

Stone lifting from Teesta threatens irrigation, dyke projects

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Illegal stone lifting from the Teesta in the upstream of the Teesta Barrage threatens the country's largest irrigation project at Daliya village in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat district and an under construction dyke on Bangladesh-India border at Char Tepa Khoribari village in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari district.

A group of locals in collusion with a section of Water Development Board (WDB) officials have continued the callous act for a month, locals said.

At least 50 dredgers are engaged to do the work around the clock but there is no action from the WDB authorities, police or upazila administrations of Hatibandha and Dimla upazilas, they said.

On May 23, a team of Border Guard Bangladesh led by Rangpur Sector Commander Col Niyamul Islam Fatemi seized six dredger machines beside the under construction dyke at Char Tepa Khoribari village of Dimla upazila.

"An organised gang illegally lift stones with dredgers from the river. The machines create sound pollution in the area. But the local people can't protest it as the gang has connections with the ruling party leaders and government officials," said Azizul Islam, 42, a schoolteacher at Daliya village.



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal stone lifting with dredgers from the Teesta River at Char Khoribari village of Sanyazan union in Hatibandha upazila under Lalmonirhat district poses threat to Teesta Barrage in Hatibandha upazila under the district and an under construction dyke on Bangladesh-India border in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari district.

"Illegal stone lifting beside the under construction dyke on Bangladesh-India border in Dimla upazila also affects my union [Sanyazan] and two other unions of Hatibandha upazila," said Mohammad Enayetullah, chairman of Sanyazan union parishad (UP).

"If the illegal stone lifting continues, the under construction dyke is likely to collapse during the rainy season and it will bring untold sufferings to several thousand families in these unions. Locals complained

to the authorities of Water Development Board at Daliya but no action has been taken yet," he added.

Jamal Uddin Bulu, chairman of Goddimari UP of Hatibandha upazila, said, "The WDB authority at Daliya can take legal action with the help of the upazila administration and the police anytime but it is not being done due to unknown reasons. Illegal stone lifting poses serious threat to Teesta Barrage and the under construction dyke and leaves several thousand people in my union vulnera-

ble to erosion and flooding by the Teesta River."

Contacted, Mahbubur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB at Daliya, said they have already stopped illegal stone lifting from the Teesta River beside the under construction dyke.

"A group of people backed by the ruling party leaders are lifting stone from different places near the Teesta Barrage. WDB officials cannot fully stop illegal stone lifting from the river without the help of local administration and the police," he added.

Settlers enforce blockade in 3 hill dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (PBCP) enforced a daylong roads and waterways blockade in three hill districts yesterday, demanding cancellation of CHT Land Commission Act amendment proposal passed by the cabinet on Monday.

The leaders of PBCP, a platform of Bangalee settlers, announced the blockade programme through a press conference on Tuesday.

In Khagrachhar, the PBCP activists blocked the roads by burning tyres at Shapla Chattar, municipality bus stand and some other points in the town. Inter-district and local buses were off the roads during the programme.

A chase and counter-chase between police and pickets took place in Shapla Chattar area at around 8:30am. Police picked up PBCP member Masum Rana from the spot.

Police Superintendent Sheikh Mizanur Rahman told this correspondent that PBCP-enforced blockade in the district ended peacefully.

BSF picks up cattle trader

UNB, Chuadanga

Members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up a Bangladeshi cattle trader from Madenapur border in Jibannagar upazila on Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Rezaul, 30, son of Tahajol Vangri of Hariharanagar village.

Major Mehedi Hasan, deputy commander of Chuadanga-6 Battalion BGB, said a BSF team from Putkhal border picked up Rezaul when he along with four other cattle traders entered the Indian territory through Madenipur border in the morning to bring cattle.

However, other cattle traders managed to flee.

After the incident, at a flag meeting at zero point in the afternoon, BSF informed BGB that Rezaul was handed over to Kristagaya police of India on charge of intrusion.

Housewife 'commits suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A newly-wed housewife allegedly committed suicide over family feud at Sonaroy village in Pirgachha upazila on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Promila Rani, 19, daughter of Narandra Nath of Ghageya-Chaitan village under Sundarganj upazila and wife of Dhananjay, 25, of Sonaroy village.

Police and locals said, Promila and Dhananjay often locked in altercation over trivial matters after a month of their marriage. She took her life by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room Wednesday morning.

MAGURA MAYORAL BYPOLL

3 defeated candidates finally file writ

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Three candidates defeated in the by-election for the mayoral post of Magura municipality have jointly filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) division of the Supreme Court, challenging the poll results.

