

Extortion a worry for Jessore people ahead of Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Frequent incidents of extortion ahead of Eid have become a cause of concern for Jhenidah townspeople.

Extortionists are demanding a big amount of money from businessmen, doctors, engineers and journalists over mobile phone and eight general diaries (GDs) have so far been filed with Sadar Police Station in the last few days.

On Monday last, the gang demanded money from Dr Rashed AL Mamun, resident medical officer (RMO) of Jhenidah Sadar Hospital, Aparna Rani, a teacher of Shishu Kunja Model School, Dr Abdul Latif, Khandakar Hafiz Faruk, president of Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee Jhenidah unit, Md Abdur Rashid Khan, and journalist Islam Uddin.

They have already filed GDs with Sadar Police Station

against one Mohiuddin whose name is being used while demanding money, said duty officer SI Feroza Kulsum.

Besides, the extortionists have demanded money from 15 other people including Rezaul Karim Benu and Dr Rakib.

Jhenidah Sadar Hospital RMO Dr Rashed AL Mamun said the criminals demanded money over cellphone No-01936-263647/ 01936-754673 at 2:00pm on Monday last. They told me to send the money to Faridpur branch of Sundarbans courier service in the name of one Sabbir Hossain.

Dr Abdul Latif and Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee leader Khandakar Hafiz Faruk said the extortionists told them the same thing. They demanded immediate arrest of the gang.

On Wednesday, an extortionist phoned a local businessman identifying himself

as Mohiuddin and demanded Tk 10,000 from him.

On October 11, the extortionist demanded Tk 3 lakh from businessman Nikhil Dutta of Shaikupa upazial town. The gang hurled bombs at his business establishment on October, 19 as he refused to pay them the amount.

On October 22, the gang demanded money from Rabiul Islam of Ghaga village under Kotchandpur upazila. Being informed, police launched a drive the same night and arrested Purbo Banglar Communist party (Janajuddho) cadres Jamal Bhuiyan, Abdus Salam and Nimoy of Chandipur village, Monirul of Bharuapara village and Ujjal of Hazidanga village under the upazila.

They confessed to their involvement in extorting money from well off people, said the officer-in-charge of Kotchandpur Police Station.

3 JMB men freed on bail in Satkhira held again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Three cadres of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), released from Satkhira jail on November 11 after High Court (HC) granted them bail, were arrested again at the jail gate the same day.

They are Monwar Hossain, son of Manir Uddin and Anisur Rahman Khokon, son of Omar Ali of Itagachha village, and Asadul Haque, son of Abdul Mazid Sardar of Kharibila village in Sadar upazila.

They all are the charge-

sheeted accused in five cases for serial blasts in Satkhira town on August 17, 2005.

After filing of a case with Sadar Police Station, police yesterday produced them in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court that sent them to jail.

Five bombs exploded at five places in the town simultaneously. Soon after the serial blasts, police filed five cases with Sadar Police Station.

On April 4, 2006, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charges against 19 people including executed JMB chief Abdur Rahman, Siddiqul Islam Bangla Bhai and military commander of

the outfit Aatur Rahman Sunny.

The other accused are Nasir uddin Dafadar, Monwar Hossain, Maniruzzaman Munna, Nur Ali, Anisur Rahman Khokon, Gias Uddin, Billal Hossain, Asadul Haque, Ismail alias Habibur, Momtaz, Abul Khair, Fakar Uddin, Nayeem, Syed alias Asaduzzaman and Rakib Hasan alias Russel.

Of them, Momtaz, Abul Khair, Fakar Uddin, Nayeem and Syed alias Asaduzzaman have been absconding since the August 17 blasts in the town.



YESTERDAY'S HARTAL: 1) Police remove a burning tyre that was set by hartal supporters on the railway at Chelopara in Bogra town, 2) BNP activists bring out a procession in Gaibandha town, 3) Battery-run three-wheelers become the main mode of transport in Natore town, 4) Long-route buses lie idle at Nathullabad terminal in Barisal city.

4 members of 'Kalemar Dal' arrested in Gopalganj

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Detective Branch of police arrested four suspected members of Islamic militant outfit Kalemar Dal from a mosque of the city on Saturday night.

The arrestees are AKM Shafiuddin Nipu, 26, Nur Islam Kazi, 27, Mohiuddin Sheikh, 21, and Monjir Rahman Milton, 23.

They are hail from different areas of Bhola, Bagerhat and Faridpur districts.

Police also recovered three Islamic books and a notebook from their possession.

