

MADHYAPARA HARD ROCK COMPANY

# 8 devices used for detonating explosives stolen from store

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least eight electronic devices meant for detonating explosives have been stolen from the highly secured storehouse of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd (MGMCL) in Phulbari upazila under the district.

At around 11:30am yesterday, the officials and staff who went to the storehouse called 'Permanent Magazine House' found its locks broken and they informed Md Abdul Latif, security in charge of the mine.

Sources said that the warehouse located around two kilometres from the administrative building of MGMCL, the storehouse has three rooms to contain the highly power-

ful explosives that are used to break underground rocks for extraction.

There were 72,510 pieces of electric detonable copper cable, 5,287 pieces of non-electric detonators (8 to 17 metre in length), 9,835kg 25MM diameter explosives, 12,375kg of 50MM diameter explosives, 1,58,565 metres of detonator cord and 66,200kg of ammonium nitrate in the stock till Monday, said Rafiqul Islam, manager (Store) of MGMCL.

Shortly after the incident, MGMCL Managing Director Md Moinul Islam formed a three-member probe committee led by Mir Mohammad Abdul Hannan, general manager (Marketing) of

MGMCL.

The committee, also comprising deputy general managers Md Asaduzzaman and Said Rafiqul Islam, was asked to count the items in the store and submit their report by 4:00pm yesterday.

By evening, they detected that at least eight electronic devices went missing from the store.

However, counting of the large amount of items, including explosives, was taking much longer time, Md Asaduzzaman told this correspondent yesterday evening.

The committee has also been asked to file a report on security arrangement of the mine area within two days.

Around 80 Ansar members per-

form duty under Md Abdul Latif, the security in charge, to ensure the safety of the mine and the surrounding area.

Md Moinul Islam, superintendent of police of Dinajpur, who visited the warehouse area yesterday afternoon, told this correspondent, "The warehouse is surrounded by a barbed wire and a mud wall. As the two-layer security measure has remained intact, it is clear that the incident took place with help of a section of mine officials and staff."

When contacted, Md Abdul Latif confirmed the incident of breaking of locks of the warehouse but he did not elaborate on the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

Dredgers continue sand extraction from the Jamuna River near the Bangabandhu Bridge, posing threat to the country's largest bridge connecting the northern region with the capital. The photo was taken from Polshia in Bhuapur upazila under Tangail district a few days ago.

# Mindless sand lifting on from near Bangabandhu Bridge

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Sand lifting from Jamuna riverbed close to the Bangabandhu Bridge is posing a threat to the country's largest bridge.

Several villages have been facing serious erosion while large shoals emerged in the river due to the mindless act.

Powerful dredgers have been engaged to lift sand allegedly on verbal permission from the bridge authorities, sources said.

The unplanned sand lifting by some influential people goes on unabated due to their links with political parties as well as public representatives, they said.

During a visit to the area recently, this correspondent saw at least eight powerful dredgers engaged in lifting sand randomly from a very close point of the east side of guide embankment.

Sand lifting was also seen at Gabsara, Khanurbari, Baintain, Madhur Bari, Kornogati areas of the river between Bhuapur upazila in Tangail and Sadar upazila in Sirajganj.

Rafiq Talukder, one of the dredger owners, told this correspondent that they started lifting sand from the area after taking permission from the bridge authorities.

The villages on the east side of the bridge were facing serious erosion while large shoals emerged on the west side, threatening to change the river course to the east, victims said.

Anwar Hossain of the erosion affected Kukadair village in Bhuapur said that the dredgers enter the restricted area at night and leave locations before day break.

He alleged that a large portion of his house was devoured by the river a few days ago as erosion was continuing at villages on the north eastern side of the bridge due to the unplanned sand lifting.

Most of the lifted sand is transported by giant cargos and engine boats to eight sand selling points only five kilometers away from the Bangabandhu bridge. Later hundreds of trucks take the

sand to different areas of the country through Jokarchar-Tarakandi flood control embankment-cum-road and Bangabandhu Bridge approach road.

