present at the inaugural function as special guests. Dr. LA Quaderi, president of the Association, presided over the inaugural function.

It is time to ban hartal,

The commerce minister urged the CMCH authorities to submit a project soon regarding establishment of a 500-bed extension ward of the hospital and also assured all cooperation in this regard.

The food minister urged doctors to discharge their responsibility with sincerity and honesty as 90 percent people live in poverty.

The first batch students of CMC were awarded memorial prizes at the function.

Among others, CMC Principal Prof Dr. Badruddin Mahmud Chowdhury, its director Brig Gen Towfiqul Alam, Bangladesh

Medical Association (BMA) Chittagong unit General Secretary Dr. Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury, addressed the function.

The two-day programmes includes cultural function, disto unite and launch a movement cussion meeting, campfire and exhibition.

Twenty stalls of different pharmaceutical companies were set up at the venue.

Puja committee

formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira Election to the executive committee of Kaligonj Puja Udjapan Parishad was held recently at the auditorium of BRDB at Kaligonj upazila.

Swapan Kumar Biswas and Dr Milon Kumar Shosh were elected President and General secretary.

He urged the freedom fighter to join their January 7 grand rally at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka, being organised by JSD Manikganj JSD president and freedom fighter Abdus Salam Bulu

presided over the rally, also addressed by JSD central vicepresident Moazzem Hossain Khan Mojlish, secretary Syed Jafor Sajjad, joint secretary Ikbal Hossain Khan, Afjal Hossain Khan Joki, Manikganj district JSD leaders and freedom fighters.

JSD demands

national govt

A CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Jatiya Samajtantrick Dal (JSD-Inu)

President Hasanul Haq Inu has

alleged that the BNP-Jamaat gov-

ernment failed to run the country

and demanded formation of a

national government to "free the

He called upon freedom fighters

against the government. Ruling

party men are responsible for

corruption and acts violence, he

fighters' rally organised by Manikganj district JSD on KG

He was addressing a freedom

people from its misrule

School on Wednesday

alleegd

Satkhira Zila Parishad

Lalmonirhat AL leader murder Women UP members inactive as People nab one more accused,

Professionals including doctors

says Huda

Huda was addressing the 3rd

Huda also criticised former president AQM Badruddoza

came and laid a siege to the BRTC bus depot following announcements from mosques over loud speakers.

BRTC officials were compelled to take the buses back to the depot at about 5 PM.

Later, people from different areas of Jaintapur, Kanaighat and Gowainghat upazilas brought out a procession and held a protest rally at Jaintapur upazila headquarters.

Speakers at the rally threatened of an indefinite strike in the region if any further step is taken to withdraw BRTC service.

The rally was held at the Battala with Jaintapur upazila BNP secretary and former Union Parishad chairman Abdul Malik Manik in the chair. It was addressed by among others, chairmen of differ ent union parishads and leaders of different political parties.

They said the people of greater Sylhet will stop supply of tea, stone, sand, coal and minerals from this region if the service is withdrawn.

Courier service co raided, closed for *hundi* business

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police led by a magistrate have raided the office of a private courier service in the city for illegal hundi business, arrested two of its employees and stopped its opera-

Police also recovered Tk 1,34,000, seized some "important documents" and two iron safes from the office of Rainbow Courier Service in Shahjalal Upashahar area.

Security men from a private security service have been deployed at its office

Police said the raid followed filing of a case against the company with Sylhet Kotwali thana on Monday under the Money Laundering Law.

In the FIR, police said the company was engaged in illegal hundi business since its launching in 1999. It did not have any approval from the Bangladesh Bank. Those accused in the case include the company's Chairman Tanvirul Haque, Managing Director Capt. (Retd) Sirajul Haque, Chief Accountant Sujay Bhhattacharya, Accountant Biswajit Chowdhury Assistant Accountant Russe Bhuiyan and Booking Officer Quaz Motahar Hossain Mamun.

male colleagues non-cooperate

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Initiative ARD.

dates contesting in the UP polls.

in the picture, among others.

