

21 sued for '71 war crimes in Khulna, Jamalpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Twenty-one alleged collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces have been sued for murder, rape and looting in Khulna and Jamalpur during the Liberation War in 1971.

Batiaghata Police Station under Khulna district recorded a case against 14 'rajakars' following a court order yesterday, according to our staff correspondent.

Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Khulna issued the order after hearing a petition filed by Ranjita Roy, wife of slain Atul Chandra Roy of Shukhdara village under Batiaghata upazila.

In the petition, Ranjita stated that her husband Atul Chandra Roy was gunned down by the accused, led by rajakar commander Habibur Rahman and his accomplices Shahor Ali, Jamir Sarder, Ashraf Ali, Kamaluddin Golder, Khalil Golder, Nausher Sheikh, Sabur Sheikh, Salim Sheikh, Wazed Morol, Aziz Mallick, Amjad Halder, Mozahar and Jahan.

With the 14, the total number of 'rajakars' so far sued for war crimes at different places of Batiaghata upazila stands at 47 four separate cases.

In Jamalpur, seven alleged rajakars have been sued for killing a freedom fighter in Bakshiganj upazila during the War of Independence in 1971, reports UNB.

The accused also gunned down Lalit Mondal and Gajendar Mondal of the

same village that day, the complainant said.

Apart from the killings, the accused let loose a reign of terror resorting to looting, rape and setting houses of Hindu families at the village on fire, she further mentioned in her petition.

The accused are rajakar commander Habibur Rahman and his accomplices Shahor Ali, Jamir Sarder, Ashraf Ali, Kamaluddin Golder, Khalil Golder, Nausher Sheikh, Sabur Sheikh, Salim Sheikh, Wazed Morol, Aziz Mallick, Amjad Halder, Mozahar and Jahan.

The complainant in her case statement said the accused picked up Akther from a road at the village on October 22, 1971, took him to Bakshiganj camp and killed him.

Earlier on March 30, Naufal Bibi of Tangaripara village of the same upazila filed another case with the same court against four other collaborators for killing her husband during the Liberation War.

Aitan Bewa, 70, mother of martyred freedom fighter Akther Hossain of Batiaghata Purbapara in the upazila, filed the case against the seven with Judicial Magistrate's Court here on Monday.

The court asked the officer-in-charge of Bakshiganj Police Station to take necessary legal steps after proper investigation.

The accused are Fazlul Haque, Momtaj Uddin, 58, Dula Mia, 59, Tana Badar, 58, Jafar, 57, Abdul Karim, 59, and Habibur Rahman Mandol, 56.

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Two children drown in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two children drowned in a pond at village Bahadurpur in Assasuni upazila on Tuesday, locals and police said.

The victims are Abu Bakar Siddique, 3, son of Abdul Hakim and Shimul, 3, son of Korban Ali of village Bahadurpur.

The ill-fated boys were playing beside the pond of a mosque. At one stage, they fell down the pond and drowned.

Later, local people found the bodies floating in the pond and recovered those.



PHOTO: STAR
AMUSEMENT ON PAHELA BAISHAKH: Riders engage in a tough contest at the horse race arranged by Tangail municipality marking the celebration of the first day of Bangla New Year on Tuesday.

Hundreds besiege Nilphamari railway station

Closure of 2 Khulna-bound trains protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Hundreds of people on Tuesday besieged Nilphamari railway station and obstructed movement of a newly-introduced Dhaka-bound inter-city train for about an hour protesting closure of two Khulna-bound inter-city trains.

They obstructed inaugural journey of Dhaka-bound Nil Sagor inter-city train for 45 minutes on the first day of Bangla New Year protesting what they said an unwise decision of Bangladesh Railway (BR) of permanent suspension of operation of Khulna-bound Rupsha

Express and Simanta Express inter-city trains from Nilphamari station.

BR earned a good profit through sale of passenger tickets and booking of luggage from the Khulna-bound trains, Nilphamari railway station sources said.

Earlier, Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industry formed a human chain in the district town demanding resumption of the trains.

At a brief rally, speakers termed the Nilphamari-Khulna railway route an important one where hundreds of passengers travel and a large number of agricultural

products are transported to the south-western region everyday.

The route is also popular to travelers who intend to visit India through Benapole land port, they said adding, a large number of students of Indian universities also use the same route to visit Bangladesh.

Locals welcomed the railway authorities' decision to start operation of Dhaka-bound 'Nil Sagor' inter-city train from Nilphamari but aggrieved at BR's simultaneous decision of suspension of operation of Rupsha and Simanta inter-city trains.

Earlier, 'Nil Sagor' used to ply from Saidpur railway station, about 20 kilometre off Nilphamari station since its commissioning in 2007.

Contacted, Nilphamari railway station master Shafiqul Islam said Rupsha and Simanta express trains were withdrawn due to lack of infrastructural facilities.

Nilphamari Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Abdul Wahed said traders, passengers and students are the worst sufferers due to closure of the trains. He demanded immediate resumption of the trains.

Sources said the gang attacked Sharat Chandra as he did not withdraw the case filed against them allegedly for grabbing his shrimp enclosure.

Local people rescued the AL leader and rushed him to Debhata Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition, hospital sources said.

Ctg woman's 'killer' held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have arrested an accused in the case for killing an elderly woman at Chashma Hill residential area in the port city on March 22.

