

POLLS-RELATED VIOLENCE IN MATHBARIA

Male villagers flee homes fearing arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

The people of several villages of three unions of Mathbaria upazila and Bhandaria upazilas under the district are passing days amid fear of arrest as a case was filed against 1,300 unnamed locals, following the death of five men in firing by Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) at Safa Degree College polling centre premises in Mathbaria upazila on Monday evening.

"A large number of males of several villages left the area for Dhaka by launch in fear of arrest although no one has so far been arrested in connection with the incident," said Bellal Talukder, a resident of Burichar village under Dhanisafa union of Mathbaria.

"We are in fear of arrest as the accused are unnamed," said Tarikul Islam, another local.

However, Khandakar Mostafizur Rahman, officer in charge of Mathbaria Police Station, said there is nothing to fear as only the guilty people will face action

after investigation.

On Monday evening, around 3,000 people, mostly from Telekhali union of Bhandaria and Tushkhali union of Mathbaria upazila, encircled the executive magistrate, the presiding officer and law enforcers when they were coming out after declaration of the result of Safa Degree College polling centre in Dhanisafa union under Mathbaria upazila.

Led by a local Awami League leader, the agitators, many of them armed with sticks and sharp weapons,

demanding that the presiding officer declare some 700 void votes valid.

As they tried to force the officials to meet the illegal demand, the situation turned worse.

At one stage, the magistrate ordered the BGB members to fire. Five people were killed and several others injured in the incident.

On Wednesday night, Md Sanowar Ali, a sub-inspector, who was on duty at the polling centre, filed a case accusing around 1,300 unnamed locals of this incident.



PHOTO: STAR

A blast disease affected wheat seed production field under Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation in Meherpur is getting burnt as the authorities decided to destroy the plants to prevent use of seriously defective seeds and spread of the disease further. Following detection of the disease by a team of experts from Wheat Research Centre in Dinajpur, a large number of farmers in Meherpur have also started burning their wheat fields as preparation to cultivate paddy or jute there in the next season.

Rival AL men clash over placing wreaths at Shaheed Minar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

At least 10 people were injured as two factions of Chandanaish upazila unit of Awami League (AL) clashed yesterday afternoon.

Of the injured, Selim Uddin, 27, a Juba League activist, was first admitted to Chandanaish Upazila Health Complex and then shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) police and AL leaders said, adding that the other injured were given primary treatment.

Sources said there was an altercation and scuffle between the two factions -- one led by local AL upazila

unit president Jahedul Islam Jahangir and the other by general secretary Abu Ahmed -- over placing wreaths at the Shaheed Minar on the occasion of Independence Day.

As a sequel to that, the two groups again locked in a clash at around 1:00pm when AL activists from different areas were coming to attend a meeting organised on the occasion of the Independence Day in the upazila headquarters.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and dispersed the clashing groups.

Shop owners in the area closed their shops when a faction put up barricades on Gachbaria-Chandanaish-Anwara road for an hour

from 1:30pm, demanding punishment of the attackers, locals said.

Jahangir alleged that activists loyal to Abu Ahmed attacked his supporters following the altercation over placing wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

"I was not at the Shaheed Minar as I returned from Omrah Hajj yesterday," Jahangir said, adding that he informed the police when he heard of the attack on his supporters by Abu's men.

Contacted, Gazi Shakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chandanaish Police Station, denied that AL activists put up barricades on the road.

Contacted, Abu Ahmed denied the allegation that his supporters attacked Jahangir's men. "Selim and other miscreants who are supporters of Jahangir attacked my supporters. Selim was injured when local people resisted them," he said, adding that they are making false accusations against him for political interest.

Contacted, local AL lawmaker Nazrul Islam Chowdhury said a chase and counter-chase took place between the supporters of the president and the general secretary of the upazila unit of AL, but police brought the situation under control immediately.

3 confess to killing schoolboy Mishu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Three accused have confessed to killing schoolboy Habibullah Hasan Mishu for ransom.

Mishu, a student of Class VIII of Pabna Collectorect Public School and College in the district town, and son of Mohosin Alam Salam of Mehedinagar village in Santhia upazila. He was found murdered at a litchi orchard in the town on Wednesday.

