

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

2 murders in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Two people were killed in two separate incidents at Natunpara under Matiranga upazila and Buiyachhari under Dighinala upazila yesterday. The two were identified as Parvez Al Mamun alias Sohag, 20, son of Matiranga upazila AL leader Mohammad Abul Hossain and Saleha Begum, 45, wife of Mohammad Habibur Rahman of Buiyachhari village under Dighinala upazila. Police said Sohag was killed in deep jungle of Taindong area under Matiranga. "It is not a political killing," Matiranga police station officer-in-charge (OC) said, adding a case has been filed accusing some of Sohag's friends who were with him on Sunday evening. Dighinala OC said unknown assailants killed Saleha with sharp knives early Monday while she was asleep. During the incident her husband was away from home, he said.

Outlaw held, arms recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A 'regional leader' of outlawed Lal Pataka, a faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCL-ML), was arrested in Chuadanga yesterday. According to police, a joint team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-6) and Alamdanga police raided a house at village Munshigan in Alamdanga upazila at about 2:30 am and arrested Rana alias Babu, 38. They recovered one rifle, one shutter gun, six bullets and four bombs from his possession. Hailing from village Jhutikadanga of Mirpur upazila, Rana was recently organising the outfit in Kushtia and Chuadanga, police and Rab sources said. Accused in at least a dozen cases including five for murder in Kushtia and Chuadanga, Rana was a listed outlaw in the area.



A housewife cooks on a chouki (wooden cot) at their Shalbon Jummapara house in Rangpur town as last two days' downpour inundated low-lying areas of the town, left, a woman and her two children moving for a safer place on a raft as the recent flash flood inundated their house at Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH/STAR

Flash flood in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Heavy downpour has triggered flash flood in the low-lying areas of Lalmonirhat district and Rangpur town.

In Lalmonirhat, the low-lying areas along the Teesta river in four upazilas have been inundated as the river swelled following heavy rains in the upstream.

Over 30,000 people are now marooned at flood-hit Goddimari village under Hatibandha upazila, Votumari village under Kaligonj upazila, Mohishkocha village under Aditarni upazila and Khuniya Gachha and Rajpur villages under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, according to a correspondent.

The Teesta was flowing 27 cm above the danger mark at Dowani point in Hatibandha upazila on Sunday night. The marooned people face severe crisis of food and safe drinking water.

Sources in Lalmonirhat Agriculture Extension Department said aman plants on around 6,000 acres of land in the affected upazilas have gone under water.

Mohishkocha Union Parishad Chairman Mohammad Hossain told this correspondent that flood hit 2,200 families at five villages of his union on Sunday night and most of them have been shifted to safer places.

Khuniya Gachha UP Chairman Abdul Malek said about 1,000 flood-hit families in his union have taken shelter on high lands. Lack of food and safe drinking water have mounted their sufferings, he said.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: Some areas in Rangpur town have been submerged due to torrential rain in the last four days. The affected areas are Baghat, Mohiganj, Lalbagh and Rangpur bus terminal.

Rangpur Pourasava (municipality) chairman said about 3,000 families in those areas have been affected due to water stagnation caused by poor drainage in the town, reports our correspondent.

Water Development sources said 400mm rainfall was recorded in the town in the last four days.

Sacked Mongla workers start indefinite siege

Their 5-pt demand includes reopening of call station

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Over a thousand of sacked casual employees of stevedoring agencies began their indefinite siege programme on the Call Station compound of Mongla Port yesterday morning to press home their five-point demand.

However, the programme did not affect cargo handling operations as there was no foreign ship at the port yesterday.

The five-point demands are reintroduction of call station system, payment of uniform (dress) allowance, death allowance and festival bonus and payment under golden handshakes promised to 741 out of 1,116 employees in 2005 and payment of wages as per conditions laid down in a tripartite agreement.

The indefinite siege programme called by sacked employees under the banner of Mongla Port Shipping Workers Union will continue until all their demands are fully met, the agitators said.

Sacked employees opened a gruel kitchen on the call station compound.

station compound.

The sacked casual workers of stevedoring agencies lost their jobs with the abolition of Dock Workers' Management Board, call station system and casual worker's booking system from August 1 last year in line with the Labour (amendment) Ordinance-2008.

The introduction of Berth Operating System abolishing Dock Workers' Management Board has given sole authority to stevedores to appoint either permanent or casual workers for cargo handling works at the port.

Fifty out of 1116 sacked casual employees of stevedoring agencies have died but their arrears were never paid, said Shamsul Alam, president of Mongla port Shipping Workers' Union.

