

Alarming rise in trafficking thru' Rajshahi border

71 rescued in 4 drives in 3 weeks

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Law enforcement agencies rescued 71 people from traffickers on Rajshahi borders only in four drives in three weeks, sending a warning that trafficking has increased alarmingly in north-western frontiers.

Organised international traffickers have built a strong network in the region taking advantage of people's poverty, sources in BDR and police said. Law enforcers have increased vigilance on the border and areas nearby.

Police on June 4 rescued 16 people including five women and seven children from Seroil bus stand area in Rajshahi city as they were about to be trafficked to India through Barakuthi ghat in Padma river.

Two days back, BDR (Ban-

gladesh Rifles) rescued 21 people of six families, including 11 children, from near Godagari border in Rajshahi. Police rescued five teenaged girls from Shiroil bus stand on May 27.

On May 13, BDR rescued 28 people of seven families including 11 children from Char Asariadaha border in Godagari.

Law enforcers said, all the victims were extremely poor and were lured with false promises of jobs in India and some Middle East countries. They were from different southern districts including Narail, Jessore and Khulna, and the five adolescent girls were from Chapainawabganj.

The victims gave traffickers up to Tk3000 each, the sources said.

"Only poverty made them land in the hands of traffickers", said

Rajshahi Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Mokhesur Rahman.

"In this situation, actions by law enforcement agencies can do a little", he said suggesting launching of a massive awareness campaign at grassroots level by the administration, local governments, NGOs and other socio-cultural bodies.

Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, Zillur Rahman, and some senior BDR officials also echoed the same sentiment.

The victims are promised good jobs, but women often land in brothels, said law enforcers.

They said traffickers mainly use 20 points in north-western border.

Family dispute is also a cause that contribute to trafficking.

Sometimes, victims are kidnapped and women are lured with false promises of jobs and marriage. At times traffickers pose as prospective grooms and take girls across the border as their wives.

Recently, a gang of local drug-peddlers kidnapped a school-girl from Srimantapur village in Godagari upazila and gang-raped her. She was rescued as the traffickers were preparing to send her to India.

Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi borders are mainly used by traffickers.

"Traffickers adopt a strategy of changing routes...When they fail at one point, they try another route...Our eyes do not reach everywhere", said a senior BDR officials requesting not to be named.

2,532 extremists, criminals on fresh lists in 10 SW districts

Khulna SP says drive on to nab them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Metropolitan police (KMP) has made a new list of 222 extremists and other hardened criminals.

Another list has also been made by Khulna Range police, which contain names of 2,532 extremists and other criminals in ten districts under Khulna division.

According to the new list, Khulna district has the highest number 623 extremists and hardened criminals, followed by Jhenaidah with 434.

The new list has names of 284 in Jessore, 172 in Kushtia, 210 in Chuadanga, 5 in Meherpur, 92 in Magura, 71 in Narail, 225 in Satkhira and 363 in Bagerhat districts.

According to Khulna Police Superintendent Belalur Rahman, the earlier list contained names of 899 extremists and other hardened criminals in Khulna.

Acting DIG of Khulna Range Asaduzzaman Mian told this correspondent that the new list is correct as it has been prepared without any political interference.

Operations are going on to nab the newly listed extremists and other criminals, he said.



There has been a good yield of Rangoai, a Burmese variety of hybrid mango, this year in Bandarban. Indigenous people raised small gardens on hill slopes along the road to Chimbuk.

15 YRS WITHOUT TRIAL Allya's bail extended by 6 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Bail of Ali Hussain Allya has been extended for six months more. The High Court extended his bail period on Thursday following a prayer.

Ali Hussain Allya of Chhaysiri village in Chunarughat upazila in Habiganj was languishing in jail for 15 years without trial. He was 47 when he was arrested on August 5, 1992 in a murder case but failed to move a bail petition as he could not afford legal assistance because of poverty. His co-accused were however freed on bail immediately after arrest.

The Daily Star published a story on Allya on February 10. After this, Moulvibazar Deputy Commissioner Md Akama Siddiquee formed a five-member committee to give legal assistance to Allya. Seeing the news, former lawmaker from Moulvibazar and a member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Chaudhury became Allya's lawyer.

