

Schoolgirl kidnapped for ransom in Kushtia

Bodies of two missing men recovered in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A schoolgirl was kidnapped for ransom in Kushtia early yesterday while Chuadanga police Sunday night recovered bodies of two persons missing since Friday.

According to police, a gang of criminals stormed into the house of shopkeeper Sahidul Islam at Mathurapur village in Daulatpur upazila at about 2 am and picked his 14-year-old daughter Saymoli Khatun at gunpoint. She was a

student of class IX at Mathurapur High School.

Latter the gang demanded Tk 2 lakh ransom for her release. The gang gave seven days' time for the payment and threatened to kill the girl for non-compliance, police said.

A case was filed with Daulatpur police station.

When contacted, the duty officer at the thana said they are trying to trace the girl.

As many as 47 people were abducted for ransom in Kushtia

district alone since January this year, according to police records.

Chuadanga police said, Mansur Ali, 37, son of Abdul Jaill of Sarkullah village and Nazrul Islam, 30, son of Kadam Ali of Munshipara village in Damurhuda upazila went out of home to attend a marriage ceremony at nearby Subolpur village on Friday night. They were missing since then.

On Sunday, at about noon, some farmers saw two bodies floating on Bhairab river and informed

Carpaudanga police camp.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsies.

A case was filed with Damurhuda police, but they could not make any clue to the murders.

Contacted over cell phone yesterday, a relative one of the victims claimed that Mansur Ali and nazrul Islam were once involved with an outlawed party and that their rivals in the party might have killed them.



PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous people presenting a dance at the Adivasi Cultural Academy in Rajshahi on Monday marking the International Indigenous Day.

Protect rights, culture of indigenous people

RU Correspondent

Indigenous people at a day-long discussion meeting at the Adivasi Cultural Academy here on Monday have demanded constitutional recognition of their rights and languages and enactment of laws to protect their traditional culture.

The programme, held in observance of International Indigenous Day, included a cultural presentation by indigenous people.

The programme was organised by Adivasi Unnayan Sangstha (AUS).

A large number of indigenous people including those from Santal and Pahari communities from north-

ern districts joined the programme that began with a big colorful procession in the Rajshahi city.

The processionists carrying banners and festoons highlighting their demands paraded the city streets chanting various slogans.

At the meeting, AUS Advocacy Manager Rangit Topo read out a resolution containing the demands, which was approved by the indigenous people.

AUS Advisor Norandro Tudu presided over the discussion meeting, attended by AUS Executive Director Bhavabat Tudu as chief guest.

Rajshahi coordinator of Blast, Abdus Samad and advocate Adip

Imam were special guests.

Leaders of indigenous communities told the meeting that they have a distinctive culture and heritage, but those are fading away due to lack of government patronisation and "aggressive" activities by sections of local Bangalees. Their rights are often violated. These can be protected only if the government comes forward and take steps, they said.

After the meeting, atristes from Santal, Worao and Pahari communities presented Danta and Dashai dances.

They also presented drama, songs and group songs depicting indigenous people's life and culture.

Three killed in Sirajganj road mishap

A CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Three persons were killed when a truck rammmed motorcycle on the Pabna-Bogra highway near Baghabari Ghat in Shahzadpur upazila yesterday.

Police and eye witnesses said the three died on the spot and the Pabna-bound wood loaded truck hit the motorcycle.

The dead have been identified as Suzon, 25, of Alokdiar village in Shahzadpur upazila and his friends Helal Uddin, 28, of Bilchand village and Moni of Shahzadpur, all motorcycle riders.

Police recovered the bodies and sent these to Shahzadpur hospital for autopsy. A case was lodged with Shahzadpur police station.

Rail, road links through Teesta bridge restored

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Train communication through Teesta bridge in Lalmonirhat district was restored at 12-50 am yesterday, 13 hours after it was disrupted.

Both rail and road communication over the bridge was suspended after a Kurigram-bound fuel tanker lorry from Bagabari became stranded on the bridge due to mechanical trouble at 2-50 pm Monday.

This snapped Lalmonirhat-Kurigram train link and created long snarl-up of vehicles on both sides of the bridge.

The road communication through the bridge was restored at 7 pm after a relief vehicle pulled the lorry out of the bridge, sources in railway department said.

