

## National



Some ill-fated erosion victims of Sonatoli village, 45-km away from Sirajganj Sadar police station. They are living under the open sky. —Star photo



Jamuna erosion takes a serious turn at Shuvagachha village in Kazipur upazila of Sirajganj district. Only 20 houses are left which may go under the riverbed at any time. —Star photo

## Erosion victims not properly rehabilitated

From Akhteruzzaman Bablu

SIRAJGANJ, July 25 : The number of homeless people is rising alarmingly due to continuous river erosion which is going on along the eastern part of the mighty Jamuna from time immemorial.

About five lakh people of 90 thousand families in six upazilas have already been rendered homeless during the last six years. When contacted with the district administration they disclosed they had already constructed a few cluster villages in some areas with the financial support of foreign agency to rehabilitate the victims. But those are too meagre in comparison with the demands. The administration sources think if the government takes up pilot programme to rehabilitate the erosion victims then they will be benefited in true sense.

According to a survey conducted by a non-governmental organisation (NGO), every year particularly from the month of July to November water coming from the upstreams affects the entire area and washes away hundreds of homesteads and crops of fields. There is no end to this erosion.

Sometimes vast tracts of lands are devoured in river bed within a moment. This way poor people are getting poorer. Sometimes their new homesteads are devoured time and again in their life time.

The most affected upazilas are Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur, Belkuchi, Chowdhali, and Shahjadpur. The mighty Jamuna flows close through these upazilas. Standing crops like paddy, jute, wheat and other cash crops on 21,747 hectares of land have already been washed away during the last six years. Besides, 3,725 square kilometres area of land has already been devoured.

At least 20 per cent of these homeless people have migrated to

Dhaka and other unknown destinations. They are now living in distressed conditions as they have become poorest of the poor people. When contacted with the district administration and officials of Water Development Board (WDB) they said that to rehabilitate the affected people several programmes have been taken up.

Embankment, cross dam are being constructed but the mighty Jamuna has been spoiling the endeavours. Under another project seven spurs are being constructed by WDB at three points in Kazipur-52, Sadar-2 at the cost of Taka 41 cores and Taka 67 lakh.

UNB from Patuakhali says: Construction work on the Patuakhali town protection embankment is yet to start causing untold sufferings to the dwellers.

The town area is surrounded by a number of rivers and it goes under 3/4 feet water during the monsoon.

In a step to save the district from recurring floods, cross dams were constructed in Galachipa upazila in 60s while the dams were constructed in Kalapara, Dashedma, Baula and Mirzaganj upazilas in 90s.

But, no dam was constructed in Sadar thana and the municipal

areas. As a result, river waters enter into the area during the rainy season.

Water Development Board submitted a proposal to the higher authorities in 1997 to control the flood.

The authorities, later, sent the project proposal to the ministry showing an estimated cost of Tk 17.27 crore for the project. But the works are yet to start.

An official told that Water Development Board (WDB) has approved the project on May this year but it is waiting for approval of the ministry concerned.

## Law and order worsens alarmingly in 10 districts

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, July 25: Law and order situation in 10 southwestern districts of Khulna division has deteriorated alarmingly though members of law enforcing agencies started combing operation from July 1. Terrorists activities have increased and people of this region have become hostages of the newly reorganised terrorists. Murder, rape, toll collection, abduction, theft, dacoities, acid assault, hijacking and robbery have become day to day affair before the very nose of the law enforcing agencies. Under the patronage of political parties and under the umbrella of the administration terrorists have become very active.

Last year in July 2,629 terrorists surrendered with their 2,077 arms.

