

BDR rescues 4 people from pirates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) rescued four people -- two cattle traders and two crab catchers -- from deep forest in the Sundarbans yesterday.

The cattle traders are Durga Pada, 28, son of Jaistha Pada and Jangal Joardar, 27, son of Santosh Joardar of Kalinchi village and the crab catchers are Abdul Majed, 38, and Yakub Ali, 30, of Jotindra Nagar village in Shyamnagar upazila.

Quoting the victims BDR said, the two cattle traders came under attack of the pirates and were abducted along with their cattle when their boat reached in Maithanga area in the river Roymong in the Sundarbans yesterday. The pirates demanded Tk 1 lakh as toll for their release.

On the other hand, pirates abducted the crab catchers while they were catching crabs in the Nashukhali canal on Tuesday.

On information, BDR members launched drive on deep forest and rescued them yesterday. Sensing the presence of BDR men the pirates left the scene leaving their catches.

Traditional boat race in Rupsha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jai Bangla Party of Magura won the traditional boat race in the river Rupsha yesterday.

Naba Durga Party of Sathkira came second while Balaka Party of Paikgachha in Khulna came third.

KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque distributed the prizes among the winners.

Winners of first, second and third places received a 21 inch colour TV, 14 inch colour TV and a bicycle respectively.

The competition participated by nine parties of Khulna, Sathkira, Narail and Magura districts began at 3:00pm from Khulna Custom Chat No 1 and ended at Rupsha Bridge Point at 7:00pm.

Earlier, the KCC mayor inaugurated the boat race organised by Khulna Nagar Samajik Sangskritik Kendra and sponsored by telecom company Banglalink.

Khulna Divisional Commissioner Md Yunusur Rahman, KMP Commissioner Helaluddin Badri, Deputy Commissioner NM Ziaul Alam, Police Super Md Shamsuddin and Regional Head of Banglalink Babul Huq were present as special guests.



Vendors set up makeshift shops on the footpath near the Second Buriganga Bridge at Babubazar in the city, forcing pedestrians to use the main road. The photo was taken yesterday.

Taiwan 'rice bomber' pins hopes on organic farming

AFP, Taipei

If there is such a thing as a non-violent bomber, Taiwanese farmer Yang Juman seems to be exactly that.

The boyish-looking 31-year-old planted 17 bombs earlier this decade to raise awareness of the plight of the island's agricultural sector, and his agenda remains very much the same, only now he pursues it by peaceful means.

"The bombs were meant to attract attention, not to hurt anyone," said Yang, who has turned into a practitioner and proponent of organic farming.

Back in 2002, after Taiwan's entry into the World Trade Organisation, he was known only as the 'rice bomber'.

Yang planted his small explosives -- some made from old-fashioned gunpowder with a handful of rice thrown on top -- in parks, telephone booths, commuter trains and public restrooms in the Taipei area.

His aim was not to hurt and maim -- only two bombs actually went off, and no one was injured -- but to remind the public of the pressure local farmers

were put under as membership of the trade body meant an influx of foreign rice.

"I'd written to the media and politicians pleading not to join the World Trade Organisation but as a nobody I was ignored," said Yang, who learned how to make bombs while doing compulsory military service.

As a mystery bomber targeted in a massive manhunt, he became something of an anonymous hero to many farmers seeing their livelihood threatened by the cheaper foreign imports.

He eventually turned himself in, believing his message had been heard, and was sentenced to seven and a half years in jail for endangering public safety in a trial that saw farmers and social activists rally behind him.

"I have no regrets in doing so. A person should only look forward," he said.

But Yang said he did regret that much of the public attention was focused on him rather than broader agricultural issues, and he hoped to remedy this after his early release in 2007 on a presidential pardon.

His objective is to promote organic farming, growing a small rice paddy in Taipei county and travelling frequently around the island to give speeches or conduct workshops to advocate his ideals.

