

# Set up 5 years ago, Ramgati weather office yet to open

Anti-social elements rule the new building

UNB, Laxmipur

The newly set up weather office in Ramgati upazila is yet to start functioning though five years have already passed since completion of the building.

Because of the delay in its opening, the people of the district are being deprived of weather service while the building turning into a den of different anti-social elements, including drugs addicts.

In 2008, the weather office building was set up at Char Sekandar in the upazila, spending Tk 1 crore

and since then its activities have not been started for the reasons unknown.

There are 17 lakh people in the coastal district where around 62,000 live on fishing in the Meghna River.

Mainly to help the fishermen, the Inland Water Transport Weather Forecast Department under the Weather Directorate has set up the office.

Ismail Hossain Jabu, a college student, said drug addicts gather at in the building in daytime or at night finding it desolate and female students of different

institutions face sexual harassment by them while crossing the area.

Fishermen Rahim, Salamat Ullah and Abdul Khaleq who donated land for the office building alleged that their expectation behind donating the land is yet to be fulfilled.

They urged the government to start its operation as early as possible.

Shahed Ali Patu, mayor of Ramgati municipality, said seeing the building abandoned, many criminals have engaged in anti-social activities there.

He also sought the intervention of higher authorities' in opening the office immediately.

Arunendra Kishore Chakrabarty, an official of Laxmipur Relief and Rehabilitation Centre, said the matter of the weather office building lying unused was informed to the higher authorities and its staff would be recruited soon to open it within next few months.

Once opened, dwellers of Noakhali and Laxmipur will be helped by its weather forecast, he said.

## 2 to die for killing woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A court here on Wednesday sentenced two people to death for killing a woman.

The convicts are Santash of Gokulnagar village in Sadar upazila and his brother Afasr.

Additional District and Sessions Judge and Judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-2 Md Mafizur Rahman Bhuiyan handed down the verdict in presence of the siblings.

According to the prosecution, Santash killed his wife Mazeda Begum with the help of Afasar for dowry on June 11, 2007.

Mazeda Begum's brother then filed a murder case accusing Santash and Afasar.

## Two jailed for stalking

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two stalkers were jailed in Joypurhat and Bogra districts yesterday and the day before.

In Joypurhat, a mobile court here on Wednesday sentenced a youth to one year's imprisonment for stalking a schoolgirl, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Stalker Md Chanchal Ali, 24, son of Nawajesh Ali of Patarkul village in Panchbibi upazila, used to harass the girl of the area on her way to school.

Following a complaint filed by the victim's family, the court, led by executive magistrate Abdul Mannan, found the youth guilty and pronounced the punishment, said Nur Hossain, officer in-charge of Panchbibi police station.

In Bogra, a young man was awarded one year imprisonment for sexually harassing a college girl in Gabtoli upazila yesterday.

Convict Shaharil Hossain Dudu, 17, son of Bhelu Mondal of Loskripara area, is a HSC candidate, reports our correspondent.

Police said Dudu attacked the girl with a sharp blade at a local college at noon as she refused her love proposal.

On information, police arrested Dudu from the spot and produced him before a mobile court, led by executive magistrate Monira Sultana, handed down the punishment.



PHOTO: STAR

A wholesale rice outlet at Bahadur Bazar under Sadar upazila of Dinajpur. Prices of rice on both wholesale and retail markets in the district have marked a sharp rise in the last 15 days.

# Rice prices mark rise in Dinajpur markets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rice prices have marked a sharp rise in wholesale and retail markets in Dinajpur in the last 15 days, causing a concern to the people of middle and low-income groups.

The wholesalers and rice millers have attributed the situation to frequent load shedding and the ongoing rice procurement drive in the district.

In retail markets, the prices of rice have increased by Tk 3 to 4 per kilogram while the prices of paddy remain static. According to the retailers, per kg of miniket was sold at Tk 32, guti swarna at Tk 23, local swarna at Tk 24 to 25, BR-28 at Tk 27 and pari at Tk 27 two

weeks ago.

"We are now selling each kg of miniket at Tk36, guti swarna at Tk 26, local swarna at Tk 27, BR-28 at Tk31.60 and pari at Tk 28.50," the retailers told this correspondent during his visit to a market yesterday.

The retailers alleged that rice prices have shot up due to huge stocks built up by some unscrupulous wholesalers.

Rafiqul Islam, a retailer of Bahadurbazaar under Sadar upazila, said he purchased a 50kg sack of miniket at Tk 1800 on Tuesday while it was priced at Tk 1600 just 12 days ago. "I had to pay Tk 200 more for each sack of rice," he added.

On the other hand, the prices of Irri-boro paddy

have remained at the same level as it was at the beginning of harvest season a month ago. Each 75kg sack of paddy is priced at Tk 1050.

Azizul Islam, a resident of Chehelgazi village under Sadar upazila, said he sold per 75kg sack of BR-28 at Tk1050 16 days ago. Price of each sack of paddy still remains the same, he added.

