

Recovered railway land in Saidpur reoccupied

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Influential people have reoccupied most of the railway land in Nilphamari's Saidpur municipality and started building structures on it again with the alleged support of a section of local political leaders. The land was recovered in an eviction drive by the railway department about 13 months ago.

Railway sources said the West Zone authorities led by Mushtaq Ahmed, divisional estate officer of Bangladesh Railway (BR) in Pakshey, launched a massive eviction drive against illegal occupants in Saidpur on March 18 and 19 last year.

Monwarul Islam, sub assistant estate officer (kanungo) in Saidpur, said the eviction team, in the face of strong opposition from the occupants, successfully demolished 250 illegal shops, business centres and houses from areas surrounding the Saidpur rail station. A number of policemen were seriously injured as the occupants attacked the eviction team with stones and sticks.

In that drive, the team recovered five acres of occupied land and handed it over to local rail officials, directing them to encircle the area with barbed wire fencing, he added.

The local rail authorities fenced some land in front of the rail station, but other areas remained open due to a shortage of funds, making them vulnerable to occupation.



PHOTO: STAR

Illegal occupiers are setting up shops on the railway land on Cantonment Road in Saidpur upazila under Nilphamari district. The perpetrators have returned to the spot recently although the authorities in a massive drive recovered the land in March last year.

During the eviction drive, the railway department filed cases with Saidpur Police Station against 75 illegal occupiers, but the law enforcers did not take any action.

Taking advantage of that, influential quarters have reoccupied the land beside the cantonment road and started constructing brick-built markets and renting them.

The situation is the same on both sides of the rail tracks, stretching about a kilometre from the rail station up to Baniapara village.

During a visit to the re-occupied railway land on cantonment road yesterday,

this correspondent found that dozens of rickshaw garages, bicycle shops, spare parts shops, and tea stalls have been set up there.

A rickshaw garage owner said they were tenants and had to pay high rent for each shop to the influential occupiers.

Contacted, Towhidul Islam, in-charge of works (IW) of the railway engineering department in Saidpur, who was also given charge of looking after the recovered land, said an influential lawmaker directed him verbally not to obstruct the occupation. "I'm helpless but I have informed the higher authorities about the matter," he added.

Mushtaq Ahmed said his department is likely to launch more eviction drives soon in Saidpur to recover the occupied land again.

"Saidpur municipality itself is occupying 25.50 acres of railway land and allowing occupiers to construct high-rise buildings and markets, and a case is running in the high court in this regard to recover it," he added.

The railway department claims that it has a total of 799 acres of land in Saidpur upazila, where the country's largest railway workshop is situated, of which 220 acres are illegally occupied and used as agricultural land, commercial plots or ponds.

Medical student drowns in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A final year student of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College drowned in Boga Lake, a tourist spot in Bandarban's Ruma upazila, yesterday noon.

The deceased was identified as Fataul Imtiaz, 25, son of Shafiqul Alam of Mirpur area in Dhaka.

He drowned while bathing in the lake along with his friends at around 2:30pm.

Police, quoting the victim's friend Rabbi, said they searched the lake and recovered the body.

Imtiaz and six other medical students went to Ruma yesterday morning to visit the spot.

His body was taken to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said Md Shariful Islam, officer-in-charge of Ruma Police Station.

Girl saved from early marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A girl was saved from early marriage at Kamardiyar village in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday.

Mahmuda Sultana, 17, daughter of Abdur Rashid of Kamardiyar village, was going to be married with Sirajul Islam, 20, son of Akkas Ali of Lenguria village in the upazila.

Being informed, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Nairuzzaman rushed to the spot and foiled the marriage.

The UNO also sentenced the bridegroom to 15 days' imprisonment and fined the father of the bride Tk 1000.

Thousand bidi workers lose job as Akij factory closes suddenly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Over a thousand bidi workers formed a human chain in front of the Akij Bidi Factory in Ishwardi municipality area under the district yesterday morning protesting sudden closure of the factory.

"An order from the authorities of Akij Group, effecting closure of the Ishwardi unit of their bidi factory for an indefinite period from April 3, came here on Saturday, April 2," Md Kamruzzaman, manager of Akij Bidi factory, Ishwardi unit, told journalists.

