

Huji man Obaida sent to jail

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) operative Abu Obaida alias Harun, 28, an accused of plotting to kill Sheikh Hasina in Sylhet in 2001, was yesterday produced in the magistrate's court that sent him to jail.

Sonagazi police arrested Obaida at a house at Bhuiya Bazar of Char Chandia at around 3:30pm on Monday.

Court sources said police produced Abu Obaida in Feni magistrate's court under Section 54. Magistrate Muntasir Ahmed sent the Huji operative to jail.

When contacted, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sylhet Sadar Police Station and Sylhet court inspector said Abu Obaida is a charge-sheeted accused in a murder case and a case under Explosive Substances Act. The two cases are now under trial in Sylhet Additional Sessions Judge's Court.

Attempt on Moulvibazar JCD leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Former general secretary of Moulvibazar district unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Abdullah Al Pervez was critically injured as unidentified criminals attacked him on Monday night.

According to family sources and Moulvibazar district JCD, a gang attacked Pervez with sharp weapons at about 10 pm in front of Hotel Belal in Chawmuhona area of Moulvibazar town. Seriously injured, he was rushed to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital first and later shifted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College and Hospital in a critical condition.

Family members claimed, the assailants attacked Pervez in a bid to kill him. But they could not say the reason behind the attack.

Harunur Rashid, Sub-inspector of police of Moulvibazar police station visited the spot. No case has yet been filed in this connection.

Four suspected criminals held in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Four suspected members of a criminal group were arrested yesterday morning by police in Koikkhong Jhiri area under Ruma upazila.

Police believe the arrestees are directly linked with Chittagong Hill Tracts Nationalist Front (CHTNF), a newly formed armed criminal group.

Identified as Sumon Bikash Chakma, 30, Teji Chakma, 20, Shipon Chakma, 22, and Shanti Chakma, 28, all the arrestees are permanent residents of Rangamati district.

Locals alleged that the criminal group along with some outsiders is carrying out criminal activities in Ruma area for a long time.

They further alleged that the group had hands in killing of three indigenous people in remote Kamok Chara Para in Ruma on Saturday night. Police are yet to find out the bodies.

AFTERMATH OF 2007 RODENT ATTACK

Food crisis still prevails in remote areas of CHT

NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN, back from Rangamati

People of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area are passing days amid concern about food supply in the aftermath of 2007 rodent attacks that caused massive destruction to their crops in fields and stores.

During the rat invasion (locally known as indur banya or rat flood), many people in the jhum cultivation areas had to depend on wild potatoes and banana trunk for survival as food problem turned serious.

Seed crisis in the following period hampered cultivation of food crops and the situation worsened in absence of assistance from the government.

A study report on the rodent crisis, conducted by UNDP in 2008, says insecurity about food is likely to remain a matter of concern for at least another three years.

Another survey conducted by World Food Programme (WFP) revealed that local people identified food as their 'top priority' need while shelter, cash and health care ranked second, third and fourth

respectively.

Through their Rodent Crisis Recovery Programme, the WFP is providing 'cash for work' and 'cash for training' to a selected number of households.

But a large number of people, who were outside the purview of WFP projects and assistance programmes by a few other organisations, are living amid concern for food, said several jhum cultivators of the area.

"The main concern is to arrange three meals for our eight-member family," said Shushir Marma, 55, a resident of a remote hilly area of Belaichhari upazila in Rangamati district.

"We take vegetables collected from the hills and sometimes catch fish from Rangamati Lake but seldom do we get the chance to eat meat. The rat flood in 2007 wreaked havoc on our jhum cultivation and we are still facing the consequences," he said, adding, "The situation was not so bad before."

Field-level observation by WFP shows that most of the families cannot afford three meals a day and their

intake of protein is very small.

A report of September 2008 survey by Helen Keller International (HKI) said 80 percent of the surveyed households were taking smaller meals.

A 'significant number' of children fall into 'seriously underweight' category and seven percent children under five had signs of severe malnutrition, the HKI report added.

Srikanta Chakma, a field organiser of an organisation and a resident of the area, said food insecurity is the main concern for the people in the CHT area.

As there is very little scope to take nutritious and protein food, many people, especially mothers and children, remain undernourished.

Urging new survey by government or non-government organisations about their food security and nutrition, Senior Scientist of ICDDR'B Dr SK Roy said ministries of agriculture, food and health should work together to ensure their food security and nutrition.

He suggested ensuring regular intake of meat to meet the protein requirement of the people of the area.



The Teesta continues to devour croplands and homesteads at Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila as erosion by the river has taken a serious turn in the area.