Being tipped off a local police team raided Court Mosque and arrested them.

Gopalganj Chief Judicial Magistrate Dilip Kumar Bhoumik granted three days' remand after police placed the arrestees before the court yesterday afternoon.

The arrestees in primary investigation said a former vice-principal of Bhola College is their party chief and the number of party member is six hundred.

Clashes, arrests mark hartal

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 210 people were injured in clashes involving BNP activists, law enforcers and ruling party men while police detained over 138 picketers during hartal in different districts yesterday, report our correspondents.

In Chittagong: At least 15 people, including five policemen, were injured in clashes between BNP activists and police in the port city.

Police arrested 17 picketers in different areas of the city. Vehicles but rickshaws were off the roads, shops and educational institutions remained shut and attendance at private offices was thin.

Delivery of goods from Chittagong Port was hampered while loading and unloading of goods at different jetties and outer anchorage were normal, said Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Syed Farhad Uddin Ahmed.

Sources said at least seven BNP men, including city unit President Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, were injured during a clash with police in front of BNP city office at Nasimon Bhaban at Nur Ahmad Chowdhury Road near Kazir Dewry.

In Bogra: Pro-hartal activists blocked Bogra-Bonarpara rail route near Chelopara area in the district town for about one and a half hours in the morning.

Khalequzzaman, officer-in-charge of Bogra Sadar Police Station, said the picketers put up barricades on the rail route by setting fire to tyres at around 9:00am.

On information, police rushed to the spot, dispersed the pro-hartal activists and took control of the area at around 10:30am.

In Gaibandha: BNP activists damaged at least 15 buses at Palashbari on Bogra-Rangpur highway during hartal hours yesterday, injuring at least 50 passengers.

They threw brickbats at the passenger coaches coming from Dhaka and damaged the vehicles.

In Rajshahi: At least 25 people, including two policemen and six journalists, were injured during clashes between BNP activists and law enforcers in the city during hartal hours.

Police also picked up three pro-hartal activists from the spot. In Khulna: The daylong hartal enforced by BNP did not hamper production in mills and factories in Khulna industrial belts and cargo handling operations at Mongla port.

Unloading of goods from ships at the port continued without any resistance by pro-hartal activists. Passenger buses, trucks and private cars were off the roads until 2:00pm.

In Noakhali: At least 18 people were injured during a tripartite

clash between BNP and Awami League activists and policemen.

Police arrested former president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Sadar upazilla unit Ahmad Ullah Wahab on the spot. On Saturday night, police arrested 27 BNP activists in different upazilas of the district.

In Barisal: Police yesterday lodged two separate cases against 150 activists of BNP and its associate bodies and arrested seven of them in connection with ransacking vehicles on Saturday.

In Natore: picketers vandalised at least seven goods-laden trucks on the Natore-Pabna Highway at Banpara Bazaar in Baraigram upazila during hartal hours.

In Manikganj, police arrested five leaders and activists of BNP and its associate bodies in different areas of the district. They were released in the evening.

Some inter-district buses and trucks were seen plying the Dhaka-Aricha Highway during hartal hours yesterday. Paturia-Daulatdia ferry service was normal.

In Mymensingh: At least 26 BNP leaders and activists were injured during daylong hartal in Mymensingh and Muktagachha yesterday.

Police picked up 23 picketers--seven from the district town, 13 from Muktagachha and three from Trishal.

In Naryanganj: Clashes between the BNP activists and the law enforcers left 30 people, including three journalists and five policemen, injured. Police fired 10 rounds of tear gas shells to disperse pro-hartal activists.

In Kishoreganj: At least 30 pro-hartal people were arrested and 20 others, including including cops, were injured in clashes during hartal in the district yesterday.

BNP activists attacked Pakundia Police Station and confined the cops to the police station for an hour. On information, additional police from Kishoreganj district headquarters rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Aminul Huq, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station, Sub-Inspectors Pradip Kumar Das and Shafiqul Islam, ASI Nazrul Islam, constables Joinal Uddin and Shafiqul Islam were injured as pro-hartal activists hurled brickbats at the policemen.

Clashes left 20 people injured in Chapainawbarganj, 10 in Dinajpur, nine in Kurigram, and five in Brahmanbaria during yesterday's hartal.

Our correspondents from Faridpur, Narsingdi, Natore, Moulvibazar, Rangpur, Jamalpur, Madaripur, Pabna, Netrokona, Sirajganj, Narail Lalmonirhat reported that barring stray incidents, the daylong hartal in the district passed off peacefully.



