

THREAT BY EXTORTIONISTS

62 NGO branch offices stop operation in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least 62 branch offices (Kendra) of three major NGOs have stopped operation in different areas of Khagrachhari district following threat by extortionists.

Twelve of them were 'closed' on Thursday as the offices did not fulfill the demand for toll, sources in the NGOs said.

Of the closed offices, 26 are of Grameen Bank (GB) and 18 each of Brac and ASA. Eight GB offices and four of ASA and Brac were closed on Thursday and the rest were closed since the menace began about four months ago, the sources said.

They said extortionists demanded toll up to Tk 5 lakh from an NGO office. The offices are in different areas in Maischhari, Bichitala, Gugrachhari under Mohalchhari upazila in Dighinala upazila.

The extortionists also threatened loanees not to repay their loan installments. Over 3,000 loanees are not paying their installments as toll collectors also threatened them, NGO officials and some loanees said.

Quoting NGO officials, Khagrachhari police said armed youths of different ethnic communities demanded over Tk 20 lakh tolls from NGO offices since last Sunday. Failing to comply with the demand, the toll collectors kept their offices closed.

Loamee Madhu Monghal Chakma at Maischhari in Mohalchhari upazila told this correspondent that extortionists threatened him with death if he paid loan installment.

Khagrachhari district manager of ASA, Bithika Chakma, said their 21 offices in Bhaibonchhara, Perachhara, Shimbardhara in Sadar upazila disbursed over Tk 18

lakh loans. "I am now worried how to collect the money", she said.

"Toll collectors belonging to ethnic communities stopped all our branch offices. We informed jointforce and police", she said.

Seeking anonymity, a Grameen Bank official said their 26 offices are now closed. It disbursed at least Tk 25 lakh micro credit among about 2,000 loanees. Weekly repayment of around Tk 2.5 lakh installments is now stopped, he said.

The official said some more Grameen Bank offices are facing closure as the extortionists are annoyed and angry after filing of cases with police.

An official of Khagrachhari district Brac office said they disbursed over Tk 10 lakh loans through different branch offices. The loanees are not paying weekly installments following threat by toll collectors, he said.

Contacted, Kazi Helal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Khagrachhari Sadar police station, said he submitted a report to higher authorities for action as his small force with poor logistics is too inadequate to take action against organised gangs of extortionists.

K h a g r a c h h a r i Police Superintendent Khandaker Lutfu

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Kabir said three toll collectors have been arrested and a drive is on to nab the rest criminals.

Some sources claimed that most of the toll collectors belong to United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), a party of indigenous people that opposed the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord signed in 1997 between the then Awami League government and Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCSS) led by Joitindriya Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantoo Larma.

In remote Munigrame area alone, UPDF cadres demanded Tk 5 lakh toll from different NGO offices, the sources claimed.

Earlier, Grameen Bank authorities filed two cases with Dighinala police station on May 14 as toll collectors forcibly closed some of its offices for toll. After filing of the cases, joint forces arrested alleged toll collector Nagor Chakma from Baradom village in Dighinala.

Acting on his confession, joint forces arrested their alleged godfather Tatindra Lal Chakma and Santushito Chakma from Nenchi Bazar and Mohonpura in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila. They were produced before court, which sent them to jail, police sources said.

Ashraf Hossain was a close aide to BNP lawmaker Habibul Islam Habib, elected in 2001 from Satkhira-I (Tala-Kalaroa constituency) as a candidate of BNP led 4-party alliance.

On contact, Kalaroa police station officer-in-charge Farid Uddin confirmed filing of the cases.

Ashraf Hossain was a close aide to BNP lawmaker Habibul Islam Habib, elected in 2001 from Satkhira-I (Tala-Kalaroa constituency) as a candidate of BNP led 4-party alliance.

Another extortion case against Kalaroa Jubo Dal president

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An extortion case was filed yesterday against nine BNP men including detained Jobo Dal leader Ashraf Hossain.

Ashraf Hossain is president of Kalaroa Jubo Dal, youth front of BNP, and chairman of Keragachhi Union Parishad (UP).

Chairman in Kalaroa upazila allegedly for demanding toll and snatching six cattle heads for non-compliance.

With this, Ashraf Hossain faces two extortion cases, filed with Kalaroa police station, police said.

Ashraf Hossain was arrested by joint forces on January 28.

Cattle trader Ainal Haque of Boalia village in Kalaroa upazila filed the case. He alleged that Ashraf Hossain demanded Tk one lakh as toll on January 12, 2003 and snatched six cattle from him as he did not pay the money.

The other accused include Atiar Rahman, Sohrab Hossain, Sharif and Rahmat Ullah.

On February 3, 2003, Ashraf Hossain and his men snatched six cattle at Panchpota village when he was going to Kalaroa market to sell those, the complainant alleged in the case.

Earlier, on April 19, Abdur Rahman of Boalia village filed another case with Kalaroa police station against Ashraf Hossain as he did not pay him Tk 3,06,240 as the price of sanitary goods taken last year.

On contact, Kalaroa police station officer-in-charge Farid Uddin confirmed filing of the cases.

