

EFFECT OF BLOCKADE IN NORTHERN DISTRICTS

Unsold veg rotting, prices of broiler, egg drop

The transport problem amid the ongoing countrywide blockade imposed by BNP-led 20-party alliance wreaks havoc on the business of winter vegetables and poultry products in the northern districts.

Growers of winter vegetables in Dinajpur and Joypurhat are either selling the produces at throwaway prices or leaving those at fields, our Dinajpur correspondent reports.

Huge quantities of popular vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli, bean, tomato, and gourd are getting damaged due to the situation.

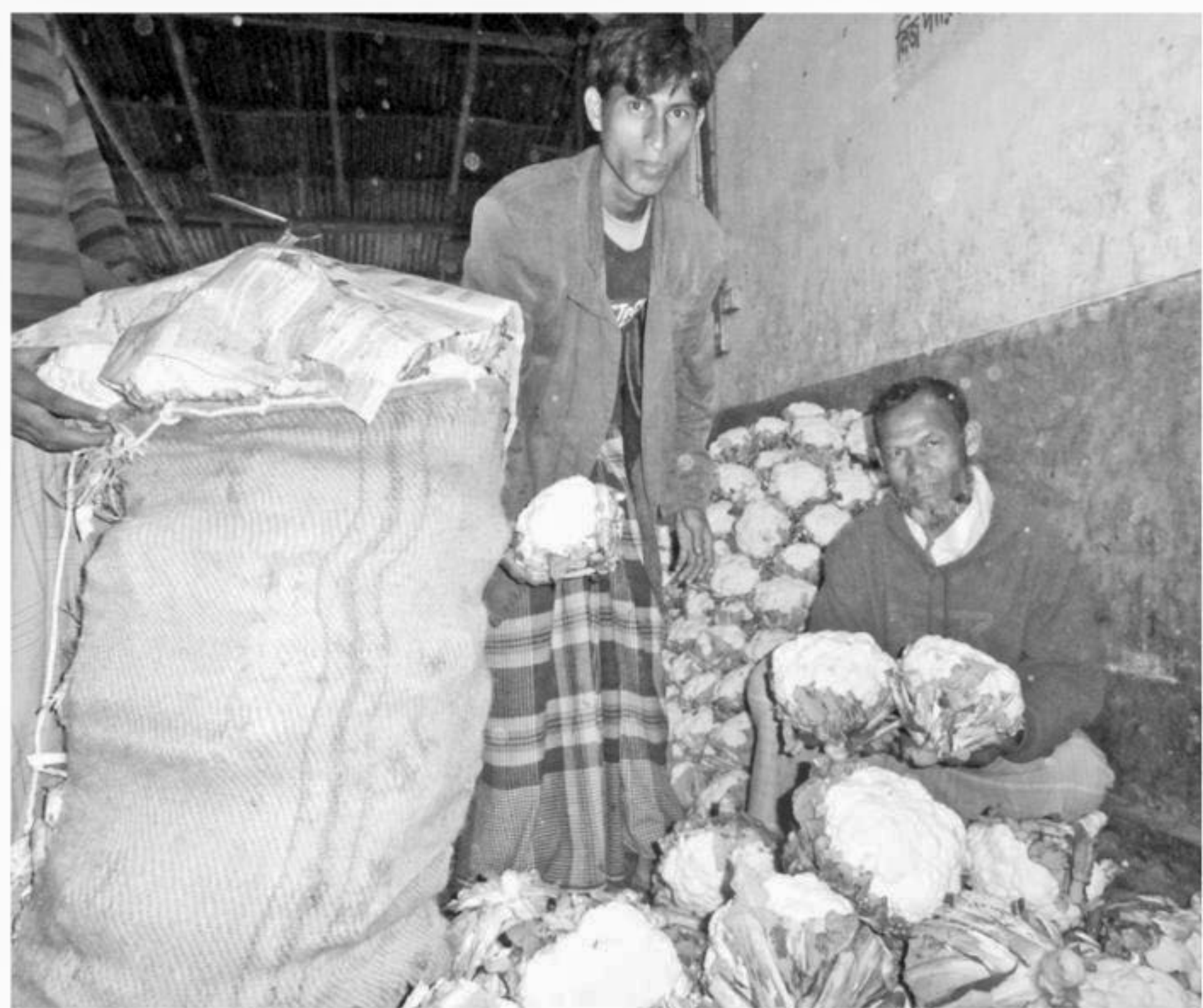
According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) of Dinajpur, 51,724 hectares of land was brought under winter vegetable cultivation with a production target of 65,58,466 tonnes this season.