PHOTO: STAR The forest department rescues 374 such turtles from their illegal keepers at Jilerdanga and Koiya bazaars in Dumuria upaila of Khulna district on Saturday. The aquatic creatures belonging to three rare species were later released in Sholmari River in the upazila.

374 rare turtles seized from Khulna shops

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

A team of The Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation department seized 374 turtles of three rare species from two shops at Jilerdanga and Koiya bazaars under Dumuria upazila in Khulna district on Saturday afternoon.

The 374 turtles belong to Indian flapshell, narrow headed softshell and Indian tent species, locally known as hashe, chaten and karhikata, were found hidden in water containers in the two shops, said Abu Nasser Muhammad Yasin Newaz, divisional forest officer (DFO) of The Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation

Department under the Ministry of Forest and Environment.

Catching of these rare species of turtles is banned and a punishable offence under sections 5 (1) and 15 (1) of The Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act, 1974, he said.

Tipped off, a ten-member team headed by DFO Yasin Newaz raided the shops of Prashanto Bairagi of Jilerdanga Bazar and Jagadish Muhari of Koiya Bazar under Dumuria upazila.

These turtles worth over Tk 1 lakh at local market price were being secretly preserved for smuggling at any available opportunity, the DFO said.

Both Prashanto Bairagi and Jagadish Muhari told DFO Yasin Newaz that they had managed trade license from the local UP chairman to deal in turtles.

They said they were not aware of the fact that catching and sale of sea turtles is banned.

Expressing surprise about the authority of a UP chairman to give license to anyone for dealing in sea-turtles in violation of the Wildlife Preservation Act, the DFO said he could not detain the two alleged persons for the illegal dealing as they produced trade licenses.

The seized turtles were released in the Sholmari River in Dumuria upazila the same day.

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Today is November 15. On this day in 2007, super cyclone Sidr left a trail of devastations in the southern districts.

The people of Barisal division, who were severely affected by the natural calamity, are yet to fully recover from the pain of losses and damage.

Meanwhile, human rights activists and cyclone affected people have demanded investigation into alleged mismanagement in rehabilitation work and misappropriation of the funds allocated for the purpose.

The backbone of agro-economy in the region was badly hurt as the crop fields were flooded with saline water following breaches in the flood control embankments and huge domestic animals and birds and fishery resources were destroyed.

More than 1.5 lakh families in Patuakhali, Barguna, Pirojpur, Barisal, Bhola and Jhalakathi districts lost their houses due to the Sidr.

The onslaughts of Sidr on November 15 in 2007 and another super cyclone Aila on May 25 in 2009, and threats of avian influenza caused damage worth about Tk 200 crore in livestock sector in the division, said Barisal divisional livestock office sources.



A Sidr victim woman gives a frustrated look beside her makeshift shelter in Pathorghata upazila of Barguna district after the cyclone in 2007.

Barisal divisional fisheries office estimated more than 1500 crore taka damages in fish farming sector in the region affected by cyclone Sidr and Aila.

Barisal division of Public Health Engineering Department sources said 9,070 deep tube-wells were destroyed or damaged by Sidr

in six districts of Barisal division while water of more than 3,500 ponds and tanks reserved for drinking water supply, became polluted, causing acute crisis of safe drinking water.

Water Development Board sources said 300 kilometres long embankments were destroyed and more 2000

kilometres long embankments damaged by Sidr in the coastal belt.

About one hundred pontoons and jetties of different water transport and ferry crossing stations were displaced and stuck aground while navigation signal lights were badly damaged.

The area also saw extensive

damage to roads and highways.

Before the damage of Sidr could be recovered, cyclone Aila hit the region, causing serious hindrance to rehabilitation programmes.

However the people of southern region have bravely fought the two devastating natural calamities, producing food above the targeted amount during the last four years, said sources at Department of Agricultural Extension in Barisal division.

There are allegations that the funds allocated for relief and rehabilitations of cyclone affected people were not properly utilised.

A large number of victims of the two cyclones have continued suffering as there was lack of coordination among different agencies and NGOs engaged in the relief and rehabilitation programmes and alleged mismanagement of funds allocated for the purpose, said Gopal Sarker, chief of Barisal divisional chapter of Bangladesh Human Rights Journalists Forum.

Many houses, built for rehabilitation of the cyclone victims, became unusable within a short time as low quality materials were used, said Dheeman Sarker, a contractor in Barguna.

They demanded investigation into the matter.