A total of 1,667 terrorists were arrested by police and 874 arms were recovered last year. But within a year terrorists activities have increased after their reorganisation. From July 1 a combing operation has started in this region. But on the first day terrorists launched an attack on a police camp at Duttapara of

Shibpur upazila in Madaripur district killing Thandu Miah a police constable and looting 19 arms and 1200 ammunition. Police are yet to recover those. During the last 18 days in July a total of 19 persons were murdered, Isarul, 30, and Naeb Ali, 32, of village Parapur under Mujibnagar upazila of Meherpur district were slaughtered on the first day of July. On the same day Abdul Latif, 70, of village Nania of Sadar upazila in Jessore and Solaiman, 60, of village Paikpara were seriously injured. On July 2, after failing to abduct a young woman of a bordering village in Satkhira her mother Kali Dashi and little son Shaym, 6, of her sister were the victims of acid assault. On the same night a burglary was committed in the food godown of Settlement Office of Debhata thana in Satkhira. On the same day 20 persons were injured in a clash between two rival groups in village Hosenpur of Malzipara union of Sadar upazila in Narail district. On July 3 Shibani Rani was killed by her father-in-law and elder brother of her husband at village

Kharidanga of Tala upazila in Satkhira district. On the same day Alamgir Hossain, 25, of Iqbalnagar of Khulna lost his hands when a bomb blasted while preparing for the same. On July 4 a group of armed terrorists abducted Lahu Saha from Kushtia Sugar Mills colony and after three days he was released by paying taka one lakh as ransom.

On the same day armed terrorists demanded taka one lakh as toll from Abdul Manan Molla, Union Parishad chairman of Fatepur of Jessore district. Member Faruq and Alamgir were also the victims.

On July 5 a group of armed terrorists abducted Abdur Rashid, 45, a businessman of village Sholmar of Sadar upazila in Meherpur district and demanded taka one lakh fifty thousand. He has not yet been released. On the same day Mahmuda, 30, tailor master of Prantic market of Khulna was murdered by her husband. On the same day terrorists inflicted stab injury on Abdul Hakim, 40, and his younger brother Abdur

Rab, 35, member of Bagerhat Press Club.

On July 6 one body of a school student was recovered by police from a shrimp farm in Dighilia thana of Khulna district. On the same night Manzed Ali, 30, a businessman of Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia was killed and his body was recovered from a residential hotel of Nawapara in Jessore district. On the same night one hundred tolas of gold ornaments were stolen from Saleha Jewelers of Jessore.

On July 7, daughter of Hanz Uddin of Umanagar in Khulna Metropolitan area was kidnapped when returning from school. On July 8 Shajahan, 45, a night guard of C & B colony of Khulna city was murdered by dacoits. On the same day Selina a housewife of Jibannagar upazila of Chuadanga district was strangled to death by her husband.

Only July 8 one unidentified youth was beaten to death in Sarsa thana of Jessore. On the same night Moniruzzaman, a van driver of Monirampur of Jessore was killed due to his wife's illicit love with another person. On the

same day a beheaded body of Kader Fakir of Bakhunda area in Faridpur district was recovered. On July 10 Ramjan Ali of Senerhuda village in Chuadanga district slaughtered his father Azizul Haq. On the same day Tazul, 22, son of Khalil of village Bahirdiar of Sadar upazila in Faridpur district was killed by terrorist brutally. On the same night one young woman of village Bandbilla of Bagharpara in Jessore became the victim of mass rape. On the same day armed terrorist hijacked a motor cycle and looted cash from Abdul Khaleque, a brickfield owner and another Shahjahan of Kushtia after injuring them by stabbing and shooting.

On July 11, Mahmud Hossain Shachchu, 34, JSD leader and Chairman of Haripur union was shot at by armed terrorists at his elder brother's house at Thanapara in the town when he was talking with others. He was rushed to Kushtia General Hospital and later flown to Dhaka for better treatment. On the same day Atiqur Rahman and his pregnant wife Anjura of Girishnagar

village in Sadar upazila of Madaripur district were abducted on gun point. Later on terrorists took them to a nearby field and tied Atiqur and raped Anjura one after another and strangled her to death.

On July 13 Ruhul Amin, a student was killed and 20 others were injured when a time bomb was blasted in a religious meeting in Gurbazara area of Faridpur district. On July 14 at 11-15 pm JSD leader Shachchu succumbed the bullet wounds at Bangabandhu Medical College Hospital.

