

# Fresh drive to nab outlaws in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police on Monday night launched a 'special combing operation' in outlaw infested upazilas of Dumuria, Paikgacha, Koira, Rupsha and Batiaghata in Khulna district.

According to Khulna Police Superintendent, the 'special operation' has been launched following information from intelligence agencies that 'extremists' who fled to India have started returning and are trying to regroup to carry out destructive activities.

The police super admitted that underground parties have again become active in several south western districts including Khulna.

But they are failing in their mission to commit crimes due to round the clock vigilance by law enforcing agencies, the SP said.

But till yesterday afternoon, police could not arrest any extremist in their combing operations in launched in five upazilas of Khulna district which are reportedly strongholds of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (M-L), New Biplobi Communist Party, Trinomul Communist Party and Jana-Juddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party.

The Police Superintendent confirmed the information that Sujit Mondol alias Sultan, 38, an armed cadre of outlawed New Biplobi

Communist Party (NBCP), had returned to Dumuria to regroup party cadres. But he had to leave in the face of police operation.

Sujit went back to Barashat in West Bengal, where he was gunned down by unidentified assailants on the night of June 25 in the house of his relative, the SP said.

According to records available to police, seven extremists including Sujit were killed in last two years in different places in West Bengal.

The six others were identified as founder of NBCP Monoronjon Goshai alias Mrinal, Khan Alamgir alias Alam, Barun Pal, Bellal Fakir, Anil Das and Gedu Goshai.

## JCD leader held for extortion in AL leader's name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Vice-president of Khalishpur Mohsin College unit of Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal, Shahed Ahmed, was arrested on Monday when he was went to Dr Mujahidul Islam to realise a toll of Tk 20,000 he had demanded in the name of Khulna city Awami League Secretary Alhaj Mizanur Rahman.

Dr Mujahidul Islam is proprietor of Khalishpur Clinic.

According to police, the JCD leader phoned the physician several times on Sunday for the toll, saying he was talking on behalf of the Awami League leader.

When Dr Mujahidul contacted, AL leader Mizanur Rahman, he denied having demanded the toll and asked the doctor to take police help.

A case was filed against the JCD leader with Dr Mujahidul as the complainant.

Meanwhile, Khulna city and district units of Awami League issued a joint statement yesterday strongly condemning the incident. Ruling party cadres are now out to tarnish the image of Awami League leaders in such notorious ways, the AL leaders said.

The joint statement was signed by district AL President Shaikh Harun-ar-Rashid, secretary Mostafa Rashidi Shuja and city president Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP.

When contacted, Khulna city BNP secretary Nazrul Islam Manju said, "We are not going to take any responsibility at party level for the crime committed by JCD leader Shahed Ahmed. Law will take its own course".



Different organisations form a human chain in Tengratila yesterday demanding trial of the persons responsible for the gasfield blowout.

## Laudable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

People of 10 villages in Purbadhala upazila in Netrakona district have voluntarily built a bridge on Ujjajuri canal as all appeals for this made earlier to public representatives and government officials failed.

The 90 feet wooden bridge erected on 16 RCC pillars was opened by village elders. No public representative was present. Students from schools in the upazila joined the simple the opening function, saying their hurdles in going to school in the wet season has now theremoved.

The bridge cost about Tk two lakh, arranged from donations by villagers. The earth work was also done voluntarily.

Talking to this correspondent, 75 year-old Abdul Wahed of Bilkawli village said the Netrakona-Kishoregonj road was built during the British period. Every year local people used to erect a makeshift bamboo bridge on Ujjajuri, which collapsed after some days. So, during full monsoon, people had to cross the Ujjajuri either on boats or swimming.

Repeated appeals were made to public representatives, but to no effect, he said. So villagers decided to build the bridge voluntarily.

# 10 Khulna shrimp units get 'final warning' from EU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The European Union has given 'final warning' to 10 shrimp processing factories in Khulna against 'any more foul play' in export as complaints of 'underweight and presence of germs and unacceptable things' in packed shrimp were found earlier from European buyers.

Owners of the 10 factories received the warning in the last week of May, sources in Khulna Unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association told this correspondent yesterday.

Existence of antibiotic germ identified as 'Nitrofruran' and 'other objects' were found in packed shrimps, they said. Nitrofruran germ is detrimental to health, they said.

When contacted, Deputy Director of Fish Inspection and Quality Control Directorate Ashraf Ali said EU the warning does not mean suspension of export. These 10 shrimp processing factories should be more careful in buying shrimps from farms and their processing, he said.