Ila Mitra forgotten, her house in ruins

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

The seventh death anniversary of legendary peasant leader Ila Mitra passed silently yesterday in her paternal home at Bagutia village in Shaikupa upazila of Jhenidah district.

No political party, leftist or rightist, took any programme to remember the leader who underwent inhuman torture during the early years of Pakistan period for her leading role in movement to protect the interest of peasants.

Ila Mitra was born in 1925 in Calcutta, where her father Nagendranath, hailing from Bagutia village in Shaikupa upazila, was a service holder.

In her student life, Ila Mitra joined left politics and later led the famous peasant movement known as Tebhaga Andolon in Rajshahiregion in late 40s.

Her paternal house at Bagutia village, some 40 kilometres away from Jhenidah town, is now in ruins while a part of the property is now

occupied by locals.

Now people in the area are hardly aware about the role of the aristocratic lady who dedicated her life for the downtrodden.

During a visit to Bagutia village yesterday, this correspondent found sons of one Hazi Kiam Uddin living in Ila Mitra's paternal house.

One of them, Ali Hossain said they purchased seven acres of land including the grand old building.

Asked about the house, a few villagers said they heard that it belonged to a 'rebel person'.

"Ila Mitra was a friend of farmers and the government should take steps to preserve her memory," said Rezaul Islam of neighbouring Goahil village.

Contacted, Shaikupa Upazila Nirbahi Officer Azmal Haq said, "I have recently joined here. I have heard about the matter. I will take necessary action to recover the occupied land of Ila Mitra's house after investigation."

KIBRIA MURDER CASE

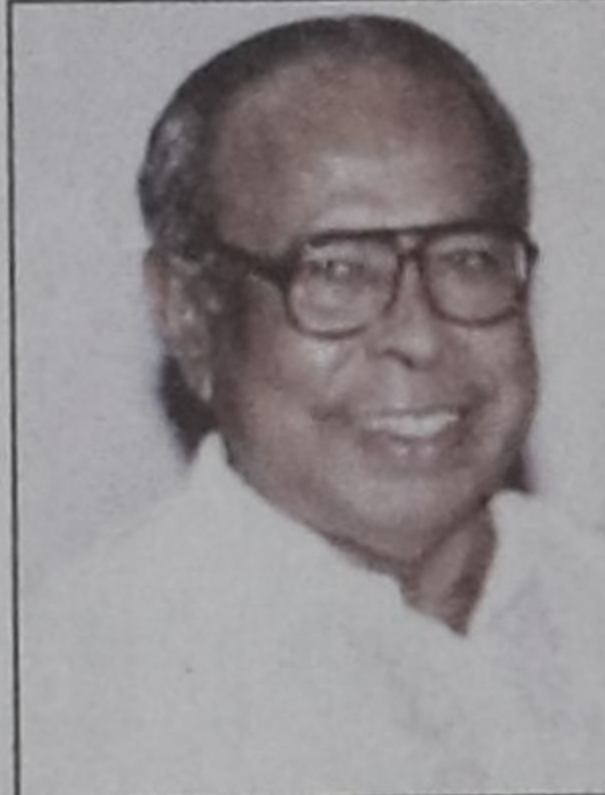
CID gets another month for filing fresh report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial tribunal yesterday gave the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) another month until November 15 to submit report on 'further investigation' into the case for killing former finance minister SAMS Kibria and others.

Judge Md Mahbub Ul Islam extended the time on a petition filed by the prosecution, court sources said. Earlier on September 13, the judge asked the CID to submit the report to the court by October 13.

The then Investigation officer CID's Senior ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman through a petition on March 7, 2007 informed the tribunal about necessity of 'further investigation' into the case. As Munshi went into retirement after a few months, CID's ASP



Md Rafiqul Islam was given the task.

SAMS Kibria, his nephew Advocate Shah Manzurul Huda, local AL leaders—Abdur Rahim, Abul Hossain and Siddique Ali—were killed in a grenade attack on a public rally at Baiderbazar under Habiganj Sadar upazila on January 27, 2005.

As Munshi Atique pressed charges against 10 on March 20, 2005, the complainant of the case, Advocate Abdul Majid Khan (now AL lawmaker from Habiganj), filed a 'naraji petition' against the charge sheet the same day.

Magistrate rejected Majid's petition and fixed May 10 the same year for hearing of the case. But before the hearing, the case was shifted to the Speedy Trial Tribunal.

On May 2006, the then tribunal judge Biplob Goswami also rejected the complainant's 'naraji petition' against the charge sheet. The complainant later went to the High Court, which stayed the case proceedings.

