

DACOITY IN SATKHIRA Alleged police involvement being probed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

A three-member committee was formed yesterday to probe the allegation of police involvement in a robbery at the house of an expatriate at Ganapatipur village in Kalaroa upazila on the night of September 5.

The committee headed by Additional Police Superintendent Zakir Hossain Khan includes ASP Sadar Circle Riaz and Inspector Pradeep Kumar of Satkhira court, sources said.

Kamrunnahar Begum, wife of Abdullah, working in Germany filed a case with Kalaroa police station.

In the case she alleged that an armed gang of six entered her house by breaking the grill, beat her and her two daughters and looted 42 ounces of gold ornaments, two mobile telephone sets and a camera worth about Tk seven lakh at gunpoint.

She said the dacoits entered the house wearing half pants and police boots.

She alleged that a police team led by Kalaroa thana officer-in-Charge (OC) Farid Uddin reached there during the dacoity but they did not chase or try to nab them. She claimed that police could have caught the dacoits if they chased them.

"The dacoits managed to escape as police were inactive. The dacoits was committed with the help of police", she said while talking to newsmen later.

On contact, OC Farid Uddin refuted the allegation and said they rushed there hearing hue and cry but the dacoits fled away sensing presence of police.

Satkhira Police Superintendent Mirza Abdullal Baki said stern action will be taken if involvement of police or their negligence is detected by the probe body.

The probe body started work yesterday.

Lightning kills 2 in Madaripur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Two persons were killed and 5 others injured in lightning at Kalkini upazila in Madaripur yesterday noon.

Those killed are Parul Begum, 44 and her brother-in-law Azhar Munshi, 42, of Puyakhali-Gopalpur village and injured persons are Kartik, 38, Rezaul, 17, Shahjaman, 20, Anis Sheikh, 40 and Reazul Gharami, 22.

Police and locals said lightning struck them while they were working in the field.

Ex ASP's daughter murdered in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Daughter of a former police official was found dead at her residence yesterday morning in Dinajpur.

She was identified as Gitiara Mahajeeben Chowdhury, 39, daughter of Md Abdullah Chowdhury, former assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of Rangpur.

Police suspecting that she was killed at one stage of scuffling with the assailants between 11 pm to 6 am yesterday.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Police also seized some evidences from the spot. A case was filed with Dinajpur police station accusing three unidentified persons. Nobody was arrested till filing this report yesterday.

Khulna BNP divided

Most front ranking leaders wait for politics ban to go

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Khulna BNP leaders are divided over allegiance to party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia or reformist leader and expelled party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan. But most of the front ranking party leaders contacted by this correspondent declined to make any direct comment.

Former lawmaker and president of Khulna city BNP M Nurul Islam said only time would tell who is right and who is wrong. He said he neither supports expulsion of former BNP whip Ashraf Hossain nor the recent political stand taken by him (former whip) against the leadership of party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

"I will take more time to comment on the future of BNP", said Nurul Islam who was seen at several meetings of 'reformists' held at the residence of party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

However, member secretary of Khulna city BNP convening committee Shaharuzzaman Martuza was open in making comment. He thanked Begum Zia for expelling Mannan Bhuiyan and Ashraf Hossain.

"The party has benefited greatly as they were trying to split

BNP. There are more people who must be expelled for anti-party activities pretending to be reformists", he said.

Former general secretary of Khulna district and city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju and advocate Shafiqul Alam Mona said things will be clear after lifting the ban on politics.

They avoided a direct reply about allegiance to Begum Zia or Mannan Bhuiyan but expressed sympathy with the party chief.

It would be proved who is stronger only after lifting of ban on indoor politics, they said.

They said Begum Zia should get justice in trial of the case filed against her. They reserved comments when asked whether they thought the allegations against her were correct.

President of Daulatpur upazila BNP Sheikh Mosharrif Hossain said he belonged to the 'mainstream' of BNP. Most leaders and activists of Daulatpur thana BNP are with Begum Zia and not with reformist group, said Mosharrif Hossain who so long belonged to city Mayor-Ashraf faction of Khulna BNP.

President of Khalishpur thana BNP SM Abdur Rahman and its secretary advocate Fazle Halim Liton said they are with the mainstream and not with 'so called

reformists".