When contacted, owners of six of

the processing factories facing the EU warning denied the allegations, saying they take maximum care in exporting processed shrimp and gives top priority to reputation of the country.

Frozen shrimp export from Khulna region fetched Tk 16,00 crore in foreign exchange during 2004-05 financial year, said Kazi Belayet Hossain, vice-president of BFFEA.

Meanwhile, 27 shrimp depots in Kaira upazila in Khulna were sealed by officials of Khulna Fisheries Department on June 18 on ground of violating guidelines for quality control.

Besides, Scientific Officer at the Dhaka head office of Fish Inspection and Quality Control Directorate Mohammad Mokammel Hossain has directed its Deputy Director to take necessary action against four shrimp processing factories in Khulna for not complying with EU guidelines, sources said.

## 11- yr -old faces abduction charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police arrested an eleven-year-old boy in an abduction case and produced him before a court in Satkhira on Monday, seeking 10 days' remand.

After a long hearing, Magistrate Dipankar Kumar Biswas asked Satkhira Civil Surgeon (CS) to form a board for medical test to ascertain the age of Idris Ali. Medical test of the accused was done at Satkhira Hospital yesterday. The victim was sent to jail.

Police arrested Idris's mother Nilima Khatun on June 24. Idris surrendered to Tala thana police for his mother's release. Police arrested him.

# More 107 bags of VGD wheat seized in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

One hundred and seven bags of WFP wheat meant for distribution under Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGD) programme were recovered from a godown owned by a local Awami League leader and his two brothers in Jaldhaka.

A case has been filed against the AL leader's elder brother Zahurul Haque Montu and their business partner Mohsin Ali. But none were arrested till yesterday, police and food officials said. The case was filed under sections 406, 417, 424 and 426, they said.

Lipon, younger brother of the AL leader, was arrested from the spot during the recovery but released within two hours.

Jaldhaka Project Implementation Officer Anwarul Islam told this correspondent that the VGD wheat was meant for distribution among cardholders in Balagram union on 19 June.

The Assistant Field Officer of WFP Rangpur Region Salma Yasmin came to Jaldhaka to monitor the distribution. At one stage she noticed that some rickshaw vans with bags of VGD wheat were coming towards Jaldhaka from Balagram area.

She secretly kept a watchful eye and found that the bags were brought from a godown at Dalia Road in Jaldhaka municipal area. She informed Jaldhaka police who raided the godown and seized 107 bags of VGD wheat and arrested

Lipon, brother of Jaldhaka AL president Ansar Ali Montu.

She then brought the matter to the notice of Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent.

Police recorded a case, filed by Project Implementation Officer Anwarul Islam.

But the local AL president and his younger brother Lipon have been exempted from the case for unknown reasons.

There has been no WFP food distribution under VGD programme in the upazila since the incident, sources said. There are 2,216 VGD cardholders in Jaldhaka upazila.

Talking to this correspondent, many cardholders alleged that they got VGD food grains only three times in six months from January to June though it is supposed to be distributed monthly.

A cardholder should get 30 kg per month but they alleged that they got 25 kg per card.

Earlier in March, WFP Assistant Field officer Salma Yasmin recovered about 100 bags of VGD wheat from another godown in Ananda Babur Pool area in Nilphamari town. The wheat was kept there for sale in the black market, police said.

WFP wheat distribution in Nilphamari Sadar upazila is suspended since the incident. A probe body formed at the directive of food ministry is investigating the matter. Its report of is still to reach Nilphamari, official sources said.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Allegations of irregularities and corruption have been raised in renovation of river embankments by Water Development Board (WDB) in Shyamnagar upazila.

A local Union Parishad chairman said he submitted a written complaint to the Prime Minister's office for action in this regard. He is now being threatened allegedly by WDB contractors.

Gabura, a union in Shyamnagar near the Sundarbans covering 41.32 square kilometres is surrounded by several rivers including the Kobadak.

Every year, crores of taka are spent to renovate embankments of the rivers and placing concrete blocks to stop erosion, but to no effect, allegedly because of irregularities in the work and use of substandard materials in making concrete blocks.

According to sources in Satkhira WDB, a Tk 1.5 crore project was undertaken to place concrete blocks in polder no 15 in Gabura union to check the erosion by the Kobadak.

The renovation work was started in December 2002 and was scheduled to be completed in April 2003. But it is yet to be completed.

