

Gun-toting terrorists active in Chapainawabganj frontier

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, May 5: Despite efforts by the government to efface terrorism from the country, gun-toting terrorists have become more active in frontier areas than ever before, reports UNB.

According to competent sources, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and explosives are frequently being smuggled into Bangladesh from a bordering country through different points.

They said the firearms are mainly brought into the country through Binodpur, Khaserhat, Chuka, Shapara, Manaharpur, Masudpur, Bakatpara, Singnagar and Balladighi points in Shibganj thana, and then supplied to various parts of the country, including capital Dhaka.

Locals alleged that the law-enforcing agencies hardly crack down on the smugglers and whenever they do they let the gun-toting terrorists to go unpunished for reasons better known to them.

Records showed that local police recovered only nine firearms from different parts of the district last year. But a CID team from Dhaka, acting on a tip-off, recovered huge arms and explosives from here in that year.

Another source said the arms dealers themselves do not carry arms. Instead, they recruit porters, preferably women, to reach small arms to their destinations.

A large section of unemployed youths and women driven by greed are getting in-

involved in arms smuggling. Leaders and cadres of different political parties are the main buyers of smuggled firearms.

Passenger buses plying on Chapainawabganj-Dhaka road are being used as safe carriers of smuggled arms and goods.

A source close to the transport owners said drivers and their helpers and the staff of ticket counters are directly involved in smuggling.

Witnesses said the bus drivers make unscheduled halts on the road for loading and off-loading of smuggled goods.

A ticket master, who spoke on condition of anonymity said the number of transports on the route has marked a rise in recent times only because of rising trend of smuggling.

Fund needed for maintenance of 350-yr-old Parolia Mosque

SHARIATPUR, May 5: The artistic work of Parolia Mosque was a symbol of wonderful and beautiful archaeological design of Moghal Empire, reports BSS.

The mosque was built in 1717 during the period of Moghal Empire. The founder of the mosque was Joynt Bibi, daughter of Zamindar Syed Alim and wife of the saint, Dewan Sharif of Chikindi under Shariatpur district. The blue coloured mosque having big domes stands for the last 350 years as the evidence of uncommon structural design and unparalleled fame of Moghal tradition.

The mosque was established at Chikindi village, 15 kilometers away from the district

headquarters. Another name of the village where the mosque was located was Plong.

The building of the mosque having a length of 60 feet and width of 326 feet stands on heavy stone arch.

A tall spire (Minar) made the mosque attractive. The engraved letter in Persian language on stone plate setting on the entrance of the mosque indicates the brief history of the mosque.

While contacted the caretaker (Khadem) of the mosque Moulvi Zahid Hossain Khan told me that about 900 Muslims come from different areas for Juma prayers every Friday.

A large number of people from different parts of the

country and abroad visit the mosque every year, he added.

The mosque is facing now manifold problems including shortage of fund, lacks facility for water supply system.

The only one tubewell sunk in the mosque premises has gone out of order long ago.

The mosque management has no source of income for its maintenance except the income from four ponds. The monthly salaries of Imams and Moazzem are paid from the fund.

The mosque management committee appealed to the concerned authorities for financial support immediately.



Living with calamities

A recent cyclonic storm damaged hundreds of houses in Rajshahi. A house in Siddiquepur (above) and a school in Hanirkutsa (below) in Bagmara thana raged to the ground completely. — Star photo

Boro paddy in haor areas of Sylhet div inundated

SYLHET, May 5: Boro paddy on a vast tract land in haor areas of the division have been inundated as the water level increased in all the rivers due to incessant rain and onrush of hilly water, reports UNB.

At present, the rivers Surma, Kushiyara, Monu and Khowai are flowing near the danger level and water entered in almost all the haors of the region.

Ripe paddy is on the verge of damage due to water stagnation on a vast tract of haor land caused by poor navigability of the rivers.

Official sources said standing crops on 49,000 hectares of land in different haors of Comapanganj, Fenchuganj, Balaganj and Goinghat upazilas submerged due to incessant rain and rolling of hilly waters.

Deputy Director of District Agriculture Extension Department, however, said the overall

situation is still better and the farmers can harvest their Boro paddy within a week.

Sources in the down stream district of Sunamganj said, 20 lakh people, solely depended on Boro paddy, are in great anxiety as flash flood caused by continuous downpour and rolling of hilly water entered into 131 haors.

The farmers have harvested only 30 per cent of the Boro paddy, the only crop throughout the year there.

District administration said Boro paddy have gone under water in haors of Kharicha, Kalna, Matiali, Chandrasanaral, Gorma, Boram, Chapati, Nolia, Bhandra and Dekhar.