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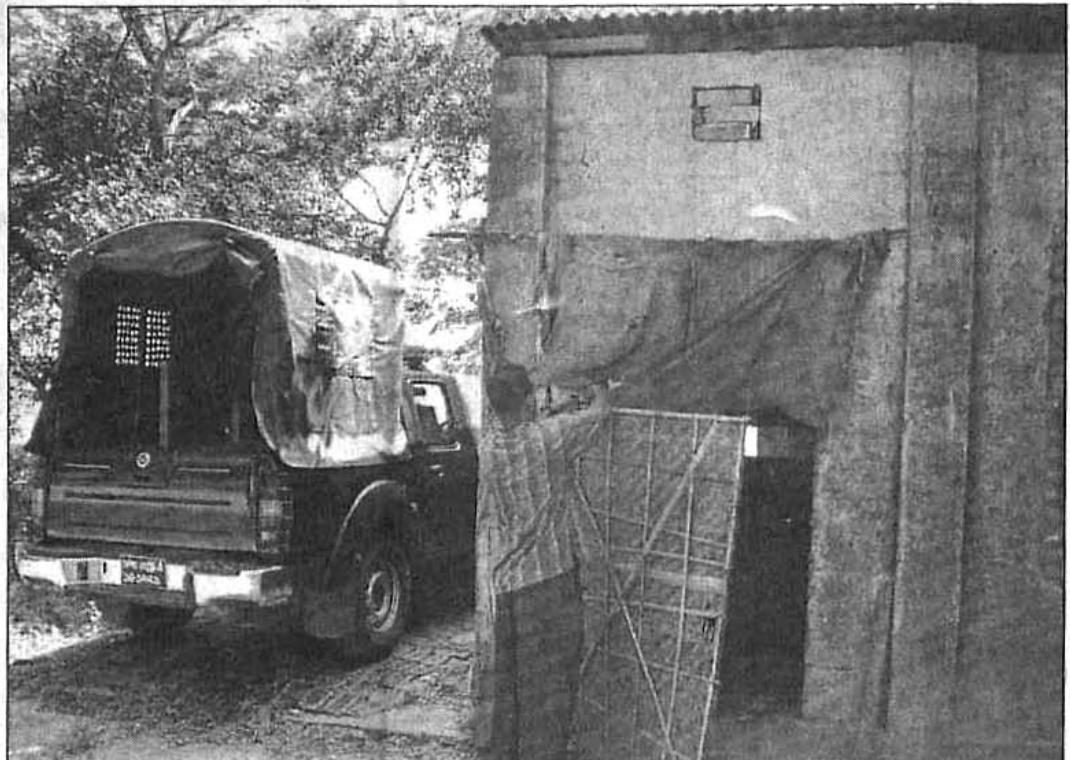


PHOTO: STAR
As the sun sets, a staff fixes a bamboo fence to close the door of Kalikaprasad highway police outpost with sacks hung atop.

Hard task, poor logistics

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Kalikaprasad highway police outpost is assigned to patrol about 100 km highway from Kishoreganj to Kanchpur bridge in Narayanganj to keep it safe from robbers and miscreants. But the outpost can hardly be called a police station and logistics are too inadequate to the job.

The outpost is housed in a tin-shed abandoned by labourers who had stayed there years back when the road was renovated by the Roads and Highways department.

Sacks are hung on its lone door and two windows as a protection from rain as there are no shutters. Inside, there is one

table. He said 25 litres of fuel are allotted monthly for the lone motorbike in the outpost, which keeps it running for a few days. The patrol car gets 10 litres of fuel a day.

Mohiuddin said, he can not supervise on-duty staff due to lack of logistics.

He said there are many important spots on the highway. These include Kachpur bridge area in Narayanganj, Sibpur and Vitimorjal in Norshingdi and Bhairob and Katiadi areas in Kishoreganj.

All these points are used by drug traffickers and hijackers, he admitted. Night coaches from Sylhet, Kishoreganj, Bhairab, Comilla and Chittagong cross the Kanchpur bridge point.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

141-143, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000
Conservancy & Pilotage Department

Invitation for Tender (4th Time)