On February 25, a High Court division bench comprising Justice Md Mujammel Hussain and Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Haque granted three months' interim bail to Allya.

Allya returned home on March 6 after 15 years.

'Gains of 1/11 should not be lost for mistakes by parties'

Qureshi says at Sylhet PDP meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) chief Dr. Ferodus Ahmed Qureshi has said achievements during the post 1/11 period should not be lost due to 'mistakes' by political parties.

Rather, democratic forces and patriotic people should work out ways to ensure a democratic government through a free and fair election.

The country is passing through critical time and will plunge into a chaotic situation if a free, fair and credible election is not held.

Qureshi was addressing a party workers' meeting yesterday afternoon.

PDP Joint Convener Nur Mohammad Khan, former lawmaker Sharaf Uddin Khoshru and its central leader Dr. Rafique Chowdhury also spoke at the

meeting chaired by its Sylhet district convener Rezwan Ahmed. It was held at a community center in the city.

Qureshi said, no doubt, the caretaker government has taken the country back to normalcy and created a congenial atmosphere so that political parties and groups can speak about their own programmes freely.

Now it is the turn of honest and dedicated leaders of parties to move forward with good visions and appropriate programmes to lead their parties for people's benefit. This will also consolidate democracy and ensure accountability at all levels, he said.

Referring to the heinous attack on Bikalpa Dhara chief Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and some party men, Qureshi said, none should face such an experience. "We want every body to

enjoy freedom for a pluralistic society".

Hailing the government's anti-graft drive, the PDP chief said, without rooting out corruption, we can not expect good governance or practicing democracy in real sense.

Plundering of national wealth has already caused much harm to our economy in last decades, he said. "We must have a corruption free society. Corrupt people must be punished for plundering national wealth", Qureshi said.

The PDP chief said honest people in parties should help the government to go on with the anti-corruption drive.

All political parties should expel corrupt people, he added.

The PDP chief called upon his party men to remain alert so that corrupt people from the other camps can not join them.

HSC examinee burned by miscreants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

HSC examinee Noore Zannan Rumi sustained severe burn injuries as some miscreants attempted to kill her by spraying petrol in her room and torching it Friday night.

Rumi, a student of Rangpur Collectorate School and College, is daughter of Abdur Rouf of Masterpara in the town.

Rouf in a case filed with Kotwali police station alleged that Shaful Gani of Barabari in the town poured petrol on her through the window and torched the room.

Hearing scream, family members broke open the door and rescued her with critical injuries. She was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) from where she was sent Dhaka.

Police arrested two of his associates yesterday.

Rumi's mother said that in 2004, Shaful had kidnapped her on the last day of her SSC examination. Police rescued her after seven days and arrested him.

Shaful has been offering her love since 2004 but is being refused, her mother claimed.

Over 5,000 illegal CNG autorickshaws in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

More than 5,000 CNG-run autorickshaws run in Bogra municipal area and on the highways in the district without valid documents, according to a preliminary survey report of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) here.

In addition to these, about 3,000 illegal autorickshaws brought from Dhaka city are also on the streets after diesel-run three-wheelers were banned there, according to Bogra BRTA Deputy Director Sheikh Selim Box.

Other BRTA officials said about 2,000 three-wheelers converted into CNG-run ones have no driving license.

Owners of about 1,300 three-wheelers submitted applications for registration but most of them failed to submit genuine driving licenses of their divers. Driving license is an important document for registration, they said.

Owners of CNG-run three-wheelers have not yet submitted documents for registration though the date expired on 17 April this year.

The survey report said almost all the three-wheelers carry five passengers against three allowed by law, which is very risky.

"Not a single CNG-run vehicle has grill besides the driver which is mandatory for registration," Sheikh Selim said.

Driver Abdul Gafur said, "I am driving CNG run autorickshaw for six months in Bogra town and on highways in the district but no body asked me for license. Gafur was a day labourer earlier.