Besides, Mongla Port Stevedores' Association is yet to pay nearly Tk 88 lakh to sacked casual workers against their arrears, he said, adding that a case was filed on August 26 last year in Khulna Divisional Labour Court for the introduction of call station system.

He further said that the court in its judgement passed on April 5 this year ordered authorities



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Sacked casual dockworkers of Mongla Port stage a sit-in in front of the closed Call Station yesterday.

concerned to reintroduce call station system within 15 days but the court order is yet to be complied with.

Asked about the matter, General Secretary of Mongla Port Stevedores Association termed four of the five demands of employees as illogical. They can claim only

Eid bonus, he said. He said there is no scope for reintroducing call station system as levies earned by stevedores have greatly declined since 2007.

He claimed that Khulna Labour Court ordered only to maintain status quo, not to continue with call station system.



PHOTO: STAR

Protesting insolent comments about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Mourning Day by Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Awami League activists yesterday burn the BNP leader's effigy at Picture Palace intersection in Khulna city.

11 bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered 11 bombs from Battala Bazar in Dullah union under Muktagachha upazila yesterday morning. Police said, a police patrol team found 'the cocktails' in a bush near the bazar. They were wrapped in a cloth. Police recovered another bomb from the same spot at noon. Officer-in-Charge of Muktagachha police station said they are investigating the matter. Locals said the incident might have link with Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) as the locality is JMB infested area. Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai, second in command of JMB, was arrested from a nearby village, Rampur in Dullah union, in 2006.

One killed in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

One person was killed and four others were injured in clashes between family members of two brothers over a disputed land in Muladi upazila on Sunday evening. Sultan Howladar, 65, succumbed to injuries after he was allegedly hit by his brother Hakim Howladar at Char Pokkhiya village under Gachhua union. Amiruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Muladi police station said the family members of Sultan and Hakim engaged in clashes with lethal weapons at about 4:00 Sunday afternoon. The injured are Sultan's wife Parul Begum, 55, Salauddin, 22, Hakim Howladar, 60, and Rashida Begum, 26.

Body recovered at IU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Islamic University (IU) police recovered body of a young man from the university lake on Saturday noon. Police said some farmers saw the body in the lake on the western side of the campus at about 5:30 pm and informed them. The young man was wearing half shirt and jeans pant. He was about 25 and his throat was slit by the killers. Campus sources said four such killing occurred within two months. On June 15, two bodies were found in the compound of a female dormitory. The victims were identified as Sher Ali and Abdul Awal, both cadres of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF). Rivals slaughtered them and dumped the bodies on the campus. Again on June 28, severed head of another person was found at the main gate of the university. The dead was identified as Liton, a cadre of the same outfit.



PHOTO: STAR

Highly vulnerable Chanduria Coukirhat bridge in Tanore upazila of Rajshahi was declared closed to traffic on Sunday as the LGED started soil testing to construct a new bridge there.

Risky bridge being replaced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) all on a sudden on Sunday sealed off Chanduria Coukirhat Bridge in Tanore to all vehicular traffic, marking the bridge risky. People were seen taking another road of neighbouring Mohonpur upazila to reach Tanore spending extra time and fare for additional 15-km of road. The LGED authorities on Sunday were shutting the road on both sides of the bridge and testing soil nearby to replace the old bridge with a new one. "Structure of the left lane of the bridge was affected due to movement of overloaded vehicles", said Abul Kashem, sub-divisional engineer of LGED who was on the spot. He claimed the bridge was constructed in Pakistan era. "Due to its old age, we declared it unfit for use one year ago and we abandoned it one week ago when we noticed the bridge's structure has become weak and it can be damaged any time", said Kashem. However, locals said the bridge was constructed in 1992 and was frequently repaired.



PHOTO: STAR

The fish trading centre on Port Road in Barisal city remains almost empty as the ongoing hilsa season sees scanty catches of the popular fish in the southern region.

Big hilsa catches still elude fishermen

Traders in southern region worried as fishing season running out

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Several weeks into the hilsa season, fishermen in the southern region are yet to start getting good catches of the popular fish.

Barisal wholesale fish market sees scanty supply of the fish, much to the worry of fishermen, traders and ice factory owners.

Small amounts of 'luckily netted' hilsas are sold at exorbitant prices at the sales centre of Bangladesh Fish Development Corporation in Barisal (BFDC).

Depending on sizes, a maund of hilsa sold at Tk 12,000-24,000 yesterday.

The centre sees only 20 to 30 maunds of hilsa a day while

300-400 maunds of hilsa were brought there daily during this period last year.

A number of traders, who took loan from fish merchants on interest and gave money to fishermen in advance, are passing hard days amid worry about repaying the loans taken from aratdars (fish wholesalers).

