

Two Indians convicted in arms case

**Bss, Netrakona**

Two Indian nationals have been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment (RI) for different terms by a court here on charges of intrusion into the Bangladesh territory with firearms and sharp weapons in 2000.

Judge of the Special Tribunal ASM Salauddin delivered the verdict on Wednesday.

The Indian nationals are Subash Barman and Halim Mia, court sources said.

Of them, Subash was sentenced to 10 years RI and fined Taka 3,000, in default, to suffer six months more RI. Halim was awarded seven years RI and fined Taka 2,000, in default to suffer three months more RI.

The prosecution story, in brief, is that on January 29, 2000, the two Indian nationals entered 500 yards inside the Bangladesh territory with a revolver and two sharp knives by crossing the border in Durgapur upazila under Netrakona district.

# Pay arrears of jute mill workers

## Civil society members urge BJMC authorities

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Leaders of civil society and 'Udbigno Nagorik Samaj' headed by Khushi Kabir yesterday visited three laid off state-owned jute mills in Khalishpur Industrial Area and urged the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) authorities to pay arrear wages of the workers.

They talked to the workers to get an idea of their sufferings.

Later, they visited the injured workers who are now undergoing treatment in the prison cells of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) to record their (workers) statements about police excesses done in name of bringing the situa-

tion under control during recent labour unrest in Khalishpur.

They addressed a press conference in the evening at Khulna Press Club where they demanded withdrawal of false cases and immediate release of all arrested workers, compensation and treatment of injured workers.

While briefing the journalists, they demanded of government to take drastic steps to stop corruption of jute mill officials, allocation of fund as running capital, withdrawal of lay off notices, reopening of jute mills and payment of all arrears to the workers at a time.

The leaders who visited the laid off jute mills include journalist Syed

Abul Maksud, Prof M M Akash of Dhaka University and former student leader Prince.

UNB adds from Khulna: Eight members of civil society, who came here from the capital, have demanded payment of arrears to the workers of four laid-off jute mills in Khalishpur industrial estate.

Exchanging views with local journalists at the press club here today (Friday), they urged the authorities to pay one-third of the workers' dues at a time and announce the time-schedule when the rest of the dues would be paid.

The civil society members called upon the government not to follow the prescription of the World Bank regarding the country's jute sector and to release the arrested workers.

They demanded reopening of the jute mills and formation of a probe committee, headed by a High Court judge, to identify those responsible for corruption in the mills and torture on the workers.

Earlier, the civil society members visited the four laid-off jute mills in Khalishpur and also went to see the injured workers undergoing treatment at the local hospital.

Four BJMC-run jute mills -- Platinum, Star, Peoples and Crescent -- were laid-off on April 20 following the agitation by the workers demanding payment of arrears.

The civil society members who visited Khalishpur are Syed Abul Moksud, Khushi Kabir, Prof. MM Akash, Nurul Khan Liton, Sultan Ahmed, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Abdul Malek and Sultana Rahman.

## Tk 1cr timber damaging in Moulvibazar

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**

Timbers worth about taka one crore are being damaged at five forest offices in Moulvibazar due to lengthy procedure of tender invitation to sell timbers.

Forest department office sources said this situation has been created as the department has reintroduced sealed tender instead of open auction to sell timbers. The timbers are now kept in open sky.

Sources said timber merchants have lost their interest to participate in the bid for its lengthy procedure. Meanwhile small merchants have no chance to participate in the bid due to their financial constraint. In open auction system all interested people could participate and purchase timbers as per their needs.

Source said a total of 26,200 cubic feet of timbers of segun, akashmoni, cham, gorzon etc are laying in open space for sale at five offices in Moulvibazar. These timbers were seized from wood pillerers of reserve forests of the district.

## 1,375 killed in Barisal road crashes in 5 yrs

**Bss, Barisal**

A total of 1,375 people including children and women, were killed in 809 road accidents in six southern districts under Barisal division in the last five years.

Jhalakathi Development Sangstha, an NGO, quoting the Accident Research Centre of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) disclosed this at a seminar here on Thursday.



PHOTO: JASIM MOJUMDER

Sudden rise in water level in the Chengi river in Panchhari upazila has activated the bamboo traders. Labourers carry bamboo from one place to another to earn a living.

## Schoolboy killed in Chandpur

**A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur**

A minor boy of class VI was allegedly strangled to death at Chor Mothura village under Faridganj upazila in Chandpur on Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Mamun, son of Abdul Mannan.

Police sources said family feud is the cause behind his death.

Mamun was called out by Alamgir, 28, a relative of Mamun at around 10.30 pm on Thursday night to attend a Waj Mahfil. Yesterday morning Mamun's body was found lying in a paddy field near his house.