"My life-time goal is to promote agriculture, help make farmers happy and farming villages prosper," he told AFP, as he led a workshop on organic farming on a hill dotted with vegetable patches on the outskirts of Taipei.

"We cannot do things like the old generations who used pesticides and chemical fertilisers," he said.

"We have to use methods that are friendly and non-toxic to the environment so it is healthy for the consumers and sustainable for the land. If we treat the land nicely it will repay us with good food."

Organic agriculture was introduced to Taiwan around 1990 although as of late 2008, the most recent data available, it accounted for less than one percent of the island's total farm area, according to the government.

Yang has so far recruited 24 like-minded farmers to start a weekend

market in Taipei for organic producers and the interest is growing as he recently received 60 new applications.

One of his recruits is software programmer Alex Lin, 38, who took up farming six months ago saying he was inspired by Yang's goals.

"Programming is stressful and exhausting while farming is very rewarding and meaningful," Lin said. "I feel content that I can do something good for myself and others by growing organic vegetables."

Lin still found his computer skills useful to help design on-line retail for the weekend market, which began this month to meet rising demand.

Another encouraging sign for the future of agriculture is that more young people, weary of the stressful urban jungle, join farming in hopes of being near nature and living simpler lives, according to Yang.

"The current generation of farmers are already in their 60s and 70s and they can barely do their jobs. The whole farming sector could be gone in ten years without new blood," the former 'rice bomber' said.

Five killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Five people were killed in separate road accidents in Panchagarh, Natore and Habiganj yesterday.

Our correspondent in Dinajpur reports: Two people were killed and two others injured in a road accident in Panchagarh yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Ibrahim 10, son of Habibur Rahman of Prodnanpara village under Panchagarh Sadar upazila and Ashraf Alam, 34.

Police quoting villagers said that Ibrahim along with his friend Ashraf, Habib and Shariful Islam were going to a coaching center riding a motorcycle. Their bike collided head-on with a speeding passenger bus while it reached in front of Tunirhat Akh Centre, leaving Ibrahim dead on the spot and others injured.

Locals rushed the injured people to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital. Later, Ashraf succumbed to his injuries.

A correspondent in Natore adds: One person was killed in a road accident on Natore-Rajshahi highway at Chandpur Dakmara village under Natore sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Hujur Ali, 55, of Chowgachi village under Natore sadar upazila.

Witnesses said the accident when he was crossing the road, a speeding BRTC bus crushed him under its wheels.

Following the accident agitating people barricade the road for a hour demanding arrest the driver and helper and their punishment.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

UNB in Habiganj adds: Two people were killed and four others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a microbus at Aushkandi in Nabiganj upazila in Habiganj yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Amina Begum, 26, wife of Harun Miah, and Abdul Gafur, 35, son of Nazim Uddin, of Debidwar upazila in Comilla.

Police said the Comilla-bound microbus skidded off the road and plunged into the roadside ditch after it collided with the bus at about 1:30pm.

"The microbus got twisted after the accident," said a spot account of the crash. All the dead and injured were microbus passengers.

The injured were rushed to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital.

RU reopens today

BSS, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University (RU) will reopen today after a two-week Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja vacation.

The RU authorities have undertaken adequate security measures with deployment of a large number of police at all seven entry points to prevent outsiders and avoid any untoward incident.

They have closed the 16 halls for the two weeks from September 16 to avert any untoward incident on the campus.

They have also asked the teachers, officials, students, employees and others concerned to carry their identity cards while at the university.



Faridur Reza Sagor, managing director of Channel I, and Toufik M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech, inaugurate Zizzi Ristorante, an Italian restaurant, at Banani in the city recently. It is a joint enterprise of Sheltech and Envoy Group.



Khulna Nagar Samajik Sangskritik Kendra organised the traditional boat race in the river Rupsha yesterday. The event was sponsored by telecom company Banglalink.