On July 16, armed terrorists shot dead journalist Shamsur Rahman, Special Correspondent of The Daily Janakantha while he was working in his office in Jessore. On the same day Shaikh Abu Naser Raseel, 35, Juba league leader of Rano Bijoypur in Bagerhat district was shot dead and later slaughtered.

All these incidents have created panic among the peace loving people who have lost confidence on the members of law enforcing agencies.

## 80,000 saplings planted along roads in six S-W districts

JESSORE, July 25: Eighty thousand saplings were planted by the side of 80-kilometer long roads of 6 districts of southwest region during the last season, reports BSS.

Jessore Forest Department is implementing this plan.

The Divisional Forest Officer said the plantation programme of this area was being done with the help of plantation programme of this area was being done with the help of union parishads. Municipalities and conscious people.

The six districts are Jessore, Khulna, Satkhira, Jhenidah,

Magura and Narail.

Divisional Forest Officer said one thousand of different saplings were planted per kilometer. Total 80 thousand saplings were planted by the side of the roads.

The tree plantation began in May last and completed on June 30.

The Divisional Forest officer said the trees would be sold when they would become full-size. From the sale proceeds care taker will get 55 per cent, Forest Department will get 10 per cent, various land owners will get 10 per cent union parishads will get

5 per cent and owners of lands beside the tree will get 10 per cent.

UNB from Sherpur adds: The government has taken up a massive programme for the development of horticulture in the district.

Under the programme, Agriculture Extension Department will motivate the people for growing vegetables and fruits on their courtyards and the roofs of their houses applying modern methods of cultivation for their own economic development.

To inspire the people, the

department has produced 1000 high yielding varieties of mango plants grafting the local varieties with famous Indian Amrapali mango.

The department is also crossbreeding new varieties of jackfruit, guava, palm and lemon and plants by grafting them with high yielding ones so that people can produce fruits throughout the year.

Meanwhile, the department has distributed a huge number of saplings of the new varieties.

It has also planted a huge quantity of fruit-bearing saplings

on the roof of local Khamarbari three months ago.

Experts hope that it would be possible to bring huge unused lands under farming if the horticulture programme could be made successful.

Another BSS report from Narsingdi adds: A total of 3,550 hectares of land have been brought under summer vegetable cultivation in the six upazilas of the district this year.

According to AED sources, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) supplied improved quality of seeds

and different commercial banks disbursed necessary loans to the vegetable growers to make the cultivation programme a success.

