

Gunfight with forest robbers; 2 arrested, arms seized

Six abducted fishermen freed in Khulna, Bhola

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Law enforcers rescued six abducted fishermen from the Sundarbans under Koira upazila of Khulna and a char area in the river Megna under Monpura upazila of Bhola yesterday.

Our Khulna correspondent reported that four fishermen, kidnapped by forest robbers from the Sundarbans a week ago, were rescued by coastguards after a gunfight with the gang early yesterday.

The coastguard members also arrested two robbers and seized five firearms, 207 bullets and two cellphones from a trawler looted by the robbers. The arrestees are Robiul Islam, 27, son of Wazed Ali of Gokhali village and Monirul Islam Moni, 28, son of Nesar Ali of Aungtiara village in the upazila.

Acting on a tip off, a special team of coastguard raided a den in Batulia Canal in the mangrove forest under Koyra upazila at around 3:00am.

Sensing the presence of coastguards, the forest robbers belonging to 'Shirsha Bahini' opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate, said Lt Commander M Mohiuddin Mojumder of coastguard west zone.

After an hour-long gun-

fight, coastguards arrested the two members of the notorious robber gang, while the rest managed to flee. They rescued fishermen Sahib Ali, Abdur Rahman, Mofizul Islam and Md Amirul Islam from a trawler at the den and seized three one barrel gun, one short gun, one pipe gun and 207 bullets from there, the commanders said.

The arrested robbers were later handed over to Koira police he said.

Forest robbers kidnapped the four fishermen while they were fishing in the Batulia Canal in the Sundarbans a week ago and demanded Tk 3 lakh ransom for release of the each fisherman, coastguard sources said.

In Bhola, Police yesterday rescued two of the six fishermen abducted by a gang of robbers from Taura area in Dhalchar (land mass emerged in the Megna) under Charfashion upazila of the district early Friday, according our correspondent.

The rescued fishermen are Siraj and Nofuallah. Law enforcers from Kalatali police camp under Monpura upazila raided Jaglar Char in the river Meghna at noon and rescued the two.

Police also recovered one of the four trawlers looted



Two forest robbers, arrested with arms and ammunition after a gunfight with coastguards in the Sundarbans early yesterday, are at Koira Police Station in Khulna district.

by the robbers from there. Police said they could not arrest any of the gang members as they managed to flee the scene, taking the rest four fishermen with them.

Police said the gang led by notorious 'Kalam Dakat' swooped on four Trawlers belonging to Faruk Majhi, Jahangir Majhi, Hanif Majhi and Nofuallah Majhi in Taura area in the river at around 4:00am and abducted them along with Malek and Saifulah from there.

On information, Char

Nizam police conducted several drives in the area on Friday but they could not rescue any of the abducted fishermen or arrest any of gang members.

The robbers later released the trawler of Nofuallah Majhi with some fishermen on board, asking them to inform the families of the abducted men to send ransom for their release.

They demanded one lakh for each of the fisherman and Tk two lakh for each of the tree trawlers.

Housewives murdered

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband and his family members at Charmohona village in Raipur upazila of Laxmipur early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Kulsuma Begum, 19, wife of Masud Hasan of the village, reports UNB.

Police, quoting locals, said Masud and his family members used to torture Kulsuma for dowry since her marriage two months back.

Recently, they demanded Tk 30,000 from her family.

As Kulsuma's parents could not meet the demand, Masud and his family members killed her on Friday midnight and hung the body with the ceiling of cowshed.

In Noakhali, police recovered the body of a housewife from yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Mahfuza Akther, 19, a resident of Kechcha colony in Maijdi town, reports our correspondent.

Locals said, Mahfuza died on the spot when her husband Ala Uddin, 26, kicked on her abdomen at one stage of altercation over a family feud.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Mir Jahidur Rahman of Sudharam Model police station said they later arrested Ala Uddin.

Robberies

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Robbers in two incidents looted goods worth Tk. one crore from shops and houses in Jamalpur and Joypurhat districts yesterday and the day before.

A gang took away mobile sets, their accessories and digital cameras worth Tk. 84 lakh and cash Tk. 8 lakh from two shops in Jamalpur town on Friday night and early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The shops are LR Telecom owned by Md. Lutfar Rahman at Tomaltola and Jannat Enterprise Md. Samsul Haque at Kathakoli market in the town.