Like other days the workers came to the factory gate yesterday morning but they found a 'closure announcement' there.

They started demonstration, demanding reopening of the factory.

The aggrieved bidi workers said they were highly dependent on the job for livelihood and the whimsical closing of the factory has left them in serious trouble.

The factory was closed without paying full dues to the workers, they said.

"We are used to the bidi-making work. It is difficult

for us to get alternative employment. Closure of the factory has left us jobless and helpless. My son is reading in BA (Honours) but his higher study has now become uncertain," said Shahidul Pramanik, a worker of the factory.

Many other workers including Kalachand and Abu Taleb expressed utter helplessness due to sudden closure of the bidi factory.

Over one thousand bidi workers are employed at Akij Bidi Factory in Ishwardi, each getting Tk 26 for making one thousand bidi.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers form a human chain in front of the Akij Bidi Factory in Ishwardi municipality under Pabna district yesterday protesting the authorities' decision to suddenly close the factory, which left around a thousand workers jobless.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Green mangoes appear at a tree at Uttar Temuhani in Lakkhipur town, heralding the arrival of summer.

Schoolboy strangled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A schoolboy was strangled, allegedly by his uncle, at Amjhol Baradanga village of Gotamari union in Hatibandha upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased, Ibrahim Miah, 15, was son of Delwar Hossain and a Class IX student of Gotamari High School.

The injured are Delwar's younger son Abu Bakkar, 10, a Class V student of Gotamari Government Primary School, and Delwar's mother Dhawli Begum, 65. They were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, police said.

Police said Delwar's brother-in-law Nannu Miah, 42, son of Saheduzzaman of Fatehpur village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur district, went to Delwar's house on Saturday evening when Delwar and his wife were at a relative's house in the village.

Nannu first strangled Ibrahim Miah while he was asleep, and then tried to strangle Abu Bakkar but could not as Abu Bakkar's grandmother Dhawli Begum saw him. Nannu tried to strangle the elderly woman, but failed. Ibrahim died instantly.

GAIBANDHA, NOAKHALI

Three abducted men rescued, five held

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three abducted people have been rescued from Gaibandha and Noakhali districts.

Police rescued two men, who were abducted on March 28, from a house at Char Gobindo village in Saghata upazila of Gaibandha yesterday, reports our correspondent.

They also arrested an alleged abductor with two pipeguns and 12 cartridges from the spot.

The arrestee is Idris Ali, 36, said Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Saghata Police Station.

A gang abducted Abul Jabbar, 64, and Yeasin Ali Pramanik, 66, of Akhira village in Adamdighi upazila of Bogra district, for Tk 10 lakh ransom.

On secret information, law enforcers raided the house and rescued Jabbar and Yeasin. They also arrested Idris Ali with the firearms from the spot.

In Noakhali, police rescued a man from Chhoyani

area of Begumganj upazila in the district on Saturday night, a day after his abduction from Laxmipur Sadar upazila, reports UNB.

They also arrested four people for their alleged involvement in this abduction.

The rescued was identified as Russel Uddin, son of Lokman Uddin, a resident of Battali area of the upazila.

Md Arjun, officer-in-charge of Chandraganj Police Station, said a gang abducted Russel soon after he went out of the house on Friday noon.

The abductors then demanded ransom from Russel's father. Later, Russel's father went to the place where his son was confined but did not find him there.

While the abductors along with Russel were changing the place in an auto-rickshaw, Russel tried to flee in Chhoyani Bazar area. Locals rescued Russel and caught four abductors. Later they were handed over to police.

SNIPPETS

Bus catches fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A bus caught fire on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Kuttapara area under Sorail upazila of Brahmanbaria district on Saturday night. However, none was hurt in this incident. On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the blaze. The movement of vehicles on the highway remained stopped for about an hour due to the incident. Alamgir Siddique, officer-in-charge of Sarail highway police, said the fire originated from the battery of the bus.

Polythene bags seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A mobile court seized 300 kg polythene bags from two traders in Phulbari upazila of the district yesterday. Executive Magistrate Ehtesham Reza, who led the court, also fined the traders Tk 5,000 each. The convicts are Md Mujahid, 45, and Ashraf Hossain, 38, of Munshipara village under Saidpur upazila in Nilphamari district, said Mokshed Ali, officer-in-charge of Phulbari Police Station.

