

**SNAPS AND SNIPPETS**

**Youth gets life for rape**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A court here yesterday sentenced a youth to life term imprisonment for raping a girl last year. Judge Sharif Uddin Ahmed of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal delivered the verdict against Amin Hossain Mandol, 25, son of Mokbul Hossain Mandol of Golgonda village in Ghatail upazila. According to the prosecution, Amin raped the girl of the same village on June 28 last year, promising to marry her. The victim's father later filed a case with Ghatail Police Station, accusing Amin.

**Missing boy found dead**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Police recovered the body of a missing boy from the River Punarbhaha in Parsha upazila of Naogaon district yesterday. The deceased is Md Nayan, 11, son of Sujon Mia of Raghunathpur village. He went missing on Saturday. The body was sent to Naogaon General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Md Mosabberul Islam, officer-in-charge of Parsha Police Station.

**Mistakenly on list**

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"missing" people yesterday. But the photograph it used in the list as Arafat's older photo is actually the picture of an A-level student from the city's Mohakhali.

"Our son had never gone missing," Abul Kalam Azad, father of the youth, told The Daily Star.

His family members claimed that the Rab made the mistake twice.

According to the new list, Arafat, son of late Maj Wasiqur Ahmed of Gulshan, went missing on November 5, 2014. He was seen praising the Gulshan café attack in a video released online a few days after the bloody terror attack.

The Rab's first list, released on July 20, of 261 "missing" people contained the same two photographs in serial no-191 against Dr Arafat Hossain Tusher.

Seeing the photograph in the media, the family contacted Rab officials and told everything about the youth.

According to the family members, Rab at that time assured them of correcting the mistake in the next updated list. But that was not to be.

Yesterday, the father, a businessman by profession,

phoned The Daily Star office after seeing his son's photograph in the updated list.

"You cannot imagine the trauma we all are in since the release of the Rab's first list. Our boy got mentally devastated," he said.

"The same mistake has been committed in the second list. We got phone calls from relatives," he added.

The young student just took some A-level exams and would sit for a few more subjects in the next session. "But now he has confined himself at home. Is it possible to visit our relatives and clarify the mistake?" questioned a family member.

Asked about the proof for their claim, the family sent several photographs to this correspondent over the phone, showing the youth holding a copy of yesterday's newspaper.

Contacted, Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's legal and media wing, said they already asked people to inform them if anyone on the list returned home or didn't go missing at all.

"Upon receiving information, we would verify it and definitely make a correction in the list," he said.



Farmers reap and process jute at Mujaborni, left, and Bothina village in Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon district that sees good yield of the cash crop this season.

**THAKURGAON, PANCHAGARH**

**Bumper yield, good price make jute growers happy**

QUAMRUL ISLAM RYBAIYAT, *Thakurgaon*

Jute farmers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are happy due to good production of the fibre and its fair prices in the local markets during the on-going harvesting season.

Now the jute farmers are seen busy cutting and processing the crop in the two northern districts as harvesting is going on in full swing.

Farmers and agro officials expect to exceed the production target as the crop grew well and the cultivation area was higher than the target.

Though the farmers had been facing trouble at the initial stage of the jute cultivation season because of insufficient rainfall, they overcame the adverse situation successfully by providing irrigation through water lifting pumps.

Jute was cultivated on 9,580 hectares of land against the target of 8,910 hectares, with the production target of 93,683 bales in Thakurgaon.

In Panchagarh, the farmers cultivated jute on 13,570 hectares

of land against the target of 10,513 hectares with the production target of one lakh 14,869 bales, said sources at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) office in the districts.

Of them, Toshi variety of jute covered over 80 percent of cultivated land and local variety covered 20 percent, and the quality of harvested jute is good, farmers and DAE officials said.

Each maund of raw jute is being sold between Tk 1700 and Tk 1900 in the local markets of the two districts this season, depending on quality. The market prices of jute are higher than the previous year early in the harvesting season, according to market sources.

Humayun Khaled, production manager of GEM Jute Mills of Panchagarh, told this correspondent over cellphone that each maund of raw jute is purchased at their purchasing centre for Tk1,700 to Tk 1,900, depending on its quality.

