



Policemen keeping a tab on people's movement from a temporary watch tower in the capital's Gabtoli area yesterday. Several such structures have been erected in the area to ensure security of people on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Three children drown in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three children drowned in different ponds at Fatikchhari upazila in Chittagong yesterday.

The dead were Md Sakib, 12, and Nobir Hossain, 10, of Uttar Dhurung village, and Tasfia Akter, 2, of Babunagar village, of the upazila.

Locals said Sakib and Nobir drowned while bathing in a pond at Uttar Dhurung village.

Locals rushed to the spot after hearing the children's cries for help and took them to a local hospital where doctors declared them dead, added the sources.

When contacted, Fatikchhari Municipality Mayor Ismail Hossain confirmed the incident.

In another incident, Tasfia drowned in a pond beside her house in Babunagar village, said locals.

She was rushed to a local hospital where doctors declared her dead, they added.

AMAR DESH PUBLICATION Why bar on use of alternative press not to be declared illegal HC asks govt to explain in two weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain in two weeks why its action to obstruct printing and publishing of the daily Amar Desh from an "alternative press" should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by Mahmuda Begum, acting chairman of Amar Desh Publications Ltd.

She filed the petition in May, saying the law enforcers illegally obstructed printing of the Amar Desh at Al-Falah Printing and Press Ltd of the daily Sangram at Baro Moghbazar on April 13 after they shut down the Amar Desh Printing and Press on April 11.

They arrested binders of the Amar Desh on April 13 in the Al-Falah Printing and Press area, although the Amar Desh authorities had informed the Dhaka district magistrate as per the relevant law of printing the newspaper from the Sangram press, she added.

She prayed to the court to direct the government to permit the Amar Desh authorities to print the newspaper from Al-Falah Printing and Press Ltd.

The home secretary, information secretary, inspector general of police, district magistrate of Dhaka, assistant district magistrate (printing), and officers-in-charge of Ramna and Tejgaon Police Stations have been asked to give the explanations.

ATTACK ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN MATIRANGA High-powered judicial probe committee demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of different indigenous communities at a press conference yesterday demanded a high-powered judicial probe committee to investigate the recent attack on indigenous communities in Matiranga upazila under Khagrachari district.

They also demanded the authority compensate the families that were affected during the arson attack allegedly by Bangalee settlers.

The authorities should take necessary steps to rehabilitate the victims, the speakers said at the press conference organised in Dhaka.

Reporters' Unity by a body of professionals from different sectors.

Following the attack on August 3, a total of 380 families of indigenous Tripura community fled and took shelter in neighbouring areas, according to Kapeng Foundation, a human rights organisation for indigenous people.

Of those families, 59 are from Purabali village, 165 from Headman Para, 140 from Laifu Kumar Karbari Para and 20 from Krishna Doyal Karbari Para under Taindong union of Matiranga.

The families took shelter at Prafulla Karbari Para, Nabaratna Karbari Para, Moratila, Rohindra Karbari Para and Subal Karbari Para under Latiban and Ultachari unions in Panchari upazila.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, urged the National Human Rights Commission to visit the area and form a team to investigate the attack.

Meanwhile, some indigenous families, who had fled their homes and took shelter near the Indian border areas, returned home on Sunday.

They returned following State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Dipankar Talukdar's assurance that they will be rehabilitated.

On August 3, Bangalee settlers allegedly torched and looted houses of indigenous community families in Matiranga following abduction of a motorbike rider, Md Kamal, 32, from Taindong area.

A case was filed against 175 with Matiranga Police Station in this connection on August 5.

Police arrested four settlers for their alleged involvement in the attack.

Condemning such communal attacks on the Hilly people, columnist Syed Abul Maksud said billboards telling success of the government are all over the city at present.

"What if indigenous communities now publish government's negligence regarding them on the billboards?" he asked.

'Abducted' Khudey Gaanraj talent Jhuma found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Jhumjum Akter Jhuma, a runner-up in a television talent hunt for child singers, was discovered at the victim support centre of Tejgaon Police Station in the capital yesterday, 15 days after she was abducted by an acquaintance in Narsingdi.

Narsingdi police said her abductor, Md Israfil, 35, a businessman in Ashulia, secretly dropped her at the centre and vanished to protect himself as he was sued recently.

Tejgaon police handed Jhuma over to Narsingdi police in the presence of her mother Jasmine Begum, and they left for Narsingdi yesterday, said Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge, Narsingdi Police Station.

