

# Criminals torch betel garden in Satkhira

## Cut down 46 guava trees in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Criminals torched a betel leaf plantation at Saihati village in Kaliganj upazila of the district on Wednesday night.

Witnesses said a gang of unidentified criminals entered the garden owned by Joydev Kumar Debnath at around 11:30 pm and set fire to it. Betel leaves worth about Tk 5 lakh were destroyed by the fire, locals said.

Being informed, fire fighters from Kaliganj upazila headquarters reached the spot and extinguished the blaze with the help of villagers.

Contacted, Joydev Kumar said he leased one

bigha of land from a villager for Tk 8,000 and cultivated betel on it. Some local influential people might have hand behind this heinous act, he alleged.

Joydev said he took Tk 3 lakh in loan from a Krishi Bank branch and a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to cultivate betel.

"How shall I repay the loan?" said Joydev, adding that he has no other alternative to maintain his four-member family.

AKM Ali Nur, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, said they are looking for the culprits involved.

Our Natore correspondent adds: Forty-six guava trees were felled by unknown criminals at

Paikpara village in Natore Sadar upazila the same night.

"I planted 46 guava trees on a land at my village home at Paikpara village two years ago. An unidentified gang cut down the trees when they were yielding fruit," said Saidur Rahman Fitar, Gurudaspur upazila primary education officer.

No case in connection with the incident was filed with Natore Sadar Police Station as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Abdullah Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they will go for action on receipt of a complaint from the affected person.

### CHEATING DEPOSITORS

# Insurance co official sent to Mymensingh jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The project manager of Sandhani Life Insurance Company at Aampatti in the district town, earlier picked up by police for his alleged cheating of hundreds of depositors with the company, was sent to jail yesterday.

"As the company did not lodge any case with the police station yet, Masud Rana, the alleged project manager, was produced before a Mymensingh court under Section 54 and the court sent him to jail," said Golam Sarwar, officer in charge (OC) of Kotwali police station.

Kotwali police took Masud Rana to the police station early Wednesday from Madhya Barera in Sadar upazila where he was confined by the angry depositors.

Dolly Akhtar, a field worker of the same company, who was also confined to her house at Madhya Barera by 'cheated' depositors on Tuesday morning, went into

### Follow-up

hiding after being freed, company sources said.

Contacted, Mrinal Kanti Acharya, executive director of Sandhani Life Insurance Company, said that he went to the police station on Wednesday night and requested the OC several times to receive the case but he did not respond. The OC, on the other hand, denied the allegation.

Mrinal Kanti said Masud Rana and Dolly Akhtar were suspended from their job on Wednesday for their alleged involvement in cheating the depositors.

"The company's central office yesterday formed a four-member probe committee headed by Major (Retd) Tawhidul Islam, general manager of the company. The committee is due to submit its report within a week," he said.

"The probe committee members will visit Barera and Madhya Barera today [Thursday] to talk to the

victims. The authority also asked me to send an overall report regarding the incident," he added.

Hundreds of depositors besieged the regional office of Sandhani Life Insurance Company at Aampatti in the district town Wednesday afternoon in protest against alleged cheating by Masud Rana. Demanding punishment of the people involved in the cheating, they also blocked the road and went to Kotwali police station with a procession.

The agitators, from Madhya Barera and Barera areas in Mymensingh Sadar upazila, alleged that company official Masud Rana cheated some 2000 depositors, mostly poor, with false premium receipts during last couple of months.

Several of the victims said that they learnt on Monday that their premium instalments in last several months were not deposited with the insurance company office as Masud Rana cheated them with false receipts.



PHOTO: STAR

Mymensingh town sees abundant supply and reasonable prices of different summer vegetables this season. The photo was taken from Machhua Bazar yesterday.

# Newsman assaulted, another gets life threat

## Jubo League man held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Men allegedly belonging to the ruling party assaulted and robbed Jitendra Nath Roy, Baufal upazila correspondent of the daily Samokal, and gave death threat to Mizanur Rahman, the same upazila correspondent of the daily Prothom Alo, on Wednesday night.

Jitendra filed a case under Speedy Trial Act and Mizanur filed a GD with Baufal police station in this regard.

Police arrested Jubo League activist Feroz Sarder, 40, for his alleged involvement with the incident.

Jitendra Nath said four or five Jubo League cadres led

by Feroz and Dulal Pada attacked him when he was crossing Bazar Road on the way to home from the press club at about 8:30pm on Wednesday.

"The gang physically assaulted me and looted my cash and gold chain. At one stage I took shelter in nearby Baufal police station," he said.

"Ruling party men got angry at me after a report titled 'Whip distributes tube well, seeking vote for his mayoral candidate in Baufal municipality polls' was published in the Samokal on May 16," he added.

After hearing the incident of attack on Jitendra, Prothom Alo correspondent Mizanur Rahman and Al

Mamun, president of Baufal Press Club, went to the police station to help Jitendra but Shahjahan Siraj, president of upazila Jubo League and his party men gave life threats to Mizanur Rahman in front of the police station, Mizanur said.