"We have already withdrawn our support from Ashraf Hossain who is involved in conspiracy to split BNP", said Abdur Rahman. President of Khanjahan Ali thana unit of BNP Mir Kaised Ali and its secretary Sheikh Iqbal Hossain said they wanted reforms in the party with Begum Zia as chairperson.

They condemned Ashraf Hossain for being 'ungrateful' to Begum Zia.

Prominent Labour leader and a member of BNP central committee Abdul Malek said Ashraf Hossain has already lost support of leaders and activists of the party in Khulna-3 constituency (Khalishpur-Daulatpur and Khanjahan Ali thanas) who elected him lawmaker twice.

"He has destroyed his career in BNP for opposing Begum Khaleda Zia", he said.

Meanwhile, only 30 party men form three thana units of BNP attended a meeting held Friday evening at Ashraf Hossain's residence to discuss reform measures under leadership of Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Participants in the meeting were mostly youths who were once cadres of the former whip, said general secretary of Khalishpur thana BNP advocate Fazle Halim Liton.

FERTILISER RATIONING IN NORTHERN DISTRICTS

Many DAE officials opt for retirement to get rid of farmers' wrath

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangpur*

Many sub-assistant agriculture officers (formerly block supervisors) of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in some northern districts have taken self-retirement to get rid of wrath of farmers following introduction of rationing system of fertiliser, DAE sources said.

Some of them are Roghunath Barmon, Abdul Qayum, Rafiqul Islam, Fazlul Haque, Debnath Kumar, Atul Chandra Pramanik of Ulipur upazila in Kurigram, Azizar Rahman, Mozammel Hoque and Abdur Razzak of Pirgachha upazila, Abdul Jalil of Rangpur Sadar upazila, Lutfar Rahman, Durgacharon of Qaunia upazila and Sahadat Hosen of Birganj upazila.

About 70 others have also applied for retirement from jobs but their applications are yet to be accepted officially, DAE sources said.

Sources said, the DAE high officials are trying to convince them to withdraw their applications.

Ulipur upazila agriculture officer Mohammad Ali said the officers who worked for at least 25 years can take self-retirement.

However, Kurigram DAE deputy director Moshin Ali denied the reason of farmers' wrath for self-retirement of the sub-assistant agriculture officers saying they sought retirement because they were suffering from various diseases. In such a situation, they are unable to do hard work, he said.

But the retired officers alleged that their life was at stake at the villages because many farmers have gone crazy for fertiliser. At places they beat them up for failure to meet their demand, they

alleged.

Motiar Rahman, a sub-assistant agriculture officer in Gangachara upazila said he had applied for self-retirement after being scared of farmers. He said, "We were friends of farmers, but we have become their foes due to fertiliser."

Under the present rationing system, the sub-assistant agriculture officers are assigned to issue allotment card for urea to farmers.

Motiar said farmers in his block got urea in the first installment. They were assured that they would get more urea in two other installments but they were suspicious.

Abdur Razzak, another officer in Pirgachha upazila said it is a tough job to deal with farmers who often rebuked him for failure to supply urea according to their expectations.

Shah Alam, of Modhupur block under Baderganj upazila said he fell ill due to excessive pressure of farmers. Unruly farmers attacked him at Modhupur fertiliser depot on August 31. Later, he took treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH). Although, he was released from hospital, still he is sick, he said. Farmers attacked him as he failed to supply them urea according to their demand. He has demanded action against the farmers for injuring him, Shah Alam said.

Abdul Jalil, a retired officer of Rangpur municipality said he took retirement in May to get rid of farmers' wrath.

On contact, Rangpur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khandker Atiar Rahman said many farmers complained that they did not get adequate urea although there is huge stock of it in the district.

Rangpur DAE assistant director Kazi Najmuddin blamed the farmers for the untoward incidents.

But Afsar Ali Choudhury, a farmer at Monurchhara under Pirgachha upazila said he needed 10 bags (50 kg) of urea for cultivation of aman paddy on his 6 acres of land but he got five bags of urea in two installments.

Kanti Bhushan Sarker, another farmer at Ramdhan of Bamondanga union in Sundarganj upazila said he needed eight bags of urea for cultivation of aman paddy on his 20 bighas of land but he got only three bags.

Other farmers echoed the same story.

Writers-Journalists Festival ends in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A three-day festival of writers and journalists ended here on Saturday.

Palakio Gathan Kendra, a local NGO, in collaboration with different educational institutions, organised the festival.