Refuting the allegation of retailers, Sahidur Rahman Patwari, joint convener of Bangladesh Auto Rice Mill Owners' Association, said prices of rice have gone up due to the ongoing procurement drive and power outages. "Frequent load shedding is greatly hampering the processing of rice," Patwari said.

# Idols vandalised, set on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Criminals vandalised three idols and then set them on fire at Radha-Govinda Temple at Dakkhin Para village in Aditmari upazila early yesterday.

Priest Punil Chandra Chakraborty said, a gang of 5/7 entered the temple by breaking open the lock at 4:30am.

The criminals then damaged idols of Radha-Govinda, Radha-Krishna and Gorkata-Masan, torched them and fled the scene.

Local devotees Nitai Chandra Sen, Horipado Roy and Narayan Chandra

expressed their deep concern saying, to their knowledge, it was the first time that such an incident took place at the temple.

If the criminals were not brought to book, this type of incidents would occur repeatedly, they said.

Visiting the spot, upazila nirbahi officer Rezaul Alam Sarker and officer in-charge of Aditmari police station Aslam Iqbal assured the locals of taking punitive actions against those responsible for the offence.

Police were raiding different areas to arrest the gang, said the OC.

## Fratricide over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

An elderly man was killed allegedly by his younger brothers over a piece of disputed land at Putail-Dakkhinpara village in the district on Wednesday morning.

The deceased was Saijuddin, 65, of the village.

There was a longstanding conflict between Saijuddin and his two brothers--Dalil Uddin, Saheb Uddin and their sons over the land.

The duo attacked Saijuddin with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot at 7:30am following an altercation over the issue.

Dalil and Saheb went into hiding after the incident, said officer in-charge of Sadar police station Shafiqul Islam.

## Robbery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth Tk 3 lakh from a house in Biral upazila early yesterday.

Police said a gang of 25/30 swooped on the house of one Kalam Mia of Medhakandor village and looted Tk 2 lakh and two tolas of gold ornaments.

The robbers attacked the six with sharp weapons when the house members tried to resist them.



# 16th anniversary of Magurchhara blowout today

A CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Today is the 16th anniversary of Magurchhara gas-well explosion.

On the night of June 14 in 1997, a massive blowout torn apart the Magurchhara gas field in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar while US energy company Occidental was drilling a well there.

The inferno that the blowout triggered wiped out property worth crores of taka. The US energy company, which was widely blamed for the devastation, is yet to pay compensation for the damage.

The flora and fauna of the Lawachhara Reserve Forest adjoining the exploded well took the brunt of the explosion. The massive blaze

destroyed a teak grove raised between 1944 and 1950, bamboo shacks created between 1993 and 1995, and a strip of plantation established in 1994.

About 96 acres of Lawachhara forest was completely burnt. Fifty percent of the forest resources on 111.15 acres of land and 30 percent resources on 106.21 acres of land were also damaged.

According to the committee reports, the damage to forest resources amounted to Tk 9,858 crore while 29 tea gardens of the area suffered a loss of about Tk 46.07 crore.

The railway suffered a loss of Tk 21 crore, Jalalabad Gas Company Tk 43 lakh, the electricity department about Tk 4.35 crore. Indigenous Khasia people lost betel leaf plantations worth Tk 18 lakh.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

A colourful procession was brought out in Pabna town yesterday, marking the 32nd founding anniversary of Pabna Drama Circle.

## Man gets life for killing aunt

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) for killing his aunt. It also fined convict Maruf Hossain Chowdhury Sobuj Tk 30,000, in default, to suffer six months more in prison. District and Session Judge's Court Judge AKM Habibur Rahman delivered the verdict in presence of the convict yesterday. According to the charge-sheet, Sobuj, son of Saidur Rahman Chowdhury of Masimpur village in Sadar upazila, entered his uncle's (Shahidullah Chowdhury) house and tried to snatch a gold chain from his aunt Sakhina on April 6, 2013, when Shahidullah was not at home. Later, Sobuj strangled Sakhina as she tried to resist him. Locals caught Sobuj while fleeing with the looted chain and handed him over to police.

## Missing boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police recovered body of a 'missing' teenage boy from a pineapple orchard in Madhupur upazila Wednesday afternoon. The deceased, Mohammad Nasir, 14, son of Hayat Ali of Bainabari Tengorpara village in Aushnara union went missing on Monday, family sources said. Local people saw his body in the orchard at noon and informed police, said Abdul Aziz, a member of the union parishad (UP). Being informed, a police team from Madhupur police station rushed to the spot recovered the body in the afternoon.

## 3 pipe guns recovered

UNB, Rajbari

Police recovered three pipe guns from a bus on the Rajbari-Kushtia highway at Amtala in Pangsha upazila of the district on Wednesday. Sub-inspector Nazim Uddin of Pangsha police station said, acting on a tip-off, they searched a Daulatdia ghat-bound bus from Kushtia on the highway around 8:30am and recovered three pipe guns wrapped in cloth. However, none was arrested in this connection.