This correspondent during visit on Friday saw that concrete blocks are not being placed on the riverbank as per design to check erosion.

Gabura UP member Abdus Sattar and some workers engaged in making concrete blocks at Jelekhali said concrete blocks are not made as per specification. Those should be made by using a bag of cement with 3 cft sand and 6 cft stone but it is not being followed.

The two farms engaged in the work there were using one bag of cement with 5 cft sand and 7 cft stones. The contractor entrusted with the job could not be contacted over cell phone despite repeated attempts.

The same thing was also seen at Napitkhali where another contractor was making concrete blocks.

On the same day, this correspondent also visited Chakbara sluice gate area and found concrete blocks placed on the bank collapsing into the river as the

bank was not properly renovated.

Some workers there said they are making blocks by mixing a bag of cement with 4 cft sand and 7 cft stones as per directive io the contractor.

Villagers Babar Ali, Rafiqul Islam, Adel Gazi and some others who gathered there seeing this correspondent said they had stopped the work protesting the irregularities.

On information, WDB Section Office (SO) Zahed Ali came and ordered resumption of work, assuring them that there would not be any more irregularity, they said.

More interesting things were found on investigation. Embankment renovation work involving Tk 10,78,050 was going on in Kholshobunia, Lebubunia,

Sora and Kalibari villages in the union in four groups.

It was gathered that contractor Abdul Gafor, who was given the work in Kholshobunia, gave the work to one Sohrab Hossain on subcontract at a cost of Tk 1,48,157; contractor Tuhin in Sora appointed one Wahiduzzaman as sub-contractor to finish the work with Tk 349,266 while contractor Bazlur Rahman in Kalibari appointed one Abdul Hamid as sub- contractor to complete his work at a cost of Tk 1, 30,000.

On contact, Sohrab, Wahiduzzaman and Abdul Hamid acknowledged doing the works on subcontract.

Gabura UP Chairman Shafiul Azam

Lenin said WDB spends lakhs of taka every year for renovating the embankments, but those collapse after the so-called renovation.

He blamed WDB officials for this. He said he submitted several written complaints to WDB officials. Seeing no result, he has sent a written complaint to the Prime Minister. This angered the contractors, who threatened him.

He filed a general diary with Shyamnagar thana on Thursday.

When contacted, WDB Executive Engineer Ismail Hossain refuted the allegations of irregularities.



Concrete blocks being made allegedly disregarding specification (inset) and continued erosion by Kobadak river in Gabura in Satkhira district.

## Pakistan HC official visits Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Press Minister of Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, Begum Sajida Iqbal Syed, accompanied by her husband and son visited Bogra on Monday.

The Pakistan HC official paid the private visit at the invitation of Syed Hamde Ali, son of Mohammed Ali, prime mMinister of erstwhile Pakistan.

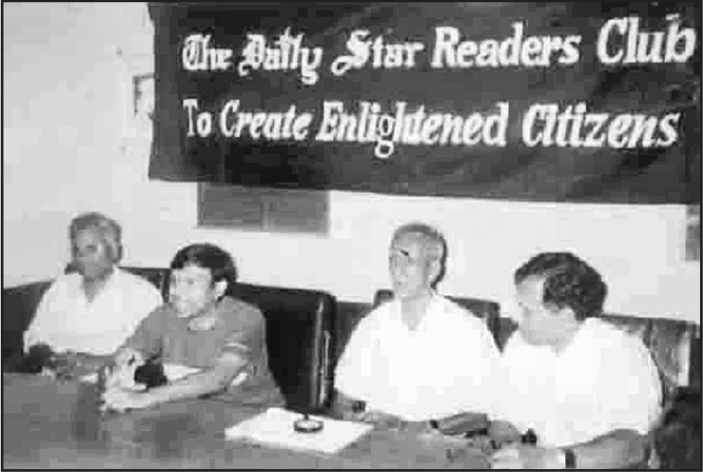
The Pakistan High Commission Press Minister also exchanged views with journalists there.

## Star Readers' Club formed in 3 dists

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The Daily Star Readers' Club was formed recently in Netrakona, Mymensingh and Kishoreganj districts with a slogan to create enlightened citizens.

Our district correspondents reported that a large number of people including lawyers, teachers and college students expressed their desire to become club members. Club committees were also formed in each district. Its coordinator Rafi Hossain was present as moderator during formation of the committees.



The first meeting of The Daily Star Readers Club in progress at Netrakona yesterday.

10x2

6x3