



PHOTO: STAR

Banners now dot the place where several business establishments had been operating their activities before being demolished during the recent drive against illegal structures. The traders have put up the banners inscribed with new addresses of their businesses. The picture was taken from Azampur in Uttara.

Extortionist handed over to Rab after mob beating

OUR CORRESPONDENT N'ganj

One extortionist after mob beating was handed over to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) for looting Tk 1.25 lakh from a shop in Masdai area in Narayanganj district yesterday.

The criminal was identified as Zahir.

Police sources said a gang of extortionists had been demanding Tk two lakh from the owner of Haider Enterprise for the last few months.

As Haider Ali refused to pay the amount, the criminals ransacked his shop and fled away with the money breaking the cash box.

Locals were able to capture Zahir while the rest managed to escape.

A case was filed with Fatullah Police Station in this connection.

Bus robbery in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of robbers looted money and valuables from the passengers of a bus at Shyampur in the city yesterday morning.

Some seven robbers posing as passengers got on the bus that was going to Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj from Jatarbari in the city, sources said.

When the bus reached Merajnagar in Shyampur at around 7:45am, the robbers equipped with firearms and sharp weapons started looting money, mobile phones and other valuables from the passengers.

The robbers got off the bus near Merajnagar Filling Station and fled away. The passengers also got off the bus but could not catch hold of any of the robbers. Meantime, the bus sped away.

The passengers then contacted Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members who arrested three people -- Anwar Hossain, 28, Mohammad Jhantu, 25, and Amir Hossain, 20, -- from Jatarbari bus stand.

Acting on their confessional statement, a Rab team found out the bus in Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant area.

The helper and the driver went into hiding.

Amend Nat'l Water Policy '99

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a workshop yesterday asked for amendment of National Water Policy 1999 in the present context of water crisis.

They also suggested that a long term water management policy should be adopted considering the importance of water in the national economy.

Water Right Forum (WRF) organised the workshop titled 'Rights of poor people in wetland: Government policies and their effectiveness' at Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium in the city on the occasion of the World Water Day.

Presenting the keynote paper, Prof Shafique-uz-Zaman of Department of Economics of Dhaka University said 175 out of 230 rivers are dead and one or more rivers die each year resulting in desertification in the northern region.

Due to poor water management in the capital, about 1500 square kilometre area of the rivers is contaminated, he said.

Explaining the hardship of the subaltern class for poor water management system and other natural reasons, Prof Shafique pointed out that poverty increases with decline in navigability, sedimentation of rivers, grabbing of silted lands and collection of underground water.

He criticised the role of National Water Policy 1999 and the River Research Institute in Faridpur in water management during the last nine years.

He suggested for the amendment, modification and implementation of the policy to cope with the present water crisis.

Prof Shafique also asked for evicting the encroachers of the

haor lands to facilitate cooperative farming for the genuine fishermen.

He also demanded demolition of all sorts of establishments on the bank of the rivers and initiatives to fix the river borders and maintain navigability.

Presiding over the workshop, Executive Director of Nijera Kori Khushi Kabir said although a water policy is adopted for water management, it is yet to be implemented.

She expressed concern over the water crisis in villages due to embankments and extinction of rivers, as such crises hinder cultivation of crops and fish.

Shamsul Huda, Abdul Kader and Zakir Hossain, executive directors of Association for Land Reform and Development, Samata and Nagorik Udyog respectively, also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori speaks at a press conference in the city yesterday demanding that the persons responsible for the death of indigenous leader Chalesh Richil be brought to book.

'Concerted efforts needed for poverty alleviation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reduction of multi-dimensional poverty requires multi-dimensional approaches and an equal participation and collaboration among communities, local government, NGOs, private sectors and international agencies to alleviate poverty, experts said at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar titled 'Addressing extreme poverty' was held at Brac Centre Inn auditorium in the city on the occasion of the silver jubilee celebration of Intercooperation (IC), a Swiss organisation working in Bangladesh since the year 2000.

Identifying lack of resources, limited access to infrastructure and public services and social exclusion as the determinants of extreme poverty, the speakers emphasised the need for elevating law and order, increasing women empowerment, and access to resources and quality public service as essential sectors to mitigate poverty.

While narrating the success story

of overcoming poverty, three extreme poor coming from remote districts of the country expressed their gratitude to IC for providing them with loans to help them break the shackles of poverty.

Head of Asia and Eastern Europe of Intercooperation Philip Vaneberg, Acting Managing Director of PKSF Mosharraf Hossain Khan, Joint

Secretary to the planning commission Mohammad Golam Sarwar and Senior Poverty Adviser of UNDP Karen Dunn also spoke on the occasion.

Eminent columnist Mahfuz Ullah conducted the seminar, which was followed by a cultural function.

World Water Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is World Water Day.

With the theme 'Coping with Water Scarcity' the day will be observed in the country and across the globe.

Like the previous years, Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, the World Health Organisation, Unicef and WSP, the World Bank are jointly observing the Day with due significance.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his message said, "Water scarcity can be physical, economic or institutional and can fluctuate over time and space."

He called on all stakeholders to forge stronger partnership and take more concerted action.

In a message marking the occasion, Unesco Director General Koichiro Matsuura said, "With growing scarcity and competition for water, it is imperative to secure a more effective and equitable allocation of this vital resource."

Different programmes have been chalked out nationwide to observe the Day, including national seminar, symposium, rally and cultural programmes highlighting the significance of the Day.

A national seminar titled 'Water scarcity in Bangladesh: The ways out' will be held at 9:00am at DPHE auditorium at Kakrail in the city.

A cultural programme will be held at 4:00pm at Rabindra Sarobar Mancha in the city.

Meanwhile, WaterAid Bangladesh and Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council's Bangladesh Chapter (WSSCC-B) at a press conference launched a campaign as part of a new global campaign styled 'End water poverty' with an aim to providing safe water and sanitation to the poor and marginalised.