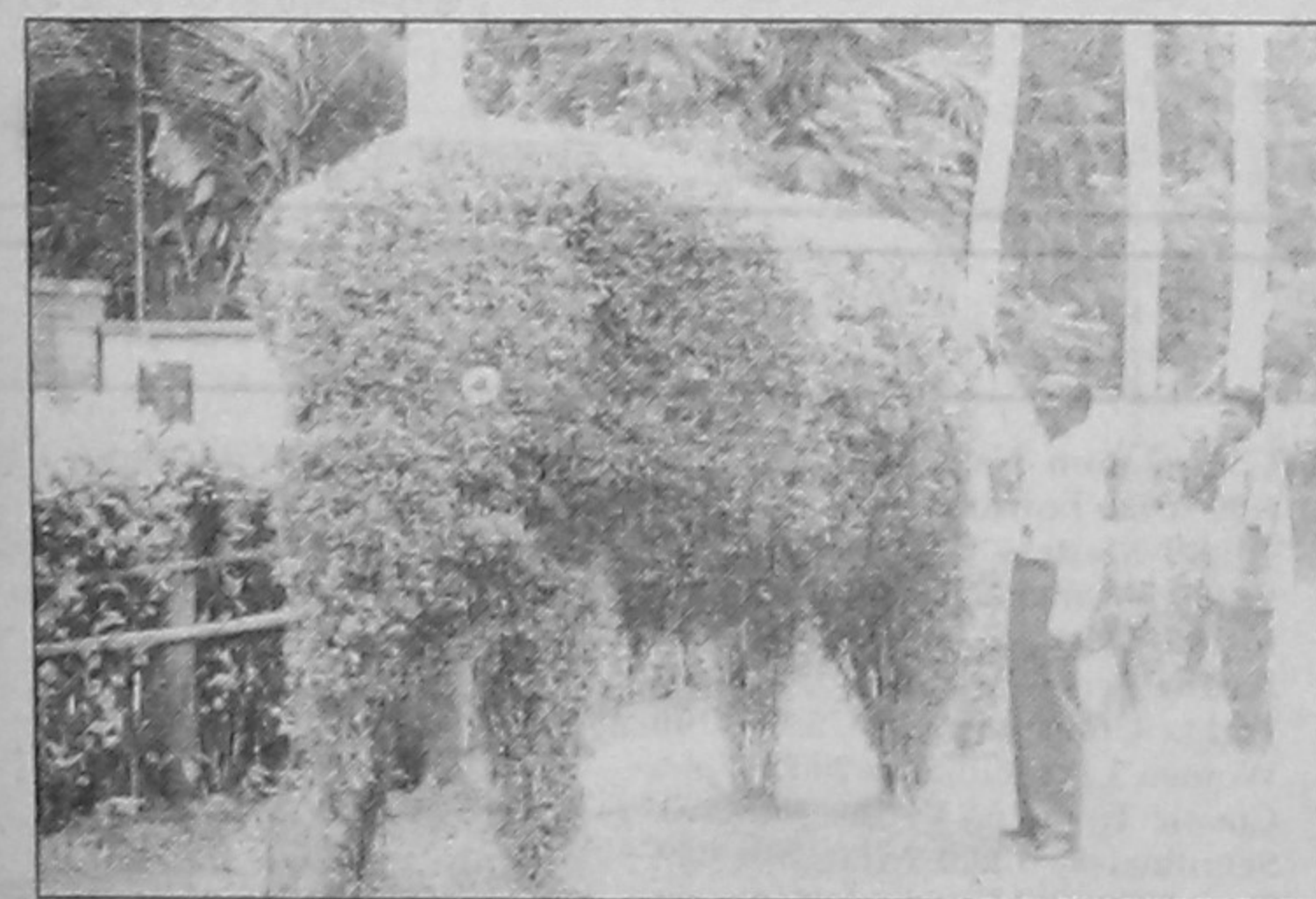
Another UNB report from Bogra adds: Forest Department has undertaken a massive plantation programme in the greater Bogra district for the current season involving Tk 4 lakh.

Saplings will be planted on 54.11-km roadside areas in Bogra and Joypurhat.

Officials said the department also has a plan to plant saplings on 12,000 acres of khas land in the two districts.

## Niribili: A different type of picnic spot

From Delwar Kabir



(From left to right): The leaves of Kamini, a traditional flower were shaped like an elephant (middle) Youths enjoying joy ride (right) Statues of National Poet Nazrul and eminent artist Sultan at Niribili Picnic Spot in Narail.

JHENIDAH, July 25: Niribili Picnic Spot located at village Rampur, 12 kilometres from Narail town has become an attractive tourist spot.

Syed Mafizur Rahman, an engineer of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) is the pioneer of the picnic spot. He said that he constructed the spot after being shocked observing the condition of all other picnic spots in the country.

He said most of the picnic spots

situated elsewhere lack residential, toilet, water and other facilities. He constructed the picnic spot on 13 acres of land in 1991. Rahman, an inhabitant of village Laxmipasha in Lohagara upazila constructed a rest house, a good number of bath rooms and roads for a good communication system. Rent of the rest house is cheaper than any guest house in other district towns.

The guest house here is surrounded by SM Sultan's Art

Gallery. There is also a beautiful shower in front of the guest house. Statues of Tagore, Nazrul and Sultan have been erected in front of the guest house. There is a zoo with Royal Bengal tigers, various species of deer, horses, monkeys, peacocks, tortoises, gnilips and other species of birds or beasts surrounding the picnic spot. The embroidered quilt and 70 feet skeleton of a whale in the mini museum attract most visitors. Stalls for cottage industry,

books and periodicals, turning car and other items are the main attraction for children.

