

## Sudden law and order slide in S-W districts

10 killed in 7 days, 2 BRTC buses robbed, 2 abducted

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A slide in law and order marked the beginning of the new year in southwestern districts with at least ten people killed in the first week. The victims included three women.

Most of the killings were done allegedly by outlaws, according to police.

Two persons were abducted for ransom and passengers of two BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) buses were robbed during the period in the crime prone area of the country.

The criminals also made three bomb attacks on law enforcers, apparently thwarting their anti-crime drive.

Some high police officials seeking anonymity admitted the slide in law and order, saying it 'a sudden phenomenon' just ahead of the Eid-ul-Ajah. The situation will improve soon, they hoped.

The first day of the year was marked with two murders, one in Khulna and the other in Kushtia.

Police said outlaws abducted one Lipi Khatun, 23, from Kartikpur village in Daulatpur upazila in Khulna and slaughtered her after rape.

In Kushtia, one Jahidul, 25, was shot dead at Kazihata village in Bheramara upazila.

On the same day, Jatya Party Presidom member Shaikh Akram Hossain came under a bomb attack, allegedly by outlaws. He survived the attack. Passengers of a BRTC bus were robbed 12 miles off Kushtia town on the Kushtia-Bheramara road.

On January 2, outlawed party cadres abducted trader Ripon Hossain, 33, son of Abdus Sattar of Shuvorazpur village in Gangni upazila in Meherpur and demanded Tk 1 lakh ransom. The victim is still untraced, police said.

On the same day, criminals hacked to death a woman Chaburennasha, 45, at Bichali village in Narail Sadar upazila in Kushtia.

On January 3, a gang impersonating al Qaida activists exploded four bombs at Poradah Bazar in Mirpur upazila in Kushtia.

On the same day unidentified criminals shot dead housewife Majeda khatun, 30, at KhordoBhaluka village in Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia over a previous rivalry with her husband.

On January 4 at night, miscreants hurled a bomb at Shiromoni police camp in Khulna. None was injured at it exploded on the sunshed of the building.

On the same day, miscreants belonging to notorious Lalchad

Bahini gunned down jewelry shop owner Tanim Hossain Ranga, 35, at Juniadah Bazar in Bheramara, while outlaws abducted businessman Yunus Ali from Bhedura village in Alamdanga in Chuadanga for Tk 3 lakh ransom. The Ali is still missing.

On the same day, criminals killed a nine year-old boy, Milton, son of Manik Lal Das at Mashni village in Kochua upazila in Bagerhat and slaughtered 60 year-old woman Surjabibi at Ambari village in Narail Sadar upazila and robbed passengers of a BRTC bus on the Khulna-Jessore highway.

A leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, Zahirul, was killed at Baitpur in Bagerhat on the same day.

On January 5, outlaws slaughtered Kushtia BRB Cable Company employee Rafiqul Islam, 40, at Sawstipur village in Kushtia Sadar upazila and strangled Manjura Khatun, 35, after abduction and rape.

On the same day, enraged people in Kushtia beat an unidentified cadre of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz when he was fleeing after killing an alleged police informer near the Polytechnic Institute in Kushtia town.

A top cadre of outlawed Purbo Banglar communist Party (PBCP-ML), Selim Ahmed Tutul, was killed on January 5, allegedly by party rivals.

College principal beaten for toll in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Terrorists beat and injured Rehana Akhter, principal of S M Sekandar Ali Chowdhury College at Kalagachhiya in Galachipa upazila in Patuakhali district. Sunday morning as she refused to pay them Tk one lakh toll.

The miscreants also snatched her gold ornaments and ransacked her office.

Police arrested two persons -Zia, 40, and Tuhin, 35, -after the principal filed a case with Galachipathana.

In the case she alleged that a gang of five terrorists led by Shawkat Ali Chowdhury alias Zia entered her office at about 11 am on Sunday and demanded a toll of Tk one lakh.

As she refused, they beat her with iron rods, hurled a chair on her and also ransacked her office.

Hearing her screams, teachers, students and employees of the college came and rescue her. The miscreants escaped.

Mentionably, the same gang had earlier demanded toll from the college authorities and are illegally occupying lands and a pond of the college.

## 'No' to early marriage, dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

It was an eye opener to many in rural Satkhira. Over 200 teenaged girls from different areas at a simple function in the town yesterday pledged not to go for early marriage and to resist dowry.

They also vowed to campaign against the two most serious social ills in the country and to continue studies to be self-reliant.