"The gang had become annoyed with me as the Prothom Alo on May 10 and 14 ran two reports on wrongful activities in the area," he said.

Confirming the incidents, Noresh Chandra Karmaker, officer in charge (Operation) of Baufal police station, said, "We have already arrested Feroz for his alleged involvement in the act. We are taking lawful action in this regard."

# AFTER THREE AND A HALF YEARS' HIATUS Kazirhat-Paturia ferry service resumes today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) will resume ferry service on Kazirhat-Paturia route today (Friday), after a hiatus of three and a half years.

Even before permanent stoppage of the ferry service on the route on January 11 in 2009, it remained suspended most of the time during the previous one and a half years, BIWTC sources said.

"Restoration of ferry service on Kazirhat-Paturia route will shorten distance from different northern

districts to the capital. It will also help to reduce huge pressure on Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge," Md Shahadat Hossain, deputy General Manager of BIWTC at Aricha, told this correspondent yesterday.

Although ferry service in the country's one of the leading river routes started on different occasions, it stopped due to the poor presence of vehicles, he said.

"Over 100 km distance would be reduced if a truck goes to Dhaka from Pabna and other northern districts through Kazirhat-Paturia route. At least 60 to 70 litter

of fuel worth Tk 2500 to 3000 would be saved for each goods carrying truck on this route," said Abul Hossain Khan Mohon, president of Northern Region Truck Owners Association.

"We have demanded arranging sufficient ferries on Kazirhat-Paturia route as over a thousand trucks, most of them carrying raw goods, move to the capital everyday. There were 12 ferries on Kazirhat-Paturia route when the ferry service stopped in 2007," Mohon said.

"Primarily the BIWTC has arranged two K-type ferries 'Kaberi' and 'Kopoti', each having capacity to carry 10 to 12 trucks, for plying this route from tomorrow [Friday]. The number of ferries will be increased if we get sufficient response from the truckers," said BIWTC DGM Shahadat Hossain.

Md Abdul Jalil, manager of Kazirhat ferry terminal, said, "The trial for operation has been done today [Thursday]. Planning Minister AK Khandaker will inaugurate the ferry service tomorrow [Friday]. Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan and State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku will also be present as guests at the inaugural function."



PHOTO: STAR

The pontoon at Kazirhat ferry terminal gets ready for operation as ferry service on Kazirhat-Paturia route is set to resume today, after a hiatus of over three and a half years.

# Four held with arms

STAR NATIONAL DESK

The law enforcers arrested four people along with a fire-arm and six lethal weapons in Tangail and Sherpur districts yesterday and the day before.

In Tangail, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two youths along with a foreign made pistol from Bir Ruhuli village in Bhuapur upazila yesterday, reports our correspondent.

On secret information, a team of Rab-12 led by its Commander ASP Mizanur Rahman raided the village and arrested Monirul Islam, 26, of Boira Masum village under Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj district and his accomplice Jahirul Islam, 29.

They also recovered the arms from their possession, said Rab sources.

In Sherpur, police arrested two young men along with six lethal weapons from a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Nokla-Nalitabari road at Dhonakusha in Nalitabari upazila on Wednesday night, reports UNB.

The arrestees were identified as Russell Mia, 24, and Mallik Hossain, 22, of the upazila.

Police said they searched the Nalitabari bound three-wheeler from Nokla upazila in the area at around 11:00pm and arrested the duo along with the six sharp 'ram daos'.

A case was filed in this connection.