In Joypurhat, the area of winter vegetable cultivation is 20,019 hectares.

After meeting the local demand, the crops from the two districts are sent to different areas of the country.

"But this year we are facing huge losses due to the political agitation, reminding us of a similar situation last year," said Zinnath Ali of Kosba village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

"Now buyers are offering only Tk 3 for a cabbage, while the production cost stood at Tk 8 on an average. Besides we have transport cost to count," Azizul Islam of Chehelgazi village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila said during this correspondent's visit to the wholesale vegetable market at Bahadurbazar



Cauliflower sellers at a store of wholesale vegetable market at Goshala in Lalmonirhat town look hapless as the price sees drastic fall amid lack of customers due to transport problem caused by the ongoing countrywide blockade enforced by BNP-led 20-party alliance.

in Dinajpur town on Thursday.

Visiting different areas of Uttarnagar under Dinajpur Sadar upazila, this correspondent found that many farmers left their harvested vegetables on the field due to the blockade programme.

In many cases, farmers refrained from plucking matured crops.

The poultry farmers are also facing problems.

The prices of a kg of broiler dropped from Tk 170 to Tk 110, and that of each egg from Tk 7 to Tk 5, he added.

The early variety potato growers are in trouble too.

Anwarul Islam, general secretary of Dinajpur Chamber of Commerce and

Industries, said farmers, rice millers and poultry farmers are badly affected due to the blockade.

Our Lalmonirhat Correspondent adds: The price of cauliflower has fallen to a meagre Tk 2 from Tk 10 a kg in a few days at Goshala Bazar in the town as wholesalers from the capital and other areas of the country cannot come here due to transport problem.

"I sold 50 maunds of cauliflowers at Tk 10 a kg a day before the blockade started. Now it is selling at Tk 2. I am worried about rest of the cauliflowers grown on four bighas land as my production cost stood at Tk 8 a kg," said Mobarok Hossain,

a farmer at Karnapur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

Taking the advantage of blockade, middlemen are offering very low prices for vegetables to the farmers, said Surendra Nath Sen, a farmer of Dighaltari village of Aditmari upazila.

"I and some other vegetable traders destroyed huge cauliflowers on Wednesday noon as the item, lying unsold due to lack of transport, rotted," said Azadur Rahman, a trader at Goshala Bazar, the biggest vegetable market in the district.

Around six thousand farmers produced cauliflower on about 2,000 hectares of land in different areas of the district this year, DAE sources said.

Acid attack on housewife over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A housewife sustained burn injuries in an acid attack following a feud with her neighbour over a disputed land at Borchor village in Sadar upazila of Habiganj district on Saturday night.

The victim is Shamsunnahar, 45, wife of late Shamsul Haque of the village. She is undergoing treatment at Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

Locals said a gang led by Rahim Miah, neighbour of the Shamsunnahar, threw acid on her while she was returning home from nearby Kadamtoli area.

Hearing scream, locals rushed to the spot, rescued the woman and took him to the hospital.

Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said there was a longstanding dispute between Rahim Miah and Shamsunnahar over the ownership of a land at the village.

Attack on 2 HC judges' houses protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Lawyers of Pirojpur District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday protested the recent attacks on the houses of two High Court judges.

Addressing a rally in the town, the speakers said criminals recently hurled crude bombs at the houses of justices Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman after they prohibited publishing any statement of Tarique Rahman, senior vice chairman of BNP, as he is a fugitive accused.

BURGLARY AT FARIDPUR RUPALI BANK

Tk 1.22 cr recovered from branch employee, 5 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Hours into the discovery of stealing of Tk 1.57 crore from Rupali Bank's corporate branch in Faridpur town, police arrested an office assistant of the bank and recovered Tk 1.22 crore from his house yesterday.