Police, quoting the shop owners, said a gang entered LR Telecom cutting its shutter at around 9:00pm and looted mobile sets worth Tk. 4 lakh and cash Tk. 3 lakh.

Another gang of criminals entered Jannat Enterprise in the same way and looted mobile sets worth Tk. 35 lakh, memory card (12,000 pieces) worth Tk. 36 lakh, mobile recharge cards worth Tk. 4.5 lakh, 30 digital cameras worth Tk. 4 lakh and other accessories Tk. 50 thousand and Tk. 5 lakh in cash, said sub-inspector (SI) Rafiqul Islam of Sadar police station who visited the spot.

In Joypurhat, robbers looted cash and goods worth Tk.10 lakh in Akkelpur upazila early yesterday, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Locals said, around 14/15 robbers entered the house of Azgar Ali of Ramshala village around 00.30am. They held the family members hostage at gun point and looted cash Tk. 90,000, two tola gold ornaments and two cell phones.

Azgar Ali, 45, his wife Jharna Begum, 40, their children Merina Begum, 21, and Sirajul Islam, 18, were injured as robbers beat them up mercilessly.

The same gang then went to the house of Siddique Hossain at Kathalbari village and looted at least 8 tolas gold ornaments and three cell phones.

SNIPPETS

BSF returns Bangladeshi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Friday returned a Bangladeshi cattle trader, who was detained earlier in the day, to the Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB). Saidur Rahman, 20, of Kakkdanga village under Kolaroa upazila, was handed over to the border guards after a flag meeting in Tarali area of India along Kolaroa border in the evening. BGB-38 Battalion Operation Officer Major Anwarul Majhar said, Saidur was held by the members of BSF at Tarali camp while he was returning from India along with cattle. Following the incident, BGB Taluigacha border camp sent a letter to its counterpart requesting to return the youth.

Girl rescued, 'trafficker' held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Border guards rescued a girl and arrested an alleged human trafficker from Hili border area in Hakimpur upazila yesterday morning. The girl was a garment worker from Patuakhali district and the alleged trafficker was identified as Nirob Mondal, 30, son of Gouranga Mondal of Kakuli of Mirpur area in Dhaka. BGB sources said, acting on information, a team of border guards led by Helal Uddin raided Churipatty area of Hili border and rescued the girl in the morning. Police said that the girl was being trafficked to India in the name of giving a lucrative job there.

Two sisters drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Two sisters drowned in a pond in Bhatipara area of Trishal municipal area on Thursday. The girls were identified as Hafiza Akhtar, 10, and Mazeda Akhtar, 7, daughters of late Abdul Halim of Bhatipara. They were students of Trishal Govt. Primary School. Police and family sources said, Hafiza and Mazeda went to their school on Thursday to have a meal arranged there marking the National Mourning Day. After having meal, they left the school but did not return home. Later, local people found their bodies floating in the pond on Friday morning. The kids might have drowned while taking bath, said Md. Faroz Talukder, officer in-charge of Trishal police station. They did not know how to swim, he said.

Ex-BCL leader found dead

UNB, B'baria

Police recovered the body of a former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) from the district's Kasba railway station area early yesterday. The deceased was identified as Alamgir Hossain, 35, former general secretary of Kasba upazila unit of the associate student body of the ruling Awami League. Officer in-charge of Kasba police station Badrul Alam Talukder said, locals spotted the body lying in the railway station area around 3.00am and informed police. Police suspected that Alamgir might have died of cardiac arrest because there was no injury mark in his body.

BAU founding day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The 53rd founding anniversary of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) will be celebrated on its campus with festivity and elaborate programmes today. Marking the occasion, BAU authorities with a slogan "Power of Food and Freedom through Agriculture" have taken a day-long programme, including hoisting of national and university flags, colorful rally, discussion meeting, distribution of memorial trust merit award, feature exhibition by BAU Sangbadik Samity, tree plantation and a *doa mehfil*, university sources said. Distribution of the awards among 65 meritorious students of different faculties will be held at Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin auditorium of BAU. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will be the chief guest at the programme.

