

GANGS RULE BAY OFF PATUAKHALI, BARGUNA

Pirates loot 69 trawlers, kidnap 72 fishermen for ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Pirates looted hilsa fish, fuel, cash from 69 trawlers in the Bay off the coastal areas of Patuakhali and Barguna districts and kidnapped for ransom 72 fishermen from the looted trawlers on Monday and Tuesday.

One of the two fishermen, who were bullet-hit by pirates, has remained missing.

Three pirate gangs named Raju Bahini, Nasir Bahini and Mujahid Bahini jointly attacked 50 trawlers about 40 km to the south of Kuakata sea beach, looted hilsa worth over Tk 20 lakh, cash and fuel from them and kidnapped one fisherman from each trawler, said fisherman Abdul Aziz, who returned to Mohipur yesterday noon.

At least 20 fishermen came to Mohipur yesterday noon with three

trawlers named FB Alauddin, FB Fulkumari and Samitty-39 that had been attacked by the pirate gang.

The gang demanded Tk two lakh as ransom for each abducted and threatened to kill them in case of failure, said the fishermen after returning.

"At about 5:00pm on Monday, men of pirate gang Raju Bahini attacked our trawler with firearms and sharp weapons and looted fish worth over Tk 50,000 and fuel. They shot at us as we tried to resist," said fisherman Kalu Howlader, 35.

With bullet injuries caused by pirates, he was admitted to Mohipur health centre yesterday morning.

Another bullet-hit by pirates, Faruq Howlader, 30, of Mithaganj village under Kalapara upazila is still missing, Kalu said.

"Pirate gangs earlier demanded Tk one lakh from each trawler for the ongoing hilsa season from May 16 to October but we could not meet the demand. In previous years, we paid Tk 10,000 per trawler. The looted trawlers are returning to Mohipur from the sea," said Ismail Hossain, a trawler owner at Mohipur in Patuakhali district.

"Fishermen are feeling insecure in the Bay as pirate gangs have become more active during the ongoing hilsa season. We informed local law enforcement agencies but to no effect," he said.

About 30 kilometres to the south of Pathorghata in Barguna district, pirates yesterday looted fishes, fuel and cash over Tk 15 lakh from 19 trawlers and kidnapped 22 fishermen demanding ransom of Tk one lakh

per fisherman, said Golam Mostafa, secretary of Mohipur fish traders association.

The looted trawlers include FB Shahjahan, FB Sima, FB Shadin, FB Mehedi Hasan, FB Mayer DOa, FB Mayer Doa-1, FB Mayer Doa-2, FB Khadija, FB CCDB, FB Altaf, FB Sohraf, FB Kabir, FB Anwar, he said.

When contacted, Abul Kashem, officer in charge of Kuakata police camp, said, "Nobody filed any case regarding the incidents of pirates' attack and trawler looting. I have informed my higher authorities of the matter."

"We heard the news of kidnapping of 22 fishermen from Barguna. We have already started drive to rescue them from pirate gangs," said Lt Mushfiqur Rahman, commander of the Navy contingent in Pathorghata.

RANGPUR UPAZILAS

X-ray machines at health complexes inoperative for yrs

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Most of the upazila health complexes in the district cannot take X-ray of the patients as the machines have remained dysfunctional for years due to various reasons.

The X-ray machine of Gangachara Upazila Health Complex has become dysfunctional as it remained unused for years after its installation in 1999, said Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Rafiqul Islam.

"We refer patients to Rangpur Medical College Hospital or private laboratories if they need examination by X-ray machine," he said.

Central Medical Store (CMS) under the Ministry of Health installed the X-ray machine at the health complex in December 1999 at a cost of about Tk 50 lakh but it could not be used due to lack of operator.

District civil surgeon's office arranged recruitment of an X-ray operator at the upazila health complex in September 2004.

"I could not operate the machine for a single day as there was no film at the hospital," said Meherunnesa, X-ray machine operator of Gangachara Upazila Health Complex.

When CMS supplied X-ray films to Gangachara Upazila Health Complex in 2007, the X-ray machine was found dysfunctional, she said.

The X-ray machine of Pirgachha Upazila Health Complex has remained inoperative since 2007, said Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Shawkot Hossain.

A technician from CMS in Dhaka, who came to the health complex a few months ago, declared that the machine went out of order for



PHOTO: STAR

Left unused for 12 years since installation in 1999, this X-ray machine at Gangachara upazila health complex in Rangpur district has become dysfunctional.

good, Dr Shawkot said.

Earlier the machine remained unused for long due to lack of X-ray films at the health complex.