Another driver Jahangir Islam of Jokosonarpara village in Shazahanpur upazila said he has been driving auto rickshaw for the last eight years in Bogra without any driving license. "Some times I carry 10 passengers in my vehicle" Jahangir Islam told.

A senior police official said at least 11 people died in the district in last two months in accidents caused by autorickshaws.

'Resume Nagarbari-Paturia ferry service'

Truckers say this will reduce Pabna-Dhaka journey by 100kms and ease pressure on Jamuna Bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Transport owners and truckers in northern districts have demanded resumption of ferry service on Nagarbari-Paturia route on the Jamuna, closed for over 10 months due to shortage of ferry boats.

After repeated demands from transport owners and suggestions from Pabna district administration, BIWTA authorities last week visited Nagarbari terminal and talked to transport owners associations in Pabna.

"We told them that one Ro-Ro ferry could be put into service on the route but they demanded at least two, which can not be arranged now due to shortage of ferry boats", BIWTA deputy general manager Abdul Matin told this correspondent when contacted over phone.

"There are 9 Ro-Ro ferries in Aricha. One of them is in dockyard for repair and eight others are in operation on Aricha-Daulatdia route.

"The ferry service (in Paturia-Nagarbari route) can not be

resumed only due to shortage of vessels. We have informed the higher authorities about the matter," Matin said.

Transport owners said resumption of the ferry service will save time and fuel for trucks from Pabna and northern districts to the capital and reduce transportation cost of goods.

"Over 100 kilometers will be saved in the journey from Pabna to Dhaka, which will reduce about 40 litres of fuel if ferry service is resumed", said Md. Abul Hossain Khan Mohan, president of truck owners association in northern districts.

This will also reduce pressure on the Jamuna Bridge, he said. Around 12 ferries were in service on the route earlier which carried several hundred trucks.

The service was suspended in July last year and resumed in December for two-three days due to the shortage of ferries and poor navigability of Jamuna.

Responding to demand of transport owners, BIWTA introduced

K-type ferry (small Ferry) 'Kosturi' on May 1 but closed after a day.

Pabna district administration send several letters to BIWTA higher authorities for resuming of the ferry service, sources said.

20 hurt in Kushtia bus dacoity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Highway robbers attacked passengers and looted a night coach on Kushtia-Meherpur highway at Katlamari in Mirpur upazila Friday night, leaving 20 people injured.

The robbers blocked the road by keeping a log on the road. As the driver and the helper alighted from the bus to remove the blockage, the bandits tied them up and swooped on passengers. They looted about Tk 3 lakh in cash, ornaments and valuables, police said.

Five of the injured-Juli, Arjun, Fatema, Rabban and Faruk-were admitted to Gangni Upazila Health Complex while the rest were released after treatment.

Motivate poor people to seek justice

Satkhira legal aid body tells workshop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a meeting held here yesterday urged members of district legal aid committee, journalists, representatives of NGOs and local government bodies to come forward to motivate poor people so that they can seek justice for which government enacted law and sanctioned money.

Satkhira district Legal Aid Committee, Uttaran and CIDA jointly organised the meeting titled, 'Legal Assistance to Poor and Destitute People'.

Held at Satkhira judge court, the meeting was presided by district and sessions judge Ashish Ranjan Das, also president of the legal aid committee.

Speakers said legal assistance has decreased in the district than

those of previous years. Of the sanctioned money, Tk 4, 30,000 remained unused in the current financial year, they said. A large number of poor people who could not afford to seek justice due to poverty did not turn up to the committee to take legal assistance. This is because of ignorance and lack of co-ordination between poor litigants and legal aid committee members, speakers said.

Among others, Satkhira superintendent of police (SP) Mirza Abdullah Baki, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Delwar Haidar, Satkhira Lawyers Association president Advocate Shah Alam, public prosecutor Advocate Jagan Kumar Chakraborty, former lawyers association presidents Abdur Rahim and Golam Mostafa and journalist Abu Ahmed.



The Padma devoured about three kilometre area from Goladangi shoal in Faridpur Sadar upazila to Paldangi in a week as erosion turned serious. Faridpur town protection embankment is now only 200 metres from the erosion site.

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