Movement of the hundreds of sand-laden boats and trucks creates problem for the waterways while damages the embankment and road.

Although the sand traders have been doing a brisk business in these vital areas of the bridge for last several years, the authorities concerned seem to turn a blind eye to it, Anwar said.

Contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, an assistant engineer of Bangladesh Bridge Authorities (BBA) at Bangabandhu Bridge site, refuted the allegation of giving verbal permission to anybody to lift sand from near the bridge.

"We do not allow this within 1.2 kilometer of the bridge," he said.

There is no chance of change in river course as a big shoal has already emerged near the east side of guide embankment, he observed.

## Who to blame

FROM PAGE 20

Uttara on Monday night on the eve of the Jamaat-enforced countrywide hartal.

His family are numbed by the shock. Russel's father Saiful Islam could not save his son and saw him die, just before him.

"As a father, how can I bear this for the rest of my life?"

Russel had been suffering from severe headache for a few months and that day he along with his father visited a doctor.

On the way back, they boarded a bus and sat together on the rear seats.

"When the bus was set ablaze, both of us kept our hands tied and tried to get down. At one stage, other passengers pushed us so hard that we got separated," said Saiful, who also suffered burns in the arson.

"I could not see anything due to huge smoke. My body caught fire. I broke a window glass and jumped out."

Saiful then screamed for help to save his son. By the time fire service personnel came and put out the fire, Russel's fate was decided.

"Firemen pulled out a charred body and that was my son," Saiful said, bursting into tears.

He had identified his son by the belt.

The family members had been suspecting that Russel had brain tumour, said his wife Farzana Mahmud Tonni.

"The medical report was supposed to come today [yesterday] but now it is no longer needed," Tonni sighed.

The couple has a baby aged about two months.

Russel was buried at a graveyard in Nadda Para of Dhakhkhin Khan yesterday afternoon.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku and LGRD State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanok, among others, visited the victim's house at Nadda Para.

Tuku assured the family that the government would punish the criminals immediately.

Uttara police filed a murder case against 94 Jamaat-Shibir and BNP men, naming former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president Azizul Bari Helal as the prime accused.

None was arrested until filing of this report around 7:30pm yesterday.

The victim's family members did not file any case.

"Political parties will try to secure political gain if we file a case. We don't want my brother to become a political tool," Russel's brother Rashed Mahmud said. He demanded punishment to the attackers.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals, teachers and students form a human chain at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar, demanding punishment to criminals who raped a college girl that caused her mother's death.

# Mother's death follows rape of college girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Teachers and students accompanied by locals formed a human chain on Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat road at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday, demanding punishment to the criminals responsible for rape of a college girl on Saturday and death of her mother on Monday.

The girl, an HSC first year student of a local college, was raped at a house of Durakuti village in Sadar upazila on Saturday, and police arrested the alleged rapist Abdus Sattar, 38, a truck driver, and his alleged abettor Nazma Begum, 28, both residents of the village, on Sunday.

The victims' mother died of a heart attack at her home on Monday noon as the woman, already afflicted with the brutality on her daughter, received continued threat by rapist's relatives, Amirul Hayat Mukul, principal of the college, said at the human chain yesterday.

"The victim college girl and her younger brother, a class seven student, got fainted several times after the death of their mother," said Habibur Rahman Habib, chairman of Mogholhat union parishad.

The victim girl's father, a day labourer, who took part in the human chain, showed all signs of despair.

"My late wife, also working as a day labourer, faced all the hardship with a smiling face as she hoped to see our daughter and son educated. But tragedy has befallen our family, making me utterly frustrated," he said.

Lalmonirhat Sadar police station OC Jamir Uddin said, after post mortem police handed over the deceased woman's body to her relatives and it was cremated at the local *shuashan* (crematory) in the village yesterday noon.

"Police have already identified all the criminals whose threat led to the death of the raped girl's mother. We hope to arrest them soon," he added.

