

## National

# Criminals have taken refuge in Sundarbans

BAGERHAT, Nov 6: As a countrywide massive combing operation has been going on since October 22, a good number of notorious criminals in southern regions have taken shelter in the Sundarbans, reports UNB.

The listed criminals under an arrangement made by about 20 gang leaders have taken shelter in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, as it has turned out to be a safe haven for them.

Though police arrested a number of criminals during their combing operation in last few days, they could not yet put any listed terrorists behind the bars.

Police sources said they had prepared a list of 116 diehard criminals and 24 of them were arrested before launching the combing operation.

But locals said the number of hardcore criminals would be much higher than the list prepared by the police.

An inhabitant of Sonatala village in Swarankhola upazila, adjoining to the Sundarbans, said the movement of unknown youths has increased in the Sundarbans after the start of the combing operation.

He said the criminals were entering the Sundarbans through Chandpal Range, Dublar Char and Hironpoint by trawlers.

The villagers who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the criminals threatened many locals when they wanted to know about their identities.

Meanwhile, police, in their special drive, arrested 3,121 people on various charges from different parts of Comilla district during the last month.

Police said of them, 2,169 people were warrantee and the rest 952 were held on other charges.

Police seized two revolvers, two LG, four guns, one pipe gun, three other firearms, 3,024 crackers and 35 rounds of bullet during the drive.

Besides, police seized smuggled goods with about Tk 51 lakh from different parts of the district.

The seized contrabands included 338 bottles of Indian phenisidyl, 279 bottles of liquor, 1.65 kg of hemp, 10,900 kg of Indian sugar, two grams of heroin and clothes.

Separate cases were filed.

Police during their combing operation from Oct 22 and 29 arrested

136 people from different parts of Feni district.

Of them, 103 were wanted criminals, nine accused in regular cases, one absconding convict, four listed terrorists and 19 were held under Section 54.

During the drive, police seized one pipe gun, 23 cocktails and a wireless set. Some 300 police, including 100 from Chittagong, took part in the operation.

However, opposition BNP accused the police administration of harassing its leaders and workers in the name of combing operation.

District BNP President Mosharrif Hossain MP alleged that police were raiding the houses of BNP leaders and workers one after another while the ruling party armed cadres who are wanted in a number of murder and other criminal cases were moving around freely.

Playing down the allegations, Police Super Monwar Hossain said their operations were being conducted impartially and it would continue until the arrest of the last terrorist.

Police could not yet arrest any listed criminals from Naogaon district although they detained 422 people during their combing operation dubbed as "operation tiger."

Although police claimed that most of the arrested were absconding accused, locals alleged that they are putting some innocent people behind the bars in the name of combing operation.

When contacted senior police officials said they would intensify the operation to arrest the diehard criminals.

A police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they could not yet arrest some of the infamous terrorists as they were enjoying the blessings of a section of political leaders.

