

Infant abducted after killing domestic help

Boy murdered for ransom

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Criminals abducted a 14-month-old adopted son of a childless couple after killing their teenaged domestic help at Thanapara in Nilphamari municipality on Tuesday while police yesterday recovered the body of a five-year-old boy killed by abductors in Bhuapur upazila under Tangail district.

Fourteen-month-old Junayed Hasan, adopted son of Mirza Nur Mohammad Beg, 45, and his wife Shirin Jahan, 38, went missing while their teenaged domestic help Sumi Akhtar, 15, was killed at their Thanapara rented house in Nilphamari municipality on Tuesday, reports our Nilphamari correspondent.

Killed Sumi Akhtar, 15, was daughter of Abdullah of Balapara Khutamara village of Jaldhaka upazila.

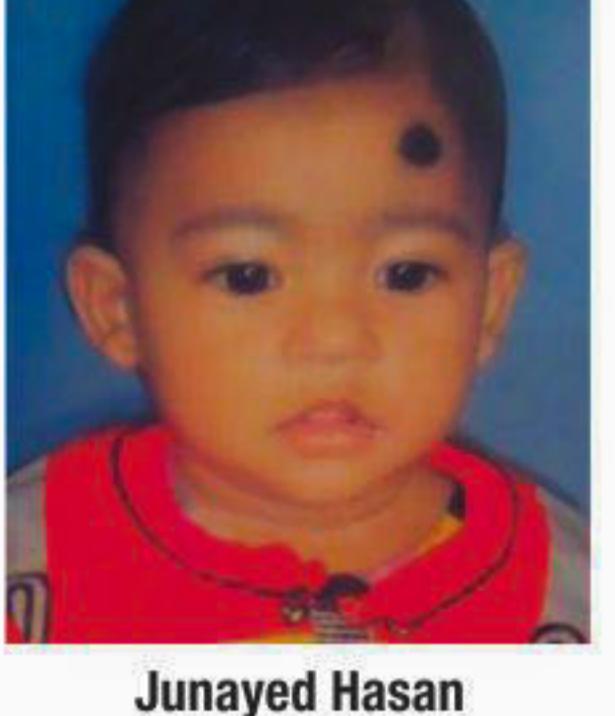
Mirza Nur, an official of a poultry feed factory in Saidpur, and Shirin Jahan, a teacher of Tengnami Government Primary School in Jaldhaka, daily go to their workplace at around 8:30am, leaving their adopted son under the care of Sumi at home.

They usually return late afternoon.

The childless couple, hailing from Mirganj Pathanpara village of Jaldhaka, have been living in a rented house of one Nuru Mia at Thanapara of the town for the last three years for work purpose, police and locals said.

"Around 5:00pm on Tuesday, I and my husband returned home. We were surprised to see the

door of their flat open. Entering inside we looked for our son and the maid. We found Sumi's dead body on the bathroom floor. I cried out and looked for our son but he was nowhere," said Shirin



Junayed Hasan

Jahan, weeping.

Mirza Nur said, "Sumi might have been raped before killing as there was no clothe on the lower part of her body."

Ornaments, money and a mobile phone were also found missing from the house, he said.

Mirza Nur filed a case with Sadar police station accusing unknown miscreants yesterday noon.

Locals said Ahenul, 20, a vagabond of Babrijhar village, and a street hawker named Anwar of Chraikholia village developed relation with Sumi Akhtar and her employer Mirza and Shirin became aware of the matter about one year ago as they found her to possess a mobile phone given by the two youths.

Then a local attribution was held in which the two accused were warned not to disturb the girl and Mirza Nur scolded the two youths that time, locals said, adding that the two men might have

committed the crime out of vengeance.

Shahjamal Pasha, officer in charge of Sadar police station, said, "Police arrested Ahenul and Anwar as suspects on Tuesday night. We are trying to rescue the abducted child."

TANGAIL

Our Tangail Correspondent reports: Abductors killed a five-year-old boy at East Bhuapur village in Bhuapur municipal area under the district.

Police recovered the body of victim Mohammad Jony, son of ex army man Harunor-Rashid of East Bhuapur village in the municipal area, from the septic tank at 12:00pm yesterday.

Mohammad Jony went missing on Sunday and his father Harun lodged a general diary with the police station the same day. Tk 5 lakh ransom was demanded from Harun through a phone call the next day for getting his son back alive,"

said Hares Ali Miah, officer in charge of Bhuapur Police Station.

