



PHOTO: STAR

Date juice gets boiled for condensation into molasses at Bhatibari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. No chemical or any other harmful item is added as the winter delicacy is prepared there amid watch by the potential buyers.

Chemical-free date juice molasses attracts buyers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Chemical-free molasses prepared from date juice at Bhatibari village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila attracts buyers from different areas during the ongoing peak season.

"Every morning I and five others collect juice from 135 date trees leased from 10 farmers of the village on seasonal contract. We prepare chemical-free molasses in presence of people and sell it on the spot daily," said Nazrul Islam, a molasses producer.

Forty to forty-five kg of molasses from 450 to 500 kg of juice is produced and a kg

of chemical-free molasses sells at Tk 80.

Although a kg of date molasses is selling between Tk 60 to 65 in the local market, we buy the chemical-free molasses from village Bhatibari at a high rate as it is good for health, said Hamid Miah, a molasses trader at BDR Haat market in Lalmonirhat Sadar.

"We dare not mix chemicals with molasses from the date juice as many people watch the preparation process. We sell the item for a bit higher than the usual market price," said molasses producer Taherul Islam.

"We get three to four kg of juice from a date tree and 10

to 11 kg of juice is needed for making one kg of molasses. After meeting up all the cost, our earning stands at Tk 1800 to 2000 daily," said another molasses producer Nabir Ali.

Chittaranjon Roy, a farmer of Bhatibari village, said he has leased his 22 date trees to a few people who are producing chemical-free molasses in the village.

"I get Tk 1200 against each date tree. I also get two kg of molasses every week," he said.

Local resident Mahabbat Ali said they are happy to get chemical-free quality molasses although the price

is a bit higher.

"I and many others from Lalmonirhat town come to the village for purchasing chemical-free molasses from date juice. The molasses available in the market, whether produced from date juice or sugarcane, are often mixed with chemicals and so, harmful for health," said Gour Gopal Saha, a resident of Adarsha Para in Lalmonirhat town.

Appreciating the initiative, Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila Sanitary Inspector Abdur Rashid said, chemical-free molasses is good for health, especially for the children.

Clash over capturing water body leaves 50 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between two groups of people of Dakkhin Kurchi village over capture of a beel (waterbody) in Chhatak upazila of Sunamganj district yesterday evening.

Locals said the clash ensued when the two groups—one led by Achir Ali and the other by Hafiz Uddin—went to Boterkhal beel to take control of it at around 6:00pm.

The two groups, equipped with lethal weapons, swooped on each other, leaving at least 50 people from both sides injured. The clash lasted for two hours.

On information, police rushed to the spot, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to Chhatak Upazila Health Complex and Sunamganj Sadar Hospital.

Three human traffickers, robber held after gunfight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police arrested three alleged human traffickers and a robber following a gunfight with a gang at Taziakata village in Moheshkhali upazila under the district yesterday.

Acting on a tip, police raided the coastal village to arrest a gang of human traffickers around 11:00am, said Didarul Ferdous, officer in charge (OC) of Moheshkhali Police Station. Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to fire back.

Police arrested human traffickers Abdur Rahim, Abdul Malek and Jahangir Alam, and robber Shafi Alam while the other gang members managed to flee, the OC said.

Police filed a case against the arrestees on charge of human trafficking, interfering in the work of the law enforcers and possessing illegal arms.

EXTORTION CASE

UP chairman sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Chairman of a union parishad (UP) under Ghatail upazila of the district was sent to jail yesterday on extortion charge.

Police arrested Sohrab Hossain, 55, chairman of Deolabari Union Parishad (UP), on Saturday night from College intersection area at the upazila headquarter following an extortion case filed by Shamima Islam of Deolabari village with Ghatail Police Station on December 25.

Police yesterday produced the chairman in a Tangail court that sent him to jail, rejecting his bail prayer.

MURDER OF JUBO LEAGUE LEADER

83 including mayor-elect sued in Shantahar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least 83 people, including newly elected mayor of Shantahar municipality in the district, have been sued on charge of killing Jubo League leader Shafiqul Islam.

Nurul Islam, brother of the victim, Shafiqul, 36, secretary of Shantahar and its associate bodies clashed with Jatiya Party men at Shantahar municipality yesterday.

The accused include newly elected mayor and secretary of Shantahar municipality BNP Tofazzal Hossain Bhutto, joint secretary of Adamdighi upazila Awami League (AL) Ashraful Islam

Montu, Jatiya Party (JP) upazila president SM Milon.

Of them, Montu, JP leader Abdul Latif and Shajal, a resident of the municipality, were arrested, said police.

