

2 get death for killing doctor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Special Tribunal Judge Nitai Chandra Saha yesterday handed down death penalty to two men for killing Dr Shafiqul Islam, owner of Jess Clinic in Jessore town, on July 29, 2009, said Prosecutor SM Badruzzaman Palash, who conducted the case on behalf of the government. Two others were acquitted.

The convicted are Ashiqur Rahman Bablu, 40, son of Rajab Ali, and Saiful Islam Jakir, 36, son of Miratul Haque, both of Ghope Nawapara in the town.

The acquitted are Rabbu alias Mursalin of New Town, and M Raihan of Ghope Nawapara.

Dr Shafiqul Islam, the then treasurer of the Jessore district unit of BMA and also owner of Jess Clinic, was killed by the criminals inside his clinic at around 10:00pm on July 29, 2009.

Abdus Salam Dhabak, father of the deceased, filed a case with Jessore Kotwali Police Station in this connection on July 30, 2009.

Mother kills kid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A three-year-old boy was killed allegedly by his mother following a family feud at Paschim Char Uria in Sadar upazila on Monday.

The deceased is Md Yamin, son of Alamgir Hossain and Poly Akter, 20, of the area.

Ajifa Khatun, grandmother of the victim, said Alamgir and Poly locked in an altercation over a family matter around 10:00pm.

At one state, Poly poisoned Yamin. She also took the poison out of anger, said Ajifa.

The two were rushed to Noakhali General Hospital where on-duty doctor declared the boy dead, said Anwar Hossain, OC of Sudharam Model PS.



Floods in Dharla River basin at Degree Char village in Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district and Teesta basin at Char Kharibari in Dimal upazila under Nilphamari district.

PHOTO: STAR

Flood worsens in Kurigram, Nilphamari districts

Situation unchanged in Lalmonirhat

STAR COUNTRY DESK

The flood situation is getting worse in Kurigram and Nilphamari as the Brahmaputra, Dharla and Teesta rivers are flowing above the danger level, while it has remained unchanged in Lalmonirhat.

In Kurigram, the situation has worsened as the water level of the Brahmaputra and Dharla rivers is rising and inundating more areas.

Around 55 thousand people of over 200 char areas in 30 unions under seven upazilas of the district were marooned as the low-lying char areas of the Brahmaputra and the

Dharla rivers got flooded due to downpour and onrush of water from upstream for the last three days.

The Brahmaputra was flowing 16 centimetres above the danger level in Chilmari Ghat point in Chilmari upazila, while the Dharla was flowing five centimetres below danger level at Dharla Bridge point in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday, said an official of the Water Development Board (WDB) in Kurigram.

Around 15 thousand people of over 20 villages of nine unions under Sadar and Phulbari upazilas were marooned by floodwater of

the Dharla river, while around 40 thousand people of over 110 villages of 21 unions under Sadar, Nageswari, Ulipur, Chilmari, Roumari and Rajibpur upazilas were marooned by floodwater of the Brahmaputra river, local sources said.

BM Abul Hossen, chairman of Hatia Union Parishad under Ulipur upazila, said, "Around 1,600 people of 10 villages are facing shortage of fodder and communication has been cut-off. Besides, their children cannot go to their schools."

In Nilphamari, onrush of water through an unwanted new channel of

the Teesta continues to damage schools, bridges and earthen dams. It has been devouring homesteads and croplands for two weeks in Dimla upazila.

The surge has raised the water level of the Teesta to 30 centimetres above the danger mark, WDB sources said.

Locals said the new channel of Teesta was created due to recent construction of a dam upstream in Indian territory. The onrush of water is diverted by the dam and hits the Teesta's left embankment at Char Kharibari village near Bangladesh-India border.

This has caused massive devastation in Char Kharibari, Putbo Kharibari, Fakrater char, Maddy Kharibari, Jhinjir para, Tabur char, Ekotar bazar, Meher Tari, Puraton Tapur char and Tepakharibari villages of Dimla upazila.

Rabiul Islam Shahin, chairman of Tepakharibari Union Parishad, said the violent flow of water has damaged four bridges in his union, disrupting road communication.