Agriculture officials said 1.71 lakh hectares have been brought under Boro cultivation in Sunamganj district this year. There is sign of bumper crop with favourable weather

including rains during the last few months.

Fresh areas are going under water every day while the farmers are harvesting immature paddy threatened by rising water level.

Another report from Naoaganj says: Standing Boro paddy on 50,000 hectares of land went under water following incessant rain for the last few days.

Pledge to protect independence of country
From A Correspondent

TANGAIL, May 5: Speakers at a public meeting of Tangail District Awami League pledged to protect the independence and sovereignty of the country at any cost. The people will foil the conspiracy of the four-party alliance against the country," they said.

Awami League (AL) leaders also stressed on the need for early implementation of the verdict of Bangabandhu Murder Case while they were addressing the public meeting on Wednesday at local Bindubashini Boys' High School playground.

Local AL leader Moazzem Hossain Khan presided over the meeting.

Khandker Asaduzzaman, MP, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Freedom Fighters Affairs and Establishment, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Syed Ashrafur Islam, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Abdul Mannan, MP, Abdul Momen, Aftabuzzaman Feroz, and district Awami League leader Fazlur Rahman Khan Faruque, among others, spoke in the meeting.

7 killers get life term in Sirajganj
From Akhteruzzaman

SIRAJGANJ, May 5: A court here on Thursday convicted seven people and sentenced them to life term imprisonment in the sensational Lalchan murder case.

The convicts — Matiar Rahman, Hormuj Ali, Noor Muhammad, Julmat Ali, Abdur Rashid, Moktar Hussain and Kashem Mondol were also fined Taka 2,000 each, in default, to suffer six months' more rigorous imprisonment. Eight others were released as they were not found guilty.

According to prosecution, Lalchan of village Nalsandha Rajapur under Ullapara upazila was murdered by the convicted persons on February 12, 1991. After his murder his brother Sukur Ali filed a case against 17 persons. Police submitted chargesheet against 15 persons.

Sirajganj District and Session Judge Md Rafiqul Islam declared the verdict on Thursday after examining witnesses and records.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Advocate Abdur Rahman (Rana) conducted the case on behalf of the government and Advocate Abul Kashem conducted the case for the accused.

News snaps

KMC classes from May 15

KHULNA, May 5: The classes for the freshers of Khulna Medical College (KMC) for the 1999-2000 academic session will begin at 9.30 am on May 15, reports BSS.

The freshers have been asked to attend the classes at Lecturer Gallery-1 of KMC Academic Building in time, a KMC press release said.

Allocation for UP complex

LALMONIRHAT, May 5: The government has allocated Tk 25 lakh for construction of Chalbala UP Complex in Kaliganj upazila in the current fiscal, reports UNB.

Local Government Engineering Department has sanctioned the money and the credit for it goes to incumbent chairman Sree Atul Chandra Sarker for his continued efforts in this connection. Work on the complex is expected to begin soon.

Lightning kills man

THAKURGAON, May 5: A man was killed and another wounded critically in a lightning at village Gouripur in Sadar upazila on Monday, reports UNB.

Hospital sources Hamidur Rahman, 25, died on the spot and his fellow-villager Rabi, 27, suffered wounds when a streak of thunderbolt struck them while they were working in a crop field during rain. Meanwhile, standing Boro paddy and watermelon on a vast track of land were damaged by hailstorm on Saturday-Sunday.

Fake DB inspector arrested

NAOAGANJ, May 5: Police have arrested a fake DB inspector from Kutubpur Bazar in frontier Dhamurhat upazila, reports UNB.

Police said Jamal Bihari, a resident of Bangbaria in the town, was arrested for cheating the people introducing himself as a DB inspector for long. Apart from collecting tolls from smugglers, he was also engaged in smuggling in the border area. On April 28, police caught him red-handed while smuggling brass metals to India.

Wife chopped to death

CHAPAINAWABGANJ, May 5: A cruel husband allegedly chopped his wife to death and seriously wounded his sleeping son at Sonadah in Rohonpur Municipality recently, reports UNB.

Police said Shafiqul Islam killed his wife Rowshan Ara, 25, following a family feud on April 28. Their six-year-old son Khokon, who was sleeping beside his mother, was injured in his attack. The little boy was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. Meanwhile, police arrested Shafiqul.

FEMA workshop at Lalmonirhat

LALMONIRHAT, May 5: A day-long workshop on "Union Parishad Election and Law Reform" organised by local Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) was held here recently, reports BSS.

The workshop was presided over by president of local FEMA Dilip Kumar Sarker. Mozibur Rahman, MP, attended the workshop as the chief guest while Abdul Kuddus, President of the District Rights Organisation as special guest. It was attended, among others, by some local distinguished personalities including political leaders, journalists, lawyers and teachers. A total of 50 persons participated in the workshop.