# 3 killed in Ctg violence

FROM PAGE 1

Cadres swooped on law enforcers in the port city's Dewanhat area. They opened fire and hurled hand-made bombs at police.

A pedestrian suffered injuries in the blasts.

Admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), he succumbed to his injuries immediately after being taken to an operation theatre, doctors said.

The victim, Afzal Ahmed, 25, was a vendor from Pahartali, Chittagong.

Another pedestrian, Shafiqul Islam, 24, a garment worker, suffered serious injuries being hit by sticks as he was caught in the clash.

Shafiqul breathed his last at the CMCH around 9:15pm, Assistant Sub-Inspector Pankaj Barua of CMCH Police Camp said.

Earlier around 12:30pm, a man was killed in a gunfight between police and pro-hartal activists in the port city's Alankar intersection.

The victim, Imran Khan, was a first-year student of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute. Jamaat claimed the youth was its activist but his father told The Daily Star that he was not involved in politics.

Soon after the tribunal pronounced its verdict around 11:30am, Jamaat and its student body Islami Chhatra Shibir went berserk and vandalised more than 100 shops and automobiles at different parts of the country, said witnesses.

The rioters also torched at least 30 vehicles including five police vans.

Equipped with firearms and sharp weapons, Jamaat-Shibir men attacked police and hurled bombs at three places including Nabaganj in Dinajpur leaving four police members injured.

Over 35 people in Chittagong and 65 more elsewhere suffered wounds when the Jamaat-Shibir cadres fought pitched battles with the law enforcers.

The injured include at least 25 policemen.

Witnesses told The Daily Star that several hundred pickets equipped with sticks and brick chips attacked police at Alankar intersection in Chittagong and blasted hand-made bombs around 1:00pm.

In Bahaddarhat intersection, over 2,000 Jamaat-Shibir men wielding guns brought out a militant procession around 1:00pm. They went on the rampage smashing shops and torching at least 20 vehicles.

The activists marched towards Panchlaish Police Station while firing shots. Police had to fire back to disperse the attackers.

At least eight people including an additional deputy commissioner and a constable of Chittagong Metropolitan Police were injured in clashes in the port city. They were admitted to CMCH.

Police nabbed 15 persons in connection with the Bahaddarhat incident.

# Bumper yield, good profit

## Brinjal farmers happy in Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Bumper yield of brinjal and its high price in local market have brought smile on the faces of farmers in different areas of the district.

The growers said they have got good yield of the vegetable this year due to favourable weather condition. "We are also earning good profit by selling brinjal at Tk 30 per kg in the local market," they said, adding that it was priced at Tk 20 last year.

Ashraf Islam, 55, of Komlabari village in Aditmari upazila said a farmer can earn Tk 1,200 to 3,000, spending only Tk 250 to 300 for cultivating brinjal on one decimal of land.

Brinjal, harvested from a field at Phulgachh village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, being put into a sack to take it to a local market for sale. Farmers are upbeat due to bumper yield of the vegetable and its high price this year.

PHOTO: STAR

"I could achieve a good yield of the vegetable as my wife and three college-going sons helped me cultivate brinjal and nurture the growth of the plants.

Shamsul Alam, 50, of the same village said he cultivated brinjal on 10 decimals of land only to meet his family's requirement. But due to bumper output of the vegetable this year, he has earned Tk

17,000 by selling it. "Next year, I will cultivate brinjal on more land. I hope to make a good profit from brinjal farming," he said with a big smile on his face.

District officials of the Agriculture Extension Department (AED) said brinjal was cultivated on 265 hectares of land in the district this year. It has brought solvency to at

least 600 farmer families in the district.

Abdul Majid, deputy director of Lalmonirhat AED, said a farmer can grow four to six maunds of brinjal on a decimal of land if he nurtures the growth of plants properly.

Brinjal farmers are gaining good profit this year due to poor supply of other vegetables to the market, he added.