Male members usually show their apathy towards their female col-Women Union Parishad (UP) leagues. Because women members members are compelled to play a lack required consciousness, they have social limitations and other passive role due to nonweaknesses, he mentioned. cooperation of their male colleagues in discharging their duties.

Former President of Comilla They are also totally unaware Press Club and local correspondent of Dainik Ittefaq Golam about their job description. Mostafa Chowdhury presided over Participants disclosed this at a the meeting. Journalists, local dialogue on Role of Mass Media in government representatives, Strengthening Local Governments

government officials and civil held in Comilla town on Monday. ociety took part in the dialogue. The Bangladesh Centre for Participants drew the attention Development, Journalism and of mass media in educating people Communication (BCDJC) and the about their rights and privileges. Comilla Press Club jointly organ-Citing an example they said peoised it in assistance with the ple blamed the municipality staff USAID-funded Local Government

for a job which is meant for the Roads and Highways Department While dwelling on the issue, the FPAB President, Papri Basu underpersonnel. As a result a big gap is being created between the people scored the need for requisite eduand local governments, they gave cational qualification and skill their opinions. development of women candi-

They called upon the press to publish well-informed and inves-

Comilla Pourasabha Commissioner Jamir Uddin (1st from left) making a point during a dialogue on 'Role of Mass

Media in Strengthening Local Governments', held at Comilla Press Club on Monday. Former president of the club

and Ittefaq correspondent Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, its GS Syed Nurur Rahman, Bangladesh Observer correspon-

dent Masudur Rahman, local BMA President Dr Iqbal Anwar, BCDJC Assistant Editor Mahfuza Jasmine are also seen

tigative stories regularly so that confusions in this regard are removed.

BCDJC Assistant Editor Mahfuza Jasmine welcomed the participants during the opening session while the press club General Secretary (GS) and Dainik Bhorer Kagoi Correspondent Sved Nurur Rahman conducted the dialogue.

Most of the participants suggested an immediate end to politi cal interference in different local government tiers, stoppage of unwanted meddling of the centre and above all creation of own fund of the respective institutions.

Among others, Comilla Pourasabha Commissioner Jamir Uddin Jampi, Durgapur UP Chairman Obaidul Kabir Mohon, Comilla Lalmai College Assistant Professor Ali Hossain and the press club GS Syed Nurur Rahman spoke.

স্থানীয় সরকাব

allege police 'inaction'

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat.

Local people on Thursday caught and handed over to police one more person in connection with the murder of popular Awami League leader, freedom fighter and Union Parishad Chairman Shamsul Islam Suruz.

Suruz was killed by miscreants at Charitabari village under Kamalabari union in Aditmari upazila on Sunday.

Khorshed was caught by people at Kakina village under Kaligonj upazila in the early hours of Thursday and handed over to Aditmari police, raising the number of people now in custody in the murder case to six.

All the six were caught by local

Pneumonia kills 49 children in B'baria শক্তিশালীকরণে গণম

Patients on Sadar Hospital floor, nurses to be bribed for use of nebuliser

with their mothers.

Talking to this correspondent, some of the parents alleged that

nurses were realising Tk 20 to Tk 30

from them each time for use of nebuliser for their children, a treat-

ment vital for respiratory problem

Abdul Kadir, father of six-year-old Nazma alleged that he had to give Tk

Attack protested

Among others, Sultan Uddin Khan, secretary of local Reporters' Unity, Ataul Karim Khokon, Bureau

chief of The Daily Jugantor, Sheikh Mohiddun of Channel-i and Babul

Hossain of Janakantha addressed the

When asked, nurses however

30 for using the machine.

refuted the allegation.