Abdul Kalam, the mastermind of the theft, was arrested from his house at Shibrampur village in Sadar upazila around 6:00pm, said Jamil Hasan, superintendent of police.

Acting on a tip off, a joint team of police including Detective Branch (DB) men conducted a drive at Kalam's house and found the money at a plastic container kept under the ground of the house, the SP said.

Burglars stole Tk 1.57 crore from state-run Rupali Bank's corporate branch in the town, using duplicate keys, said bank officials.

Police then arrested three Ansar members and a guard of the bank in this connection and started quizzing them, said Bijoy Boshak, additional superintendent of police.

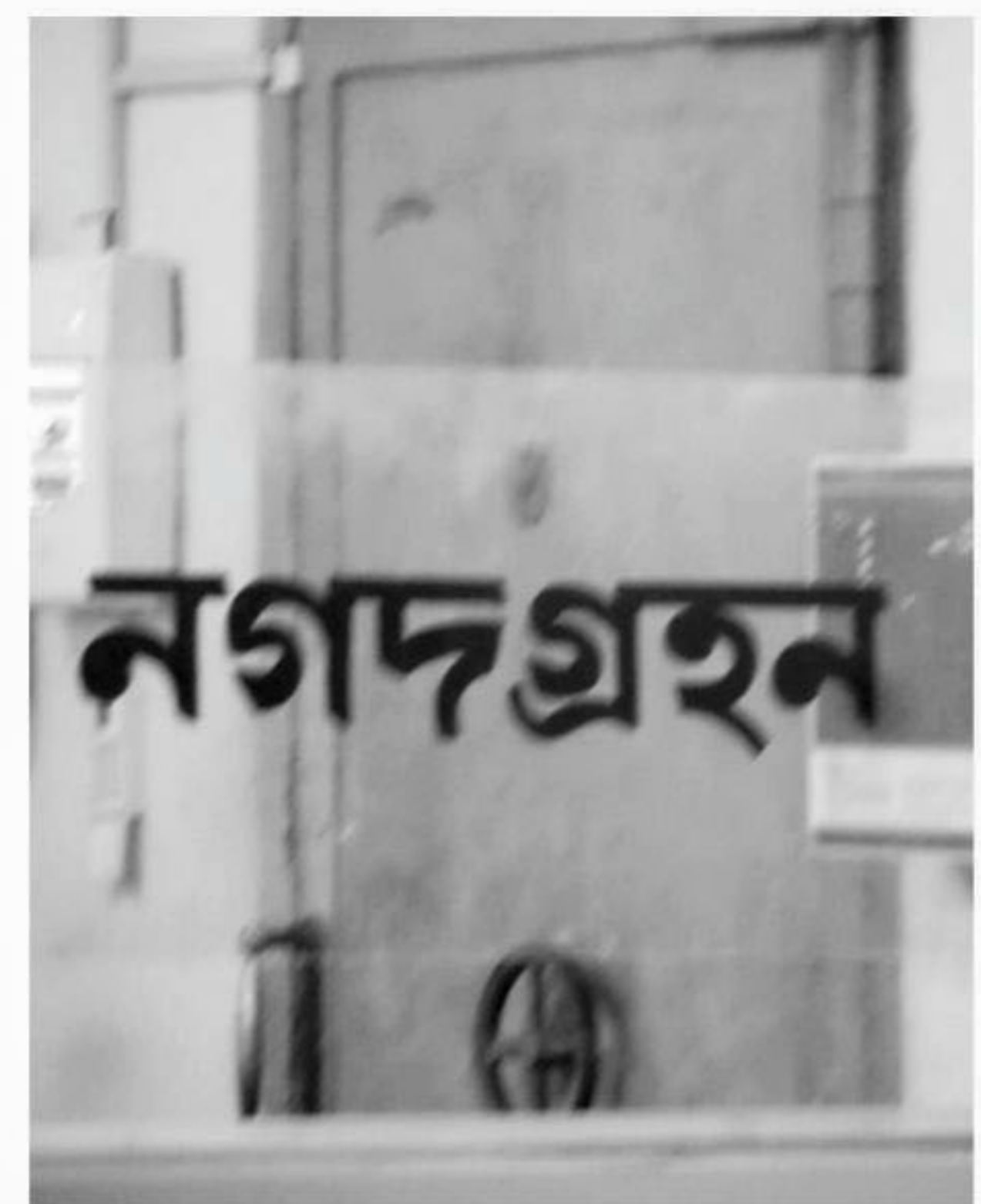
The arrestees are Faruk Mollah, 55, guard of the bank, and Ansar members Md Ashek Ullah, 32, Md Luthfor Rahman, 33, and