The girls from different community schools gathered at the Rishilpi auditorium. It was organised by Rishilpi, an Italian NGO working for creating awareness against early marriage, dowry and other social ills among poor segments of the society. The campaign is being conducted under the banner of Amar Sonar Paribar (my happy family).

The credit for motivating the teenaged girls goes to Abdul Alim, Chairman of Labsa Union Parishad.

Representatives of the participating girls, local people's representatives and elite spoke at the function presided over by Abdul Alim.

Rishilpi Director Enzo Falcono was the chief guest.



Teenaged girls pose for photograph after the function where they pledged not to go for early marriage and to resist dowry. The programme, held in Satkhira town yesterday, was organised by Rishilpi, an Italian NGO.

## Khulna under security blanket

JMB suicide attack feared ahead of Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna city is under a security blanket and police and Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) are on 'high alert' following intelligence reports that JMB suicide bombers may carry out attacks on prime spots or key installations in Khulna city on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha.

Fifteen mobile teams, in addition to 25 parties, will remain vigilant in vulnerable areas and the security blanket will continue till January 13, said DC (Hq) Akbar Ali of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP).

KMP Commissioner told this correspondent that a manhunt for JMB men is going on following reports that 17 Islamist militants are in the city in the guise of workers and employees of Shiromoni Cable Factory.

The KMP Commissioner has issued a circular banning sale of cold drinks at open places on the Eid day. Any body found selling the items will be prosecuted under KMP ordinance, the circular said.

Earlier, the Managing Director of the factory in a general diary filed with Khanjahan Ali thana alleged that some Islamist militants are suing the name of the factory to hide their identity.

Inspector of City Special Branch of KMP Golam Mohammad is investigating into the allegation made by the MD of state-owned cable factory.

Rab members are desperately hunting for most wanted JMB 'operations commander' in Khulna division and its Majhis-e-Shura member Hafez Mahmud following intelligence reports that after he is hiding in Khulna along with some suicide bombers. Rab is following different tactics to net Hafez Mahmud, the sources said.

Hafez Mahmud is now the main target of law enforcers including Rab to finish JMB's chain of command in the southwestern region, sources in intelligence agencies said.

The government has declared a bounty of Tk 10 lakh for his arrest.

"Our operations are going on to finish JMB network in this part of the country", said a senior official of KMP, who is one of those monitoring the drives to arrest Hafez Mahmud.

The drive began after arrested Ziaur Rahman alias Shahabir, 'second-in-command' of JMB in Khulna district, gave 'important information' to Rab on whereabouts of Hafez Mahmud, the sources said.

Police are also raiding students' hostels and messes in Khulna city. There are some 200 hostels and messes in the city.

All student hostels in Khulna city and residential halls of universities and colleges are under watch by intelligence agencies.

3X3

5.5X3

10X3

9.5X3

AUGUST 17 BLASTS IN BARISAL

Attachment of property of six accused ordered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Special Tribunal has rejected bail prayers of seven of the accused chargesheeted in August 17 bomb blasts in Barisal city and ordered attachment of property of the rest six who are absconding.

Judge Md. Shaifuiddin gave the orders when seven of the accused persons were produced before the court on Sunday.

The accused are Ziaur Rahman Zia, Golam Morshed Chowdhury Reza, Jalal Ahmed, Hafez Saiful Islam, Abu Yusuf Majumdar and Abu Solaiman Sujan, all officials of Al Ikram Social Welfare Society; and Md. Maruf, Jasimuddin, Zahid Babu, Sultan Sharif, Rahim, Sobhan and Gias.

They are accused for blasting bombs at 18 spots in Barisal city on August 17 last year.

Of them, Zia, Babu, Yusuf, Sobhan, Rahim and Gias are absconding.

Sec 144 in Shahzadpur as AL factions clash over rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

The district administration yesterday imposed section 144 at Shahzadpur in Sirajganj district following a clash between two groups of Awami League activists clashed over holding meetings at the same venue at the same time. At least 30 people were injured.

The injured people include district Awami League president and former lawmaker Abdul Latif Mirza. They are being treated at Sirajganj Sadar Hospital.

Shahzadpur thana Officer-in-Charge Khalilur Rahman said four houses, four minibuses were also damaged during the clash. Police clubbed the AL activists and brought the situation under control, he said.

The meetings on the premises of Rabindra Kuthibari were called at noon by rival groups led by Swapan and Chayan.

## Clamorous clamber



Home bound people ahead of Eid-ul-Azha scramble to board a train in Chittagong railway station yesterday.