Rahman further said that efforts are underway to make the scenic beauty surrounding the picnic spot much more attractive.

Mango, jack-fruit, lichi, coconut, betel-nut, epi-epil, christmas tree and other trees inside the spot have made the area more beautiful. The guara garden and the flower gardens enhanced the beauty of the place to a great extent.

Expressing gratitude to Qamrul Islam Siddique, former Chief Engineer of LGED and Power Development road (PDB), Rahman said that installation of deep tubewells, construction of link roads from the main road and electricity connection have been completed due to initiatives taken by Siddique.

Rahman thought of establishing the picnic spot in his locality when he participated in the liber-

ation war in 1971.

He informed that most visitors visit this place in the winter season. Even 150 picnic parties rush on the same day which some times put them in trouble. However, his staffers meet their all demands.

Pointing towards the 'hanging bridge' Rahman said, it is not available at any picnic spot in the country. This picnic spot is being developed into a tourist spot of international standard.

## News snaps

### Condemnation

FARIDPUR, July 25: Speakers at a public meeting here on Monday strongly protested and condemned the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by planting a bomb at Kotallipara in Gopalganj, reports BSS.

Faridpur District Awami League organised the meeting at the Janata Bank Square here. Chaired by Imamuddin Ahmed, convenor of District Awami League, the meeting was addressed, among others, by local Awami League leader S M Nurunnabi, municipality chairman and district Sramik League president Hasibul Hassan Lablu, Abdul Hal Miah and Bipul Ghose. The speakers said terrorists backed by anti-liberation elements are trying to destroy democracy by creating anarchy and chaos in the country.

### Forest resources dwindling

KHAGRACHHARI, July 25: Forest resources are dwindling fast as a section of people have been engaged in rampant felling of valuable plants, including bamboo, reports UNB.

If the felling of bamboo goes unabated, it is not far away when there would be no bamboo in the district, concerned sources said. The wood traders have been able to carry out their misdeed owing to covert help and assistance given by a section of dishonest forest officials and employees. Local people said the Forest Department has arrested a group of tribals along with a chunk of 15,000 bamboos from the Dhurung river in Laxdhiar upazila on June 12 when they were smuggling these through the river. However, the local Forest Department admitted that only 3,000 bamboos were seized.

### Man hacked to death

PABNA, July 25: A 40-year old poor bullock cart driver was hacked to death by unknown assailants on Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Abdur Rahman, the victim, of Lohachmarpur village under sadar thana was called out by assailants from his house at about 8 pm. With multiple injuries he was shortly afterward rescued from a nearby field in a bleeding condition and rushed to the General Hospital. Soon he died. Police suspect that activists of underground Purbo Banglar Communist Party killed Rahman because of enmity.

### 6 unnatural deaths in Habiganj

HABIGANJ, July 25: Six unnatural deaths were reported from different parts of Habiganj district during July 10-17, reports UNB.

According to police and witnesses rival villagers killed Ustar Ali, 30, of Banai village in Bahubal upazila over past enmity on July 17. A young man, identified as Joyanal Abedin, 20, of Narapati village in Chunarughat upazila, was killed in a traffic mishap on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Ramganga area on the following day. On July 11, a housewife Sufia Begum, 20, of Muriakul village in Lakhai upazila was allegedly beaten to death by her husband. Helal Mia, 50, of Kumari village in Panachang upazila, was killed allegedly by his cousin over family feud on the same day. Apart from this, a worker of Imam Tea Garden Madhu, 30, died of poisoning in the district on the day. Khelu Mia of Krishnapur village in Madhabpur upazila allegedly committed suicide by taking pesticides on July 10.

### Workshop

MADARIPUR, July 25: A day long workshop for the unemployed youths for creating self-employment opportunities was held here recently, reports BSS.

It was organised by Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) at BSCIC office. Twenty young men and women from different areas took part in the workshop. The workshop was aimed at self-employment generation. Extension Officer of BSCIC, Kazi Mehdi Hasan, coordinated the workshop.

### Cotton farming scheme

CHUADANGA, July 25: A total of 9,000 hectares of land will be brought under cotton cultivation in Chuadanga Zone of Bangladesh Cotton Development Board during the current season, reports BSS.

