



PHOTO: STAR

Bangla speaking people from two neighbouring countries through two sides of barbed wire fence on Omarkhana border in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, as authorities on the special occasion 'allow' the unique reunion among near and dear ones, living on two sides of the state boundary.

Fence can't always stand as a barrier

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Panchagarh

Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year, presented a different scene on Omarkhana border in Panchagarh Sadar upazila as thousands of Bangla speaking people living on two sides of the border got a unique opportunity to meet their relatives. Standing on both sides of the barbed wire fence on Omarkhana border between pillars No 743 and 744, people of Bangladesh and India exchanged greetings and talked heartily with their near and dear ones. A large number of people in both countries, especially those who cannot afford the expenditure to visit their relatives through legal procedure, eagerly wait for this special day. People from different districts of the two countries were seen exchanging various things including biscuits, chanchachur, pens, clothes and towels. Seeing near and dear ones after a long time, many of them could not check their tears. Several people who came here on Wednesday to meet their relatives said they and their ancestors had been related in various ways for long but the 1947 partition made it hard for those living on two sides of the border to meet.

Nelwasha Barman, 70, of Gobindaguru village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh, came here to meet his daughter Bashonti, who lives in Shiliguri in India. It is 11 years that they met last. Nurul Haque Proddhan, 60, of Jhotiakhal village of Shiliguri sub-division in India met with his nephew Golam Rabbani, 45, living at Notun Bosti village in Panchagarh. Each year on the first day of Bangla New Year they come to the border to meet with their relatives. Ananta Roy, 35, of Shiliguri in India came here to meet his father while Ananta Bala, 32, of Farabari village came to meet her brother and sisters. "Every year on the first day of Bangla New Year people from both sides come here to meet with their relatives. We make the arrangement through discussion with BSF" said Major AKM Hasibul Hossain Nabi, deputy commanding officer of 25 Rifles Battalion. Company commander of Khalpara BSF Battalion Arun Lal said they unofficially allow people to meet with their relatives on the special occasion considering emotional issue of people. BSF opens the door of barbed wire fence to facilitate people to come to the border after 11:00am and keeps it open for three hours.

Tendons of BNP leader severed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiha

Criminals cut off tendons of hand and legs of a sexagenarian BNP leader at Jorapukur village in Gangni upazila in Meherpur on Wednesday night. Police said the incident took place following a dispute over a piece of land between two influential persons of the area. According to police, Reaz Uddin Ahmed, 60, former BNP vice-president of Sholokata Union unit and some of his aides occupied five bighas of khas land in the area during the tenure of his party in 2005. After the change over of power, another group of the same area led by one Tara Alam alias Biscuit, 45, took control of the same land ousting Reaz and his men and distributed it among his followers one year ago. Recently, Reaz Uddin made documents of land in his favour and filed a case with Gangni police station. The incident angered Tara Alam. On the fateful night, Tara Alam with his men went to the house of Reaz at about 11:30pm. They dragged the old man out of his house and chopped him indiscriminately. The criminals also cut off

the tendons of Reaz's two legs and two hands. Reaz was rushed to Meherpur General Hospital yesterday, and later sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Officer-in-charge (OC) of Gangni police station Sagir Mia said they could not arrest the criminals as none filed any case in this regard. In another incident, at least 20 visitors were injured at historical Mujibnagar mango orchard in Meherpur yesterday as a group of criminals allegedly led by a Jubo League cadre attacked them for not paying illegal toll. According to sources, a group of visitors went to Mujibnagar mango orchard by a bus at about 1:30pm. One Menta, 32, known as a Jubo League cadre of the area appeared at the scene with around 10 of his cohorts and stopped the bus at the main gate of the complex. Menta asked the visitors to pay Tk 200 for visiting the memorial complex. As the visitors refused to pay the amount Menta and his accomplices attacked the visitors leaving at least 20 injured. Of the injured, Hasan, 25, Laltu, 23, Yamin, 29, Noyeem, 30, Razzak, 22, Bona, 18, Yasef, 23, have been admitted to Meherpur General Hospital.

Police station besieged to free arrestees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Hundreds of people laid a siege to Baya Bazar police outpost and blocked Rajshahi-Naogaon Road under Shah Makhdum police station in the city for five hours yesterday protesting arrest of three family members of a local who was killed over a land dispute. Angry locals put up barricade by placing the body of Ekram Hossain, 35, of Baliadanga village and logs at different points on the road at around 8am. Women protesters sat on the road in front of the police outpost while their male counterparts held processions demanding release of the three family members of Ekram. As police asked them to free the road, the protesters pelted brickbats on the police. They withdrew at around 1pm when senior police officials rushed to the scene and assured them of releasing the three. Later a Rajshahi court freed the three on bail at around 3pm and Ekram's body was buried in the evening. According to police, Ekram's neighbour Deen Mohammad along with his goons mercilessly beat him up on Wednesday morning over a piece of disputed land.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals block Rajshahi-Naogaon road near Baya Bazar police camp under Shah Makhdum Police Station in Rajshahi city yesterday protesting arrest of the brother and two sons of Ekram Hossain, 35, who was killed over a land dispute on Wednesday. Later the three arrestees were freed on bail from a Rajshahi court.