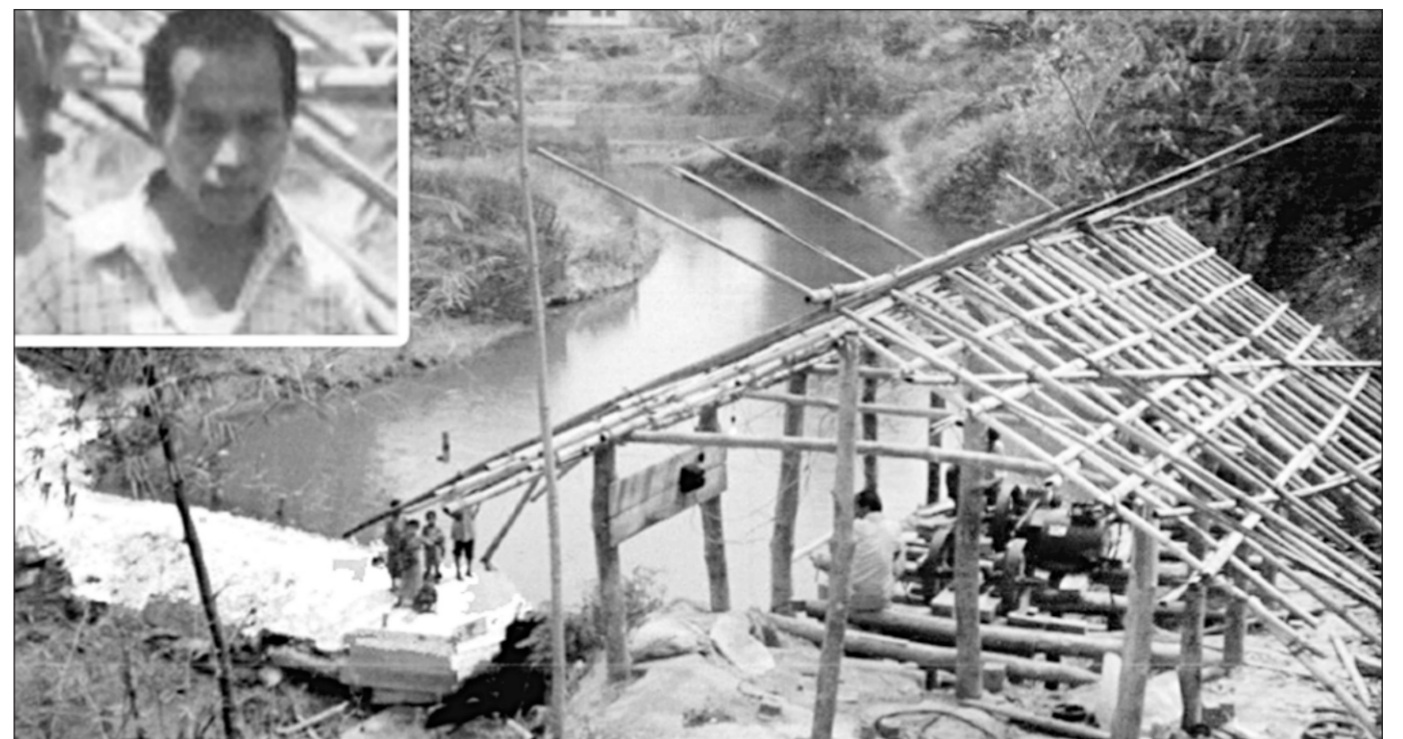


PHOTO: STAR

Aung Thui Khoy's (inset) dream of supplying electricity in CHT is finally coming true as the government has approved a mini power generation project based on his innovation. Photo shows Khoy's experimental plant in Monzai Para in Bandarban Sadar upazila in 2001.

Khoy's dream comes true

Ministry finally okays mini power generation plant in Bandarban in recognition to his innovation

MONIRUL ISLAM MONU, Bandarban

Aung Thui Khoy's innovation has finally been recognised by the government. He is very happy that the dark hills in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) will now have electricity, which will change life.

After a long silence, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry has approved a mini power generation project designed after Khoy's innovation. The project, if proved successful, will be replicated in the three hills districts.

Khoy, who could not read or write, surprised his neighbours and drew public attention in 2001 by generating power by using water flow of a hill canal in his native Monzai Para in Bandarban Sadar upazila.

He made the canal water fall on a

wooden turbine to produce 5 kilowatt electricity daily. It was a momentous event for Khoy and his neighbours as their houses were lighted with electricity at least for some hours at night.