May Day observed

MADARIPUR, May 5: The historic May day was observed here with a call to address the sufferings of the workers, reports BSS.

Different local trade union bodies and political organisations held discussions and public rallies recalling the supreme sacrifices of the Chicago workers in 1886.

CPA official on forced leave

CHITTAGONG, May 5: An official of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has been sent on a two-month forced leave on charge of corruption, negligence of duty and misuse of power, reports UNB.

Chittagong Port Authority issued the order on Wednesday against Assistant Traffic Manager Sultan Ahmed and gave directive for further administrative action. Sultan Ahmed was also charged with harassing port users and taking bribe in container handling. This was the first such kind of action taken against a port official.



Safwan Chowdhury, President of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SCCI), addressing a workshop, organised jointly by JOBS Programme and SCCI, at Sylhet recently. — Star photo

2 Feni thanas flooded

FENI, May 5: A vast area of two thanas here has been flooded due to heavy rainfall in the last two days and onrush of hilly water from Indian state of Tripura, reports BSS.

According to Agriculture Department sources, standing IRRI-Boro crops and Rabi crops on more than 5,000 acres have been submerged by flash flood in the eight unions of Chhagalnaiya and Parshuram thanas. Water Board sources said, all the 40 gates of Muhuri Regulator under Muhuri Irrigation Project (MIP) have been opened earlier, but floodwater is receding slowly. The dam on River Kahua in Bilonia of Indian State of Tripura was washed out due to onrush of hilly water on April 29. As a result the hilly water entered into Bangladesh.

Chuadanga AL workers' meeting

CHUADANGA, May 5: Forest and Environment Minister Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury on Tuesday laid emphasis on party unity and solidarity to face the challenges of the anti-liberation forces politically, reports BSS.

She was addressing as the chief guest the extended workers' meeting of the party organised by the district Awami League. The minister said at present there are two trends of politics in the country — one is in favour of the Independence and the Liberation War and the other one is against it. She urged all the party leaders and workers to be united for facing the anti-liberation politics.

Goods worth Tk 60,000 looted

BAGERHAT, May 5: A gang of robbers looted goods and valuables worth about Tk 60,000 from a house at Utkul village in Sadar upazila injuring four people early on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Villagers said about 12 bandits stormed into the house of Kalipada Chakrabarti and looted the valuables including six tolas gold and cash money at gunpoint. They also hacked the youngest son of the house owner Asit Chakrabarti and beat up his wife Renu Bala and another son Babu Lal leaving them injured.

4 timber smugglers convicted

KISHOREGANJ, May 5: A special court here has sentenced four people to three years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a timber smuggling case, reports UNB.

The tribunal also fined the convicts — Abul Mia, Nazrul Islam, Siddique Mia and Ekram Hossain — Tk 1,000 each, in default, to suffer two months' more RI. According to prosecution, river police arrested the accused along with a boatload of smuggled timbers from near Bishurikona village in Mitamoin thana on January 8, 1998. After examining the records and witnesses, the Judge handed down the verdict on Sunday.

Feni DIARY

Seminar on disaster management

From Our Correspondent
FENI, May 5: A seminar on disaster management was held at Conference Hall of Deputy Commissioner here recently.

Organised by District Relief and Rehabilitation Department, the seminar was presided over by Addition District Magistrate Abul Kashem Masud. The seminar was addressed, among others, by Ishaq Miah, GM Haidar, Nowab Ali Munshe, Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan and DRRO Gan Beshak Boria.

Addition Deputy Commissioner Abul Kashem read out the keynote paper in the seminar.

Two with heroin arrested

Police arrested two persons with 300 grams of heroin from West Pathangor area under Chhagalnaiya upazila recently. Police, acting on a tip-off, raided a house in the area and arrested the two. They were identified as Kopluddinn, 32, and Nurul Hoque, 38.

Local people said the two had been in the illegal trade for a long time.

Housewife beaten to death

A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Darnapur village under Daganbhuiyan upazila recently. The victim was identified as Bibi Hazra, 25.

Neighbours said the husband, Fariduddin, beat the wife mercilessly stick following an altercation. The wife received severe head injuries. On her way to hospital Bibi Hazra succumbed to injuries.

Villagers caught the husband and handed him over to police.

Housewife commits suicide

A housewife committed suicide by taking poison at Laxmipur village under Chhagalnaiya recently. The victim was identified as Jharna Begum, 18.

The actual reason behind the suicide could not be known immediately.

The neighbours, however, said Jharna, who was four months pregnant, killed herself over family feud.