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Shipping. | | |
| 2 | Agency | Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority. | | |
| 3 | Procuring entity name | BIWTA. | | |
| 4 | Procuring entity code | Not used at present. | | |
| 5 | Procuring entity district | Dhaka. | | |
| 6 | Invitation for | Procurement of fuel for BIWTA Vessels, Pontoons etc. for sections Sadarghat & Aricha for the period from September 2007 to June 2009 (22 months). | | |
| 7 | Invitation Ref. No. | MS/2-2 (Part-13). | | |
| 8 | Date | 18-08-2007. | | |
| 9 | KEY INFORMATION | National open tendering (NOT). | | |
| 10 | Funding information | GOB Fund. | | |
| 11 | Budget and source of funds | Not applicable. | | |
| 12 | Project/programme code (if applicable) | Not applicable. | | |
| 13 | Project/programme name (if applicable) | Not applicable. | | |
| 14 | Tender package No. | MS/2-2 (Part-13). | | |
| 15 | Tender package name | Procurement of fuel for BIWTA Vessels, Pontoons etc. for sections Sadarghat & Aricha for the period from September 2007 to June 2009 (22 months). | | |
| 16 | Tender publication date | 27-08-2007 | | |
| 17 | Tender last selling date | 09-09-2007. | | |
| 18 | Tender closing date and time | 10-09-2007 | | |
| 19 | Tender opening date and time | 10-09-2007 | | |
| 20 | Name & address of the office(s) | Accounts Department, BIWTA, 9th Floor, 141-143, Motijheel, Dhaka. | | |
| | -Selling tender document (principal) | Nil. | | |
| | -Selling tender document (others) | Primary C&P Dept, BIWTA Bhaban, 10th Floor, 141-143, Motijheel, Dhaka. | | |
| | -Receiving tender document | Secondary (i) Ministry of Shipping, Bangladesh Secretariat, Bhaban No-6 (7th Floor), Room No-826, Dhaka, (ii) Divisional Commissioner Office, First 11th Floor Bhaban (1st Floor), Segunbagicha, Dhaka. C&P Dept BIWTA Bhaban, 10th Floor, 141-143, Motijheel, Dhaka. BIWTA Bhaban, 10th Floor, Dhaka. | | |
| 21 | Opening tender document | Date | | |
| | Place/date/time of | 10-09-2007 | | |
| | | V Time 1400 hrs | | |
| 22 | INFORMATION FOR TENDERER | The bidder must be an updated agent of Padma/Jamuna/Meghna fuel Co. under BPC having explosive licence, with at least 3 years experience of supply of fuel to govt/semi govt/autonomous organisations. The bidder must have storage & supply arrangement of petroleum. At least 5 (five) copies of supply order of fuel for the last 2 (two) years to be produced with the bid. Owners of fuel tanker/vessel will be given preference. | | |
| 23 | Brief description of goods or works | Diesel, lub oil, kerosene & petrol to be supplied to vessels, pontoons, flats etc. as per order of the concerned officials. | | |
| 24 | Brief description of related services | - | | |
| 25 | Price of tender document (Tk) | Tk 5000/- (five thousand) non refundable. | | |
| 26 | Lot No. | Identification of lot | | |
| 27 | Location | Tender security amount (Tk) | | |
| 28 | Completion time in weeks/ months | | | |
| 29 | 1 | Covering the area Sadarghat, Fatullah, Mirpur, Tongi etc. under NED Section | Tk 1,50,000/- | 22 months |
| 30 | 2 | Covering the entire area under Aricha Section, Aricha | Tk 1,65,000/- | 22 months |
| 31 | Name of official inviting tender | Md Ibrahim Hossain. | | |
| 32 | Designation of official inviting tender | Director C&P. | | |
| 33 | Address of official inviting tender | C&P Dept, BIWTA Bhaban, 10th Floor, 141-143, Motijheel, Dhaka. | | |
| 34 | Contact details of official inviting tender | Tel: 9550918, Fax: 9551072. | | |
| 35 | The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any or all tenders. | | | |

Ensure rights of Harijans Seminar in Kushtia told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday stressed on ensuring the Constitutional rights of Harijans, a neglected community in society.

FAIR, a local NGO working for development of Harijans, organised the seminar at its seminar room in collaboration with Manusehr Jonno, a Dhaka-based NGO.

Nazrul Islam, former deputy director of Social Welfare Department presided the seminar.

In his keynote paper, FAIR official Niranjan Kumar Biswas said the children of Harijans are being deprived of their right to education in most of the schools in the district. Although a few of the schools allow their studentship in schools, but they are not treated equally. Even, in some cases, Harijan children are not allowed to sit with other children, he said. He urged to eliminate the manmade social discrimination.

Among others, former lawmaker Advocate Badruzzoda Gama, FAIR executive director Dewan Aktaruzzaman, Advocate Rajib Ahsan Ranju, Sunil Chakrabarty, Shahana Ahmed Talukdar, Sohel Bashphore and The Daily Star correspondent Amanur Aman addressed.

Fayazaddressed.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports: Open House Day was observed in all seven police stations in the district. The police stations are Kushtia Sadar, Bheramara, Daultpur, Mirpur, Kumarkhali, Knoksa and Islamic University(IU).

Well-known as a dedicated and popular teacher of the college, specially among girl students, Nadira Sultan joined Muminunnisa Government Women's College in 1981 as a lecturer of Mathematics. There she served till the year of 2001. At that time, she was serving as an assistant professor of Mathematics department at Ananda Mohan Government College.

While addressing, the DIG said that crime would be eradicated from society through introduction of community policing.

The DIG said people-police cordial relationship would grow through this system.

Earlier, a colourful procession

was brought out in the district town. Pabna Pourasabha organised the procession where police officials and community policemen here took part.

Among others, Mizanur Rahman Biplob, Chairman of Pabna Pourasabha, organised the procession where police officials and community policemen here took part.

Businessmen, public representatives, social workers, lawyers, journalists and senior citizens of the district attended.

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