After that he submitted a proposal to the authorities and moved from door to door, but to no effect.

However, Khoy's dream came true after about four and a half years. The CHT Affairs Ministry at a meeting in Dhaka on July 30 approved a proposal by the LGED Ministry to build a mini power generation plant designed after his innovation, according to sources here yesterday.

Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Mini Swapan Dewan was present at the meeting chaired by Secretary of the ministry Md. Shajahan Majumder.

The project will involve Tk 1.60 crore. It was submitted to the ministry

by LGED (Local Government and Engineering Department) on July 10 this year.

"This is a great achievement for a person like me.

"The nation will be benefited tremendously if innovations done in remote areas are recognised and properly evaluated in time" he added.

The project will be implemented by the LGED and the work will begin later this month or early next month, LGED Assistant Engineer in Bandarban Kew Hla Khoy told this correspondent.

The project is being implemented at the initiative of Moni Swapan Dewan, he said.

The generation unit will be installed at Thang Khung Chhora' (stream), one and a half kilometres from the spot where Aung Thui Khoy

had produced electricity. More people will be benefited if the unit is set up there, the LGED engineer said.

It will produce 20 kilowatt electricity by harnessing the stream water and three hundred families in three indigenous villages will come under electricity supply network.

Power will be supplied for 24 hours a day from June to September, five to six hours from October to January and three to four hours daily from February to May, the LGED engineers said.

This is a pilot project. If successful, it will be replicated in remote Thanchi and Ruma upazilas in Bandarban district, he said.

This will open a new horizon in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Kew Hla Khoy hoped.

RU opens new department

RU CORRESPONDENT

A new department -- Agricultural Economic, Rural Sociology and Statistics was opened at Rajshahi University yesterday.

The department under the Agriculture Faculty will start enrolling students in 2005-2006 academic session.

Agromy and Agriculture Extension Department Chairman Prof Dr Aminul Haque has been appointed chairman of the new department, opened by RU VC Prof Altaf Hossain at a simple function. There are five departments under the Agriculture Faculty.

Hartal in Jaldhaka demanding arrest of 'rapist'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A half-day hartal was observed in Jaldhaka upazila headquarters yesterday demanding arrest and punishment to the municipal chairman for allegedly raping a housewife Sunday night.

The hartal was called by 'Nagorik Committee,' a citizens' committee consisting of activists of political parties including Awami League, Jamaat-e-Islami and members of professional groups. Jaldhaka Upazila Nirbahi Officer's (UNO) office was besieged during hartal hours.

The Committee brought out processions yesterday and the day before following filing of a case against Jaldhaka Poursabha chairman and some of his associates by the victim, Morsheda Begum.

The processionists besieged the local police station demanding arrest of the chairman who is also the upazila unit president of BNP.

Morsheda hailing from Uttar Cherega is mother of a child. She was sent to Nilphamari Modern 50-bed Hospital for medical test. But the test report is yet to be known.

The victim told police and journalists that she went to visit her elder sister at Desibai village on Sunday. After dinner she was returning home by a rickshaw. On way, the miscreants abducted her from Rajarhat at 8 pm and took her to Jaldhaka Poursabha office where she was confined and raped.

The rickshaw-puller who fled from the spot informed the matter to victim's

elder sister. The victim's relatives began a search operation but failed to trace her whereabouts. Finally, they went to the pourasabha office at midnight to inform the matter to the chairman. But to their utter surprise, they found Morsheda confined there. The poura chairman and his goons chased and drove them away from there following which they lodged a complaint to Jaldhaka police.

Another source said, Morsheda was wandering about with another person in the pourasabha area on Sunday evening. The poura chairman's men detained and brought them to the pourasabha where they kept them confined in the office for 'arbitration' in presence of Morsheda's relatives and local elite the next day.

Meanwhile, the chairman's wife Farida Akhter told newsmen that their house was attacked by the Nagorik Committee men. She alleged a guard of her house, Zahedi, was manhandled by them. She blamed her husband's opponents belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami and Awami League for hatching a conspiracy jointly to shatter the image of the chairman whom she described 'a popular leader in Jaldhaka'.

However, the chairman is absconding till filing of the report yesterday afternoon.

When contacted, Nilphamari Superintendent of Police (SP) told newsmen yesterday that action would be taken against the culprit after getting the medical report.