Rafiq Mollah.

Authorities discovered the burglary in the morning, said Ashak Kumar Singh Roy, deputy general manager of the Rupali Bank branch.

"We opened the vault

around 10:15am and found around Tk 1.57 crore missing. Someone opened the vault of the bank by using duplicate key and theft occurred anytime between Friday and Saturday," he added.



Tk 1.57 crore 50 thousand was found missing from Rupali Bank's main branch in Faridpur town as officials checked its vault yesterday morning. Police recovered Tk 1.22 crore of the stolen money from the house of an office assistant of the branch the same day.

49 sued on charge of Killing Jhenidah AL leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Forty-nine people have been sued on charge of killing local Awami League leader Ananda Mohan Ghosh in Kaliganj upazila of the district on January 7.

Tapon Kumar Ghosh, brother of the slain leader, filed the case with Kaliganj Police Station on Saturday night. None of the accused was arrested as of 6:00pm yesterday.

Tapon Kumar Ghosh, president of Kola union unit of the party, was killed and at least 15 others were injured as BCL activists attacked the extended meeting of Kaliganj upazila unit of the ruling party at municipality auditorium.

Israil Hossain, ex-general secretary of upazila AL, and Rezaul Islam, panel mayor of Kaliganj municipality, were among the injured.

The BCL men also damaged at least 200 chairs, 15 motorbikes, a private car and a jeep of district AL General Secretary Azizur Rahman.

They (BCL men) led by Jubo League leader Shibli Nomani swooped on the extended meeting at around 5:00pm and assaulted the AL leaders and activists.

The complainant said all the accused are supporters of AL lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar. He demanded immediate arrest of the accused.

Withdraw false case filed by land grabber

Demand indigenous people at human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Jatiya Adivasi Parishad formed a human chain in front of Samobaya Market in the town yesterday, demanding withdrawal of a 'false' case filed by an alleged land grabber against six indigenous people of Gobindanagar village under Thakurgaon municipality recently.

They also protested a bid to grab the land of one Daniel Tirkki of the village.

Addressing a rally at the venue, the participants said Daniel and his family members on January 1 resisted the land grabber, Kanchan Roy, and his musclemen

when they came to erect a fence on a piece of land of Daniel.

On the same day, Kanchan filed a false case with Thakurgaon Police Station against six people, including Daniel, Colonel Tirkki, Polash Kalko, Julian Topko and Satis Chandra.

Later, police arrested Daniel and sent him to jail. Daniel was released on bail on January 8.

Kanchan filed the false case with a view to grabbing the land, said the speakers. Like the six, many indigenous people of the plane land are being harassed regularly in different areas of the northern districts,

they said. Urging the government to save the indigenous people from the land grabbers, the speakers said all fake documents made to occupy their lands should be declared illegal.

They also demanded immediate arrest of the killers of indigenous youth Bablu Hembrom, 25, son of Mohesh Hembrom of Moyenpara, 15-km off Tanore Sadar upazila in Rajshahi, on Friday.

Later, the indigenous people submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner to take immediate steps to bring the offenders to book.



Remains of trunks bear testimony to illegal felling of the trees beside Kalapara-Kuakata alternative road in Baliatoli area of Kalapara upazila under Patuakhali district during the last three days. The forest department planted the trees 15 years ago.

Over 50 roadside trees felled in Kalapara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Over 50 roadside trees were felled by a union parishad (UP) chairman in Baliatoli area under Kuakata upazila of the district in the last three days.

