



PHOTO: STAR
This training aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) crash-lands on a paddy field near Mahidia Bazar in Sadar upazila of Jessore due to technical fault yesterday noon. Two pilots of the aircraft--Squadron Leader Faruq and Pilot Officer Zami--managed to come out of the aircraft safely.

Kishoreganj bank heist case goes to Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kishoreganj

Kishoreganj Sonali Bank heist case involving Tk 16.40 crore was handed over to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday to investigate whether there is any militancy connection with the robbery.

Rajib Kumar Deb, ASP of Rab-14, took up the case from police, said Officer-in-Charge Abdul Malek of Kishoreganj Police Station.

The High Court on February 3 ordered the government to hand over the case to the elite force within 48 hours.

The HC also issued a rule upon the government to explain in two weeks why it should not be directed to

bring the mastermind behind the robbery to book.

The court passed the orders acting on a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), seeking directives on the government to unearth the reason behind the sensational burglary.

The court asked the home secretary and the inspector general of police to hand over the case to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) so that the elite force could investigate whether there is any militancy link with the robbery.

An HC bench of Justice Kazi Reza-Ul Haque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain passed the order and issued the rule.

Robbers took away Tk 16.40 crore from a Sonali Bank branch in Kishoreganj by digging a tunnel into the bank's vault.

Two bank officials discovered it on January 26 when they entered the second cell of the bank's vault to get money for transactions.

Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan, manager of the bank branch, said they learnt about the robbery around 3:00pm after bank's Joint Custodian (cash) Mohsinul Haq and Joint Custodian General Hasna Ahmed Moin entered the vault.

A total of Tk 16.40 crore was kept on a table in the second cell, he said.

9 rescued in Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole, Jessore

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) rescued nine people from Putkhali border here while they were being trafficked to India yesterday morning.

Commander M Abdullah of 26 BGB Benapole check post said, being tipped off, a team of BGB raided the area in the morning and rescued the nine, including two kids.

However, the human traffickers fled the scene, sensing the presence of the BGB team.

The rescued people, hailing from different areas of Faridpur and Narail districts, were handed over to Benapole port police station.

A case was filed in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR
Coastguards raid a Dhaka-bound passenger launch from Barisal on the Meghna in Chandpur and seize around 150 maunds of jatka (hilsa fry less than nine inches) yesterday. The hilsa fry were later distributed among poor people in the area.

ALLEGATION OF ILLEGAL POSTINGS AT COLLEGE

11 including Rangpur DC sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangpur

Eleven people, including Farid Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Rangpur district and chairman of governing body of Rangpur Law College (RLC), were sued on Tuesday on charge of appointing three part-time teachers illegally at the college.

Md. Sajed Hossain Tota, Md. Abdul Hadi Belal and Khondker Md. Rafiq Hasnain, part-time professors of the college filed the cases.

The other accused are -- Abu Mohammad Mozammel Haque, principal of RLC, Rezaul Haque,

Jamil Akhter and Jagadish Chandra Burman, part-time teachers of the college, Dr. Rezaul Haque and Dr. Abu Md. Iqbal Rumi Shah, members of governing body, Abdur Rashid Chowdhury, teacher representative, Tofazzal Hossain, Abul Kashem and Md. Anwaruzzaman, guardian members of the college.

The complainants lodged the case with the Joint District Judge's Court of Rangpur.

Court sources said, after the hearing, Judge Md. Shariful Islam issued a stay order in this regard on Tuesday evening and asked the disputants to

submit their answers within next five working days.

The complainants in their case statement said, as per the National University Act 1992, upper limit age of appointment of a principal is 60 and it may be extended to 65 according to the permission of the university and he/she [principal] must be a Master's Degree holder.

But violating the Act, on November 25, 2013, the accused appointed Abu Mohammad Mozammel Haque as the principal of RLC who is now 81 and a Bachelor Degree holder.

Beside this, the governing body of the college

appointed him as the principal without taking any approval from the syndicate of the National University, the complainants claimed.

The complainants further said, both Rezaul Haque and Jamil Akhter have no Master's Degree. Jagadish Chandra Burman is also a Bachelor Degree holder and now 66 years old, they said.

Meanwhile, Abu Mohammad Mozammel Haque, principal of RLC, claimed that he was appointed according to the rules.

Contacted, Farid Ahmed, DC of Rangpur, said he was not aware about the issue.

They live by 'looting' paddy from rat holes in fields

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A good number of ultra poor people move around paddy fields in search of rat holes during the harvesting period as the grains stored by the rodents become their prize possession.

"Rats take paddy from farmers' fields and store it in their holes as provision for future. Many poor people like me dig the holes to collect the paddy every harvesting period," said Mafizul Islam, 48, of Karnapur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

"I get 10 to 25 kg of paddy from a rat hole and I can dig two to three holes daily. I have continued the work for the last 15 years," he said.