During primary interrogation, the arrestee, Mohammad Ali, 24, who was arrested from Khulna on Tuesday evening and handed over to Panchlaish Police Station in Chittagong yesterday afternoon, confessed to killing Nasima Shahida, 60, wife of Nazrul Islam, a retired divisional engineer of Bangladesh Railway, police said.

A special team, led by Assistant Commissioner (Kotwali Circle) Babul Akter of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), arrested Ali at fish wholesale shop Jamal Fish at Natun Bazar in Khulna city where he had started working after introducing himself as Faisal, AC Babul Akter said.

"I along with Nurul Islam, my fellow worker at Bayezid Steel in Chittagong, went to loot gold ornaments and valuables at the rented house of the elderly couple at Chashma Hill residential area under Panchlaish Police Station on March 22 morning. As the couple tried to resist, Nurul Islam tied up house master Nazrul Islam while I strangled Nasima with a 'gamchha' (towel) before looting two gold bracelets, two gold chains, two mobile sets and Tk 5000 in cash," police quoted Ali as saying.

Ali told police that he sold the booty at Narayanganj.

Road blockade protesting attack on AL leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Awami League leaders and activists brought out a procession at Kalaroa and blocked traffic on Satkhira-Kaigan road protesting attack on a local AL leader and demanding arrest and punishment of the culprits.

Debhata upazila AL Organising Secretary Sharat Chandra Ghosh came under attack yesterday by a gang led by Abdul Kalshem, Md Isha, Abdul Alim and Afasor Ali of village Sangbaria while he was returning home at the village from the upazila headquarters riding a motorcycle.

Sources said the gang attacked Sharat Chandra as he did not withdraw the case filed against them allegedly for grabbing his shrimp enclosure.

Local people rescued the AL leader and rushed him to Debhata Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition, hospital sources said.

Unique reunion on Pahela Baishakh

Bangla speaking people from both sides of Panchaghar border exchange new year's greetings



PHOTO: STAR
Drawn by the urge to meet near and dear ones from either side of Bangladesh-India border, several thousand people of the two countries gather near the barbed wire fencing at Amarkhana in Panchaghar district to exchange Pahela Baishakh greetings.

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, back from Panchaghar

It was a different scene on Omarkhana border in Panchaghar Sadar upazila as Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, brought a unique opportunity to meet for thousands of Bangla speaking people living on both sides of the border.

Standing on both sides of the barbed wire on Omarkhana border, people of neighbouring Bangladesh and India exchanged greetings on the Bangla New Year and talked with their near and dear ones.

They were seen giving various things including biscuits, chanachur, pens and clothes to each other as token of good wishes.

Many of them could not check their tears as they saw near and dear ones after a long time.

As residents of the same country before the 1947 partition and creation of India and the then Pakistan, people of the area were related in various ways, said several people who came here on Tuesday.

But after the partition, most of them, especially those who cannot manage expenditure to visit relatives through proper ways, became detached from their friends and relatives.

Many people of the two countries, especially those who cannot afford the cost for visiting their relatives through maintaining legal procedure, come here every year to meet their friends and relatives.

Solimuddin, 60, of Gomostapur village under Jalpaiguri district in India, came here to meet his brother Ishaq Ali of Koliyoth village under Tentulia upazila in Panchaghar.

Ishaq told this correspondent that he met his elder brother after 41 years.

Tanzina came from another village of Jalpaiguri in India to meet her sister Taslima, an inhabitant of Panchaghar town.

Dalua Rani came from Dinajpur to meet with her daughter and son-in-law.

"Following the 1947 partition, relatives of many people became residents of a different country on the other side of the border. I am one of them," said Abdus Sattar, general secretary of Jalpaiguri district unit of Trinamul Congress.

He urged the authorities to give chance to meet near and dear ones from the two sides of the border every year on Pahela Baishakh.

Two officials of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) said they allowed meeting between relatives living on two sides of the border following their request.

Many people of the two countries, especially those who cannot afford the cost for visiting their relatives through maintaining legal procedure, come here every year to meet their friends and relatives.

Body formed to probe corruption in Barind development works

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Barind Development Authority (BMDA) in a meeting yesterday formed a seven-member committee comprising five lawmakers to investigate alleged irregularities and corruption involving 'hundreds of crores' of taka public money during last several years.

Omar Faruk Chowdhury, lawmaker from Rajshahi-1 constituency, is the head of the committee. Other members are Naogaon lawmakers Sadhan Chandra Majumder and Israfil Alam,

Chapainwabganj lawmaker Ziaur Rahman, Pabna lawmaker Shamsur Rahman Dilu, Additional Divisional Commissioner Asit Kumar Mukutmoni and BMDA Executive Director Abdul Mannan (member secretary).

The meeting formed the probe body after allegations of corruption and irregularities in the development works done under former BMDA executive director M Asaduzzaman were raised by the BMDA members.

The committee will submit its report within one month.

Rajshahi Divisional commissioner M Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan chaired the meeting while the State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker attended as the chief guest.

Lawmakers from Barind region covering Rajshahi, Chhajai, Naogaon and Pabna districts were present. They include Fazle Hossain Badsha, Zinnatul Nesa Talukdar, Meraj Uddin Molla, Shahriar Alam, Kazi Abdul Wadud and Abdul Kuddus.

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