Locals alleged that Md Humayun Kabir, chairman of Baliatoli Union Parishad (UP) cut down the trees along Kalapara-Kuakata alternative road and brought them to a field near the UP office.

Locals said the forest

department planted trees along the road from Shishu Academy to Tulatali Bazar around 15 years ago. The labourers engaged by the UP chairman felled over 50 trees on both sides of the road.

The labourers told this correspondent that UP Chairman Humayun Kabir engaged them to cut down the trees with a daily wage of Tk 300 per head.

Contacted, Chairman Humayun Kabir said he felled only seven to eight

dead trees and brought them to the field in front of the UP office. "After taking decision in a union parishad meeting, I will auction them off," the chairman said.

Local forest officer Md Belayet Hossain said he was not aware of the matter.

Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Jahangir Hossain told the correspondent that he would investigate the matter and take legal steps against the man who illegally felled the roadside trees.

Abducted man found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

An indigenous man, abducted from his house in Lama upazila on January 7, was found murdered on Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Bipul Tripura, 30, son of Johan Tripura of Durjodhan Para of the upazila.

Locals found Bipul's body in Boroj Bagan area at the village at around 8:00pm and informed the police who went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

A gang of unknown criminals picked up Bipul from his house at gunpoint at around

12:30am, said Apu Tripura, brother of Bipul. They also beat up Bipul's wife Rebeka Tripura as she tried to save her husband.

Bipul, a garments worker in Chittagong city, came to his village home a few days ago to attend a family function, Apu Tripura said. He filed a case with Lama Police Station yesterday.

Investigation officer (IO) Ismail Hossain said the body bore stab injury marks. Police yesterday arrested two people of the area, suspecting their involvement in the kidnapping.

The arrestees are Madhu Chandra Tripura, 38, and Mong Shwe Tripura, 35.

SNIPPETS

Blanket distribution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Over 3000 cold affected destitute people of five upazilas in the district got blankets from NGO RDRS Bangladesh yesterday. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Abu Noor Md Shamsuzzaman distributed the blankets among the cold affected people at Saptibari village in Aditmari upazila. Nazrul Islam, senior programme manager of micro credit at the NGO, was present.

MNC students on strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Students of Mymensingh Nursing College (MNC) continued their indefinite strike for the fifth day yesterday to press their demands. The demands include removal of Principal Monwara Khatun and Housekeeper Nazmun Nahar and cancellation of the transfer orders against their fellow students. Though the MNC authorities withdrew the transfer orders on Saturday, the students said they would continue the strike until the removal of the principal and the housekeeper. On October 28 last year, a group of students ransacked college dormitories and created anarchy on the campus. Later two committees were formed to investigate the incident. Following recommendations of the committees, Directorate of Nursing Services transferred eight students of MNC to Barisal Nursing College as punitive measures on December 27, said sources.

Newsman gets threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A journalist here got threat through SMS on mobile phone on Saturday. A general diary was filed with Sadar Police Station in this connection yesterday morning. The victim is S Dilip Roy, Lalmonirhat district correspondent of The Daily Star, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the PS. According to the GD, the newsman got threat from mobile No 01750956606 on Saturday night. Police are investigating the matter, said the OC.

Youth beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A youth was beaten to death over a trivial matter at Moheshpur village in Begumganj upazila on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Zakir Hossain Tarek, son of Md Saheb Uddin of the village. He passed the HSC examinations from Noakhali Government College last year. Family sources said Zakir's goat damaged the seedbed of his neighbour Anwar Hossain. Later, Anwar tied the goat in his house. Zakir went to get back his goat at night and locked in an altercation with Anwar over the issue. At one stage, Anwar beat the youth mercilessly, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to Noakhali Abdul Malek Ukil Medical College Hospital where on duty doctors declared him dead. A murder case was filed, accusing Anwar, said police.



Jatiya Adivasi Parishad forms a human chain in front of Samobaya Market in Thakurgaon town yesterday demanding withdrawal of a false case filed by land grabbers against six indigenous people of Gobindanagar in Thakurgaon municipality.