Accused Shuvo Rahman, 14, and Siam Hossain, 14, classmates of Mishu, and their senior friend Abdul Hadi, 22, a bank employee, were arrested on Friday, said Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Station Md Abdullah Al Hasan.

Later, the three made the confessional statement before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Md



Habibullah Hasan Mishu

Nazimuddoula.

According to their confessional statement, the trio called the victim and took him to Shalgaria village on Wednesday afternoon and strangled him there. They had also plan to force the boy's family to pay ransom.

They later dumped the body at the orchard, said Sub-Inspector Abdus Salam.

After recording statements, the accused were sent to the district jail, said the SI.

LAND DISPUTE

Acid attack on three sisters in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Three sisters sustained burn injuries in an acid attack following a dispute over land at Kumri Pherengitila village in Baniachong upazila of Habiganj district on Friday around 10:30pm.

The victims are Safia Khatun, 35, wife of Abdur Razzak, Monwara Khatun, 32, wife of Jitu Miah, and Amena Khatun, 30, wife of Nazrul Islam of the village. They were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

Police and eye witnesses said Abdur Razzak and Sadikur Rahman of the village had long been at loggerheads over the ownership of a piece of land.

Safia Khatun, wife of Abdur Razzak, said a gang led by Sadikur Rahman, 45,

entered their house looking for her husband. Not finding him at home, they threw acid on the three sisters.

Hearing a hue and cry, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the three women, police said, but the criminals managed to flee.

Amulya Kumar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Baniachong Police Station, said there was a longstanding dispute over land between neighbours Razzak and Sadikur. Sadikur was putting pressure on Razzak to sell a portion of the land, but Razzak refused.

Sadikur became angry at the refusal and he and his men threw acid on the three women, he added.

No case was filed in this connection as of 6:00pm yesterday.

Fish trader robbed of Tk 1.5 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Criminals snatched away Tk 1.50 lakh and a bicycle from a fish trader after injuring him on Lalmonirhat-Fulbari road in Baniya Dighi area under Sadar upazila of the district on Friday.

The victim is Mozaffar Hossain, 45, son of late Elahi Baks of Pashchim Barua village in the upazila. He was admitted to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

The incident took place at night when he was returning to house from Nararhat Market in the district town.

Mozaffar said a gang of 6/7 led by Abdul Hai, Shamsul Alam and Azizul Islam swooped on him on the road and took away the money and the bicycle. They also beat him mercilessly.

Pradip Kumar Roy, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said legal action will be taken against the culprits after getting complaint in this regard.

Elderly woman found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A mother of seven children was found dead at Goyeshpur village in Muktagachha upazila of the district early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Manik Jaan, 62, wife of Abdur Rahim, a farmer of the village.

Abu Mohammad Fazlul Karim, officer-in-charge (OC) of Muktagachha Police Station, quoted her family members as saying that Manik Jaan, a mentally disturbed woman, committed suicide by hanging herself from a branch of a tree near her house.

Locals found the body in the morning and informed police, who rushed to the spot and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Though family members said it was 'suicide,' the autopsy will tell whether it was suicide or murder, the OC said.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Muktagacha Police Station.

3 drug traders arrested in C'nawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Law enforcers arrested three drug traders and recovered heroin and Phensidyl from them in separate drives in two upazilas of the district yesterday and on Friday night.

The arrestees are Abdus Samad, 55, son of Sirajul Islam, and Mosehuddin, 45, son of Altaf Hossain of Matikata village under Godagari upazila in Rajshahi, and Abdur Karim, 34, son of Abul Hossain of Telkupi village under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj.

Hamidur Rashid, inspector of the Detective Branch (DB), said, acting on secret information, a team of DB police went to Tangpara village of Sadar upazila at around 10:30am and detained Abdus Samad and Mosehuddin when they were waiting for a bus. After searching them, DB recovered two hundred grams of heroin in two packets. DB police handed them over to Sadar Model Police Station and filed a case against them.

In another drive, a Rab-5 team from Chapainawabganj camp went to Telkupi village at around 9:05pm on Friday and arrested Abul Karim with 500 bottles of Phensidyl, said ASP Shahidur Rahman of Chapainawabganj Rab camp.

Later, Rab handed him over to Shibganj Police Station and filed a case against him. During primary interrogation, Karim admitted his involvement in drug business, a Rab official said.

