

RAB SMASHES FOREST ROBBERS' DEN

# 14 abducted fishermen rescued after gunfight

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A Rab-8 team early yesterday rescued 14 of the 200 fishermen, kidnapped a week ago, following a gunfight with robbers at Narkelbaria in Sharankhola upazila in the Sundarbans East Zone. Maj Sabbir Rahman Osmani, deputy commander of Rab-8 (Barisal), said acting on secret information, they raided a den of forest robbers at Narkelbaria Char in the morning. The gunfight ensued as the gang, sensing the presence of law enforcers, opened fire at the Rab team.

At one stage, the robbers retreated and fled the scene.

The Rab troops then rescued the 14 fishermen along with two trawlers and recovered two shotguns from the spot.

Meanwhile, a commander of Mongla coastguard said that the members of the coastguard, Navy and Air Force and Rab were raiding the dens of the robbers.

He said a joint drive was launched yesterday noon to rescue the fishermen kidnapped by robbers in the Sundarbans East Zone last Friday to Sunday.

He further said that over

300 members of Navy and Coastguard, led by Coastguard zonal commander M Saidur Rahman, along with four ships and six speedboats and three mechanised boats were conducting the drive.

Intelligence sources said the Air Force assisted the drive with a helicopter, reports UNB.

According to the sources, the joint forces identified the dens of the forest robbers in Dublar Char, Shelar Char, Kalir Char, Pushpakathi and Jwakhali coastal areas of Sundarbans east and west zones in

Bagerhat, Khulna and Satkhira districts.

The robbers of notorious Mortoza Bahini and Sagor Bahini attacked the fishermen on Aug 10-12 while they were catching hilsa in the Bay of Bengal.

The robbers later demanded a ransom of Tk 50,000 for release of each fisherman. They also threatened to kill the fishermen if their demand was not met within a week.

The kidnapped fishermen hailed from different areas of Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Bhola and Patuakhali districts.

## 8 grenades found in cropland

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police recovered eight grenades from a cropland in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur district on Wednesday afternoon.

Selim Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kaunia Police Station, said Nasima Begum, a woman labourer, found the grenades while she was working on the cropland at Gobrapara village at around 3:00pm.

Nasima informed Azharul Islam, deputy commander of Kaunia upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad of the matter. Azharul recovered the grenades, took them to his house and informed Kaunia police.

Police along with upazila Muktiyoddha commander Suruzzaman went to Zharul's house and brought the grenades to Kaunia Police Station.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH  
Fish traders along with their family members preserve hilsa in salt in Sitakunda of Chittagong as the sea along the upazila sees a good catch of the delicious fish in the last few days.

# Attractive handiwork of needles and threads from 20 villages

Several thousand women busy ahead of Eid

TEAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Several thousand women in around 20 remote villages under the district are now busy making artistic fancy works on women's dresses like saris, scarves, blouses and kameezes as several Dhaka-based garment traders placed orders to make fashionable designs ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Getting the attractive designs done for very cheap labour, traders make a good profit while the seasonal earning helps the artisans, mostly poor women, to have a joyful festival with family members.

This correspondent in last couple of days visited the handiwork at several villages like Dhelapeer, Islambagh,

Golhat and Neyamatpur of Saidpur upazila, Tenganmari, Rajarhat, Dundibari and Poursava under Jaldhaka upazila, and Panchapukur and Kaniakhat of Sadar upazila.

Sitting at their house yard in circles, middle-aged women, young girls and even children were seen making artistic designs on different kinds of clothes by setting *chumki, puti, jori*, colourful stones, lace and other fancy articles with the help of needles and threads.

Artisans usually learn the art of making the attractive designs from family members and neighbours.

As small children, they start the work as assistants of their mothers or elder sisters.

"We do these design work after finishing our domestic

chores in the morning. My nine-year-old daughter also helps me in the work and learns the art," Shakila Banu, an artisan in Dhelapeer village said.

"Dhaka-based traders supply sarees and other clothes and necessary fancy articles and catalogues containing various designs. Village women make the designs, according to choice of the order suppliers," said Anwar Hossain, president of 'Karu shilpi samobai samity' in Saidpur.

Some local garments traders who have show rooms in Saidpur, Jaldhaka and Nilphamari like Champa Karchupi House, Pappu Fashion, Ruma Fashion, Mukta Fashion, Mina Batik House, Saudia Handicraft usually coordinate between Dhaka-based traders and village

artisans in this work.

They sell a portion of the products at local markets while the larger portion is sent to Dhaka traders in exchange of handsome amounts of commission. Some local garment traders and individuals also supply clothes and fancy goods to village women for getting the artistic works done.

"The work starts in full swing two months before the Eid-ul-Fitr as hundreds of sarees and other dresses with artistic designs are prepared and sent to the capital. But the import of Indian dresses with machine-made designs leave a negative impact on local handiwork industry," SM Ali, owner of Champa Karchupi House, told newsmen.