Ajit Das Monu, president of Bangladesh Fish Exporters' Association, Barisal said 20 firms in West Bengal imported hilsa worth Tk 250 crore from Bangladesh last year but the country is now losing hilsa market to Myanmar and Thailand.

Local exporter Zikrullah Traders exported only 940 kg hilsa to India from this port at the government fixed rate of

US \$ 6 per kg on June 29 this year, said Belayet Hossain, assistant marketing officer of BFDC in Barisal.

There are 50 wholesalers, over 150 hilsa traders and 20 exporters in Barisal fish market, Md Yusuf Ali, general secretary of Barisal District Wholesalers Association, said.

To run their business, most of the traders take loans from different fish merchants on interest and give the money to fishermen in advance, he said, adding, they are passing worrying days because of poor catches.

Besides coastal areas, hilsa caught from Meghna, Arial Khan, Kalabadar, Kirtonkhola, Pacha, Andharmanik, Tentulia and Paira rivers are brought to Barisal fish market.

Three die of 'food poisoning'

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Three people died of 'food poisoning' and another fell sick at Chouddagram upazila headquarters early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mahbubur Rahman, 32, a teacher of Chouddagram girls High School, Shahnewaz Mojumder, 35, a technician of Chouddagram Clinic and Tofayel Ahmed, 28, a representative of a pharmaceutical company.

Locals said four inmates of a mess near Sonali Bank Chouddagram branch fell sick after they took chanchur and coke bought from a shop at Chouddagram Bazar at around 1:00am.

Of them, Tofayel died on way to Comilla Medical College Hospital while Mahbub and Shahnewaz at the hospital.

Seriously ill Zahur Islam, a teacher of Nankora High School, was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

TWO TALES OF BRUTALITY

Moslema burnt with acid for protesting wrong

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Victim of acid attack by husband, a mother of three children is undergoing treatment at a Nilphamari hospital.

The victim, Moslema Khatun, 25, daughter of Mubachher Ali of Kachukata Mazapara village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila, faced the wrath of her husband Sirajul Islam as she filed a case against him for marrying another woman without her consent, said victim's family members.

After marrying another woman without Moslema's consent six months ago, Sirajul started torturing Moslema for dowry, victim's family members said. At one stage, he went to Dhaka with his second wife. Moslema also returned to his father's house with her three children.

Later Moslema filed a case with Women and Children Repression Prevention Court

against her husband. After Sirajul's return from Dhaka recently, police arrested him. He came out of jail on bail after 11 days.

"After coming out of jail, Sirajul pressed me to withdraw the case and became furious as I did not agree," the victim said.

On Saturday midnight Moslema came out of her room at her father's house to respond to the call of nature. Sirajul and his cousin Rabbani, who had been waiting in hiding, threw acid on her and fled the scene immediately, she said.

Hearing Moslema's scream, relatives and neighbours rushed to the spot and took her to Nilphamari hundred-bed hospital the same night.

"Moslema's face has been burnt with acid," attending physician Dr Aminur Rahman said.

A case has been filed and police is trying to arrest the culprits, said SI Ruhani of Nilphamari Police Station.

Lizu's parents seek justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The family members of killed schoolgirl Lizu Rani Dey have demanded punishment to the alleged killer, her husband Shakirul Islam Mamun of village Char Bhawanipur in Sadar upazila.

Lizu, daughter of Bhakta Chandra Dey and Sheuly Rani Dey of Baghmara in the district town was a class ten student of City Collegiate School.

There were marks of severe injury at the back of the victim's head, said ASI Noor Hossain of Kotwali Police Station.

Lizu eloped with Shakirul Islam Mamun, also a student of the same school, a year ago, family and police said.

Mamun and Lizu stayed at a rented house in the town for three months and meantime, they got married, they added.

Later Lizu returned to her father's house and started staying there.

Following Mamun's call over a cell phone, Lizu Rani went to his house on Wednesday morning when

Mamun told her that his parents were not willing to accept her. An altercation followed and Mamun allegedly beat her severely and poured poison into her mouth.

"On Wednesday, a neighbour of Mamun told me over a cell phone that Lizu was being beaten mercilessly. Shortly afterwards, the same caller (a woman) said that Lizu was probably killed at around noon," said Tithi Rani, elder sister of the victim.

"We started for Mamun's house. At Naumahal in the town, we saw Mamun taking Lizu in a tempo to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. When we reached the hospital in the afternoon, we found Lizu dead. There were marks of injuries in her hand, neck and head," said the victim's mother Sheuly Rani Dey.

Mamun tried to flee the scene but people caught him, gave a sound beating and handed him over to police. He was produced before a court that sent him to jail.