According to an official source, 11,493 cultivators will take part in this programme. Production target has been fixed at 11,250 tonnes. Cultivation of cotton has just started. It will continue till middle of the next month. Chuadanga Zone consists of all the four upazilas of Chuadanga and Meherpur Sadar upazila of Meherpur district.

### UNICEF sponsored workshop

BANDARBAN, July 25: A daylong workshop on 'Integrated Social Development Project' sponsored by UNICEF and organised by Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board was held in Bandarbhan Circuit House conference room recently, reports BSS.

Press Club president Prof Osman Gani presided over the workshop. Project Director Sahajan Ali and Chittagong Hill Tracts regional correspondent of the Sangbad were present as chief guest and special guest respectively at the workshop. Journalist Enamul Haq Kashmi AKM Jahangir and Buddajoti Chakma also addressed the workshop. Speakers of the workshop advised to develop the Para Centre. Earlier, they visited Para Centres of Talukdar Para of Buangchhari and Raicha area of Bandarbhan Sadar upazila.

### Financial hardship of farmers

NARSINGDI, July 25: Cultivation is being hampered seriously due to financial hardships of farmers and dearth of agri-inputs, reports UNB.

Local farmers alleged that they are forced to sell their products at nominal prices to repay loans to moneylenders and banks and to purchase agri-inputs. In the current season, marginal farmers were compelled to sell their Boro crops in advance to the moneylenders between Tk 150 and Tk 200 per maund to purchase necessary agri-inputs. Some of the farmers sold their bullocks at throwaway prices to purchase the inputs. Taking advantage of their pecuniary condition, unscrupulous moneylenders are doing brisk business by giving loan at a high rate of interest. Due to continuous exploitation of moneylenders, many marginal farmers have already been rendered pauper, locals said.

### Fugitive arrested

PATUAKHALI, July 25: A convicted fugitive was arrested from a toll house at Charbare in Boupul upazila on Thursday, reports UNB.

Police said Bazu Sardar has been involved in looting paddy from 17 shoals in Bohola district for long. Of the four cases against him he was convicted in one case by the court. He had been hiding since long.

### Imprisonment

COMILLA, July 25: A court here has sentenced a man to three years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal drugs and other contraband items, reports UNB.

The court also fined him Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer three months more RI. According to the prosecution, Kotwali police raided the house of convict Masum Mia, son of Abdul Zabbar, in town's Sujanager area on January 28, 1996 and recovered wine, phensidyl and Indian sares from his possession. After examining witnesses and records Additional Sessions Judge and Judge of the Special Court-3, Monir Ahmed Patwari, awarded the punishment last week.

### Freedom fighter dead

PIROJIPUR, July 25: M Mojibur Rahman, Muktioddha (freedom fighter) Commander of Swarnpukthi Upazila, died of heart attack yesterday at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital at the age of 48, reports BSS.

The namaj-e-janaza was held on the Akom Muslim High School premises at his native village on Monday morning. He was buried at his family graveyard. The coffin of the late Mojibur Rahman was draped with national flag. A contingent of police gave a guard of honour during his burial. Magistrate M Rafiqul Islam, District Muktioddha Commander Zamanul Haque, Deputy Commander Goutom Chowdhury and elite of the town were present at that time.

### Girl drowns

PATUAKHALI, July 25: A little girl drowned in a canal in Kalikapur area in the town Wednesday, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Rahima, 4, daughter of Yakub Sharif. Family sources said Rahima went to pick up fruits near the canal in the morning and fell into it. Later, the body of the girl was recovered from the canal.

### Prison term for 4 dacoits

KISHOREGANJ, July 25: Four persons were convicted recently by the first sub-judge, Kishoreganj who sentenced them to suffer 10 years' rigorous imprisonment each on charge of dacoity, reports BSS.

The judge, S M Halal Uddin also ordered fine of Taka 2,000 each in default to suffer six months' RI. The convicted are Siddique Miah, Mustafa, Saifuddin and Golap.