Badarganj Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Abdul Baki Sarker said, "The X-ray machine at the upazila health complex remained inactive for two years. It was repaired 15 days ago but trouble remains. We cannot get photo of waist and backbone with the X-ray machine."

Sources at Taraganj Upazila Health Complex said its X-ray machine had remained inoperative for four years from 2006. It is still unfit for operation despite recent repair.

The X-ray machine at Pirganj Upazila Health

Complex often fails to function properly.

Kept unused for about three years due to lack of film at the health complex, the X-ray machine got troubles and cannot give proper service, said a doctor at the health complex seeking anonymity.

A functional X-ray machine is very much essential as Pirganj Upazila Health Complex has been upgraded to a 50-bed hospital recently, he said.

There are allegations that the authorities of the upazila health complexes intentionally kept the X-ray machines unused on the plea to troubles and lack of X-ray films as patients are often referred to private laboratories in Rangpur town in exchange of 'commission'.



PHOTO: STAR

A banner of Hijbut Tahrir lies abandoned as activists of the banned organisation flee in the face of police action after a brief procession in port city Chittagong yesterday. The outfit was protesting US-Bangladesh joint military exercise Tiger Shark.

8 BCL men at Rajshahi medical punished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The authorities of Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) have suspended eight students belonging to the college unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, including its general secretary Ashiqur Rahman Chowdhury, for breaking discipline on the campus.

Seven others are MBBS fourth year students Rakibuzzaman Jony, Tanikur Rahman Titu, Nahiduzzaman and third year dental students Abdur Rouf, Navid Anjum Rishat, Manjurul Ahsan Moon and Jawad Hossain Khan.

The Academic Council and Disciplinary Committee in a joint meeting yesterday decided to suspend the students for six months on the basis of a report of the probe committee formed after June 20 incident.

RMC Principal Abdul Hannan, who chaired the meeting, confirmed the authorities' decision that will come into effect soon.

Two rival BCL groups clashed on the campus on June 20 over formation of a college unit committee of Bangladesh Dental Society. Tanveer Sarif, a supporter of BCL RMC unit President Sampad Kumar Dutta, was critically injured by his opponents belonging to General Secretary Ashiq group during the clash.

After the incident, the college authorities formed a probe committee headed by Orthopaedics Department chief Prof BK Dam. The committee in its report held the eight BCL men responsible for the incident, RMC Academic Council sources said.

A week ago, the college authorities suspended five students belonging to RMC BCL unit for one year on charge of assaulting Dr Nawshad Ali of the college on June 21.

The punished students are BCL RMC unit chief Sampad Kumar Dutta, president of a faction Bangladesh Dental Society Abidur Rahman, general secretary Kamol Hasda, and BCL activists Khandoker Al Mamun and Sandwip Kumar Moitra.

The students were punished on a probe report submitted medicine department chief Prof Saifuddin Ekram. The probe body also recommended that RMCH director take action against Intern Doctors' Association President Shah Alam Siddiki Lalon for his involvement in the June 21 incident.

According to RMC sources, the five punished students yesterday submitted petitions to RMC Principal Abdul Hannan to exempt them from punishment.

Indigenous people block highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hundreds of indigenous people blocked Dinajpur-Dhaka highway for about two and a half hours Monday night as a mobile court raided a wedding party of the community and seized country-made liquor.

Sources said a mobile court of Dinajpur Narcotic Department led by magistrate Yarul Islam raided the residence of Shadhu Tudu at village Khosalpur under Sadar upazila minutes after the marriage ceremony started at night.

In a massive search, the members of mobile court recovered huge country made liquor from the possession of Shadhu Tudu. The indigenous people urged the mobile court not to take away the liquor as it is one of their ritual items to conduct marriage but to no effect.

The indigenous people became disappointed when the team destroyed the recovered goods and also containers despite repeated request by the bride party. The villagers burst into protest as the mobile court also arrested Shom Kisku, a member of the community.

Protesting the action, the indigenous people including relatives of bride and groom rushed to Dinajpur-Dhaka highway and blocked it at 8:30pm.

Being informed, ASP Shanjit Kumar along with police force rushed to the spot and restored the road communication after two and a half hours.

Villagers said the raid disrupted the wedding ceremony of Jyotsna Tudu, daughter of Shadhu Tudu of Khosalpur and Bhagan Murmu, son of Thakur Murmu of Birganj.

However, the marriage was solemnised yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

A few buildings at Ghoshpara in Rajshahi city turn risky as the owners themselves partly demolish them before the start of the work for construction of a link road from Fire Service intersection to City Bypass intersection. The photo was taken a few days ago.



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