The OC said Jhuma, 14, a ninth grader at Cambrian School and College in Dhaka, would be produced before a court on Thursday as per the legal procedure.

Jasmine filed an abduction case against Israfil and his driver Faisal, 25, with a Narsingdi court on August 4.

Talking to journalists on the tribunal premises that day, Jasmine alleged that the two men bundled Jhuma into a microbus in Narsingdi district town when she was going to her village home in Shibpur upazila from her residence in the town by a rickshaw on July 23.

Jhuma, the first runner-up in the Meridian-Channel-i Khudey Gaanraj in 2008, got acquainted with Israfil at a concert in Savar recently, her mother said. Israfil, who is already married to two women, wanted to marry Jhuma, she added.

MURDER OF RAFIQUK ISLAM MAZUMDAR Four people arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people have been arrested from different parts of the capital and Gazipur in connection with the murder of BNP leader Rafiukul Islam Mazumdar on January 5.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-1 arrested the four during a 10-hour drive from Tuesday evening, said a Rab press release yesterday.

The arrestees are Lipi Akhter, 46, mother-in-law of Rafiqli, Mohammad Ali Mohabbat, 36, Fazlur Rahman, 53 and Mizanur Rahman alias Montu, 41, added the release.

Rafiqli, member secretary of ward no-56, Dhaka unit of BNP and vice-president of Dhaka's Bangabazar Super Market Traders' Association, was abducted from his in-law's house in Anandanagar village in Jhenidah district on January 5.

His body was found later that night in Adabaria village of Kushtia. A pair of handcuffs was found dangling from his wrist with the word "police" inscribed on it.

According to Rab Rafiqli had forced his mother-in-law and sister-in-law to engage in extra-marital affairs with him. As a result, Lipi had hired eight men, including the three arrested, for Tk 2 lakh to abduct and kill Rafiqli.

However, Lipi had told The Daily Star that seven people identifying themselves as Rab officials, picked Rafiqli up from her house, handcuffed him and left within 15 minutes.

Also, a family member wishing anonymity refuted Rab's claims and said Rab had been harassing the family since the murder.

TARIQUE'S BRIBERY CASE Stay order extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday extended for six months its earlier order that stayed the proceedings against BNP leader Tarique Rahman in a case filed over an allegation of taking Tk 21 crore as bribe to suppress Sabbir murder case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case on October 4, 2007 against Tarique, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and four accused in another case filed in connection with the murder of Humayun Kabir Sabbir, a director of Basundhara Telecommunications Network Ltd, in July, 2006.

Yesterday, a vacation bench of the HC extended the stay order after a petition filed by Tarique, senior vice-chairman of BNP and son of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Tarique who is accused in 15 criminal cases was freed from jail on bail in 2008 and went to London for treatment the same year.

ABDUCTION OF KAYES Immediate arrest of abductors demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Narayanganj-based Sruti Cultural Academy yesterday demanded immediate arrest of traders, who extract sand from Narayanganj's Mayadwip and Nunertek areas, for allegedly abducting and attempting to murder poet and environmentalist Shahed Kayes.

At a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, the academy members accused Railways Minister Mujibul Haque, Comilla 1 (Daudkandi-Meghna) lawmaker Subid Ali Bhuiyan and a local Awami League leader, Selina Islam, of protecting the accused.

As per a case filed by Shahed, around 14 men on a speedboat abducted him from the Meghna river near Comilla's Boydder Bazar on July 25. Three hours later police rescued him with stab injuries from Rampour Bazar in Comilla's Meghna upazila. He is now undergoing treatment.

The academy members said Shahed was attacked for voicing and organising villagers against the "illegal" sand extraction.

They said police had arrested one of the accused, Wasim, but later released him upon the minister's request.

The minister told The Daily Star yesterday that he had called Sonargaon Police Station's officer-in-charge to know what had happened after two of Wasim's relatives sought his help. "But upon hearing his crime I asked police to take steps as per the law," he said.

Terming the allegations against him false and motivated, Subid said, "I do not like the sand trading business...it is of poor taste."

The academy members yesterday also stated that the speedboat was owned by Selina and Wasim was her nephew.

Selina said, "I am an expatriate and have nothing to do with sand trading...the boy (Wasim) is from my village but not my relative. He drives my speedboat."

The academy members also demanded that the government either bears the cost of Shahed's treatment or makes the attackers pay.

Santrash Nirmul Toki Mancha Convener Rafiur Rabbi and Gono Sanghati Coordinator Zonayed Saki were present.