# SNAPSHOTS OF YESTERDAY'S HARTAL

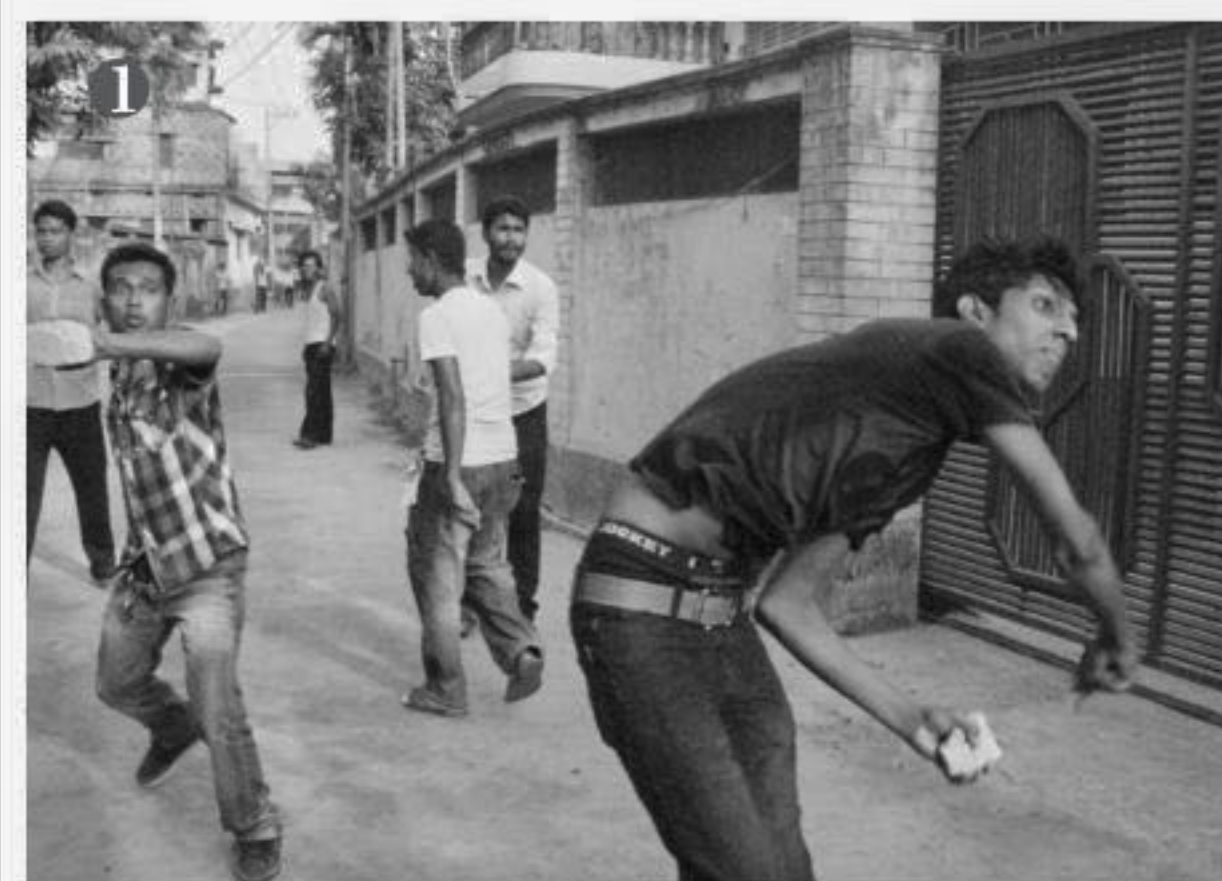


PHOTO: STAR, FOCUS BANGLA

1) Pickets hurl brick chips at law enforcers in Rajshahi city during yesterday's hartal enforced by BNP demanding unconditional release of its leaders and withdrawal of 'false' cases against them, 2) police arrest a BNP man from a procession in Thakurgaon town, 3) pro-hartal procession in Bogra town, 4) Assaduzzaman Market in Gaibandha town remains shut, and 5) Police chase pickets in Dinajpur town.

# Two killed in attack over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Two people were killed and six others injured in an attack over a land dispute at Baraigram upazila in Natore yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Nazrul Islam, 40, and Abdus Salam, 42, of Goppara village in the upazila.

Police quoting locals as saying Abdur Razzak and his hired goons equipped with sharp weapons stormed into the house of his uncle Taleb Biswas at around 9:30am and hit the family members with

sharp weapons.

Nazrul died on the spot while six others, including Salam, received serious injuries.

The injured were rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where Salam succumbed to his injuries, police said.

Locals said Razzak and Taleb have a dispute over the ownership of two bighas of land.

Razzak had gone into hiding soon after the incident. Taleb Biswas filed a case against his nephew with Baraigram Police station.

# Two housewives tortured for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two housewives were tortured allegedly by their husbands for dowry at two villages in Kalapara upazila in a week.

The victims, Asma Begum, 28, of Nachnapara village, and Asma, 25, of Baliatali village, are now undergoing treatment at the upazila health complex.

Police said Asma Begum, daughter of Billal Bepari of Munshiganj, married Azad Bepari of Nachnapara village 14 years ago. They have a 14-year-old boy.

After marriage, Azad put pressure on Asma to bring Tk two lakh in dowry from her father. As she refused to do so, Azad and his family members often used to torture her.

On May 13, Azad beat up Asma mercilessly over the

issue and later he tied her to an electric poll at his house.

Locals rescued the victim in the morning and sent her to the health complex in a critical condition. Azad tried to pick up his wife from the health complex but failed due to a resistance by other patients.

At Baliatali village, housewife Asma was tortured allegedly by her husband and in-laws on May 10.

The victim said her husband Mamun Sikder and his family members beat up her on the day as she failed to bring Tk one lakh in dowry from her parents.

On information, her father came to the house and took her to the health complex on May 12.

Earlier in November last year, she brought Tk 75,000 from her father and gave it to Mamun.

# 16 rescued while being trafficked to India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) rescued 16 people, including three women and a child, yesterday while they were being trafficked to India through Putkhali Border.

The victims hail from Madaripur, Khulna, Bagerhat and Narail

districts.

BGB-26 Camp Commander Humayun Kabir said acting on a tip-off, they raided the border area in the morning and rescued the 16.

However, the traffickers fled the scene, sensing the presence of the BGB men.

Later, the victims were handed over to Benapole police, he said.