Most babies born this century will live to 100

AP, London

Most babies born in rich countries this century will eventually make it to their 100th birthday, new research says. Danish experts say that since the 20th century, people in developed countries are living about three decades longer than in the past. Surprisingly, the trend shows little sign of slowing down.

In an article published Friday in the medical journal Lancet, the researchers write that the process of aging may be "modifiable."

James Vaupel of the Max Planck Institute in Germany and colleagues in Denmark examined studies published

globally in 2004-2005 on numerous issues related to aging. They found life expectancy is increasing steadily in most countries, even beyond the limits of what scientists first thought possible. In Japan, for instance, which has the world's longest life expectancy, more than half of the country's 80-year-old women are expected to live to 90.

"Improvements in health care are leading to ever slowing rates of aging, challenging the idea that there is a fixed ceiling to human longevity," said David Gems, an aging expert at University College London. Gems was not connected to the research, and is studying drugs that can lengthen the life span

of mice, which may one day have applications for people.

"Laboratory studies of mice, including our own, demonstrate that if you slow aging even just a little, it has a strong protective effect," he said. "A pill that slowed aging could provide protection against the whole gamut of aging-related diseases."

While illnesses affecting the elderly like heart disease, cancer and diabetes are rising, advances in medical treatment are also making it possible for them to remain active for longer. The obesity epidemic, however, may complicate matters. Extra weight makes people more susceptible to diseases and may increase

their risk of dying.

In the US, data from 1982 to 2000 showed a major drop in illness and disability among the elderly, though that has now begun to reverse, probably linked to the rise in obesity.

The graying population will slowly radically transform society, and retirement ages may soon be pushed back, said Richard Suzman, an aging expert at the U.S. National Institute on Aging.

"We are within five to 10 years of a watershed event where there will be more people on earth over 65 than there under five," he said. "Those extra years need to be financed somehow and we need to start thinking about it now."

Court frames charges

FROM PAGE 1

Library ground on May 29, 2006.

Kushtia Reporters Unity organised the meeting to protest the filing of false extortion cases against three local journalists by Shahidul and two BNP activists loyal to the former lawmakers.

At least 25 journalists including the then Bangladesh Federal Journalists Union president and Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Omar Faruk, Farazi Azmol Hossain and Saiful Islam were injured in the attack.

Following the incident, the journalists went to Kushtia Police Station to file a case but the police refused to accept it. Later, a case was filed with the

same police station on April 25, 2007 against 22 BNP leaders and activists in connection with the incident.

Police arrested BNP cadres Hasan Jamal and Ariful Islam Sumon and submitted charge sheet against 14 BNP leaders and activists on September 29, 2007.

Sources said Daily Manabzamin ran reports on the wrongdoings of the two BNP leaders and their followers, which angered them.

The then BNP lawmaker Shahidul at a programme at Rabindra Kuthibari on May 8, 2006 abused Manabzamin's staff reporter Hasan Jahid and threatened him with dire consequences.

When some journalists including the then Kushtia

correspondent of Samakal Munshi Torikul Islam and Jugantar correspondent Al Mamun Sagar came to his aid, Shahidul also threatened them.

Later, Hasan, Torikul and Al Mamun filed three general diaries with Kushtia Police Station seeking security.

Following the incident, Shahidul filed a case with Bheramara Police Station on May 9, while two BNP activists lodged two cases with Kushtia Police Station the same day against the three journalists on charge of demanding Tk 25,000 from them.

The journalists fled the district and took shelter in the capital following repeated police raids on their houses.

3 muggers arrested in C'nawabganj

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested three alleged muggers along with a toy pistol in Radhanagar Chhiattar Bighi Bridge area of Shibganj upazila on Thursday night.

The arrested were identified as Atik, 28, of Radhanagar village and Siyam, 28, and Nayan, 25, of Telkupi village of the upazila.

Acting on secret information, police conducted a raid in the area and arrested the three along with the pistol at about 9:30pm with the help of BDR jawans and local people.

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