Ekram succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital at around 2pm. The same night, Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shah Makhdum police station called the family members of the victim for filing a case while police arrested Ekram's brother Aslam and two sons -- Sohel Rana and Shamim, Ekram's family members alleged. They also alleged that the OC ordered the arrest of the three taking bribe from their opponents. OC Nazrul however denied allegations. He said that police arrested the three persons under Section 54 as tension was brewing in the area following the murder. He said police also arrested Deen Mohammad's wife Sahara Khatun and sister-in-law Joynab Khatun in connection with the murder. Ekram's sister Salma said, they sold two decimals of land at Baliadanga to Deen Mohammad 20 years ago. "The dispute began in December last year when he (Deen) claimed ownership of another two decimals adjacent to the sold out land," she said.

Traders protest leasing of Nagarbari port terminal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Loading and unloading of goods at Nagarbari river port came to a halt yesterday as traders kept shutters of their warehouses down alleging that the authorities concerned leased the port terminal (ghat) to a Jamaat man. They also decided not to pay toll to the lessee and demanded immediate cancellation of the lease.

They alleged that the district administration leased the port terminal to Ilias Ali, brother of Puran Varena union Jamaat chief Iman Ali, ignoring the highest bidder. Bera Upazila Chairman Md Azizul Haque said though a bidder offered Tk 22 lakh to use the terminal, the district administration leased it to Ilias Ali, also a leader of pro-Jamaat traders' association at Nagarbari, for Tk 20 lakh. He urged the authorities con-

cerned to cancel the lease of the port terminal and invite fresh tender. Nagarbari River Port Traders' association Secretary Md Rafiqullah, said they will continue agitation until the lease of the river port terminal is cancelled. Md Emam Uddin Kabir, additional deputy commissioner (revenue), told this correspondent that the district administration leased the terminal to Ilias as he was the

highest bidder. "We have completed the leasing process as per tender rules and given work order to Ilias," the ADC said, adding that Ilias' political identity was not found in the tender documents. Contacted, Bera upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) said the district administration is the authority to lease the terminal of the river port. "I was just a member of the tender committee," the UNO said.

PAHELA BAISHAKH: AIR OF FESTIVITY ALL OVER



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Noted Indian singer Arati Mukhopadhyay performs at the function arranged to welcome Bangla New Year at Bawa School in Chittagong city, women bring out an 'umbrella procession' in Mymensingh town, cultural function on Muktijoddha Square at Panchagarh, a jubilant procession in Chapainawabganj town, artistes of Udichi sing at a function at BM School in Barisal city, mongol shovajatra in Patuakhali town, and people take traditional panta ilish arranged by Chandpur district administration.

SNIPPETS

4 get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail
Four people were sentenced to life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a murder case yesterday. ATM Mezbaudoula, special sessions judge delivered the verdict against Tomser Ali and his son Shajahan Miah and Tomser's cousin Jarina Begum and Rahima Khatun of Katulee in Sadar upazila. The judge also fined them Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer six months' more RI. According to prosecution, the convicts attacked Naosher Ali of the same village with lethal weapons and injured him seriously on November 25, 2001. Severely injured Naosher succumbed to injuries on the same day. Victim's brother Nazrul Islam filed a murder case with Tangail police station against 10 people including Tomser Ali.

1 killed in boat capsized

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur
One person was killed as a boat carrying 7 to 8 passengers sank in the Dakatia river at Chandpur after a passenger launch hit it at around 10:30 pm on Wednesday. All the passengers but boatman Hashim Khan, 40, managed to swim ashore. Witnesses said, MV Al Walid, which left for Hularhat from Dhaka, hit the boat at Bhuiyar Ghat area. Seriously injured boatman Hashim Khan was rescued and taken to Chandpur Sadar Hospital where he died. Hashim hailed from Tarabunia in Shariatpur district.

8 Pabna criminals held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna
Police arrested eight alleged criminals from Dilalpur under the municipality on Tuesday night and recovered weapons and wine from them. A police team during a raid on Jakson Road area at about 8:00 pm chased a microbus and arrested eight criminals from it. The arrestees are Saddam Hosain alias Kaila Saddam, 20, Rajib Hossain, 20, Md Shrabon, 21, Sharif, 20, Prince, 25, Rubel, 22, Md Rajib, 21, and Md Munna, 25, hailing from Kafiluddin Para, Kalachandpara and Pathartola of the town.

Youth held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj
Police yesterday arrested an alleged arms peddler with a pistol and a revolver, two magazines and 111 bullets at Folimara of Naogaon town. Abdur Razzak, 28, son of Mazed Ali of Ekborpur village under Binodpur union in Shibganj upazila was arrested from a bus. Azim Uddin, sub inspector of Naogaon model police station said, a team of narcotics officials searched a Naogaon bound passenger bus from Chapainawabganj. As they were searching Razzak's body, they found the aforesaid arms and arrested him. Razzak confessed to police that he was going to Dhaka to sell the arms and ammunition.

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