

SNAPS

Dacoit lynched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

People lynched an alleged dacoit at Mathurapur village in Daulatpur upazila on Friday.

Two villagers were injured with bullet fired by the gang. Police said an armed gang stormed into the house of one Mahabul Hossain to commit robbery at about midnight.

As the inmates screamed for help, villagers rushed to the spot and encircled the house. The villagers caught one of the dacoits-- Robiul, son of Afel Uddin of Baguan village-- and lynched him.

Others escaped firing shots. The injured villagers--Mahajil and Anwarul--have been admitted to Kushtia General Hospital.

2 hurt as bomb goes off in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two construction workers were injured, one of them critically, as an abandoned bomb went off at an under-construction building in the housing area in Kushtia town.

The bomb exploded when workers were removing sand piled up in a room. Police rushed to the spot but failed to unearth any clue in the incident.

The injured workers--Hamidul, 36 and Khokon, 22-- were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital. Condition of Hamidul is critical, doctors said.

Arms flowing in almost freely

Five bordering villages in Sherpur safe haven for arms smugglers

JAHANGIR ALAM back from Sherpur

Netrakona: Firearms are being smuggled into the country almost freely through bordering areas in Jhinaigati upazila in Sherpur district.

Five bordering villages in the area are now safe havens for criminals engaged in arms smuggling. The villages are Bakakura, Chuta Gajni, Tilapara, Dudhnai and Namapara.

Any one protesting their crimes is abducted.

The area is only about 30 kilometres from the district headquarter and close to the Gojni picnic spot.

But the police and the administration are seemingly unconcerned.

The terrorists use local youths as carriers to smuggle arms. A youth gets Tk 500 to 600 per night for carrying illegal arms.

In recent days, crimes including abduction increased in the five bordering villages. Terrorists abducted 14 people from those villages so far this year, local people told this correspondent during a probe.

The abducted people are Dina Chambugong, 26, of Bakakura village; Rupon Kubi, 23, Probat Kubi, Profulla Kubi and Michael Daro of Chuta Gojni village; Nipin Dapo, 27, Walem Sangma and Amores of Khilapara village; Frijina Kubi and her college

student daughter Protima Kubi, Majom Ali, 30 and schoolteacher Dilip Mrong, 34, of Dudhnai village; and Captain Mankin, 26 and Shudhir Mankin of Namapara village.

Terrorists later freed Majom Ali, Dilip Mrong, Captain Mankin, Frijina Kubi and Protima Kubi but nine others are till missing.

Local people apprehended that they have been killed by terrorists.

Male members of at least 50 families are fleeing homes in bordering area of Jinaigathi upazila out of fear of abduction.

Some local people seeking anonymity told his correspondent that on August 12 they informed the Sherpur Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent of the incidents in writing, but no action has been taken.

Interestingly, the terrorists first started their work in 1995 in the guise of an NGO-- Adibashi Kallyan Kendra.

It was welcomed by the local people as most of them are indigenous and very poor.

The NGO had started its work from the house of Rangaburi in Namapara village. Their number was 25 to 30. Now they are about 500, operating in the area, local people said.

They said every one in the area knows that arms are sold almost

openly.

The arms are sent to different areas of the country through Panakucha, Balijuri and Kamajura routes, they said.

When contacted, Sherpur SP Nibash Chndra Maji only said he has arranged regular police petrol in the area. He declined to say anything more.

When contacted, Subedar Abdul Haque at Nokshi BDR camp said, "Don't ask me about this".

On the other hand, an old Garo tribesman alleged that terrorism and arms smuggling is continuing in the area due to lax patrolling by BDR and police.

It was gathered that the gangs are led by one Ranju Chowdhury, aged about 40. He uses a microbus (No-Sherpur Ba-14-0123) and a motorcycle (No Mymensingh Ha-13-3142).

The local people said all the terrorists are tribesmen.

Ranju was arrested along with four others about one and a half years back but he got bail from court.

It is also very risky for newsmen to visit the area. Terrorists have a 'shoot at sight' order from their gang leader if any newsmen is seen in the area, sources said.



Horrific

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Villagers heard her screams while being gangraped and then strangled, but none dared to rescue her as the armed criminals were outlaws and had links with the ruling party.

The incident took place at Radhanagar village in the Sadar upazila, 30 kilometres off the district town.

The villagers even declined to be named while talking to a group of newsmen on Friday. Rozina Khatun, 16, a student of class ten, was the daughter of poor farmer Nasir Uddin, 37.

On her way to school, Joardar, son of Khilaphat Ali of the same village, used to tease her. Joardar was a member of an outlawed party and had links with the ruling party.

Some days back, he proposed to Nasir Uddin to marry Rozina. But he declined as she did not agree. On Wednesday night, Joardar and five of his accomplices, all armed, kidnapped Rozina from her house, keeping family members hostage. They took her to a nearby field, gangraped and strangled her.

Her loud screams were heard from a distance but none of the villagers dared to resist the criminals as all had firearms, the villagers said.

Nasir Uddin said they did not dare to face the criminals led by Joardar as they are very influential and carry arms.