INDEPENDENCE DAY IN FRAME

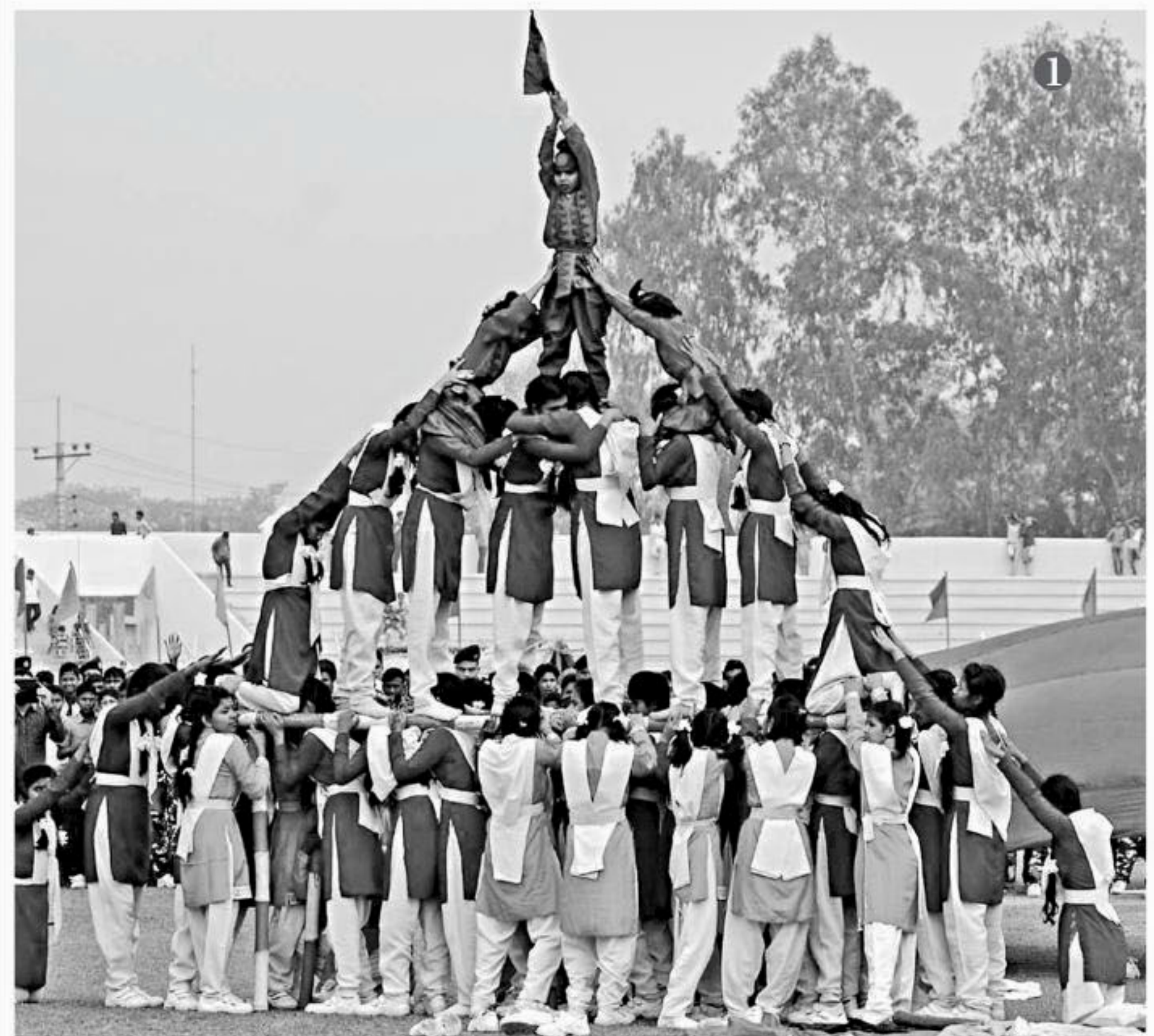


PHOTO: STAR
Students display artistic presentations of the Liberation War at 1) Gaibandha, 2) Chapainawabganj, and 3) Munshiganj stadiums and take part in march past at 4) Naogaon, and 5) Mymensingh stadiums as the nation celebrates the 46th Independence Day yesterday.