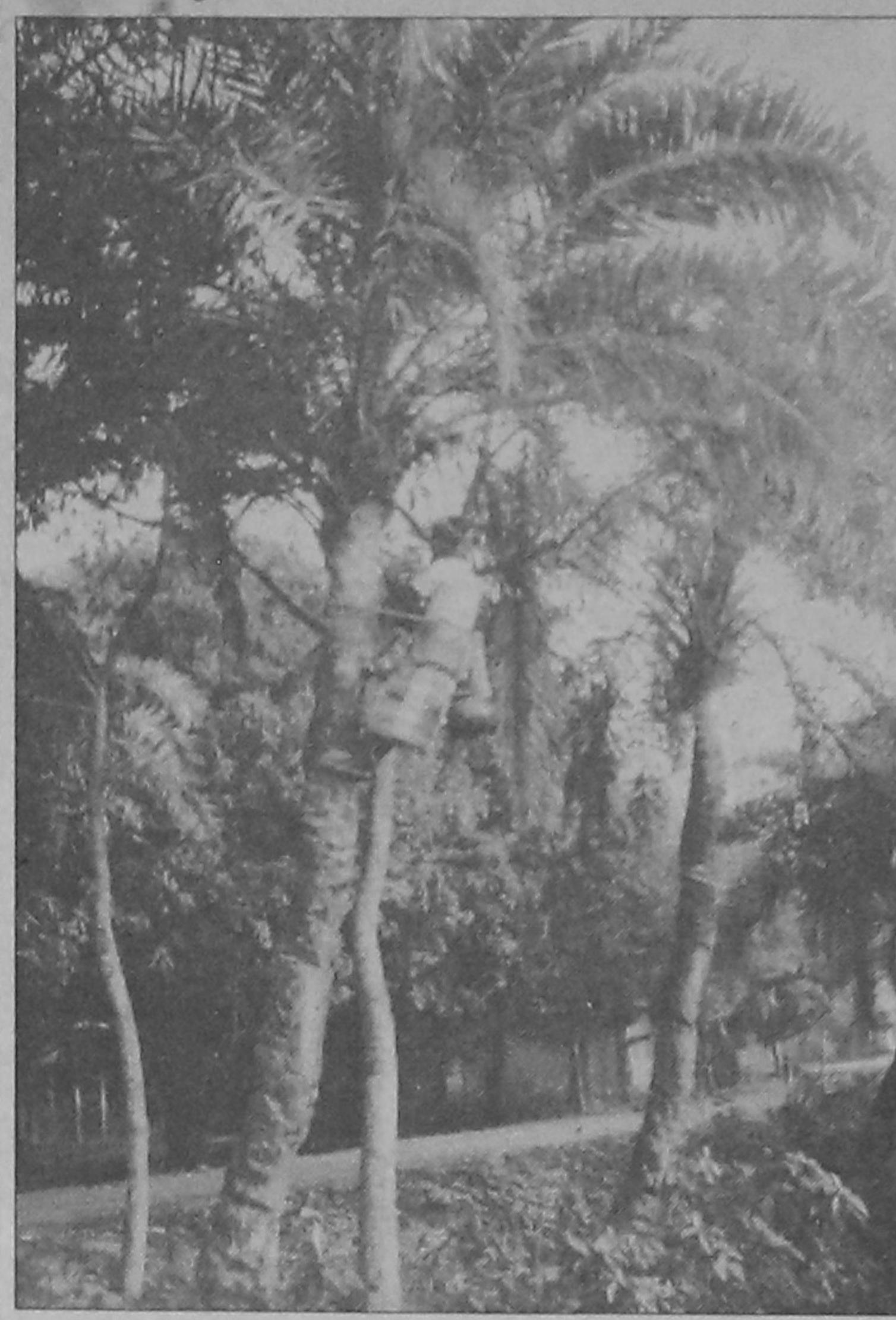
Police arrested 274 people in last 12 days in their month-long combing operation launched since October 15 in Chandpur district.

Of the total arrested, 264 were absconding accused and 10 were convicted accused.

Police said the arrested were wanted in connection with a number of criminal cases including killing, robbery, terrorism, women and children repression, rape, acid throwing, hijacking, theft and drug selling.

Police started the combing operation in the face of rising criminal activities.

## Early winter in N dists



Northern districts of Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and Kurigram have been experiencing early winter with cooler nights and foggy dawn. Winter vegetables have also begun to reach the markets earlier as they grew early with cold wind and fog. Generally winter sets in on these districts every year ahead of other areas in Bangladesh because of their proximity to the Himalayas. This year, it has come unusually too early. This year's winter may be more severe than the previous years, say meteorologists. Date juice is the main attraction of winter. People are busy now cleaning and cutting date trees everywhere. In the meantime date molasses have begun to arrive, though in small scale, in some markets in Rajshahi where it is being sold at Tk 20-25 per kilogram. Photo shows preparations on for date juice extraction at Bagha in Rajshahi area. This photograph was taken last week.

—Star photo

## Fund shortage in Rajshahi medical campus school

From Abdul Wadood

RAJSHAHI, Nov 6: Rajshahi Medical Campus High School is

plagued with manifold problems.

Authorities could not be drawn even after repeated attempts for resolving the problems, school sources said. Standard of education of the school cannot be improved due to the prevailing problems, they said.

There is a government primary school in the campus almost from the very beginning. Children of teachers, officials and doctors of Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) and Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) read in this school.

After passing class five the children have to go to high schools situated at different places in the city. As admission into good schools is difficult, the RMC and RMCH authorities took an initiative to establish a standard high school in their own campus. Thus Rajshahi Medical Campus High School was opened in 1991 in an abandoned building of the Health Department in the campus.

The teachers worked there for about seven years without any remunerations till 1998 when the school was included in the list of Monthly Payment Order (MPO) of the Ministry of Education.

The number of students stood at about 300 in the school but facilities have not increased proportionately.

A small building with five

rooms has so far been built which cannot accommodate even the students and teachers. Students of Arts and Science groups of class nine and ten are to take their lessons in the two corners of the same room at the same time due to shortage of class rooms.

There is no laboratory in the school. Scientific instruments, apparatuses and reagents are kept in almirah. Many instruments and apparatuses are going to be inoperative due to lack of proper maintenance.

There are some books but these cannot be used or displayed due to lack of a library room and shelf. There is no facility for sports and games in the school.

These problems cannot be resolved due to shortage of funds, school sources said.

Shariful Islam, headmaster of the school informed that the Facilities Department of the Ministry of Education had surveyed the school several times on their request, but did nothing in this connection.

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