Police recovered the body on the following day. A case has been filed with the Islamic University (IU) police but none was arrested to yesterday.

SYLHET BNP CONVENING BODY FORMED Saifur followers in backstage, polarisation likely again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

The recent change has shaken ruling BNP's leadership in Sylhet, putting Saifur followers in the backstage. A number of "silent activists" have come in the forefront, with a young lawmaker in the steering wheel of the new district body.

People who played a good job for the party in the past have again came up in the newly formed convening committees and many of those who were in the district and city units in the last few years have been dropped.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary Tarique Rahman on September 10 announced the convening committees for three months. Party councils at different levels in the district will be held on December 10.

He was entrusted with the task of looking after organisational matters of the party in Sylhet division on 22 December last year.

Some of the leaders, who had been in the committees for the last ten years with blessings of party stalwart and Finance Minister Saifur Rahman have been dropped while a number of party leaders got positions after a long interval "only because they were in the good book of Tarique Rahman", party sources said.

The now dissolved Sylhet district BNP committee was formed in 1992 when elections were held for posts of president, general secretary and organising secretary.

Although, in the last decade, several attempts were taken to reform the district leadership, it did not happen.

After the defeat in the first mayoral

election, the party high command realised the necessity for a total overhauling, they said.

The district BNP president, an ardent follower of Saifur, who is also the lawmaker from the Sadar constituency, lost the battle against the city Awami League chief and the then pourashava chairman Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran.

Besides, district BNP General Secretary Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who was also close to the minister, was against the party candidate in the mayoral polls, along with many other senior leaders. This brought about a debacle in the polls.

This put the minister in an awkward situation, the sources said.

Another central leader and Prime Minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury had also no direct involvement with the party activities in the region.

Tarique visited Sylhet last month and held several meetings with leaders and activists.

M Ilyas Ali MP has been made convener of the new 11-member ad-hoc committee of district BNP. Other members include, Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury MP, Dilder Hossain Selim MP, Syed Mokbul Hossain MP, Nurul Haque PP, Advocate Abdul Gaffar, Abul Kafer Shamim, Mokon Miah, Begum Abeda Chowdhury, Ashique Uddin Chowdhury and Abdul Hafiz Shomsu.

Outgoing general secretary of the district committee Ariful Haque Chowdhury has been made convener of the 9-member city unit.

The other members include Nasim Hossain, Noman Mahmud,

Badruzzaman Selim, Humayun Kabir Shahin, Habibur Rahman, Prof Moksud Ali, Hadia Chowdhury and Md. Mohiuddin.

The committees had been asked to complete the councils by December 10.

Many important leaders have been dropped from the committees, which has created commotion among the rank and file, party sources said.

Although a number of leaders and activists could not accept Ilyas as district convener, even then they are "satisfied with the end of Haque era", the sources said.

Same was the situation in the city unit. Though inclusion of Arif was not readily acceptable to most of the party leaders, a change is there.

Sources claimed that the post of convener was supposed to go to outgoing city BNP president Ahea Reza Chowdhury.

But things were changed overnight following the intervention of Saifur Rahman, who pressed for Arif's inclusion.

However, there would be a major polarisation in the party here, keeping in view councils of ward, and upazila, city and district units.

Talking to this correspondent, Ariful Haque Chowdhury said, "We would try to reorganise ward committees where needed and are confident of holding election of the city unit on schedule".



Diarrhoea patients on the floor of Syedpur hospital (left) and health workers blaring warnings and advices for people in rural areas.

Diarrhoea spreads in Nilphamari 3 die, 2500 attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

At least three persons died from diarrhoea and about 2500 people have been attacked with the disease in Syedpur upazila.

In worst affected 15 villages, there is no family without at least one diarrhoea patient, local people said. The villages include Telipara, Hazipara, Pathan Para, Machhuapara, Wapda Natun Para, Suparno Khuli, Balapra, Shaskandor, Khori Botlagari,

Dhukuria Porarhat and Halipara. Nilphamari Civil Surgeon Dr Abdur Rahim however told this correspondent that the situation in Syedpur "is not out of control". He said 1105 people have so far been treated in different government hospitals since the outbreak of the disease about ten days back.

Seven medical teams are working in the affected villages, he said. But local people said medical teams do not have adequate medicines and saline packets.

The civil surgeon admitted that field workers were given oral saline

only so that they could treat patients at primary stage.

But there is shortage of medicines including IV saline, he said. The district health workers and union Parishad members are using microphones to caution and advise people about the disease.

All the hospitals are crowded with patients. At least 80 patients are coming to different hospitals in a day, sources said. Twenty-five patients were admitted to Syedpur 50 Bed Hospital in last 24 hours.

Anti-drug meet held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

An anti-drug meeting organised by 'Brahmanbaria Dhumpam O Maddak Brudhi Sangatha' (an organisation to campaign against smoking and drug) was held in the town on Friday.

The meeting was presided over by Osman Goni while B'baria Police Superintendent ATM Tarek was the chief guest and Additional SP Md Jahangir Hossain was the special guest.