At least 20 national and international writers and journalists took part in a discussion held on the concluding day at the Palakio Gathan Kendra complex.

Dinajpur Press Club president Chitta Ghosh was present as chief guest while journalists Md Akram Hossain Talukder, Kongkon Karmaker and Father Komol and Anthony Sen of the Kendra were present as special guests.

Police force to be reorganised

IGP says in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

Police department force should be reorganised to make it a 'service oriented organisation' rather than force, Inspector General of Police Noor Mohammad said here yesterday.

Steps will be taken in this regard during the tenure of the caretaker government, he said while addressing a rally organised by district community policing coordinating committee. It was held at Gaibandha police lines.

The IGP said the police are to serve the people not to misbehave or harass them. This needs a total change in mentality and culture.

He however said changes will not come overnight, but steps must be initiated now.

Earlier, police were friends of influential people in the society who were not identified as honest. Changing the culture will take time.

Earlier, the IGP inaugurated the newly constricted police station building in Sundeganj upazila and led a rally organised by upazila community policing committee.

Presided over by Gaibandha Police Superintendent Saleh Md. Tanveer, the function was attended by among others, Rajshahi Range DIGAKM Shahidul Haque, Deputy Commissioner Kazi Md. Anowerul Hakim, Gaibandha District Community Policing Committee Conver M. Abdus Salam and Gaibandha Press Club President Gobinda Lal Das.

Bomb recovered in Jessore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Police yesterday recovered a bomb from the house of 'wanted criminal' Nuruzzaman at Kotapara union under Abhoynagar upazila in Jessore district.

According to police, four criminals including Nuruzzaman were preparation to commit a crime. All of them escaped sensing arrival of police.

Int'l Literacy Day observed in Nilphamari, Dinajpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

International Literacy Day was observed yesterday in Nilphamari and Dinajpur with a slogan, 'Literacy for Decent Life.'

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports: A big procession was brought out from the Collectorate building here in the morning to mark the occasion. Students of different educational institutions, government officials, NGO workers and people of various professions took part. Processionists carried colourful festoons and placards with them and paraded different streets in the town.

Rupayan, a local NGO, organised a discussion at the Sadar upazila auditorium. Rupayan president Md Javed Ali presided the discussion while Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khondokar Moklesur Rahman addressed as chief guest. Raja Shahidul Islam read out a key-note paper.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC-Gen) Syed Tazul Islam, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Khorshed Alam and others addressed.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: A procession led by Dinajpur DC AM Saiful Hasan paraded different streets in the district town. Processionists carried banners, festoons and placards with them.

A discussion was arranged at Dinajpur Zilla School auditorium. Md Moazzem Hossain, director of Gram Bikash Kendra, a local NGO presided while ADC (Education) Dilip Kumar Banik was present as the main discussant.

FLOOD IN DISTRICTS



Boat and motorised vehicles ply on Bazaar Station Road in Sirajganj town (top), inundated Chitakhola area of Rangamati town and a woman with households moving to safety in Kazipur in Sirajganj district yesterday.



Small mechanised boats plied the turbulent Hatia-Noakhali route yesterday though the authorities stopped movement of launches due to inclement weather.

BJMC chairman warns of 'stern action' against CBA leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) Chairman Md Alaharul Islam yesterday warned CBA leaders of jute mills of 'dire consequences' if they do not stop 'instigating workers to create chaos and confusion' in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt.

The warning came at a meeting of high officials of jute mills, held at BJMC zonal office at Charehat in Khalishpur with BJMC chief in the chair. The meeting continued from 10 am to 12-30 pm.

Project directors of all state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt and four other high ranking officials who accompanied the BJMC chairman from Dhaka attended the meeting.

The BJMC chairman said the process was on to privatise closed Peoples Jute Mills (PJM). Tenders for this purpose will be floated shortly to sell the jute mill.

He said the government had allocated Tk 150 crore for 18 jute mills in the country for purchasing raw material.

"We sincerely want to make jute mills production-oriented", he said. Hinting at closure of Ailm Jute Mills shortly, the BJMC chairman said the government was considering full payment of gratuity and provident fund of retrenched workers of jute mills including Peoples Jute Mills after getting audit report.

The BJMC chairman will hold another meeting today (Sunday) with officials of joint forces, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), police and the district administration.

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