EMON MURDER IN PABNA Police round up 3 of 12 accused

One arrested in Bogra Dipu murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police arrested three of the 12 accused in the case for killing Pabna Awami League activist Emon Hossain early yesterday.

The arrestees are Rumon Hossain, of Ramanandapur village, Mirazul alias Sahabul, and Riyadh Hossain, 25 of Mondolpara village in Pabna Sadar upazila. Police yesterday produced them in a court that sent them to jail.

The arrestees are among the 12 accused in the case filed by the Emon's mother on the night of August 15.

"Both the victim and the accused belong to the ruling party and law enforcers are continuing the drive to arrest the rest of the accused," said Officer-in-Charge Kazi Haniful Islam of Pabna Sadar Police Station.

Emon was critically injured by his rivals in Pabna town on Thursday afternoon and succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) later in the day.

Police quoted locals as saying that rivals swooped on Emon at around 1:00pm in Doi Bazar area while he was returning home in Banglabazar area in the town after attending a procession organised on the occasion of

the National Mourning Day by Pabna district unit of AL.

They stabbed Emon indiscriminately with sharp weapons, leaving him critically injured. He was taken to Pabna Medical College Hospital and later referred to RMCH where he died in the evening.

Saidul Haque Chunnun, vice-president of the district unit of AL, said Emon might have been killed as a sequel to a previous enmity with his rivals. He demanded punishment to the killers.

Our Bogra correspondent adds: The Detective Branch (DB) police yesterday arrested one of the alleged killers of college student Niranjan alias Dipu, 22, in Banani area of the town.

The arrestee is Ashraf Ali, 59, son of late Gius Uddin of Shaheed Nagar in the town. He was produced in a court that sent him to jail.

Niranjan was killed by a gang led by criminal Shorgo Rahman, brother-in-law of the arrestee, in Khandar area of the town on June 13 last year.

Niranjan's father filed a murder case with Sadar Police Station the same day, accusing Shorgo, Rana and several unnamed persons. Rana was later arrested and is still at large.



Ethnic minority people from Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail and Netrakona districts join a colourful procession in Mymensingh town yesterday, marking International Day for the World's Indigenous People. They demanded recognition as indigenous people, ensuring land rights and steps for preservation of their traditional culture and heritage.



Transport workers block the road at Charmatha intersection in Bogra town for two hours from 10:30am yesterday protesting the beating up of a Bogra-based transport worker at Bypail in Dhaka and alleged rampant extortion by police.

Transport workers block Dhaka-Bogra highway

Extortion, harassment by cops alleged

UNB, Bogra

Traffic movement on Dhaka-Bogra highway was disrupted for two hours yesterday as transport workers put up road barricade in protest against what they said extortion by police.

A long tailback was created on the highway due to the blockade, causing untold sufferings to the Eid

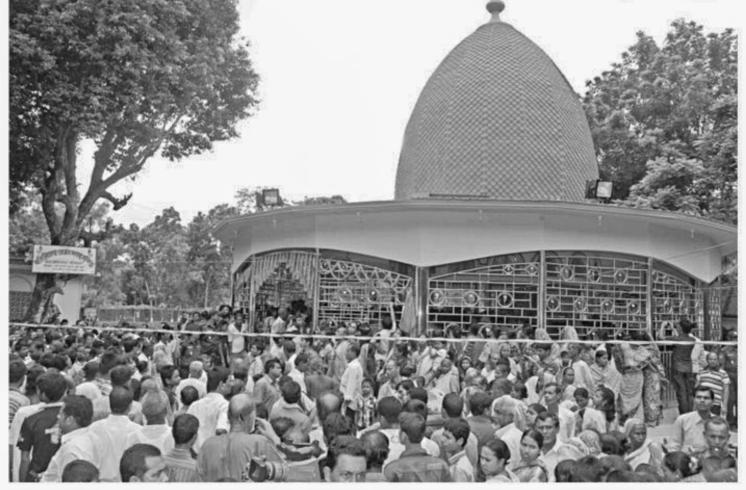
holidaymakers returning to their workplace.

