

NEWS SNAPS

Five sued for killing businessman

UNB, *Laxmipur*

Five people have been sued for Saturday's killing of a businessman at Khilbaicha Bhuiyarth village at Sadar upazila in Laxmipur.

The wife of the victim, Khurshida Begum, filed the murder case Saturday night against BNP activists Tuhin, Ismail Hossain Ratan, Shibul, Shawkat Manik and Abu. However, police could not arrest anyone. Trader Abdul Mannan, also a BNP supporter, was killed by unknown miscreants at Bhuiyarth bazaar on Saturday.

Bomb hurled on housewife in Barisal

UNB, *Barisal*

A middle aged housewife was injured critically as miscreants hurled a bomb on her at Adhuna village at Gouranadi upazila in Barisal on Saturday.

Family sources said the miscreants threw the bomb on Shikha Rani Datta, 40, wife Shankar Datta, while she was working at the veranda of her house. The bomb blew up the wrist of her right hand. She was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Health Day observed in Khulna

UNB, *Khulna*

World Health Day was observed in Khulna on Sunday in a befitting manner.

Acting Civil Surgeon Dr Daud Ali Meer inaugurated the day's programme at Shaheed Hades Park in the morning. A colourful rally was brought out from the park. It ended at School Health Clinic after parading the main thoroughfares. The employees and activists of different government, non-government and voluntary organisations took part in the rally. Later, a discussion meeting was held at the School Health Clinic premises. High officials of the departments of health and family planning took part in the discussion.

Workshop on standard of education

UNB, *Madaripur*

A daylong workshop on Improvement of Standard of Education was held at Alhaj Aminuddin High School premises in Sadar upazila in Madaripur recently.

A total of 705 male and female teachers from secondary schools and madrasahs took part in the workshop, organised by Secondary Education Department. Deputy Commissioner M Shafiqul Islam inaugurated the workshop on March 31. It was chaired by district education officer MAtahar Rahman.

Young man with explosives arrested

UNB, *Chapainawabganj*

Police arrested a young man along with two kgs of explosive materials from Dhaka Bus Stand in Chapainawabganj town Tuesday night.

A team of Detective Branch Police challenged two youths moving suspiciously in the area and recovered the explosives from one of them identified as Samaul. Police arrested Samaul, but his accomplice, Murad, managed to escape. A case was filed with sadar thana.

Work on college buildings going on

UNB, *Chapainawabganj*

Academic buildings of six educational institutions are being constructed in Chapainawabganj at a cost of Tk 1.42 crore.

Facilities Department of Education Ministry is implementing the project with the financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The buildings are being constructed for a college, a madrasa and four high schools. The work is expected to be completed by June next, official sources said.

Indiscriminate catching of fries on

BSS, *Bheramara*

Fries of different species of fishes are being caught indiscriminately by the unscrupulous fishermen and villagers with current nets defying the government ban on catching small and under size fish and fries.

As a result, the prospect of fish breeding in this areas is being hampered drastically. Current nets are being used indiscriminately in different beels (water bodies) and rivers in Bheramara upazila and its adjacent areas. Under-seize fishes are also being sold openly in different markets. No steps have yet been taken by the authorities concerned, local people alleged.

Alleged rapist arrested in Sirajganj

UNB, *Sirajganj*

Police arrested a youth from Kadampal village in Sadar upazila Thursday night in connection with an alleged raping of a girl.

Police said Abdul Halim, 24, of Barobagh village in Roynanjan upazila, allegedly raped his next-door-neighbour January 23. Locals caught Halim red-handed but he was snatched away by his associates. Later, he went into hiding. Earlier, the victim filed a case with the police in this regard on the following day.

Pediaticians needed to treat children

UNB, *Chuadanga*

Treatment of the child patients is seriously being hampered due to absence of pediaticians in Chuadanga.

Hospital sources said a sizable number of child-patients visit sadar hospital everyday with complications of pneumonia, septicemia and meningitis. At present 21 child patients have been undergoing treatment in the hospital. Of them, conditions of 20 are said to be critical. But there is no child specialist in the hospital. Common MBBS doctors are treating the patients. Two children Rabbi and Shariful died of complication of their diseases on April 3.

Two injured by fire in Jhalakathi

UNB, *Jhalakathi*

Two people were injured when a fire broke out at a restaurant at Jhalakathi town's Tinpotti area Friday morning.

Locals said the fire originated from a kerosene stove which soon engulfed the entire restaurant reducing it to ashes. With critical burns restaurant worker Sujjan and van driver Sayeed were admitted to local hospital.

Four alleged rapists of little girl nabbed from Bagmara

ANWAR ALI, *Rajshahi*

Bagmara Police initially tried to conceal the rape incident of a seven-year-old girl at Konda village in Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi.

One week after the brutal incident police arrested all the four alleged rapists who were roaming openly in the village. Bagmara Police acted after being directed by the higher authorities.

The investigating authorities refrained from taking any action until the matter drew attention of the local journalists.

Rajab Ali, father of the victim girl delayed to file the case with the concerned police station apprehending harassment and further attacks.

He, however, lodged the case on March 31 accusing four culprits.

But police refrained from arresting the accused persons because of their political identity, it was alleged.

They first arrested the principal accused, Ashrafal Alam on Thursday when they perceived that the incident would draw the attention of local

journalists. By Friday night, Bagmara police managed to nab all the four accused.

On March 21, four cadres of the ruling BNP's front organisation Jubo Dal entered into the house of Rajab

by breaking open the door and raped the seven-year-old girl in front of her brother. They also cut a portion of her sexual organ with a sharp weapon.

The victim, a student of class three at BRAC School in Bagmara and daughter of an Awami League (AL) worker Rajob Ali is undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

The incident was brought to public when the girl was admitted to RMCH on April 5 following deterioration of her physical condition.