The onrush also swallowed 250 homesteads and around 300 acres of land. About 600 families shifted to safer places from the affected villages. The surge submerged two community clinics at Ekotar char and Char Kharibari, hampering health services.

Robiul Islam, upazila primary education officer (UPEO) of Dimla, said four government primary schools have been totally or partially damaged or subsided due to the strong current through the new channel.

In Lalmonirhat, overall flood situation at 80 villages of 16 unions was unchanged yesterday, and the Teesta and Dharla rivers were flowing below the danger level. The water level of other small

rivers in the district decreased yesterday.

Hazrat Ali, 58, of Gobordhan village under Aditmari upazila, said, "We have been living in an inhuman situation since Saturday evening. We have no scope to cook our meal as we are surrounded by water. So we need dry food like chira, muri, gur," he said.

"There is still knee deep water in our houses, and all the link roads are under water, so we can't move freely," said Hamida Bewa, 60, of the village. "There is acute crisis of pure drinking water in our village as all the tube-wells are submerged," she added.

Mosaddeque Hossain, chairman of Mahishkhoa Union Parishad under Aditmari upazila, said at least 2,300 families of his union have been badly affected by flood. "I have prepared a list of flood affected people, but I didn't get any materials for distributing to them," he added.

Idris Ali, Lalmonirhat district relief and rehabilitation officer, said the government has allocated 35 tonnes of rice and a huge quantity of dry food like chira, muri, gur, bread for flood affected people in the district, and these relief materials are being distributed.

Farmer Noor Islam, 55, of Char Narsingh, said he prepared seedlings to cultivate aman paddy in the current season, but about fifty percent of the seedlings were damaged by flood. "The lands will be uncultivated if I do not get aman seedlings in the local market within this month," he said.

Sarwar Ul-Haque, acting deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, said farmers will get seedlings available in the local market, he said.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Dentist hurt in attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A dentist was injured in an attack by criminals at Bhalkutia village in Nagarpur upazila yesterday. Injured Habibur Rahman, 30, of the village, was admitted to Tangail Medical College Hospital. The victim said a gang led by Jahid felled his several trees near their house in the morning. As he called local journalists and public representatives to visit the spot, the criminals attack him. A case was filed with Nagarpur Police Station in this connection. Jahid, son of Amzad Ali of the same village, was accused in a number of cases including one for murder, said locals.

Girl missing for 11 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiya

Police are yet to rescue a 13-year-old madrasa girl of Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga, who went missing on July 9. A general diary was filed in this connection. Police said the seventh grader went out of home to go to madrasa in the upazila on the day and did not return since then. Police are investigating the matter, said Abu Zihad Faqurul Alam Khan, officer-in-charge of Damurhuda Police Station.

Child found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police recovered the body of an unidentified minor girl, aged about 8, from a maize field in Dhunat upazila yesterday. The body was sent to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. Criminals might have killed the girl and dumped the body at the field, said police.



PHOTO: STAR

Children take part in a colourful procession in Mirzapur upazila under Tangail district yesterday marking inauguration of a three-day fruit tree fair organised by the agriculture office.

Matchmaker beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A matchmaker was beaten to death at Bhabanipur village in Mohammadpur upazila on Monday. The victim is Rashid Biswas, 45, of the village. Police and locals said Rashid arranged marriage between one Feroz Mandol's daughter-in-law and Abdul Wahab's son two months ago. Feroz wanted to pay Tk 2000 after the marriage. Rashid pressured Feroz for the money several times but in vain. On Monday night, Feroz and his men beat up Rashid following an altercation over the issue. Seriously injured Rashid later died at a hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

Criminals set fire to the local office of Jubo League at Patabunia Bazar in Angaria union of Dumki upazila under Patuakhali district on Monday night, burning the structure with all the furniture to ashes.

Housewife murdered for dowry in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A young housewife was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry at Ghiba village under Benapole Port Police Station in Jessore on Monday.

The deceased was Shefali Khatun Shefa, 20, wife of Shariful Islam Kalu, and daughter of Badol Hossain of the same village.

The victim's father alleged that Shariful often tortured Shefa for Tk one lakh after their marriage.

Following an altercation over the issue, Shariful strangled Shefa and hung the body with the ceiling to pass it off as suicide, he said. Shariful and his family members went into hiding soon after the incident.