Meher Ali of the same village said he can collect 20 to 30 maunds of paddy from the rat holes every harvesting season and it serves as a great support for his family in bad times.

"It is a kind of sin to loot deposit of rats from their holes but we do it due to poverty," said Ranjit Chandra Das, 42, at Mritinga Dola of Mohendranagar village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

"Hearing scream of rats when we dig their holes we

can understand their pain," said Nurul Islam, engaged in the same act at Bhadai village of Aditmari upazila.

"Rats make holes about four to eight feet deep to store paddy. Often we have to search several fields to find a hole as the number of such holes has decreased during the last several

years," said Narayan Chandra Das of the same village.

Several farmers including Nazrul Islam, Abdul Khaleque, Mahir Chandra Barmon and Tazer Ali at Bongram village in Lalmonirhat Sadar said they never protest digging the rat holes in the field as rats are harmful for crops.

Yasim Ara Begum, a local NGO representative at Sindurna village in Hatibandha upazila, said, "I visited houses of several people who collect paddy from rat holes. The work may bring temporary relief to the poverty-stricken people but it can hardly bring any change in their fate."



PHOTO: STAR
A youth collects sheaves of paddy stored by rats in a deep hole at a field at Mohendranagar village in Sadar upazila of Lalmonirhat. Ultra poor people of the area collect paddy from rat holes during every harvesting season.

2013 ROUND-UP

Khulna division districts see a spate of crimes

UNB, Khulna

The year 2013, which has just made exit, saw a spate of crimes, including killing, in 10 districts of Khulna division.

Besides killings, the other crimes in the districts include bombing, extortion, abduction, repression on women and children, rape and other offences.

People of the southwestern region had to pass their days amid anxiety due to the criminal activities.

At least 446 people, including 29 activists of different parties, including Awami League, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, were killed in the 10 districts last year, according to sources concerned.

Clandestine attacks by armed criminals and gangs, political rivalries, attacks by rival groups and torture and firing by law enforcers led to these deaths.

There was also a remarkable number of deaths in political violence in the last month of the year when the 18-party opposition enforced back-to-back agitation programmes, including hartal and blockade.

Sources at the office of the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Khulna range, said of the killings, 51 were reported in January, 37 in February, 42 in March, 41 in April, 35 in May, 31 in June, 34 in July, 38 in August, 26 in September, 31 in October, 38 in November and 42 in December.

According to district-wise data, 82 people were killed in Khulna, 93 in Jessore, 59 in Bagerhat, 42 in Jhenidah, 37 in Kushtia, 25 in Magura, 31 in Narail, 28 in Chuadanga, eight in Meherpur and 41 in Satkhira.

Bodies of 63 out of 459 were recovered from different water bodies while 22 ones were found in sacks.

Among those killed were 98 teenage girls and women. On December 30, a gang of 7-8, identifying themselves as journalists picked up local BNP leader Anwarul Islam, also chairman of Agardari union parishad in Satkhira, from his residence.

The abductors later shot him dead in an open field. The family of the disease put the blame of the killing on the joint forces, which recently started crackdown on the political men having charges of violence across the country to maintain law and order in the wake of the present unrest.

Also on the day, the joint forces allegedly killed union level Jamaat leader Abdul Jabbar Malitha, also member of Amjhupi union parishad under Meherpur Sadar upazila.

On December 26 in Jessore, district unit Krishak League leader Shafi Kamal, union level Awami League leader Robiul Islam and a former UP member were killed. On December 4, freedom

fighter Alauddin Khokon was hacked to death by criminals in Kaliganj upazila in Satkhira at midnight.

On August 8, former official of power department Tayebur Rahman and his son Nazmun Monir were killed by slitting throats at Khalishpur in Khulna city.

On October 31, listed criminal Masud Rana, also accused in the murder case of former Jubo League central vice-president Iqbal Bither, was hacked to death by criminals.

On February 28 in Satkhira, Shibir activists Iqbal Hossain Tuhin, Shahin Alam, Ali Mostafa, Jamaat activists Mahmudul Hasan, Robiul Islam, Saifulfulah, Abdus Salam were killed in attacks allegedly by police and ruling Awami League cadres.

In addition to the killings, there have been incidents of torture and abduction of journalists in the crime-prone areas of the division.

On December 4, former president of Satkhira Press Club and local correspondent of the Daily Amar Desh Altaf Hossain went missing and since then he has remained traceless.

His disappearance has created fear among the local journalist community.

On December 28, Satkhira correspondent of the Daily Sangram Abu Sayeed Biswas was arrested by police.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH
Farmers in Devpur area under Rampur union in Chandpur Sadar saw a bumper production of sweet gourds this season. However, they are not getting reasonable prices of the produce for lack of proper marketing.