

Suspect in journalist Balu murder arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Detective branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Sunday night arrested one person allegedly involved in the murder of journalist Humayun Kabir Balu. KMP sources said a team of detective branch arrested Alhaj Nazimuddin Ahmed, a close neighbour of the slain journalist, from Iqbalnagar in the city. He will be interrogated for three days in police remand. Former president of Khulna Press Club and editor of a local daily Janmabhumi Humayun Kabir Balu was killed in a bomb attack in front of his office on June 26, 2004.

Indigenous youth held with pistol

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Joint forces Sunday night arrested an indigenous youth and recovered a pistol and four bullets from his possession in the hill town, Kotwali police said. Jibon Tripura ,27, son of Debendra Tripura was arrested along with the pistol and ammunition from Clerk Para near Tabal Chhari police line, they said. Jibon was produced before a magistrate's court here yesterday in connection with an arms case, they said.

Obituary

BSS, Jhenaidah

Former member of Parliament for Jhenaidah-3 constituency Samsul Huda Khan died of old age complications at his home at Jajilpur under Moheshpur upazila of the district on Friday. He was 72. He left behind his wife, three sons, four daughters, to mourn his death. One of his sons, Advocate Shafiqul Azam Khan Chanchal is the incumbent chairman of Moheshpur pourasabha. Shamsul Huda was buried at his family graveyard after Namaz-e-Janaza at Jalilpur High School ground on Saturday. Qulkawani of the deceased was held yesterday at his Jhenaidah residence.

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT YET OF EXPORT BAN Stop smuggling, monitor wholesale markets to ease hilsa price

STAR NATIONAL REPORT

Prices of hilsa are unlikely to come down to a reasonable level till smuggling of the delicious fish is stopped and unscrupulous wholesalers taken to task, observed traders and sources concerned in the fishing zones. Our Staff Correspondent form



Khulna says, moderately big size hilsa was selling between Tk 400 and Tk 450 a kilogram in all the kitchen markets in the city making it difficult for middle and lower income group to buy them. Retailers blamed the syndicate at wholesale markets for not selling hilsha within purchasing capacity of common people despite ban on its export. They demanded immediate crackdown on the syndicate of wholesalers and middlemen to bring down prices within reasonable level. Retailers also demanded sur-

veillance and monitoring by government officials of hilsha price situation in wholesale and kitchen markets. They also urged the authorities to take stern steps to stop smuggling across border through trawlers. Wholesalers said there was adequate supply in all fish landing centres of Khulna and Bagerhat

Kingdom last year from six fish export centers in Khulna and Bagerhat districts. Our Correspondent in Patuakhali says, the authorities are running special drive in all fish markets for the last two days so that traders can not sell hilsha at high price or cannot store them to create crisis. A monitoring team is observing hilsa prices in the markets. Despite ban on export, hilsa prices did not fall here significantly. This correspondent when visited local fish market yesterday found 40 kgs of hilsa (weighing over 1 kg each) was selling between Tk 12,500 and Tk 12,800. Two days ago those were sold at Tk 14,000. Small size (less than 1 kg each) hilsa was selling between Tk 10,000 and Tk 11,500 in place of Tk 11,500 and 12,000 only two days back. But Fazlu Gazi, president of fishing trawlers owners association in Kuakata said, " We are bound to sell hilsa at lower rate but we are deprived of fair price. We are facing loss as the prices of fishing instruments are still very high." "We had to buy fishing net at a cost Tk 290 a kg while it was Tk 220 last year. Diesel price increased by Tk 10 per liter. Because of this the fishing cost has gone up, he added. He urged the government to take immediate step to reduce prices of the fishing instruments. Our Correspondent form Chandpur, the hub of country's hilsa trade, echoed sentiment of the hilsa lovers. Consumers at Pal Bazar, Bipani Bagh Bazar, Natun Bazar and Wireless Bazar expressed disappointment at 'ineffective' ban on export as the prices of the delicious fish remained almost unchanged. A one kg hilsa was selling at Tk 400 yesterday afternoon, which was just 20-30 taka costlier a week ago. Even a 600 gm hilsa sells at not less than Tk 250. "I could not buy a one kg fish this year. The export ban made little impact," said Abdullah, 53, a low paid staff of Chandpur pourasabha. Traders at Boro Station Railway fish ghat however said, the prices are slowly coming down as hilsa is now being sold at Tk 15,000 a mound instead of Tk 18,000 just before the ban.