Depending on the nature and quality of designs, an artisan gets Tk 700-Tk 1200 as wage for a saree, Tk 250-400 for a modesty scarf and Tk 100-Tk 250 for a blouse, sources said. It takes at least 15 days to make complete design on a silk saree.

Several artisans of Dhelapeer village of Saidpur upazila, including Baby Akhtar, Kazoli, Parveen, Shahida, Moni, Ayesha, and Asha said the seasonal work enables them to buy new dresses, churi, bangles, toys and other things as well as arrange good food for family members on the occasion of the Eid.

Depending on the quality of cloth and gravity of design, a designed saree is usually sold for Tk 5,000-Tk 30,000 in Dhaka, sources said.

Amid rising popularity of the items, the number of orders from Dhaka is increasing and more and more women are getting involved in this seasonal profession.



PHOTO: STAR

Middle-aged women, young girls and even children at Dhelapeer village in Saidpur upazila of Nilphamari are busy making artistic fancy works on women's dresses, setting *chumki, puti, jori*, colourful stones and other articles with the help of needles and threads to supply the attractive dresses to Dhaka-based garment traders ahead of Eid.



PHOTO: STAR

Land subsidence victims of eight villages around Barapukuria coal mine have to offer Eid prayers at other places this year too as the lone Eidgah in the area has remained under water since 2010.

## Robber killed in blast while throwing bombs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, C'nawabganj

A robber was killed and two of his accomplices were injured in bomb explosion at Collegepara under Mohadebpur upazila of Naogaon district early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Israil Hossain, 45, son of Ismail Hossain of Bagdanga village under Sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj.

The injured are Samir, 40, son of Setabuddin of Satoshia villager under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj, and Abul Hossain, 50, son of Tilak Chad of Madisahar village under Mohadebpur upazila of Naogaon.

Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohadebpur Police Station said a gang of robbers entered the house of one Kachu Babu at Collegepara by breaking open the door at around 1:30 am. Being informed by locals, a police team went to the village.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the robbers started hurling bombs at them. Suddenly, a bomb fell to the ground and exploded, injuring Israil, Samir and Abul.

Police detained the tree and took them to Mohadebpur Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition where Israil succumbed to his injuries at 12:55pm.

## BARAPUKURIA LAND SUBSIDENCE

# Lone Eidgah for 8 villages still remains under water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

As in the two previous years, land subsidence victims of eight villages around Barapukuria coal mine have to offer Eid prayers at other places this year too since the only Eidgah in the area still remains under water.

Around 16,000 villagers have been offering Eid prayers at a school ground at Barapukuria Bazar and at other places for the last two years as the 60-year-old

Eidgah went under water as lands subsided due to mining in 2010.

The affected villages are Barapukuria, Kalupara, Balorampur, Jigagari, Boddyanathpur, Moupukur, Baspukur and Islampur.

The Eidgah where the villagers used to offer Eid prayers and the land surrounding the Eidgah remains under waist-deep water.

Md Ibrahim Khalil, convener of Jibon O Shampad

Rakkha Committee, said as the school ground is too small to accommodate a large number of devotees, the villagers have to go other places to offer Eid prayers.

Md Belal Hossain, general secretary of the committee, said they had to offer prayers last year on a road near the Bazar due to shortage of Eid grounds in the area. He demanded allocation of fund to prepare an Eidgah on a high land in the area.

## MUSHROOMING DWELLINGS, BRICK KILNS

# Cultivable lands decreasing fast in Rangpur region

UNB, Rangpur

Cultivable lands have been shrinking fast in the region due to an increase in construction of dwelling houses and brick-fields on the farmlands.

If the conversion of arable land continues at the current pace, production of aman paddy and other crops will be badly affected in the near future, fear farmers and officials.

In the current season, production of aman will fall short of target in the region as the total land brought under the cultivation is 60,000 hectares less than that of last year.

Farmers have brought 1,024,068 hectares of land

under aman cultivation in eight districts in the region in the current season whereas the paddy was cultivated on about 1,084,068 hectares in the last season.

Deputy Director of Rangpur Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Firoz Ahmed attributed the shortfall to occupying cultivable land for other purposes, including for construction of dwelling houses and brick kilns.

He said the region has been losing arable lands due to the use of farmlands for other purposes, resulting in a cut in cultivation target.

He, however, hoped that the growers, after harvesting

of jute, will bring more lands under aman cultivation.

There are at least 487 brick fields in the region and at least 10 acres were required for building each one, affecting the agricultural production, said agronomists.

The brick fields were set up on the farmlands mostly without taking permission from the Department of the Environment (DoE).

Of the total brick kilns, 108 are in Rangpur district, 41 in Kurigram, 32 in Nilphamari, 52 in Gaibandha, 22 in Lalmonirhat, 157 in Dinajpur, 50 in Thakurgaon and 25 in Panchagarh districts.

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