

BOMBING OF SHEIKH HELAL'S RALLY Mufti Hannan, 5 others charge sheeted

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday pressed charges against six people, including Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, in the case for bomb attack on Sheikh Helal's election rally in Mollahat upazila in 2001.

Assistant Police Superintendent of CID (Faridpur zone) ABM Siddiqur Rahman, also the investigation officer the case, submitted two charge sheets—one in the murder case and another in the case filed under Explosives Substances Act—to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Bagerhat.

Five other charge sheeted accused are former president of BNP Mollahat upazila unit Badsha Mia Shikdar, JMB activists Zillur Rahman alias Jinu Mollah, Abu Taleb, Arifuzzaman alias Anis, and Hafez Mohammad Rakib Hasan alias Russel.

The four JMB activists are now in jail as they have been sentenced to seven years imprisonment in the case for serious of bomb blasts in Bagerhat town on August 17 in 2005.

Eight people were killed and 50 others, including



FILE PHOTO: STAR

Harkat-ul-Jihad chief Mufti Hannan being taken to a Bagerhat court on August 18, 2010 in connection with the case for a bomb attack on the election rally of Sheikh Helal Uddin at Mollahat in the district on September 23, 2001.

Sheikh Helal, were injured as a powerful bomb planted by the accused exploded at the rally of Sheikh Helal at Khalilur Rahman Degree College ground in Mollahat upazila on September 23, 2001.

The accused exploded the bomb by using a remote-controlled device. The then upazila Awami League President Chowdhury Ziaul Islam Panna Miah filed the cases with Mollahat Police Station against 176 people

the following day. After investigation, the investigation officer dropped the names of 174 out of 176 FIR-named accused except Badsha Miah Shikder and JMB activist Jinu Mollah.

The IO included the names of Huji chief Mufti Hannan and JMB activists Abu Taleb, Arifuzzaman, and Hafez Mohammad Rakib Hasan in the charge sheets as their involvement.

Ansarullah leader remanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna court yesterday placed Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, spiritual leader of Ansarullah Bangla Team, also known as Ansarullah Bahini, on a four-day remand.

Police arrested 31 alleged militants, including Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, 43, at a house in South Khajurtala of Barguna town on August 11. According to police, the arrestees were holding a "secret meeting" there.

They produced the arrestees in the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Barguna on August 13, seeking 10 days' remand, but the court fixed August 21 for remand hearing. After hearing on the remand prayer yesterday, the court put only Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani on remand.

Law enforcers lodged a case with Barguna Police Station against the 31 under section-57 of Information and Communication Technology Act. ASP Jahangir Alam claimed that police had found Jasim's connections with militant activities and that his statements to police were inconsistent.

Mufti Jasim, however, claimed himself to be a Pir (spiritual leader) and rest of the arrestees as his followers, who had gone there to hear his sermon, said the ASP.

A director of Markajul Ulum Al-Islamia at Basila of Dhaka, Mufti Jasim used to encourage young people to eliminate atheist bloggers, headed.

Domestic help beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A domestic help was beaten to death allegedly by her master in Bera upazila town on Tuesday morning.

The deceased was identified as Sharmin Hossain, 21, daughter of Babul Hossain of Amaikola village. She worked as domestic help at the house of Shariful Islam, a local trader, in the town.

Police said Shariful beat up Sharmin mercilessly, leaving her critically injured over a trivial matter in the morning.

She was rushed to the upazila health complex where doctors declared her dead at 11:00am.

Shariful and his family members then took the body to his village home in Sirajganj district for burial but failed as locals informed the police.

However, Shariful and his family managed to flee, sensing the presence of the law enforcers, said officer in-charge of Bera police station Md Siddikur Rahman.

No case was filed in this regard till filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday.

8 fall sick after eating mangoes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Eight of a family of Baliatali village in Kalapara upazila fell sick after eating 'chemical-mixed' mangoes on Tuesday.

Police arrested Khokon, 35, and Nizam, 40, on charge of selling the toxic mangoes in the market.

Those fell sick are Siddik Matobar, 45, his wife Rasheda Begum, 37, sons Osman Matubar, 18, Easin, 16, Hossain Matobar, 13, daughters Khajida Begum, 22, Bhanu Begum, 10, Shewli, 2, and grand son Sabbir, 7.

