

PHOTO: STAR

Boats lie stranded at Haripur landing station on the Teesta River in Sundarganj upazila under Gaibandha district as the adjoining waterways have lost navigability due to drastic fall of the water level in the once mighty river.

SHARP DECLINE IN WATER LEVEL

# Ten river routes in Teesta basin area closed

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

At least ten river routes in the Teesta river basin area of Sundarganj upazila under the district have closed as the area sees sharp decline in water level during the ongoing dry season.

The situation is not likely to change before the advent of the rainy season when the river will be fed by water from the upstream, locals said.

Once the mighty river remained navigable round the year but the situation changed due to withdrawal of huge water from the upstream in India for the last several years.

This year the situation seems worse. People are often seen crossing the river on foot as large chars (landmass emerged from riverbed) have devel-

oped there.

With a large number of cargo and passenger boats lying idle, over 1500 boatmen and workers have become jobless and locals are undergoing immense sufferings as they have to either walk miles or take costly ride on horse carts to reach the destinations.

The river ghats (landing stations) at Tarapur, Ramdakua, Belka, Haripur, Bochagari Lalchamar, Kapasia and Bhati Burail are now lifeless, with the boats lying stranded on dried up tributaries.

At present boat communication between Sundarganj upazila with distant ghats of Jamalpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat districts are suspended, as river routes have already dried up.

Fishermen are mostly passing time idle, while many of them migrated to other places in search of work.

"My son is now working as a rickshaw-van puller to feed the family," said Hari Chandra Das, a fisherman of

"We are passing hard days, as boats cannot ply the Teesta and adjoining canals due to acute water crisis," said Julu Bhatiya, a boatman of Haripur.

"We want to see normal water flow in the Teesta round the year. And so, the government should arrange dredging the riverbed and negotiate with India to release water from the upstream," said Abdus Samad Khoka, chairman of Tarapur union parisahd.

# Criminals set school afire in Feni

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Criminals burnt down Pashim Bijoysingh High School in Panchgachhia union under Feni Sadar upazila early yesterday.

After the arson at around 1:00am, a few locals sensed the matter and they along with many others rushed to the spot and engaged in dousing fire, locals and school sources said.

Later a fire service team brought the fire under control but the schoolhouse including its furniture, valuable documents and computer sets got burnt by the time, said Belal Hossain, headmaster of the school.

Set up in 1992, the school now enrols four hundred students, he said.

Students have been sitting for the Secondary School Certificate examinations from the school since 2005.

The incident seems preplanned, said Abdul Gofran Bachchu, president of school managing committee.

Visiting the school yesterday morning, Deputy Commissioner Md Humayun Kabir urged the authorities to continue school activities with the help of the primary school adjacent to the school. He also assured necessary allocation for the school.

Earlier on March 30, activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, tried to have some students of the banned any political activischool fill up forms of the ties in the school and asked



Children look bleakly, standing at a charred classroom of Pashchim Bijoysingha High School in Feni Sadar upazila yesterday.

organisation when several students protested the act, said students, teachers and

Then the school managing committee at a meeting attended by teachers, students and guardians

all concerned to refrain from such activities.

Police detained a Class X student of the school and an HSC candidate in the area but released them a day later.

remained suspended on smooth academic atmo-April 3 as miscreants left sphere at the school.

human excrement at the classrooms the previous night.

Later the school committee held a meeting with the public representatives and local elite and sought School activities help for maintaining

## 3 held on charge of selling 'leaked' questions of NU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested three people on charge of selling 'leaked' question papers of honours second year final examinations of National University (NU) from Kamargari near Government Azizul Haque College in Bogra town on Tuesday night.

The arrestees are Belal Hossain, owner of photocopier shop Ma Photostat in the area, his uncle Nesar Uddin, and Abdul Hakim, an employee of the shop.

A gang started selling question papers, terming them as those of honours second year final examinations of sociology, accounting, political science, and philosophy under the National University, at different photocopier shops of the area on Tuesday evening, DB police sources said.

Informed, DB police went there under the guise of purchasers and arrested the three people with hand and print writings of the question papers that were sold for Tk 50-200

Examinees and their relatives were seen buying those. Seeking anonymity, a student of philosophy said, "After hearing the matter question leaking, I rushed to the spot to buy a

question paper but I failed as police raided the area by the time." Arrestee Belal claimed, "A few youths came to us for photocopying some papers but we could not understand the matter of question leaking. Meanwhile police arrested us."