The candidates are Awami League (AL) backed Khurshid Haidar Tutul, BNP backed Dr Mahbubul Haque Siddiquee and Jatiya Party (JP) backed advocate Hasan Seraj Suja.

In the petition filed on May 27, the candidates rejected the gazette notifica-

tion issued by the Election Commission on May 16, declaring Iqbal Akhtar Khan as mayor of Magura municipality.

They sought a court order for recounting of votes, alleging that the election results were manipulated.

The by-poll for the mayoral post was held on May 6 as the post fell vacant following the death of Mohammad Altaf Hossain on February 12.

The writ petition is pending for hearing with a High Court bench, comprising Justice Naima Haidar and Justice Zafar Ahmed, said lawyer for the petitioners

advocate Humayun Kabir Manju.

The petitioners also stated that 19 presiding officers (POs) out of the 31 were appointed from Magura Government Huseyn Shahid Suhrawardy College in a bid to influence the election.

The presiding officers forced the polling agents to remain out of the booths for about 15 minutes before counting ballots, they alleged.

On May 11, the defeated candidates held a joint press conference where they formally rejected the election results, alleging manipulation.



PHOTO: STAR

Traders under the banner of Thakurgaon Zila Babosayee Sangathan Oikya Parishad held a rally at Thakurgaon intersection, blocking Bangabandhu Road in the town yesterday. They were demanding immediate arrest of the robbers who looted around 300 tolas of gold ornaments from Khawaja Guinea House, a jeweller's in the town, on May 22.

THAKURGAON JEWELLERY HEIST

Traders keep their shutters down, hold protest rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Traders at a protest rally in the town yesterday demanded immediate arrest of the robbers who looted gold ornaments from a jewellery shop on May 22.

Under the banner of Thakurgaon Zila Babosayee Shangathan Oikya Parishad, they held the rally at Thakurgaon intersection in the morning. Eight days into the incident, police are yet to arrest the 'real' criminals and recover the looted gold ornaments, alleged the speakers at the rally.

They also threatened to go for a tougher agitation if the demand was not met immediately.

Among others, president of Thakurgaon Babosayee Samity Samsuzzaman, municipality mayor SMA Moin, vice-president of Thakurgaon Chamber of Commerce and Industries

Murad Hossain and general secretary of Thakurgaon Jewellery Owners' Association Hafizur Rahman, spoke.

The shopkeepers and owners of different business establishments also kept their shutters down till noon to realise the demand.

A gang of 7/8 in a microbus swooped on 'Khawaja Guinea House' at about 9:30pm and looted 300 tolas of gold ornaments amid presence of hundreds of people at Bazarpara market, said police.

The law enforcers later arrested seven people in this connection and seized the microbus at Bhulli Bazar in Sadar upazila.

The arrestees are Ilyas Mia, Mosharrar Hossain, Arman Ali, Tazul Islam, Selim Mia, Md Sobhan and driver Musa Mia of Narayanganj.

Youth jailed for stalking in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A mobile court here yesterday sentenced a youth to three months imprisonment for harassing a school-girl sexually.

Upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) in Bhupur Mohammad Helaluzzaman Sarker, delivered the verdict against Mohammad Mamun, 25, son of Abu Bakar of Pach Tikri village in Ghatail upazila.

Abu Obaida, officer in-charge (investigation) at Bhupur police station, said Mamun abused a student of Bhupur Girls High School physically on a lonely road when she was returning home from a coaching center at around 9:00am.

Police detained Mamun and produced him before the UNO after the girl and her mother lodged a complaint against him over the incident.

Later the mobile court, headed by the UNO, handed down the punishment.

SNIPPETS

ASI closed for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An assistant sub-inspector of Sadar police station was closed on Wednesday on charge of demanding bribe from a complainant. Police said a truck of one Abul Hossain Titas, son of Prof Abdul Mannan of Gokul area, was stolen on May 11. When Titas came to file a case in connection with the theft, ASI Ashit Kumar Sarkar demanded bribe. Later, Titas lodged a complaint against the ASI and superintendent of police Mozammel Haque closed Ashit to the district police line.

Youth gets life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A court in Joypurhat district yesterday sentenced a youth to life term imprisonment for murdering his friend. The convict is Touhidul Islam Sohel, 19, son of Shahin Master of Shantinagar in Sadar upazila. The court also fined Sohel Tk 20,000, in default, to suffer more two years in jail. Additional District and Session Judge AKM Shahid Iqbal Ahmed handed down the verdict in a crowded courtroom. Other two accused in the case were acquitted of the charges. According to the prosecution, Shadhan Kumar Das, 19, son of Ruma Das of Shantinagar village, was killed on 8 November, 2009 following an altercation over a mobile phone. A murder case was filed accusing three people including Sohel.