The High Court, however, vacated its stay order on trial proceeding of the case in December last year.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: BANGLA CHOKH

National flower water lily, grown abundantly in the water bodies during the rains and the autumn, is also a popular vegetable. The photo shows a stack of the flower brought for sale at Stadium Bazar in Cox's Bazar.

Fake examinees

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities yesterday expelled two 'fake' examinees during admission test of Islamic History department under 2009-10 academic session. They were identified as Shahidul Islam of Natore and Selim Reza of Dinajpur district. Administration sources said the invigilators expelled them during admission test at Momtaz Uddin Arts Building and handed them over to the law enforcers. RU proctor Prof Chowdhury Zakaria told this correspondent that he later released them after an undertaking. Earlier on Monday, RU authorities caught a fake examinee during the admission test of Philosophy department and freed him on similar condition.

Youth's body recovered

UNB, Sylhet

Body of an unidentified youth was recovered on Sunday from the Bashia River in Bishwanath upazila. Police said, locals saw the body of the youth, aged about 15, floating in the river and informed police. Police went to the spot and recovered the body. They suspect that assailants might have thrown the body into the river after murder. An unnatural death (UD) case was filed with local police station.

Housewife commits suicide

UNB, Gazipur

A housewife allegedly committed suicide on Sunday by hanging from the ceiling of her house at Taltala village in Sadar upazila. The victim was identified as Salma Akhter, 20, wife of Uzzal Mia. Family sources said, Slama, following a family feud, took her own life. On information, police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death (UD) case was filed with local police.

4 drug peddlers held

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Rapid Action Battalion, in separate drives, held four alleged drug peddlers along with 2,300 bottles of banned phenisidyl syrup from different parts of the district on Monday and Tuesday. Being tipped off, a team of Rab-5 raided a truck at Belabazar in Gomostapur upazila at about 6:30am and recovered 2,000 bottles of phenisidyl syrup. The elite force members also arrested truck driver Babu in this connection. Another Rab team conducted a drive in Barik Bazar area under Shibganj upazila on Monday. They arrested one Khairul and his two cohorts Mozammel and Saban from a house along with 300 bottles of the banned syrup.

Killer suspect arrested

UNB, Barisal

Police on Monday arrested another person suspecting his involvement in killing of advocate Gias Uddin Khan Masud at Kachukathi in Kachukathi upazila of Pirojpur district. Acting on a tip-off, a team of Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Santu from Kachukathi area and handed him over to Kachukathi police. Earlier, police arrested two people -- Kamrul Islam, local coordinator of NGO Jubok, and Hemayetuddin Shikdar, a clerk of local sub-registrar office - in this connection. Advocate Gias Uddin Khan Masud, 38, was shot dead by a group of armed assailants near Kachukathi bridge on Kachukathi-Swarupkathi road on Sunday.

Jubo League man killed

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A Jubo League activist was hacked to death on Saturday night following a feud over a water body. Victim Monirul Islam Pikul, 28, was son of Abu Zafar Biswas of Dogacha village under Sadar upazila. Police arrested two BNP activists in connection with the murder. Locals and relatives said, Pikul had a long-standing dispute over ownership of a water body at the village with some local BNP activists. When he came out of his house at about 10:30 pm on Saturday he was hacked by some rivals leaving him seriously injured, they said. Pikul was rushed to the hospital but he succumbed to his injuries at about 3:00 am. Police arrested Saiful and Shaheenur the same night.

BNP meet attacked

UNB, Jamalpur

Five people were injured when rivals attacked a BNP meeting in Dewanganj Sadar union here on Monday. Witnesses said, a gang launched the attack on the meeting at about 12 noon, leaving at least five BNP leaders and activists injured. Union BNP unit arranged the meeting to form its convening committee. The attackers also ransacked a number of houses and damaged a motorbike.

Couple held with pistol

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Jessore Kotwali police on Sunday night arrested a couple with a 9 mm pistol from Benapole area in connection with an abduction case filed by one Motaleb Hossain. They arrestees are Syedur Rahman, 28, son of Nurul Islam of Talbaria village and Runa alias Rekha, 22, daughter of Abdul Haque of Chanpara under Sadar upazila. Police said, Motaleb filed the case alleging that Runa is the second wife of his brother Kabir Hossain who has been missing since May 1 this year. Runa and her lover Syedur abducted his brother, according to the complaint. The couple had been living at Mohisdanga village in Benapole as husband-wife for last two months, locals said.



PHOTO: STAR

Local administration conducts a drive to demolish illegal structures on the Bhairab River yesterday.