"An understanding was made between Harun and the kidnappers that they would give him an opportunity to talk to Jony in exchange of Tk 20,000 and later the boy will be released after getting rest of the money," he said.

Meantime, Jony's body was recovered from the septic tank of an adjacent house, also owned by Harun. He had rented it to others, the OC added.

Police detained the house renter and three others in connection with the incident.

SNIPPETS

Woman 'commits suicide'

UNB, Chandpur

A newly-wed woman allegedly committed suicide at her father's residence at Nayergaon village in Matlab (South) upazila on Monday. The deceased was identified as Jyote Begum, 19, wife of Ziaur Rahman of Nandikholia village in the same upazila. Her family sources said Jyote, who had got married 45 days ago, came to visit her father's house with her husband Ziaur a few days back. But she hanged herself from the ceiling of a room with the help of a scarf in the morning.

Two journos sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A court here sent two journalists to jail at noon on Tuesday in an extortion case filed an engineer of Roads and Highways Department. Tapan Roy, senior Judicial magistrate delivered the order rejecting their bail prayers, when they surrendered to the court. The journalists were identified as Sanjoy Kumar Das Litu, Patuakhali correspondent for DeshTV and Bangladesh Protidin and Jalilur Rahman Jalil, Patuakhali correspondent for Mrasanga TV. Hasan Al-Mamun, Sub-Divisional engineer for Patuakhali RHD filed a case with Patuakhali police station on April 25 bringing the allegation of extortion. Accordance to the case, at about 9:00pm on April 24, a gang led by Sanjoy and Jalil, entered into his house on RHD campus and demanded Tk 5 lakh as illegal toll.

Youth murdered

UNB, Comilla

Police recovered the body of a young man with the throat slashed from Mokimpur in Brahmanbaria upazila of the district on Tuesday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Abul Miah, 18, son of Tajel Miah, a resident of the upazila. Family sources of the deceased said Abul, a conductor of microbus, had remained missing since Monday afternoon. Locals noticed the body of Abul, with the throat slit and intestines bulging out, lying on a street at Burigang in the upazila and informed police.

3,200 firecrackers seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessor

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 3,200 Indian firecrackers from Amrakhalia area here early Tuesday. Being tipped off that a huge quantity of firecrackers was being smuggled into the country from India, a patrol team of the border force raided the area in the early hours and seized the crackers, said Mohammad Liakat Ali, deputy commanding officer of Benapole BGB Battalion-26.

Body recovered

UNB, Kushtia

Police recovered the body of a young man with its throat slashed from a field at Natubia village in Kumarkhali upazila yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Altu Miah, 25, son of Arshed Miah, a resident of the same village. Lutfar Rahman, officer in-charge of Kumarkhali Police Station, said the motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

CUT OUT MIDDLEMEN, SAVE GUAVA GROWERS



PHOTO: STAR

The floating market on Bhimruli canal in Jhalakathi district sees buying and selling of huge quantity of guava but the local growers, failing to carry the popular fruit to other districts for sale due to communications problem, are compelled to sell the item for a meagre Tk 1 or 2 a kg at present.

The fruit sells for Tk 1 a kg in Jhalakathi

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, Jhalakathi

Awfully low prices frustrate guava growers in the district famous for various varieties of the popular fruit.

Guava in the local market is now selling for as low as Tk 1 per kg while the price goes up to Tk 40-50 when the item reaches the capital and other areas of the

country.

The situation has arisen as most of the profit goes to the middlemen, said farmers.

"I had to sell guava for Tk 30 per maund (40 kg) this season," said farmer Amulya Mondol who came to sell his produce at Bhimruli, the biggest floating guava market in Jhalakathi district.

Buyers from different areas come with large engine boats to buy the fruit in large amounts.

"I buy per kg of guava for Tk 2 to 5 and sell it for Tk 15 to 20 in different areas including Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Comilla. I would give the sellers better price if the communications were good," said Shah Alam Jamaddar, who is engaged in the business

for 35 years.

Local farmers have demanded establishing a fruit processing factory where they can sell their fruits for fair prices.

"In last year, we trained 25 farmers for making jam and jelly from the fruits but they hardly utilise the knowledge," said Abul Hossen Mia, agriculture extension officer of Jhalakathi Sadar.

Rampant garbage dumping killing roadside trees

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

Random dumping of toxic garbage causes death to roadside trees from Border Bazaar point to Poirtala bridge of the town bypass, thanks to the callousness of the cleaning department staff of Brahmanbaria municipality.