districts but they accused middlemen for the price hike. Wholesaler A K chand Mian at Skid Ghat blamed the owners of fish processing factories in Khulna and Bagerhat saying they were hoarding hilsha being well aware of ban on its export. Many of them are doing it with the intention of smuggling, said another wholesaler. According to a source in Khulna unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association (BFFEA), besides India, hilsha worth over Tk 8 crore were exported to America, Belgium, Germany and United



The incomplete and 'abandoned' Ghatina bridge over Korotoa in Sirajganj.

JMB militant, 4 outlaws arrested in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police conducted several drives in some villages in Bagmara yesterday and arrested a JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) militant and four outlaws including a regional commander of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), police said. Among the arrested, the two top criminals are JMB militant Shamsar Ali, 50, also an accused in a police assault case, Bagmara upazila PBCP commander Ariful Islam Rony, 40 of Jugipara village, also a charge-sheeted accused in Jugipara UP chairman Amjad Hossain murder case, police said. Other arrested outlaws are Hazrat, 35, of Taherpur, Rashid Babu, 37 of Cheukhali and Islam, 24 of Polashi villages in the same upazila. All are black-listed criminals, police said. Mirza Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bagmara Police Station led the raids.

Construction of bridge 'abandoned' half-way

Contractor 'absconding', authorities silent

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Work on a much needed bridge on the Korotoa in Ullapara town has been abandoned half way due to whim of a contractor and apathy of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) authorities. The ordeals of thousands of locals continued for non-completion of Ghatina Bridge. They are still compelled to cross the river everyday. Even many others brave a railway bridge near the incomplete bridge risking their lives.

The Korotoa, a tributary of the Jamuna has been flowing through Ullapara upazila town dividing it into two parts. Most of the people here earn a living either by doing agricultural work or through handloom trade. People on both sides of the river face problem in crossing the river. So, they have been demanding a bridge on the river for a long time. At one stage, the government undertook a project at a cost of Tk 3.94 crore to build the bridge with the supervision of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). Accordingly, the LGED gave a work order to Hasibur Rahman Swapan, an Awami League (AL) leader and owner of Islam Trading Construction. Work on the 240-metre long and 6.4-metre wide bridge started during the BNP-Jamaat Alliance rule in 2004. The LGED chief engineer visited the site in 2006. During his visit, he expressed his dissatisfaction at slow progress of the work. The contractor concerned abandoned the work on the bridge arbitrarily the same year. Following takeover of the caretaker government, the contractor 'went missing', sources said. As a result, the fate of the bridge became uncertain. Meanwhile, construction materials including rods and bricks were stolen by some dishonest people in the area, locals said. When contacted, Ullapara upazila engineer Mahfuzur Rahman said construction of the bridge remained off due to financial crisis faced by the contractor concerned. He said 70 percent work of the bridge has been completed. 'We



Locals crossing railway bridge risking lives.

tried to contact the contractor several times for completion of its work in scheduled time but in vain. He said if the contractor does not agree to do the rest work, new estimate would be made and fresh tender would be floated for completion of the bridge requiring additional expenditure. He said action will be taken against the contractor as per rule for his failure to do the work in stipulated time. Talking to this correspondent, a district level officer of the LGED said the contractor is now absconding. He hoped the authorities to take necessary steps in this regard without delay.

4.5X2

4.5X2



Traffic jam at Jamal Khan in Chittagong yesterday.

5X3

8X3