## Carpenter goes missing

UNB, Sylhet

A carpenter who went 'missing' from Daudpur Chowdhurybazar in Dakkhin Surma upazila on Monday, is yet to be traced. The carpenter was identified as Md Mokbul Ali, 45, son of late Abdur Rup of Taruckhala Gangpar village of the upazila. Family sources said, Md Mokbul Ali went to Daudpur Chowdhurybazar from his home on June 10 at about 8:00pm. Since then he remained missing. He was wearing black trousers and violet half shirt on the day, said Mokbul Ali's younger brother Md Jubel Ahmed.

## Yaba peddler jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Saiful Islam alias Sujon, 30, a yaba peddler has been sentenced to seven years jail and fined Tk 1,000, in default, to suffer more one month in jail yesterday. ATM Musa, additional district and session judge delivered the judgement yesterday. According to the prosecution, a team of Rab-8 arrested Sujon and recovered 70 pieces of yaba from him on February 16 in 2011 when he was trying to sell it. Later Rab filed a case with Patuakhali police station and police submitted the charge sheet before the court on March 22 in 2011.

## Sand lifter fined

UNB, Mymensingh

A mobile court here on Tuesday fined owner of a dredger Tk50,000 for extracting sand illegally from the Brahmaputra River in the district. Officer-in-charge (OC) Gulam Sarwar of Kotwali Police Station said a mobile court arrested dredger owner Sujan Miah from Khakdahor area in Sadar upazila at noon and fined him for the offence. In default to pay the amount, he will have to suffer seven days in jail, added the OC.

# Repression on poor fishermen alleged

UNB, Khulna

An organised gang has continued repression on the fishermen in Hindu dominated Rangpur union of Dumuria upazila in the district.

Grabbing a few *jalmahal* (water bodies) in the area from the fishermen's possession they are now torturing them for illegal toll.

During a recent visit, fishermen at Shalua-Rangpur Bazar of the union and *jete polli* (fishermen's abode) informed the UNB correspondent that the criminal gang regularly extort money from the local fishermen and businessmen through intimidation.

In fear of attack by the goons, many members of the fishermen community sometimes pass sleepless nights, locals said.

The gang is led allegedly by Benu Miah *alias* Benu Chairman, former chief of an outlawed party and a notorious criminal, they said.

The gang members forcibility took control of a few water bodies which were earlier under the possession of villagers.

In recent times, they extorted Tk 7,000 from Anamika Mallik, Tk 20,000 from Probin Dhali, Tk 2 lakh from fish enclosure owner Ramesh Mandal and Tk 17,000 from Chandi Das, said villagers.

They also demanded 20 thousand pieces of bricks

from Dinesh Mistri.

Dinesh, after giving them 1,000 bricks, wound up his business from the area.

They forcibly took control of the local water bodies -- Naler Khal, Amviter Khal and Bil Pabla Gagana Khal and now doing fish farming there.

For the purpose, they have also kept the local sluice gate shut, stopping the flow of sewage and causing water logging in the area during monsoon.

Poor villagers on the banks of the canals are the worst victims of the situation.

Two local Jubo League activists are reportedly giving shelter to the gang.

Aditya Biswas, chairman of Shalua-Rangpur Fishermen Co-operative Society and Amal Biswas, general secretary, said they submitted a memorandum to Dumuria upazila chairman, upazila nirbahi officer and responsible police officers seeking urgent action and protection.

They also protested torture by the gangs at a recent press conference at Dumuria Press Club and filed cases and general diary in this connection.

But all their allegations and appeals fell on the deaf ears of the authorities concerned.

Contacted, M Mashiur Rahman, officer in-charge of Dumuria police station, said they were doing all to arrest the gang members.



PHOTO: STAR

A big pothole, developed at Puratan Bazar point on Godagari Road in Chapainawabganj town, causes trouble to commuters and hinders vehicular movement.

# Roads in C'nawabganj town badly need repair

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Many roads of the town are in an awful condition for lack of repair for long, thanks to the indifference of the city fathers.

Hospital road, Mistrypara point, Godagari road at Puratan Bazar, Shahibag-Horipur road, Shehala -Chouhodditola, Rajarampur, Udayan intersection and Dhaka bus stand area, are in bad shape.

Locals expressed deep concern as road to Puratan Bazar, where the main

wholesale kitchen market and the commercial area are situated, and Godagari and Hospital roads have become totally unusable.

Vegetable vendors sitting on one side of the roads often create huge traffic congestion, causing immense sufferings to the townspeople, said Taslim Uddin, a local grocer.

Potholes and ditches are common on the roads in the municipality areas. Locals often witness accidents when goods-laden trucks and other vehicles get stuck in the potholes during mon-

soon.

Due to the poor drainage system and lack of maintenance work, the roads of the town reach their worst condition at the time of heavy rain. Patients on the roads bear the burnt of it, said local people.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities did not pay any heed to the matter, they alleged.

Contracted, Abdul Matin, mayor of the municipality, said they have already written to the higher authorities for funds for repairing the roads.