The arrestees were sent to the court on charge of leaking question papers yesterday noon, said Mizanur Rahman,

### One to die, 3 get life for murder in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A Netrakona court yesterday sentenced a man to death and three others to life imprisonment for killing a villager in Kendua upazila of the district in 2007.

The man, awarded death penalty, is Bablu, 35, son of Abdul Sahed of Dewly village in the upazila. The lifers are Abdul Sahed, 60, Raton, 30, and Faruk, 30.

Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court fined the lifers Tk 50,000 each, in default they are to suffer five more years in prison.

Two other people were jailed for three years by

the court in the same case. The convicts are Abdul

Kadir and Sultan of the village. The court fined them Tk 3,000 each, in default they are to suffer another three months in jail. According to the prosecution, the six hit Tofazzal

Hossain of Dewly village with sharp weapons as a sequel to a previous enmity on February 7, 2007. Tofazzal died instantly. Victim's son Arif Hasan filed a murder case with

Kendua Police Station the same day, accusing Bablu, Sahed, Raton, Faruk, Kadir and Sultan. After investigation, police pressed charges against the six on April 23, 2007.

After examining the witnesses and evidence, Additional District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hamid found them guilty and pronounced the verdict.



The coastguard seizes eight maunds of jatka (hilsa less than nine inches long) and arrests nine fishermen on charge of illegal catching of the young fishes in Chandpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

A large number of women wait for their turn to cast votes at Gopalpur Government Primary School centre in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila during the election to the upazila parishad yesterday. Voters from cross section of the society exercised their right to franchise in the polls that were held peacefully.

### Criminals assault 2 teachers in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two government primary school teachers were assaulted by criminals following a feud over forming managing committee in Belgaria area of Nandigram upazila yesterday.

The victims are Rashedul Islam, headmaster of Monibag Government Primary School and its assistant teacher Yushub Ali.

They were admitted to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital with injuries in hands and leg.

Locals said a gang, allegedly led by Rajib Ahmed, beat up the duo while they were going to Panditpukur area under the upazila.

Officer in-charge of Nandigram police station Shajahan Ali said punitive action would be taken against those responsible for the attack after investigating the matter.

## Yaba smuggler held after gunfight with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged yaba smuggler, who sustained bullet wounds following a gunfight with the detectives, was arrested in Kalatali area of

the district town early yesterday. They also seized a pistol, two bullets and 1400 pieces of yaba tablets from the spot, said officer in-

charge Manjur Alam of DB in Cox's Bazar. The arrestee is Mohammad Ayub, 25, son of Rashid Prakash of Naitangpara area in Teknaf municipality. He was admitted to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital.

Informed that a gang of yaba smugglers

were holding a clandestine meeting at Bypass road in the area, a team of DB police conducted the drive at 1:45am.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire, prompting the DB men to fire back, said OC Manjur Alam.

At this, the detectives arrested bullet-hit Ayub from the spot. However, his cohorts

managed to flee.

Three separate cases were filed with Sadar police station in this connection. Two of them were lodged under the Arms Act and the Narcotics Control Act, said Manjur Alam.

### TARUN LEAGUE LEADER RAJU MURDER CASE Main accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The main accused in Tarun League leader Sabbir Amed Raju murder case was arrested at Hazraniya village in Kaliganj upazila of the district yesterday.

The arrestee is Aslam Hossain, 40, general secretary of Jubo Dal Lalmonirhat municipality unit.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a house at Hazraniya village and arrested Aslam Hossain, said Officer-in-Charge Mahfuzur Rahman of Sadar Police Station.

Police are trying to recover the looted motorcycle of Raju and arrest the rest of the

accused in the case, the OC added. Sabbir Amed Raju, 28, convener of

Mogholhat union unit of Awami Tarun League, was stabbed to death by Jubo Dal leader Aslam Hossain and his accomplices at Putimari Dola village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on January 2. The killers also took away Raju's motorbike.

Victim's father Ahmed Ali filed a murder case with Sadar Police Station the same day, accusing Aslam and seven others.

Police said Aslam was wanted three other murder cases lodged with Sadar and Kaliganj police stations.