

ABDUCTION, CRIME ON RISE IN KUSHTIA, MEHERPUR

Trader buys freedom, another bombed, robbers kill youth

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A businessman bought freedom by paying ransom in Kushtia on Saturday while another was injured when a gang hurled a bomb on him after failing to abduct him in Meherpur on the previous night.

In another incident, armed robbers shot dead a man and injured two others during a robbery in Meherpur in the early hours of Saturday. Abduction fort ransom and other crimes are on the rise in Kushtia and Meherpur districts.

At least six persons including two students were abducted in Kushtia and five in Meherpur since beginning of month.

In Kushtia, sanitary ware trader Aktaruzzaman of Sawstipur village in the Sadar upazila bought freedom after paying his captors Tk 50,000. Police and family sources said a gang whisked Aktaruzzaman into a microbus when he was returning home at Alampur on Thursday at about 10:pm.

Four hours latter, the gang demanded Tk one lakh ransom on cellphone for his release. After negotiation, his family left Tk 50,000 at a place suggested by the abductors on Saturday. Aktaruzzaman was left at a place in Aruapara area in Kushtia town at about 11:pm on Saturday.

After fling of a case, Sadar police

arrested one Babul Biswas of Swasripur yesterday for interrogation, police said.

In Meherpur, some criminals threw bombs on corn trader Faruk Hossain Malitha, 29, after they failed to abduct him from Karamdi village in Gangni upazila Friday noon. He was returning home from Gangni riding a motorcycle.

According to police, a gang led by Abu Hasan and Khudu Mia intercepted and tried to abduct him. As Faruk cried for help and people gathered, the gang threw two bombs on him and fled away.

Local people took him to the local health complex. He was later shifted to Meherpur General Hospital.

In another incident at Dighirpara in Meherpur town, armed robbers killed Sahin Uddin, 30, and injured two others in the early hours of Saturday. Shahin had gone for rescue when inmates of Osman Ali's house there cried for help when some dacoits attacked them at about 2:am.

Two others -- Osman and Khidir were bullet-hit in the incident. They were admitted to Meherpur General Hospital.

Police rushed to the spot after the incident. They recovered Shahin's body and sent it to Meherpur General Hospital for autopsy.

Human chain protesting erratic power supply

OUR CORESPONDENT, Satkhira

Several hundred people from all walks of life formed a human chain with lighted candles in hand and laid a siege to the Satkhira PDB (Power Development Board) office Saturday night protesting irregular power supply in the town.

Satkhira Catering Service organised the programmes. The human chain was formed from the Pucca Pool intersection to the New Market intersection. Later the demonstrators laid a siege to the PDB office and held a rally on its premises.

With Shahedullah Liton in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, Ariful Islam, MA Selim, Arifuzzaman, Firoz Ahmed, Joy Ahmed and Shah Alam. They said, due to erratic power supply, most of the mills and factories in the district are incurring losses and HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examinees are suffering.

Earlier on Wednesday, Satkhira district Jatiya Party and its student front Chhatra Samaj brought out a procession and held a rally.

Ex-JCD leader arrested with smuggled goods

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Former president of Domar upazila unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) was arrested with smuggled goods at Chilahati border on Saturday.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members arrested Asaduzzaman Chayan, 37, while he along with his three associates were carrying various smuggled Indian goods including beer, gold chain, saree and cosmetics at Uttar Ketki Bari Nayahat border point at midnight.

He was produced before the court on Sunday.

BDR sources said Chayan, son of BNP leader Abdul Jabbar of Domar upazila had been engaged in smuggling for a long time.

However, his three associates managed to escape.

Sharsha OC, 4 cops stand-released

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The officer in-charge (OC) of Sharsha Police Station, Mosharaf Hossain and four other constables of various police stations were stand-released on Friday by the deputy inspector general (DIG) of Khulna range for alleged involvement in corruption and links with criminals.

They are constable Alauddin, cashier of Benapole Port Police Station, Benapole Immigration police constable Abdul Kuddus, constable Nuruzaman, cashier of Sharsha Police Station and constable Delawar Hossain, cashier of Jhakargachha Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

An encroacher dismantling an illegal structure near Daratana bridge on the Bhairab riverbank in Jessore town yesterday.

20 STRUCTURES DISMANTLED ON FIRST DAY

Encroachers back away from Bhairab riverbanks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Eviction of illegal occupants from the Bhairab riverbanks in Jessore town began yesterday morning.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Wazed led the drive.

Police Superintendent SM Hafizur Rahman, all additional deputy commissioners, engineers and officials of the Roads and Highways Department, district BNP President Chaudhury Shahidul Islam Nayan, Workers' Party leader Iqbal Kabir Zahid, NAP leader Enamul Haq, editors of local dailies, commissioners of Jessore municipality and officials of different government departments were present. Till filing of the report at about 4 pm, about 20 illegal occupants

dismantled and removed their structures on their own, sources said.

Bulldozer was not used. About 20 policemen were present there during the drive.

Later talking to the The Daily Star, the DC said the Eviction Committee has identified 119 illegal structures along the banks.

"It is very encouraging that most of the land grabbers are removing their structures on their own", he said.

Forty-three encroachers have submitted written prayers seeking seven days' time to remove their structures, he said.

During the drive, owners of Helal Book Depot and Hasan Book Depot showed High Court orders to give

them two months' time, the DC said.

"We are now evicting illegal occupants from the municipal portion of the riverbanks. These will be decorated with gardens and trees and walkways built along the river".

Ultimately about 35 kilometre riverbank area from Haibatpur to Basundia will be freed from encroachers, he said.