On Friday, Shafiqul was killed and 10 others were injured as the activists of AL and its associate bodies clashed with Jatiya Party men at Shantahar municipality.

The following day, critically injured Sramik League activist Sohag Hossain, 26, son of Abdul Khaleque of Dogachi village in Noagaon Sadar upazila, died on way to Dhaka.

Locals said the incident took place over establishing

supremacy in the area.

There was a longstanding conflict between local battery-run auto-rickshaw drivers and conductors, backed by the AL, and the ones of CNG-run auto-rickshaws, supported by the JP, over taking control in the area.

On the other hand, there was a tension between the two groups as AL-backed Rashedul Islam Raja blames the local JP for his defeat in the municipal polls, saying he did not get their support properly.

The law enforcers are raiding different areas to arrest the accused, said Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Gazir Rahman.



PHOTO: STAR

The depot of Akij Food and Beverage at Belail beside Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Bogra town lies vandalised after robbers looted at least Tk 12 lakh from there early yesterday.

Tk 12 lakh looted from Bogra depot of Akij Group

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Robbers looted at least Tk 12 lakh from the depot of Akij Corporation and Akij Food and Beverage, sister concerns of Akij Group, in Belail area beside Rangpur-Dhaka highway of Bogra town early yesterday.

Depot sources said the money was kept in three vaults of the depot. Officials of the depot left the office and it was closed at around 9:00pm. At least nine guards were engaged in the depot.

At around 2:30am, a gang of 20-25 robbers, equipped with the necessary tools for cutting through the vaults of the depot, tied up the guards and broke into the depot. The robbers also beat up the security guards.

Locals informed the police of the matter at around 6:00 am. Police rescued the guards and sent two of them -- Emdad and Shajahan -- to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH). They detained

guard Shahidul, driver Rajib and helper Imran for quizzing.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, senior store officer of Akij Group, Bogra depot, said they will lodge a case in this connection with Bogra Sadar Police Station.

Contacted, Abul Bashar, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bogra Sadar Police Station, said that police have detained three employees of the depot for interrogation and are investigating the matter.

No trace yet of abducted schoolboy

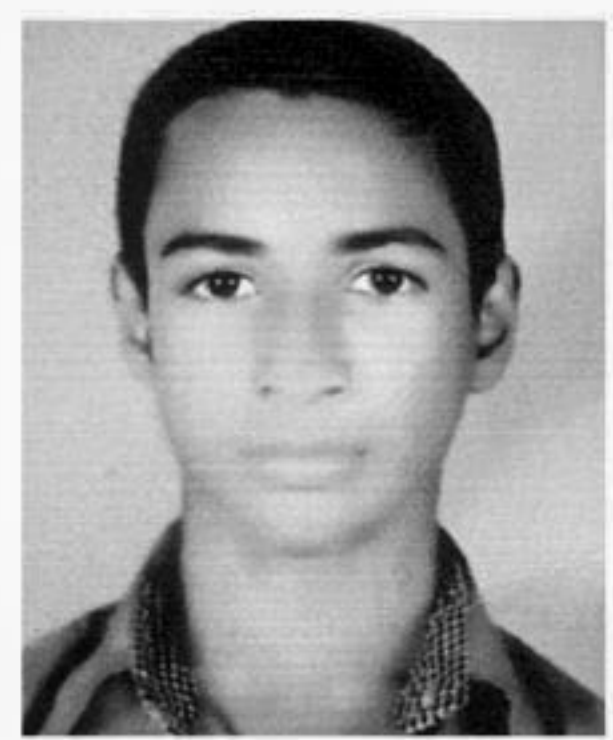
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

There is no trace yet of a Class VIII student of Naldanga Bhusan Pilot Secondary School in Kaliganj upazila even 12 days after his abduction.

The abductee is Rabbul Haq Rafi, 13, son of Monirul Islam of Arpara village in the upazila.

Family and police sources said Rafi went to the school to get his annual exam results on December 30. He was abducted while he was returning home.

In the early hours of January 1, 2016, the abductors demanded a ransom of Tk 6,000 over mobile phone. On January 4, they demanded Tk 2 lakh and told Rafi's mother to send the money if she had any sympathy for her son. They



Rabbul Haq Rafi

gave two bKash numbers. Rafi's father filed a GD with Kaliganj Police Station on January 1.

Contacted, Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kaliganj Police Station, said a GD has been lodged with the police station. We are trying to rescue the boy and arrest the culprits involved, the OC added.