The meeting was also addressed by, among other, ASP (Sadar Circle) Kamruzzaman, Sadar thana OC Md Ismail, anti-drug committee president Md Tanvir Bhayan, Brahmanbaria Government College Principal Md Mujibur Rahman, freedom fighters Md Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Abu Huraira, Md Nazrul Islam, Muhammad Ali, Maynuddin Khaza, Md Hanif, Minhajul Islam, Md Tajul Islam Babu, Prof Md Musharrar Hossain, Md Nurazzaman Laskar Babu, Muhammad Shah Alam, Md Sujan Miah, Md Khukan Ahmed, Md Abdul Basir, Abdullah Al Mamun, Ashrafur Hoque Tuhin, Sabbir Hussain Mamun and Journalist Reaz Uddin Jami.

The meeting decided hat police,

in cooperation with people will launch a special drive against drug peddlers in the town.

SP ATM Tarek told the meeting that there would be no compromise with drug peddlers. They will be identified and arrested soon.

Meanwhile, three alleged drug peddlers were arrested yesterday, police said.

BAU Proctor resigns Threat by Chhatra Dal alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh,

Proctor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) Prof Dr Md. Ismael Hossain resigned on Thursday.

The Proctor submitted his resignation letter to Vice-chancellor showing health ground but sources said he did this resign following alleged threat from a section of Chhatra Dal activists over an appointment at BAU.

The Proctor could not be contacted for comments.

Promote indigenous vehicles

Nasimon and Karimon are favourite to rural people but opposed by police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The unconventional motorised three-wheelers are regarded by farmers and the poor as 'saviors' but opposed by registered transport owners and law enforcers.

'Nasimon' and 'Karimon', as they are locally called, are very popular among the vast majority of rural people because of cheap fare and availability at their doorsteps.

Developed by innovative youths using simple technology, these have been playing a vital role in building rural economy by setting up good communication networks in the rural areas of greater Jessore and Kushtia.

These carry both passengers and agri-products from remote rural areas to far away markets and towns.

But these cannot move freely on roads and highways because of illegal toll collection by policemen and obstruction by other transport

owners and workers.

Transport workers also observed strike demanding stoppage of movement of 'Nasimon' and 'Karimon'.

All these are because the three-wheelers have no registration and their drivers have no driving licence.

'Nasimon and Karimon,' built with shallow irrigation machine, three wheels and some indigenous tools, was first introduced in Kushtia some years back.

A Nasimon costs only Tk 25,000 to build, less than one fourth of the cost of a conventional autorickshaw. A Karimon costs lesser.

These vehicles are run with diesel. So the fare rates are lesser than other vehicles run with petrol.

The government should come forward with technical assistance and financial help to develop the present models of Nasimon and 'Karimon' so that they can run without emitting smoke and air pollution, they said.



PHOTO: STAR

A Nasimon with passengers inside and goods on its roof going to a rural market in Jessore sadar upazila.

OIL SPILLAGE Ministry probe body blames oil tanker staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Last month's oil spillage at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port that caused a massive pollution in the Bay was due to "negligence of the Master, Chief Officer and other deck officials" of oil tanker MT Banglar Sourav owned by Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC).

This was detected by a 7-member probe body formed by the Ministry of Shipping.

The committee will submit its reports to the Shipping Secretary soon, said one of its members requesting anonymity.

"Negligence by the officials on board the tanker led to the leakage of crude" he said.

"We also collected reports from Eastern Refinery Ltd. after chemical analysis of the crude mixed water of the oil tanker that contained 38 percent water and 30 percent sludge," he said.

The committee headed by

Director General of Shipping Ahsanul Azim probed the incident for two weeks.

The ministry formed the probe body following a reported "cold war" between Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and BSC over the oil spillage. They gave contradictory reports after separate investigations, other sources said.

CPA Chairman Shahadat Hossain said, "We hope a clear picture will come out in the investigation" but he declined to comment further.

CPA sued the BSC oil tanker for the oil spillage. It also formed a two-member probe body headed by its Assistant Harbour Master, which said a valve leakage due to negligence of Master and other officials of the tanker caused the spillage.

A BSC probe report said 800 litres of crude fell into the sea as a valve leaked "accidentally". There was no massive pollution due to this, it said.

3 women held with 51 gm heroin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Detective Branch police seized 51 grams of heroin from Naumohal area in the district town last night and arrested four alleged drug peddlers, three of them women.

They are Beauty, 30, Jesmin, 22, Halima Khatun, 35 and Liton Miah 23. They hailed from Kanchijuly area of the district town.

The seized heroin is worth about Tk 50,000, police said. A case was lodged with Kotwali police station.

Tk 30 lakh shrimps looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Misceants looted shrimps worth over Tk 30 lakh from three farms at Patkelghata Dakhhin Beel in Tala upazila Thursday night.

Police arrested Mohor Ali of Jugipukuria village and Krim Gazi of Taikupi village in Tala upazila.

The firms are owned by Sheikh Shahiduddin, Obaidus Sultan, Shahkar Sadhu and Biswajit in Tala upazila.

A case was lodged with Tala thana but none was arrested till yesterday.

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