At least 49 children died from pneumonia and other respiratory prob-lems in the district since October,

As the mercury is dipping, the number of children being brought to hospitals with the diseases is increasing, most of them coming from rural areas. At least 35 children were brought to the Sadar Hospital alone since Monday, sources there said vesterday

Doctors said children being attacked with pneumonia broncholites, viral pneumonia and throat sore due to lack of awareness amongparents.

Dr. Narayon Chandra Shah, child specialist at the Sadar Hospital, said on an average, at least ten patients are being admitted to the hospital with respiratory problems every day. During a visit to the Sadar

Hospital on Tuesday, 62 admitted patients were seen being treated at the childward.

But there are only 11 beds at the ward. Fifty-one patients were seen lying on mats on the hospital floor people and handed over to police, local people said and alleged a "mysterious inaction" by law the sake of investigation. enforcers since the murder.

Of the six, three including Khorshed are accused in the case and three are suspects, police said. Two others accused are Hariz and Kamruzzaman.

Four of them were produced before court, which placed Hariz on four days' remand and sent the rest three to jail.

Police said Khorshed was inter-gated at Aditmari thana on Wednesday in presence of Lalmonirhat Police Superintendent.

Khurshid confessed to his involvement in the murder, police said but declined to elaborate for

CEO standreleased

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The local people said tension is prevailing in Kamlabari union as supporters of Suruz and his politi-cal rivals are in a stand-off situation. A clash may erupt any time,

The local people alleged that police reached the spot of the killing about 10 hours after being nformed.

The slain AL leader's wife Halima also alleged that police are not playing their due role to arrest the killers.

they said.

Local leaders of Awami League say it is a political murder.

Meanwhile, freedom fighters of Lalmonirhat arranged a Milad Mahfil at Aditmari for peace and salvation of the soul of Suruz.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Satkhira Zila Parishad, Ataur Rahman Bhuiyan was stand released from Satkhira to Pirojpur on charge of 'irregularities and corruption' while allocating shops in the Muktijoddha Market at Shyamnagar upazila headquarters. The order was passed by the Minister for Local Government and Co-operatives on Thursday. During his tenure he made irregularities in allocating 64 shops in the

Muktijoddha Market. A probe body of the ministry found him guilty.

Highest punishment demanded for traffickers

Police officials, civil society representatives, NGO men join BNWLA workshop in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

Women and children trafficking from 13 districts including those in Sylhet division is increasing as traffickers escape punishment due to legal loopholes and alleged inaction by law enforcers.

This was stated by speakers at a workshop on 'Resistance of Women and Children Trafficking and Ensuring Trial of Traffickers', held at the Sylhet City Corporation auditorium on Wednesday.

Traffickers should be given the 'highest punishment", the speakers said

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh Sylhet City Corporation ward commissioners, lawyers, journal-The working journalists here pro-tested the recent attack on Jhalakati newsmen and took out a procession in the district town on Sunday. ists, NGO representatives, educationists and representatives of law enforcing agencies joined the day-long workshop organised Following the procession they organised a meeting at the MymensinghPressClub. by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA).

> Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran was the chief gust at the inaugural session with advocate Fouhida Khondaker of BNWLA in the chair.

Principal of Sylhet Government Mohila College Shamsunnahar and Special Public Prosecutor of the Special Tribunal for Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Domon Adalat Ashique Uddin Ahmed spoke as special guests. The speakers said greater Sylhet

has become vulnerable for trafficking as it has border with Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. The organised gangs are more active now. Seven minor boys trafficked from different areas of Habiganj district returned home recently, they mentioned.

Mayor Kamran also stressed on creating mass awareness to stop such crimes.

Advocate Touhida Khondaker called for strict enforcement of laws against trafficking and cooperation from people of all walks with BNWLA in its efforts in creating mass awareness and helping hevictims.

Starting in 1991, BNWLA resies the victims, keeps them in its shelter homes, extends legal aid and rehabilitates them in their families and societies.



PHOTO: STAR