Fake army man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Police arrested a fake army man from Utholy under Shivalaya upazila in the district yesterday. They also recovered a wireless set, 16 mobile sets, 22 mobile SIM-cards and a bag inscribed with the word army from his possession. The arrestee is Tanvir Ahmed of Tungibari in Munshiganj district. Tanvir introducing himself as a major has been cheating people for long, said Superintendent of Police Mahfuzur Rahman.

Lightning kills schoolboy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A schoolboy was killed and two others were injured by lightning at Goiripur village in Lalpur upazila of the district yesterday. The deceased is Sohan Hossain, 15, a student of Class X of Goiripur High School, and son of Dulal Hossain of the village. Police and family sources said a thunderbolt struck the three when they were playing football at the school playground. Dulal died on the spot. Injured Raza Hossain, 13, and Imran Hossain, 15, were rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

3,000 Yaba pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man with 3,000 Yaba tablets from Porsha upazila in Naogaon district on Saturday night. They also seized a one dollar note and 50 Indian rupees from his possession. The arrestee is Md Sazzad, 22, son of Md Samad of Paharpur village in Sadar upazila. On secret information, the elite force raided Soraigachchi village in Porsha upazila and arrested Sazzad with the Yaba. A case was filed in this connection, said Rab-5 sources.

2 drug addicts held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police arrested two alleged drug addicts at Ruhea railway station in Sadar upazila of the district on Saturday night. The arrestees are Prokash Chandra Barman, 35, son of late Ramendranath Barman of Radhanagar village, and Toimur Rahman, 25, son of Abdul Jabbar of Rosea village in Atwary upazila of Panchagarh. Police said acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers raided the area and arrested the duo when they were taking hemp. A case was filed in this connection.

DINAJPUR, JOYPURHAT

Trader shot, boy stabbed to death: 3 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A gang of criminals shot a trader in Dinajpur town early yesterday. Two people have been arrested in connection with the incident, police said.

The victim is Shuvo Goswami, 26, son of Jogodish Chandra Goswami of Ganeshtala area in the town.

Shuvo has a cosmetics shop in Ganeshtala, and is a student of Open University.

The arrestees are Biswajit Das Bishu, 45, son of Gopal Chandra Das of Uttar Balubari, and Dulal Ghosh, 36, son of Shankar Ghosh of Khetripura area in the district town.

Police, quoting Shuvo's family members, said he went to Chawkbazar to attend a Kirtan festival, and was returning home at around 2:00am.

As Shuvo reached near Dinajpur Sangeet College, criminals shot him in the head. Hearing the gun-

shots, locals rushed to the spot and took Shuvo to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. Later, he was referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Shuvo's condition was deteriorating, said family members. The doctors could not bring out the bullet lodged in his forehead till filing of this report.

Contacted, ATM Khalequzzaman, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur Police Station, said police visited the spot soon after the incident. The criminals left behind the pistol used to shoot Shuvo, and police seized it as evidence.

Ruhul Amin, superintendent of police in Dinajpur, visited the spot. He said financial issues could be a reason behind the incident.

No case was filed regarding the incident as of 5:00pm yesterday, the OC said.

In Joypurhat, a gang of

criminals stabbed a 16-year-old boy on Saturday afternoon. He was taken to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra, where he succumbed to his injuries soon after admission.

The deceased is Robiul Islam, son of Belal Hossain, an employee of Joypurhat Public Works Department.

Police yesterday arrested Serekul Islam Seja, 20, from Uttar Gopalpur village under Panchbibi upazila of the district for his alleged involvement in the killing. He was arrested while fleeing to India, police said.

Farid Hossain, officer-in-charge of Joypurhat Police Station, said four to five criminals stabbed the boy near Joypurhat Collectorate field.

A murder case was filed with the police station yesterday morning, said the OC.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Parents of Brac official Sirajul Islam Sumon, who was abducted in Afghanistan on March 17, hand over a memorandum to the deputy commissioner of Pabna yesterday, for sending to the prime minister, seeking the government's all-out help for rescue and safe return of the victim.