A UD case was filed with police in this connection.

Property worth Tk 20 lakh gutted

Three people were injured and property worth about Taka 20 lakh was gutted in devastating fire at Goshipur under Fulgazi upazila recently.

According to police and villagers, the fire, which originated from a kitchen of the village, gutted 14 houses.

The injured were identified as Kazi Abdul Mannan, Kazi Ahsanul and Moinuddin. They were admitted to a local clinic.

Fire brigades men rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Kajal of Kotchandpur still missing

From Delwar Kabir

JHENIDAH, May 5: Farooque Ahmed Kajal, the much talked about hundi trader in Kotchandpur upazila headquarters, still has been missing.

People who invested money with the mysterious man and his agents are passing their days with great anxiety.

Apu Chowdhury, a cousin of Kajal, lodged a GD with police, saying Kajal was probably abducted. The GD was lodged on April 26.

Locals said Kajal received deposit from people and re-funded the money with 12 per cent interest per month. He started the business a couple of years ago.

The 'lucrative' interest rate has attracted a large number of people to invest money with Kajal.

Now the deposit stands nearly at 1000 crore taka, locals said.

Amid media reports local people became suspicious of Kajal and his agents and asked him to refund their money. Following pressure from the depositors Kajal promised that he would refund their money by May 15.

Meanwhile, about one hundred agents and sub agents flee the area.

Local people suspected that Kajal went into hiding.

Local people caught Ratna, a female agent of Kajal, recently from the area.

Serajul Haque Siru Mia, Chairman Kotchandpur municipality, said that a committee was formed to recover the money and hand over to actual depositors.

Ratna was under their safe custody, he informed.

2 electrocuted

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, May 5: Two person have been electrocuted in Durmoth areas of Islampur thana on Thursday morning.

The victims, Shohanur Rahman, 18, and Abdul Miah, 35, met death as they were standing on the roof of a Bahadurabad-Jamalpur bound local train when it was passing under the electric wires at 11:30 am on Thursday.

Diarrhoea breaks out in Pabna

449 tubewells, 425 tara pumps out of order

PABNA, May 5: A large number of people in the rural areas of the district using canal and pond waters have been affected by diarrhoea and other intestinal diseases, reports UNB.

Health Department and Hospital sources admitted two children died of diarrhoea in Vangura and Faridpur upazilas recently. More than 5,000 people were afflicted by water borne diseases during last three months till March.

The Civil Surgeon's Office denied any death from diarrhoea and said two babies died of intestinal disease.

Officials said government and non-government organisations have installed 1,30,264 tubewells. Of these, 885 tubewells of Public Health & Engineering Department and 5,000 of NGOs went out of order in the

absence of spares.

A recent survey conducted by UNICEF showed that 99 per cent people of the district drink tubewell water round the year except in the dry season when the ground water level goes down.

Fifty per cent of the people are to drink pond and canal waters during March-May as they could not pump out water from tubewells due to the fall of water level.

Executive Director of PHED told the news agency that water level fell sharply this year due to inadequate rainfall, the low flow of water in the Ganges.

He said water level fell by 7-11 metres last year but it dropped by 10-16 metres this year making 80 per cent of the hand operated tubewells went inoperative and the remaining 20 per cent could pump out only

25 per cent of capacity.

Official sources said about 449 tubewells and 425 tara pumps out of 14,518 tubewells and 8,479 tara pumps of PHED remained inoperative since long and could not be repaired due to financial constraints.

A PHED officials said paucity of drinking water is likely to take a serious turn if there is no adequate rains during the current month. The problem can be minimised by installing tara pumps. Installation of 100 such pumps is in progress.

Another report from Bardanban says: Will Mary, one of the species of anopheles mosquitoes, is spreading malaria in the hilly country-side.

This was detected by a survey team of Health Department who

worked to identify the mosquitoes that contribute to the outbreak of malaria.

There are 34 anopheles species of mosquitoes of which seven are the carriers of malaria germ.

The Health Department conducted the survey in the district in an attempt to check the outbreak of the disease.

BSS from Shariatpur says: Viral fever has broken out in an epidemic form in six thanas of the district, affecting thousands of people.

Hospital sources said about 255 people visit hospital everyday with complaints of headache and muscular pain caused by high fever.

Doctors said this viral fever makes patients very weak and it might turn into typhoid if not treated properly.



Faulty drainage system

Water remains stagnant in different areas of Sylhet town even after a moderate rainfall due to faulty drainage system. Sufferings of the town dwellers multiply as such a situation remains static for long. Photo shows the partial view of the Upashahar main road and Baruthkana point in Sylhet town after a heavy rainfall recently. — Star photo by Iqbal Siddiquee