PHOTO: STAR

Children of Khasi community at a learning centre in Kulaura upazila under Moulvibazar district take lessons in a joyful atmosphere, thanks to the arrangement of mother-tongue based schooling.

Mother-tongue revival bid in Sylhet hills

Ethnic kids get lessons in Khasi, Mandi and Sadri languages

MINITU DESHWARA with ANDREW EAGLE

That one's mother tongue is an indispensable element of self-identity is a truth which is readily understood in Bangladesh. Indeed, thanks to the importance of the language movement in this nation's history, Bangladesh was able to introduce 21 February as International Mother Language Day to the world.

In the spirit of protecting mother languages, contemporary efforts are underway in the Sylheti hills to revitalise and preserve three of the other languages of Bangladesh: Khasi, Mandi and Sadri, with Sadri being the shared mother tongue of the Oraon, Munda and Karia peoples.

Ridom Konglah is a Khasi student of Lamapunjee Education Centre in Sylhet's Guainghat upazila, who studies in class 1. "Reading books in my own Khasi language," he says, "gives new hope. It's not only me. All my friends enjoy reading in Khasi."

"I'm so happy I can read and write in my own language," says Lenika Dikhar, 9, who studies in class 2.

Rifilda Lymba, 8, of class 1 is thrilled to be able to recite Khasi poetry.

By tradition, Khasis are hill-dwelling farmers, famed for their betel leaf plantations. Historically, formal education did not have great prominence in their society; even a

generation ago Khasi teachers were few. But things have changed: great strides are being made in furthering education as Khasis have come to better appreciate its value.

While the Khasi language was taught informally, in Bangladesh its Latin script written form in particular was endangered. From an absence of locally published Khasi books, the only books in the language had to be imported from India. It's quite a revival to have a new generation of Khasis formally trained in their written language.

"It's a great initiative," says school parent Silvester Pathang, who is also a local council member in Kormodha union of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila. "Our community will greatly benefit from this."

Funded by the European Union and Caritas France, and implemented by Caritas Bangladesh since 2013, the Aloghar Project hopes to improve education access and quality through mother tongue tuition to eight communities in the Sylhet region.

The project involves the establishment of 38 education centres in remote villages, to support over 900 children up to class 2. According to Margaret Sumer, Aloghar's technical officer, students learn better when tuition is in their mother tongue, since it facilitates understanding.

But teaching Khasi, Mandi and Sadri also helps students develop

their talent in Bangla and English, which are taught side by side. "My teacher instructs in Khasi, and then translates into Bangla," says Dinim Kongwang, 10, who studies in class 2. "When she teaches in this way it's too easy to learn; it's why most students attend class regularly."

Head teacher at the Lamapunjee Education Centre, Rebeka Dikhar says Khasi students were not very motivated to read previously, but when they read in their mother tongue they become much more confident with reading overall.

In Kulaura's Puran Cholta Punjee Education Centre meanwhile, the language of instruction is Mandi; and at Mongrabostu Tea Garden Education Centre in Sreemangal, Sadri is taught. "I am very pleased that our children can learn in their own mother tongues," says Kulaura's primary education officer Shariful Islam.

Also supportive of the endeavour, Moulvibazar's district education officer notes the project is simultaneously helping to develop better maths and general language skills among enrolled indigenous children. "It gives new hope," he says, "for indigenous children to access higher education too."

According to Aloghar's regional manager, Pius Nanuar, plans are afoot for the project to be progressively expanded.

2 bodies found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Two bodies were found in the district yesterday.

Police recovered the body of an unidentified girl, aged about 5, from a field at Dhutrabari village in Shivalaya upazila around 6:00pm.

The body was found covered with a blanket, said Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shivalaya Police Station.

Meanwhile, a decomposed body was found in a ditch in Narangai area of Manikganj municipality in the morning.

The body was sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, said OC Ashrafur Islam of Sadar Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

POETS VOICE TO SAVE FOREST: Demanding cancellation of the authorities' decision to fell 25 thousand trees in Lawachhara Reserve Forest, poets and environmentalists arrange a poetry recitation programme at Shilpakala Academy in Moulvibazar town on Sunday night.