AL mayoral candidate alleges result manipulation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Awami League (AL) nominated mayoral candidate in Chapainawabganj municipality, Samiul Haque Liton, alleged at a post-polls public meeting yesterday afternoon that the returning officer had manipulated the result, which meant a loss for him.

The meeting was arranged by the Chapainawabganj district unit of AL at Poura Park in the town, with the president of the municipality unit of AL Iqbal Mahmud Khan Khannu as the chair. Moinuddin Mondal, president of Chapainawabganj district unit of AL and its secretary, law maker of Chapainawabganj-3 constituency Abdul Wadud, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Liton said there was a blueprint strategy to defeat

him and that he would pursue legal actions with the encouragement of his supporters. He noted that although not a single candidate for councillor from Jamaat was elected in the mayoral race the Jamaat candidate was declared winner.

Liton said he would meet the prime minister regarding this and expressed his optimism that he would be the mayor.

When lawmaker Abdul Wadud started to deliver his speech, some AL men left the place shouting slogans against him. Abdul Wadud said the result might have been manipulated by design and Liton would win through a legal process.

Independent candidate Nazrul Islam, ameer of district unit Jamaat, received 31,504 votes and AL candidate Samiul Hoque Liton received 30,504 votes in the election.

SNIPPETS

IU pro-VC resigns

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Pro-Vice chancellor Shahinoor Rahman of Islamic University (IU) in the district resigned from the post yesterday. Showing personal reasons, he submitted his resignation letter to President Abdul Hamid, also chancellor of the university, through the education ministry around 11:00am and sent a copy to Vice Chancellor Abdul Hakim Sarker, said Acting Registrar of IU Abdul Laitf. According to campus sources, there was a conflict between the vice chancellor and the pro-vice chancellor on different issues since they assumed office.

Two robbers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested two men for their alleged involvement in committing robbery at a Mymensingh-bound local train from Monhanganj in Gouripur upazila of the district on Saturday night. The arrestees are Abdus Selim, 30, son of late Abdul Hekim, and Kawsar Miah, 24, son of Abdul Barek of the upazila. Police said a gang of 7/8 swooped on the train around 11:00pm when it left Shyamganj railway station and took away cash, gold ornaments and other valuables from the passengers. The law enforcers are raiding different areas to arrest other members of the gang, said Abdul Ahad Khan, officer-in-charge of Mymensingh Railway Police Station.

Journo's motorbike stolen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Criminals took away the motorbike of a journalist from his residence in Kacharipara area of the district town early yesterday. The victim is Lutfor Rahman, district correspondent of ATN Bangla and ATN News, and general secretary of Jamalpur Press Club. Lutfor said the incident took place around 1:00am when he was asleep. Police are raiding different areas to recover the motorcycle, said Assistant Superintendent of Police Monirul Islam. A case was filed in this connection, said the ASP.

38 held on various charges

UNB, Sunamganj

At least 38 people were arrested on various charges during special drives by law enforcers at different places of the district yesterday and the day before. Different teams of police conducted the drive in 11 upazilas. Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Station Harun-ur-Rashid confirmed the incident.

Blankets distributed to poor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Over 1000 blankets were distributed among ultra poor people at remote villages in the district. Superintendent of Police TM Mozahidul Islam distributed the blankets funded by district police in the last three days. Getting the blanket, Sahara Bewa, 70, of Teesta River basin Beribandh village in Aditarni upazila, expressed her gratitude to the law enforcers. The SP confirmed the incident.

Illegal sand lifting threatens flood control dyke

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Illegal sand lifting from the Jamuna River in Baniajan area under Dhunat upazila of the district threatens an under-construction flood control embankment and a cluster village.

Locals said the government has undertaken a project of erecting a 1.2 km long flood control embankment from Gorali to Koyagari area under the upazila at a cost of Tk 42 crore to protect farmlands,

houses and other establishments from onslaught of the river.

Locals said the river devours homesteads, croplands, schools mosques and other establishments every year.

Influential people are lifting sand from the river bed using shallow-machine-run dredger and selling it to the local contractor, threatening the possibility of erosion, locals said.

Muzaffar, Abdur

Rahman and Abdul Ja'il of Shaharabari village under the upazila said the sand lifting will threaten the flood control embankment.

Contacted, Harunur Rashid, sub-divisional engineer of Water Development Board, said the sand is being lifted from the middle of the river and it will not affect the flood control embankment on the western side of the Jamuna River.



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal sand lifting by dredgers from the Jamuna at Baniajan in Dhunat upazila under Bogra district poses threat to the flood control embankment on the mighty river.