Transport workers said they put up barricades on Bogra-Dhaka, Bogra-Rangpur roads around 10:30 am, protesting harassment of workers and illegal toll collection by policemen.

They alleged that police at Ashulia PS recently realised over Tk 1 lakh as toll from 34 vehicles of Bogra

and took one of the vehicles to police station when it refused to pay toll.

Traffic movement on the highway returned to normalcy around 12:30 pm when the transport workers removed the barricade following assurance by Police Superintendent Mozammel Haque of taking action against the responsible policemen.



Devotees as well as curious locals throng the premises of historic Manasa Mandir at Goila in Agoiljehara upazila under Barisal district on Friday as the 500-year-old Hindu temple of snake deity saw inauguration after a massive renovation.

Goila Manasa temple opens to public after renovation

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

The five hundred years' old 'Manasa Mandir', a temple popularly known as 'Bijoy Gupter Manasa Mandir', saw inauguration at Goila in Agoiljehara upazila under the district on Friday, following completion of its reconstruction.

Bijoy Gupta was the great poet of popular 'Padma Pura' (1484-5), the tales of 'Padma' (Devi Manasa) in 'Mangal Kavya' trend, one of the most important composed forms of the mediaeval Bangla literature dedicated to the deities of rural and low-caste Hindus.

Poet Bijoy Gupta set up the murti (idol) of Manasa, the snake deity, at his birthplace of Goila in Agoiljehara upazila in 1494 and the Hindus started worshipping there. The devotees built there a beautiful Manasa idol with brass in early twentieth century.

Pakistan occupation

army and their associates looted and destroyed the temple and idol during Liberation War of 1971.

The local devotees built a makeshift Manasa idol with sand and cement in post-liberation period. In 2003, the local people formed "Manasa Devi Murti Reconstruction Committee" to rebuild the idol in its original form along with reconstruction and renovation of the temple on about two acres of land at a cost of about Tk 1 crore.

Under that project a 27-maund brass idol of Manasa was made by Ramgopal Kanga Banik of Dhaka Shakhripatty and placed in the temple early this year.

Following completion of other work of reconstruction and renovation of the unique dome-shaped architecture of the temple, it was opened to people on Friday by lighting *mangal propid* (light of welfare) with socio-religious festivals.

Among others, advocate

Talukdar Md Yunus, local AL lawmaker, Abu Alam Shaheed Khan, secretary of local government ministry, Dr Khandokar Shawkat Hossain, secretary of public works ministry, Dr Ranjit Kumar Biswas, secretary of cultural ministry, Prodig Kumar Chakraborty, chief priest of Dhakeshwari National Temple, Swami Bijit Atmananda, chief of Ramakrishna Ashram in Barisal, Atulananda Bhrahmachari, chief of Ganesh Pagal Ashram in Madaripur, addressed the programme.

The temple is known for being the holy abode of Manasa, a form of Shakti, and is said to have emerged from the Manas (mind) of the sage Kashyapa. Manasa is regarded as the sister of the Naga (serpent) Vasuki.

The term Manasa means wish and it is believed that the goddess fulfils all the wishes of a sincere devotee, the religious leaders said at the function.

Schoolboy missing as boat sinks

UNB, Bhola

A teenaged schoolboy went missing after a boat, carrying 13 passengers, sank in Bhola Khal (canal) in Sadar upazila on Friday.

The boy was identified as Swapan, a class VII student and son of Aiub Ali, a resident of Mirpur section-11 in the capital.

Witnesses said the boat sank when its passengers were trying to board a Dhaka-bound launch at the terminal.

All passengers but Swapan swam ashore, they said.

In Pabna, body of a minor girl was recovered from the Gumani River in Chatmohar upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

She was found floating in the river near Nimaichara village of the upazila.

8-year-old girl to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Patuakhali, body of an unidentified woman was recovered from Buragourango River under Dashmina upazila early yesterday.

Police said, locals found a body floating in the river near Kalaraja bazar and informed them.

In Thakurgaon, police recovered the body of a young man from a pond at Tajpur village in Pirganj upazila on Friday.

Identity of the deceased could not be ascertained immediately.

AKM Mehedi Hasan, officer in-charge of Pirganj police station, said locals spotted the youth's body floating in the pond around 11.00am and informed police.