They were admitted to Kalapara upazila health complex yesterday noon.

Family sources said Siddik bought some mangoes from a shop in the upazila town and ate those along with his family members on Tuesday night.

The eight fell sick due to food poisoning, said Abdul Motin, on duty doctor of the health complex. They are now out of danger, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Diesel electric multiple unit (Demu) train on Dhaka-Comilla route reaches Brahmanbaria at 4:30pm yesterday, starting its maiden journey from Dhaka three and a half hours earlier the same day. A Demu train bound for Dhaka and another bound for Comilla will ply the route everyday, except Saturday.

Case against MP Rony, 14 others sent to ACC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Patuakhali court on Tuesday sent a corruption case against lawmaker Golam Maula Rony and 14 others to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for probe.

One Jamal Hossain of Dashmina upazila town filed the case with the District and Sessions Judge's Court on August 12, accusing Rony and his associates of misappropriating Tk 79 crore of different government projects in the upazila.

After hearing both sides, Judge Md Ashraf Islam issued the order, said Abdul Khaleque, a lawyer of the complainant.

In the case statement, the complainant stated that lawmaker Rony and 14

others misappropriated Tk 79 crore of the government projects in Dashmina upazila in the last four and a half years without doing any work in the projects.



Golam Maula Rony

The accused had drawn Tk 6 crore from test relief food, Tk 10 crore from project for work project, Tk 12 crore from 120-day work project, Tk 20 crore from 20-

day work project, Tk 5 crore from the programme for ultra poor project, Tk 10 crore from road construction and repair project, Tk 3 crore by selling trees on government land, Tk 10 crore from upazila education fund, and Tk 3 crore from the project for fishermen's welfare, the plaintiff stated in the case statement.

The plaintiff alleged that he went to Dashmina Police Station on August 4 and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) office in Patuakhali on August 8 to lodge formal complaints against Rony and 14 others, but they didn't record his complaints.

"As police and ACC refused to accept the case, I filed it with the court," the complainant added.

Oishee

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Nevertheless, Sumi, who was shown as a 15-year-old in DB's remand petition and so is a minor too as per the law, was also remanded for five days and taken for the age determination tests along with Oishee.

Doctors measure weight and height and check teeth and body structure through X-ray to determine someone's age, said doctors in the DMC forensic medicine department.

Police recovered the decomposing bodies of Special Branch police inspector Mahfuzur Rahman and his wife Swapna on Friday from their Chamelibagh residence in the capital.

The couple's teenage daughter Oishee surrendered to police on Saturday. In primary interrogation, she admitted to killing her parents in the early hours of Thursday and said house help Sumi had helped her move the bodies to her bathroom and clean bloodstains.

The duo and Oishee's friend Mizanur Rahman Rony, who, according to Oishee, had helped her stay at one of his aunt's place after the murder, are now in DB's custody.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Investigation Department submitted a report on the findings at the crime scene, a source in the DB office told The Daily Star.

No finger prints were found on the knife that Oishee had allegedly used to stab her parents, a CID official said, adding the knife had been found on top of a basin and that the fingerprints had been washed off.

PETITION TO STOP NEWS ON OISHEE

Oishee's lawyer Prakash Ranjan Biswas filed a petition with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) court yesterday under the Right to Information Act, seeking directives on police to stop giving out any kind of information about Oishee to the media.

In the petition, Prakash said newspapers and electronic media had published and broadcast news items involving Oishee and Sumi on the basis of information given by investigation officers and DB officials, which was illegal.

"It will damage Oishee's privacy and security and blemish the reputation of her family and relatives," Prakash told The Daily Star that he had filed the petition after discussing the matter with Oishee's relatives, who felt that the information published in the media was baseless.

CMM Bikash Kumar Saha sent the petition to Metropolitan Magistrate Mizanur Rahman, who then fixed today for hearing the petition.



PHOTO: STAR

A profusely yielding lotkon tree in Gouripur upazila under Mymensingh district. The area now sees large-scale cultivation of the nutritious fruit.