Visiting the spot on eastern side of the bypass a few days ago, this correspondent

said.

They also said some traders hang cables and signboards, fixing them with iron nails on the trees, causing their harm.

Despite being an 'A' category municipality, Brahmanbaria lacks any specific spot for dumping its huge garbage and so, scattering of waste materials pollutes environment, said Md Alamgir of Poirtala village.

Enamul Haque, assistant conservator of forest in Brahmanbaria, said regular dumping of garbage at the base of the trees poisons the soil, causing hindrance to the growth of trees and their gradual death.

In absence of proper

garbage management system including waste treatment plant, various waste materials from mills, factories, hospitals, business centres and households in the municipality are disposed in unplanned ways, affecting lives as well as underground water, Md Saifullah Talukder, deputy director of the environment department in the district, said.

Md Helal Uddin, mayor of Brahmanbaria municipality, said, "A project proposal for a big dumping spot has already been sent to the higher authorities. I also directed the staffs concerned to take care of the environment while dumping garbage."



PHOTO: STAR

Random dumping of garbage, including toxic items, wreaks havoc to roadside trees in Brahmanbaria municipality. The photo was taken from the town bypass a few days ago.

Mawa ferry services resume

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Ferry services on the Mawa-Kewrakandi route resumed partially yesterday after 11 hours of suspension due to erosion onslaught continued at Mawa by the Padma River.

Transport Corporation (BIWTC), at Mawa, said the terminal no-3 at Mawa was washed away partially by strong currents of the river around 8:45pm on Tuesday, prompting the authorities to suspend ferry movement. He also said a few shops were also devoured down by the mighty river.

Several hundred vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the river following the suspension of ferry services.

General ferry services on the route resumed from Kewrakandi ghat at about 8:00am but Ro-Ro ferry services remained halted till filing of this report in the evening. BIWTC sources said.

Wrong strategy

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In the ADB ranking, Bangladesh fell below Sri Lanka (17th), India (22nd), Pakistan (23rd) and Nepal (26th).

Bangladesh scored 1.49, which is much lower than the Asia and Pacific average of 4.39 and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 8.25.

Any score below three would be regarded as "poor" because the average score was 4.39 for the region, according to Biru Paksha Paul, an associate professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland.

Bangladesh ranked 26th in terms of innovation, 25th in education and skill, and 24th in economic and institutional regime, said the ADB report based on the World Bank index.

"Much to our despair, we positioned below even Pakistan in the index of knowledge economy ... Growth without a knowledge base will run out of steam very soon," Paul, a Bangladeshi economist, wrote in a recent article.

He said the ranking and scores in the knowledge economy index warrant urgent attention from the government. "It is a wake-up call for the higher education industry where quality is appalling."

The ADB study assessed the current state of knowledge-based economies in a number of developing Asian economies, and benchmarked them with advanced economies using four pillars: innovation, information and communication technology, education and skill, and the economic and institutional regime.

"The underlying premise is that emerging economies in Asia can climb up the ladder of higher value-added products and services in global markets and go beyond middle-income levels by strengthening knowledge-based development processes," said the ADB.

Much of the exemplary growth in Asia has come from its economies' long-held comparative advantage.

in labour-intensive goods. Emerging economies will, however, find it impossible to continue their success under the same growth models used over the last few decades, as technological progress changes the ways countries produce and trade.

With rising wages across the region, most Asian economies stand to lose their comparative advantage for labour-intensive manufacturing and will also feel the pressure exerted on increasingly scarce and costly energy resources, it said.

Asia's economies also face a looming "middle-income trap" where the economic success a country achieves through comparative labour advantage diminishes as wages rise and productivity levels decline, slowing overall economic growth.

For Asia's emerging economies to avoid the middle-income trap, they need to effectively shift from accumulation-led growth to productivity-led growth.

"Knowledge will become increasingly important as a source of productivity growth. While many countries in Asia have expanded their industrial base and increased the share of the services sector, they need to avoid being stuck in the middle-income trap -- knowledge-based economy is an important way forward."

This study argues that there are three ways in which emerging economies of Asia and the Pacific can pursue knowledge-based economic development.

Firstly, they can learn from the knowledge-based journey of advanced economies and make appropriate investments and policy reforms.

Secondly, they can exploit the unique strengths and endowments of the region by pursuing strategies that amplify such strengths, and thirdly, they can do it by leveraging game-changing trends in technology and business processes that can enable emerging economies to leapfrog technology development cycles and catch up with the latest.