While talking to this correspondent a number of villagers claimed that the incident occurred as a sequel to political rivalry.

Since last October election, at least 40 'identified' families belonging to AL at Konda village have been facing harassment of various nature, said a villager preferring anonymity.

Ali, father of the girl alleged before the journalists that associates of the accused were now threatening him to withdraw the case and to leave the village. So, they were feeling insecure at the hospital.

On April 4, some of the BNP workers chased Ali and his nephew Feroz out of the village. Police on Saturday set up a temporary camp before the house of Ali to ensure security of their life.

Sweden signs accord with Samata

Swedish SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) has decided to support Samata and a project called " Empowerment through resource mobilisation-Land and Agrarian Network for Development (LAND) in the greater Faridpur area, says a press release of the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh.

This pilot phase will receive support for activities undertaken during 2002.

The objective of the Tk 8.4-million pilot project is to establish, in the greater Faridpur area (starting from Rajbari district), an effective network of local Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) which will be able to address the needs and rights of the landless poor. The network will replicate three of Samata programme components: Land rights, gender and democratisation.

Samata has implemented similar activities for several years in other districts. The Land-GF is relatively newly established, but builds on positive experience gained in northern Bangladesh. There is a lot of potential in developing networks of this kind in order to replicate and reinforce the work of organisations such as Samata. The activities respond very much to the needs of the landless poor people and to the core poor strata of Bangladesh and are of a high relevance in Bangladesh.

The poverty focus on land rights, gender, democratic values. Human rights falls well under what is defined as a vital area of development assistance as outlined in the Swedish Country Strategy for Bangladesh.

Three alleged rapists held in Rajshahi

BSS, *Rajshahi*

Three alleged rapists were arrested at village Konda in Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi on Saturday.

The arrested persons were identified as Ashrafal Islam, 26, Abdur Rahim, 30, and Moka, 27.

According to police, one little girl was gang-raped at Konda village by four local miscreants of the same village recently. The girl is now undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

A case was recorded with Bagmara thana.

Betel leaf growers face manifold problems

BSS, *Narail*

Betel leaf growers in three upazilas in Narail have been facing manifold problems.

Dearth of inputs, high rates of carrying costs, crisis of loan and marketing facilities, insufficient rain and natural calamities like drought, cyclone, flood are main causes behind the setback of betel leaf cultivation in Narail Sadar, Lohagora and Kalia upazila. Betel leaves produced in these areas are large in size.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) sources, betel leaf fields in these areas have become less in number

following abnormal price hike of raw materials during the last few years.

Besides, the cost of cultivation materials of betel leaves like straw, bamboo, jute stick, oil cake, pesticides, wire and labour charges have gone up in recent years.

About 40 maunds of oil cakes are required for one bigha of cultivable land for betel leaf. Bamboo frame used for plantation of betel leaf are required to be changed frequently, but it is impossible for the farmers because of high cost of bamboo which sells at Tk 100 to Tk 120 per pieces.

Most of the betel leaves produced in these areas are exported to various Asian, Arabian and Middle

Eastern countries.

Meanwhile, due to drastic fall in demand of betel leaf in domestic markets and lack of district export facilities many of the growers have given up their traditional profession.

On the other hand, the conditions of betel leaf farmers are very miserable. They could not cope with the production and the selling price of these. At present, about 20 families of these areas have been facing miseries.

When contacted, some betel leaf growers told that the prices of inputs such as straw, bamboo, fixture, coir, oil cake, fertilisers and jute sticks have increased abnormally.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers and students of Rajshahi University protest the atrocities of Israeli army in Palestine by bringing out a silent procession on Sunday at the campus.

Baniakandor incident of rape, murder

Body of minor victim recovered

Delwar Kabir, *Jhenidah*

Body of four-year-three-month old girl who was raped and killed at village Baniakandor in Jhenidah Sadar upazila was recovered from a safety tank near the house of the victim.

Sathi, the only child of Wazed Ali and Hazera Khatun was allegedly taken inside the latrine of Dukhu Mandal on March 7 by Abdul Latif alias Khokon, 23, a day labourer also a neighbour of Wazed who raped her repeatedly. At one stage Khokon left the body in the safety tank covering it with a gunny bag.

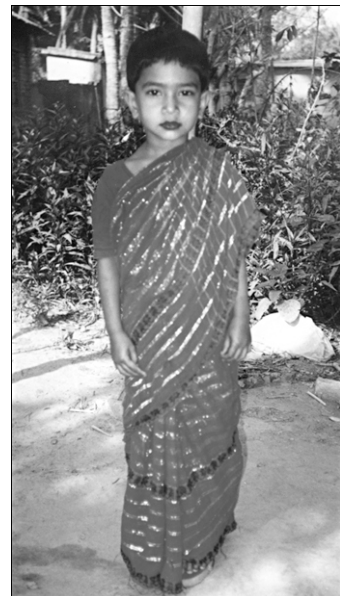
In the meantime, to divert the rape and killing incident Khokon sent a letter to Sathi's father to rush near the National Memorial Monument at Savar in Dhaka. But the handwriting of the letter proved that Khokon was the main culprit. On March 23 Sathi's father lodged a case against Khokon and police nabbed him.

On the basis of Khokon's confessional statement to police in presence of a magistrate police exhumed the skeleton of Sathi after 27 days of her killing. In his statement to police and magistrate the killer narrated how he killed her.

Sathi's mother Hazera Khatun informed that they used to provide food to Khokon and his wife because of Khokon's poverty. She

questioned how Khokon could do such brutal act? She also disclosed that they took the help of Khokon in searching the body of Sathi, because they thought that Khokon was a reliable person.

Hazera demanded exemplary punishment to the killer and rapist of her baby.



Sathi.