TWO UPAZILAS OF MYMENSINGH

Sour lotkon now sweetheart of hundreds of growers

ABM AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Cultivation of highly nutritious fruit Burmese grape or lotkon is now a profitable venture for many farmers in Gouripur and Phulpur upazilas under the district.

Once seen as a jungle fruit growing naturally, lotkon now sees commercial cultivation by hundreds of farmers, said officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

The yield of the sour juicy fruit, locally known as bubi, crossed 100 tonnes in Gouripur this year, they said, adding that a farmer can earn reasonable amounts by cultivating lotkon even at the home-yard.

Now lotkon is being cultivated in 111 hectares of land including 17 orchards—15 in Gouripur and two in Phulpur upazila. There are over 7000 fruit bearing lotkon trees in the areas at present, DAE sources said.

Borobagh, Yearpur, Birpur, Bhawanipur, Maizbagh, Bokainagar, Ramgopalpur, Duttpara, Achintapur, Shahganj, Sahanati, Bhalukapur, Pathanthula and Phulhor

are some of the well-known lotkon producing villages, they said.

More and more farmers in the district are showing interest to grow this indigenous fruit as it requires very low investment and the price is quite good.

"Lotkon is cultivated in many Asian countries like India, Vietnam and China. The fruit is rich in Vitamin C and minerals. It has also good demand in different countries including the Middle East. It could be a good export item if cultivated on a much larger scale," said Narayan Chandra Basak, deputy director of DAE.

Nurul Anwar, president of Borobagh Lotkon Farmers' Cooperative, said, "Lotkon farmers need better

support from the authorities concerned. Many villages in Gouripur are still deprived of electricity. If the farmers can irrigate their lotkon plants during summer, they will get better production. Besides, proper training can help better yield of the fruit."

Wholesalers from Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Bogra, Jessore, Brahmanbaria and Savar come to Gouripur to buy lotkon, he said.

Some Dhaka-based businessmen export Gouripur lotkon to India and different Middle Eastern countries, he added.

Depending on quality, prices of a maund of lotkon in the local market vary from Tk 2,000 to Tk 4,000.



PHOTO: STAR

Baskets of lotkon brought for sale at a market in Gouripur upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

Faced with the threat of erosion by the Padma, locals shift their shops and hoes at Char Khidirpur in Poba upazila under Rajshahi district on Sunday. Inset, attempts are on to save the area by dumping sandbags.



Padma devouring two bordering villages

250 families rendered homeless in 10 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Around 250 families have become homeless as the Padma devoured large portions of bordering villages, Char Khidirpur and Char Khanpur in Poba upazila under the district during the last ten days.

"The Padma has continued eroding lands on a stretch of three kilometre area since August 10 and around 250 houses, four mosques, a madrasa, a community clinic, four culverts and vast cultivable lands have gone into the riverbed by this time," said Razzakul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Poba.

"If the erosion continues, Bangladesh might lose huge land to India as the latter will claim its territory from the midstream. According to

the India-Bangladesh Border Treaty of 1974, the mid-point of a river flowing between the two countries determines the border there," he said.

Over 10,000 villagers are passing days amid fear of losing lands as the river has reached 60 yards from Char Khanpur outpost of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) while it is flowing only a few yards away from Char Khidirpur BGB outpost.

Erosion by the Padma has reduced Char Khanpur and Char Khidirpur villages to around five square kilometres from 28 square kilometres in last five or six years, said villagers and officials concerned.

Visiting the villages a couple of days ago, a group of newsmen saw the villagers shifting their tin-made

houses to safer places fearing erosion.

"I along with many others lost home one week ago. I erected a new house near Khidirpur BGB camp in July but it is gone," said Hafizul Islam, a villager.

BGB has started shifting equipment and office documents of Char Khidirpur and Char Khanpur camps due to the threat of erosion, said Khalilur Rahman, commander of Khanpur BGB outpost.

WDB Executive Engineer Harunur Rashid said, "It is difficult to deal with the situation as the river is deep at erosion points. An emergency Tk 3 crore erosion prevention project that was taken in last week of July was 75 percent complete, but it virtually failed due to the strong current of the river."