Magistrate Waziur Rahman has been deputed to take necessary steps in this regard, DC added.

Nawapara, a river port on the Bhairab, has already been declared a naval port and handed over to Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority for its development, he mentioned.

KMP stops production for 7 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Production at Kamaphuli Paper Mill (KPM) was interrupted for about seven hours from about 5:30 pm on Saturday following an explosion in the electric turbine.

The giant and oldest paper mill in the country started rumbling again at 12:30 in the night after repair, KPM Co-ordination Officer Harun told The Daily Star yesterday. The explosion caused a blackout in and around the mill, that also drew fire fighters.

"However, no major fault or damage was detected during check", he said. The production loss is being estimated. The incident is being probed, Harun said.

KMP employees and workers held a rally and brought out a procession in the mill compound on Saturday demanding pay rise. They also submitted a memorandum to KPM Managing Director Mir Mozaffar Ali.

NON-PAYMENT OF SALARY

Hunger strike by hospital staff in Dinajpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Forty employees of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital yesterday began a fast unto death to press their two-point demand.

They are abstaining from work since June 2 to realise their out-standing salaries for eleven months and transfer of their services under the revenue budget.

They also observed a seven-hour hunger strike in front of the Civil Surgeon's office on June 11. Their ongoing agitation is hampering normal activities at the hospital, much to the peril of patients. Many of the patients have left the hospital, sources said.

They have formed a committee to realise the demands. Its convener Anwar Hossain told this correspondent that they would continue their agitation till the demands are met.

'Bangla Bhai cadre' held in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday arrested a Bangla Bhai cadre while extorting money from a senior government official here.

Identifying himself as Bangla Bhai's man, Musa, 23, alias Sabui demanded Tk 20, 000 as illegal toll from chief cotton development officer (CCDO) Prodeep Kumar Mondol a few days ago. He told Mondol he would collect the money on Saturday night over code number 550.

When he went to collect the money, police caught him.

Govt misrule, not opposition tarnishes image

Motia says at Gaibandha AL council

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Awami League Presidium member and former minister Motia Chowdhury yesterday said the government, by its misrule, has tarnished the image of the country abroad but is shifting the blame on opposition leaders.

She was addressing as chief guest a council of Gaibandha Awami League, held at the Shawdhinota Prangon in the town after eight years.

Crimes and corruption have increased under the protection of ruling party men and prices are spiraling because of the government's failure, she said.

Academic atmosphere in all the universities have been destroyed because of vandalism by activists of Chhatra Dal, ruling BNP's student front, she alleged.

The alliance government raised elite forces like Kobra, Chitto and RAB to suppress opposition political parties in the name of curbing crimes. But crimes are increasing.

Crimes remained under control during Awami League rule when there was no such elite force, Motia noted.

She claimed that the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is warming up again because of the government's wrong policies. Awami League government had

brought back peace in the hills after 22 years of trouble by signing a peace agreement, he mentioned.

Presided over by local party leader Mohammed Khaled, the opening session was addressed by, among others, AL central organising secretary Abdul Mannan, Advocate Fazley Rabbi and Lutfur Rahman MP.

Obituary

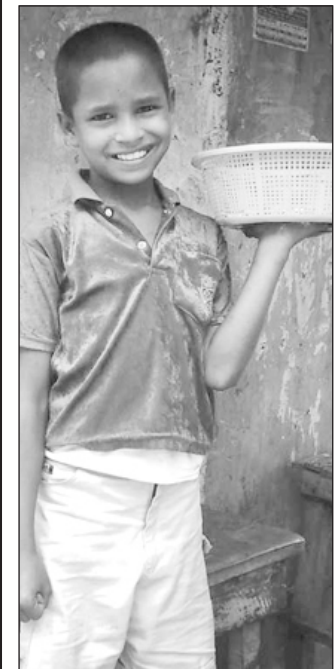
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur



Betar died of asthma and old age ailments at Rangpur Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) at 10:00 am yesterday. He was 73.

His namaj-e-janaza was held at East Guptapara mosque in the afternoon. Afterwards, he was buried at Noorpur graveyard.

Leaders of Rangpur Reporters' Club, Rangpur Press Club and different socio-cultural and political organisations expressed their deep shock at his death.



Buy a chocolate from Akash, keep his hopes alive

EMRAN HOSSAIN EMON, JU Correspondent from Jessore

Minor boy Akash will pronounce Bangla and English language alphabets for you if you only buy a chocolate from him.

Holding a basket in his little arms, a class one student at Jagarani Chakra Foundation, approaches passengers in every bus at Jessore bus terminal to sell chocolates to keep his skin and bone together.

Eleven year-old Akash, came on the streets three years ago to earn a living when his mother fell sick after his father married another woman and deserted them.

Since then Akash tried several

business including peddling various things at the bus terminal. His mother is now sick.

"Taking me to be a street urchin, passers-by and bus passengers did not pay heed to me when I began peddling things of common use. Many of them rebuked me for doing so, suspecting me a truant," said Akash recalling the bitter experience.

Then Akash started memorising Bengali and English alphabets to draw people's attention and to show that he is not like other street urchins or hawkers.

"This yielded results. I can now impress customers to buy chocolate. I work after attending classes

from 9:00am to 10:00am and earn Tk 40-45 a day," said Akash.

Akash says he will soon recite Bengali and English poems he is now learning. "This will be more attractive to customers", he hopes.

He says he likes reading books and hopes to continue studies.

He does not know from which disease his mother is suffering from. "I will treat my mother and set up a grocery shop near my house", he says.

"I want to study and help my mother survive. Just buy some chocolate from me," said Akash while talking to this correspondent.