Elderly woman abducted

OUR COIRRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An elderly woman was abducted from Ananda Nagar village in Shaikhpura upazila yesterday. Identified as Lipi Begum, 54, she was mother-in-law of Rafikul Islam, general secretary of 56 NO ward BNP and vice president of Bangabazar Market Committee in Dhaka. Rafikul was murdered in the capital on January 5 this year. Officer in-charge Anwar Hossain of Shaikhpura police station said, a gang of 4/5 in a microbus picked up Lipi when she was going to Ananda Nagar Bazar from Sheikhpara at 12:30pm.

Toxic mangoes destroyed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A mobile court in a drive here yesterday destroyed formalin mixed fruits including mangoes and grapes. The court, led by executive magistrate Md Mobarak Hossain, also fined the fruit traders Tk 29,800. The magistrate said, they raided Bahadurbazar and Dinajpur Fruit markets in the town and seized about 435 kgs and 36kgs formalin-mixed mango and grasp. Later, those were destroyed, said the magistrate.

Youth stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A youth man was stabbed to death by district town on Wednesday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Mintu Hossain, 33, son of Abdul Hamid of Poilanpur area of the town. Police sources said Mintu had a longstanding dispute with a local group over toll collection at Poilanpur tempo (human hauler) stand. A gang of 4-5 swooped on Mintu in front of the tempo stand around 6:30pm and stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to Pabna Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

EXTORTION CASE

Court again turns down Pintu's petition for bail

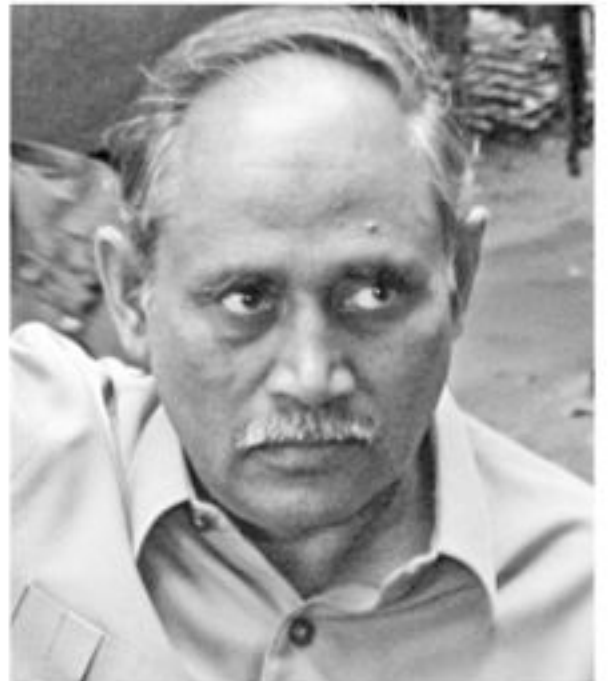
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Tangail court yesterday again rejected the bail petition of BNP central leader and former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu in an extortion case.

He was produced in the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Sheuly Rani Das, who rejected the bail petition and sent him to jail. The same court on April 25 rejected Pintu's bail prayer in the case and sent him to jail.

Local AL worker Zahidul Islam Bhuiyan alias Lebu filed the case against Pintu and 10 others with Bhupur Police Station on October 13 last year.

In the case statement, the complainant stated that a gang of 10 on the instruction of Abdus Salam Pintu stormed into his house on October 1, 2001 and demanded Tk 3 lakh from his wife Flora Begum.



Abdus Salam Pintu

As she refused to oblige, the gang vandalised the house and took away money and other valuables, the complainant added.

Pintu, one of the accused in the case for grenade attack on Awami League (AL) rally in the city on August 21, 2004, was brought to Tangail from Dhaka Central Jail in a prison van on Wednesday night.

Of the 10 other accused, eight were earlier granted bail by the High Court while the rest two are now staying abroad, police said.



A large portion of Mawa launch and ferry terminal in Munshiganj collapsed into the Padma yesterday. Ferry and launch services on Mawa-Kawrakandi route remained halted throughout the day as the river was rough due to gusty winds coupled with huge waves, right, the approach road of Elisha ferry terminal in Bhola was inundated during high tide on Wednesday night, disrupting Bhola-Laxmipur ferry service.



PHOTO: STAR