Alamgir was arrested for his alleged connection in the killing.

## 'Corrupt' REB official held

**Bss, Dinajpur**

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested an official of Rural Electrification Board (REB) from his Dinajpur office while he was taking bribe from another officials of his office on Wednesday.

The arrested REB officials was identified as Abdul Matin, Assistant General Manager of REB.

The RAB personnel caught him red handed when he was taking Taka six thousand as bribe from Abdul Karim, an assistant Engineer of his office for passing a bill which was pending with him.

Official sources said a team of RAB led by Captain Zakir conducted a drive at Pally Biddut Samity-1 office in Dinajpur and arrested Abdul Matin.

A case was filed against him under anti-corruption act. He was taken on a 3-day remand when police produced him before the court on Thursday.

## Arms seized

**Bss, Rangpur**

The joint forces in a sudden drive seized huge quantities of arms and ammunitions from village Palipara under Potnitola upazila in Naogaon on Wednesday, police sources said.

Joint forces raided the house of one Shariful Islam at the village on Wednesday evening and recovered nine powerful and live hand grenades from the paddy straw heaps of Shariful Islam.

## Capt Shujat Ali laid to rest

The body was buried on the compound of Shujat Ali Government College field.

Former Speaker Ali Ashraf, former State Minister Fakhrul Islam Munshi and a large number of freedom fighters and officials attended the namaz-e-janaza

Earlier, the first janaza was held at Azad Mosque in Gulshan, Dhaka on Thursday.

Capt Shujat Ali passed away due to old-age complications at Richardson Regional Medical Centre, Texas, USA on Friday at the age of 81.

He left behind his wife, six sons, two daughters, a number of grandchildren, relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Shujat Ali, who did his BA (Hons) in Political Science from Dhaka University in 1942, received the King's Commission (1943-44) as an officer first in the Royal Indian Air Force and later in the Royal Indian Army.

Recipient of both the War Medal and the Pakistan Medal, he was also the commandant of Palatana freedom fighters' training camp in Tripura, India. He was critically injured along with Major Khaled Mosharraf in Koshba sector during the War of Liberation. He hoisted the Bangladesh flag in Debidwar, Homna, Chandina, Muradnagar and Daudkandi on December 4 in 1971.

Shujat Ali was elected MNA in 1970, MCA in 1972 and MP in 1973. He was also a successful jute businessman.

# Thousands of shoal children suffer from malnutrition

**RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur**

Abul, 7-month-old son of Quayum of Arazi Joydeb char (shoal) in Gangachhara upazila died of chronic pneumonia a few days ago.

Quayum took the baby to a NGO-run clinic at the village in a critical condition. He was shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH). A few hours after his arrival he died.

Like Abul, hundreds of children of shoal areas in the rivers Teesta, Dharla and Bramhputra die annually. Thousands others suffer from diseases relating to malnutrition.

Food crisis has been identified as the main reason of malnutrition of children in the shoals.

Rate of disability during birth is higher as 95 percent pregnant mothers lack micro-nutrients.

Members of 95 percent families of shoals do not have access to meals twice a day due to poverty as the family members remain unemployed almost round the year.

This correspondent visited shoal

areas of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur districts recently. A large number of landless poor who are mainly agricultural day labourers described physical status of their children to him.

Majority of them said their children often suffer from different kinds of diseases like diarrhea, pneumonia, asthma, dysentery and worms.

Jarina, wife of a day labourer named Aminur of Arazi Joydeb said her 4-year-old daughter Amina and two-year-old son Zakaria had been suffering from intestinal diseases since their birth.

She said, her husband can not manage meals twice a day regularly let alone treatment cost for her sick children.

She said, her husband remained unemployed for four days a week as job in shoal is not available.

'During monga (famine-like situation) period their sufferings knows no bound as her husband remain jobless, she added.

Saleha Begum, wife of Ahmmad Ali of Mouhasa char under Mornea

union was sobbing during her journey to Gangachhara Health Complex for treatment of her diarrhea attacked child Sujan, 2.

Sarwar Hosen Chandan, a doctor of the health complex attended Sujan. He said the number of patients suffering from diarrhea and respiratory diseases was higher in Gangachhara shoals than those of other areas in the district.

Rangpur civil surgeon (CS) Tamsil Uddin said, 'Prevalence of the diseases is due to malnutrition.'

A number of NGOs have set up clinics in the shoals in the districts to provide health care services to the poor, especially pregnant mothers and children under five.

Affected people in remote shoals alleged that The clinics usually do not come to much benefit of them.

Kurigram civil surgeon (CS) Ferdous Alam said it will not benefit the poor by setting up clinics only when they do not get the least calorie.

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