Momtajur Rahman, a local jute trader of Moidandighi Bazar in Boda upazila of Panchagarh, said the jute



PHOTO: STAR

price will be higher than in the previous year as the price trend is high in the initial stage of harvesting.

Sajjad Selim, a farmer of Rosea village under Atray upazila of Panchagarh, told this correspondent that he cultivated jute on six bighas of land in the current season and produced 42 maunds of raw jute, spending just Tk 40,000. He sold his produce at Tk 1,800 per maund. He also hoped that he would be able to sell his jute sticks for Tk 2,000, so his net profit would be about Tk 30,000 to Tk 35,000.

Promoth Kumar Roy, a farmer of Boikanthapur village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, said if the government ensured fair prices of the cash crop by fixing its prices in time, the farmers would be benefited and encouraged to cultivate it.

Replying to a query, Simul Roy said he cultivated jute on four bighas of land this year and hoped to make a good profit.

Arshed Ali, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Thakurgaon, told this correspondent that jute plants grew well up to a height of

10 feet to 12 feet in most areas of the district due to favourable weather almost all through the cultivation season. Pest attack was not witnessed in the areas.

The trend of jute cultivation is increasing as the crop's cultivation process is not so hard and the farmers have been getting good return (fair price) from it for the last several years.

Jute cutting and processing commenced in the middle of the current month (July), the DD added. The optimum time of jute cultivation is between March and April.

Habibul Islam, president of Thakurgaon Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said as the government restricted of using polythene, the demand for environment-friendly and diversified jute goods was increasing day-by-day, nationally and internationally.

As the demand for raw jute is increasing at home and abroad, the farmers are getting good price for their produce. So this is the golden opportunity for regaining the lost glory of the golden fibre, he added.

**Teacher among 4 killed in dists**

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Four people including a schoolteacher were murdered in Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha and Pabna districts in the last two days.

Police recovered the body of a missing schoolteacher from the Atrai River in Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Deceased Md Rafiqul Islam, 40, was computer teacher of Chirirbandar Pilot High School in the upazila. The body bore several torture marks, said police.

The victim's wife said a few youths called her husband out of home on Saturday night and he remained missing since then.

In Nilphamari, a female worker of Uttara EPZ was strangled at a farmland near the EPZ area in Sadar upazila, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was Shukla Rani Sen, 20, daughter of Jogesh Chandra Sen of Boda upazila in Panchagarh district. She went missing on Sunday, said family sources.

Meanwhile, a man was killed allegedly by his younger brother following an altercation over family property in Pabna Sadar upazila on Sunday night, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was Md Tajim Molla, 55, of the area, police said, adding that wife of the accused was held in this connection.

Away in Gaibandha, a man was hacked to death allegedly by his rivals over a disputed land in Sundarganj upazila of the district early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

**2 held with Yaba**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Police arrested two men with a revolver and 50 Yaba tablets in the district town on Sunday.

The arrestees are Md Rubel, 30, and Abdur Hakim, 31, of Santi Nagar area in the town.

On secret information, they raided the area at night and arrested the duo with Yaba and the firearm, said Md Rashid, officer-in-charge of Rangamati Kotwali Police Station.

**Gross anomalies in test relief, food for work projects**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

Gross irregularities are evident in Dimla upazila in projects under Test Relief (TR), Food for Work (FW) and Taka for Work (TW), in the 2nd phase of general allotment for rural infrastructure renovation and maintenance programme in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

It is alleged that Nayema Tabassum, the upazila project implementation officer (PIO), illegally withdrew project money from local Sonali Bank branch on June 30 without completing 50% of the work or informing the project chairmen.

Sources said that around Tk 90 lakh was allocated against 69 projects under general allotment in the second phase.

According to departmental directives, 50% of the allocated money against each project should be utilised for infrastructure renovation or maintenance and the rest 50% to be utilised for buying and setting up solar panels on rooftops of selected infrastructures.

Visiting different projects today, this correspondent found that there were no solar panels on the roof of any infrastructure of the projects.

In Khagakarbari village, Tk 2.4 lakh was allocated under TR project to renovate the Shaheed Minar of Khagakarbari High School with 50% of the money and the rest 50% was to be used

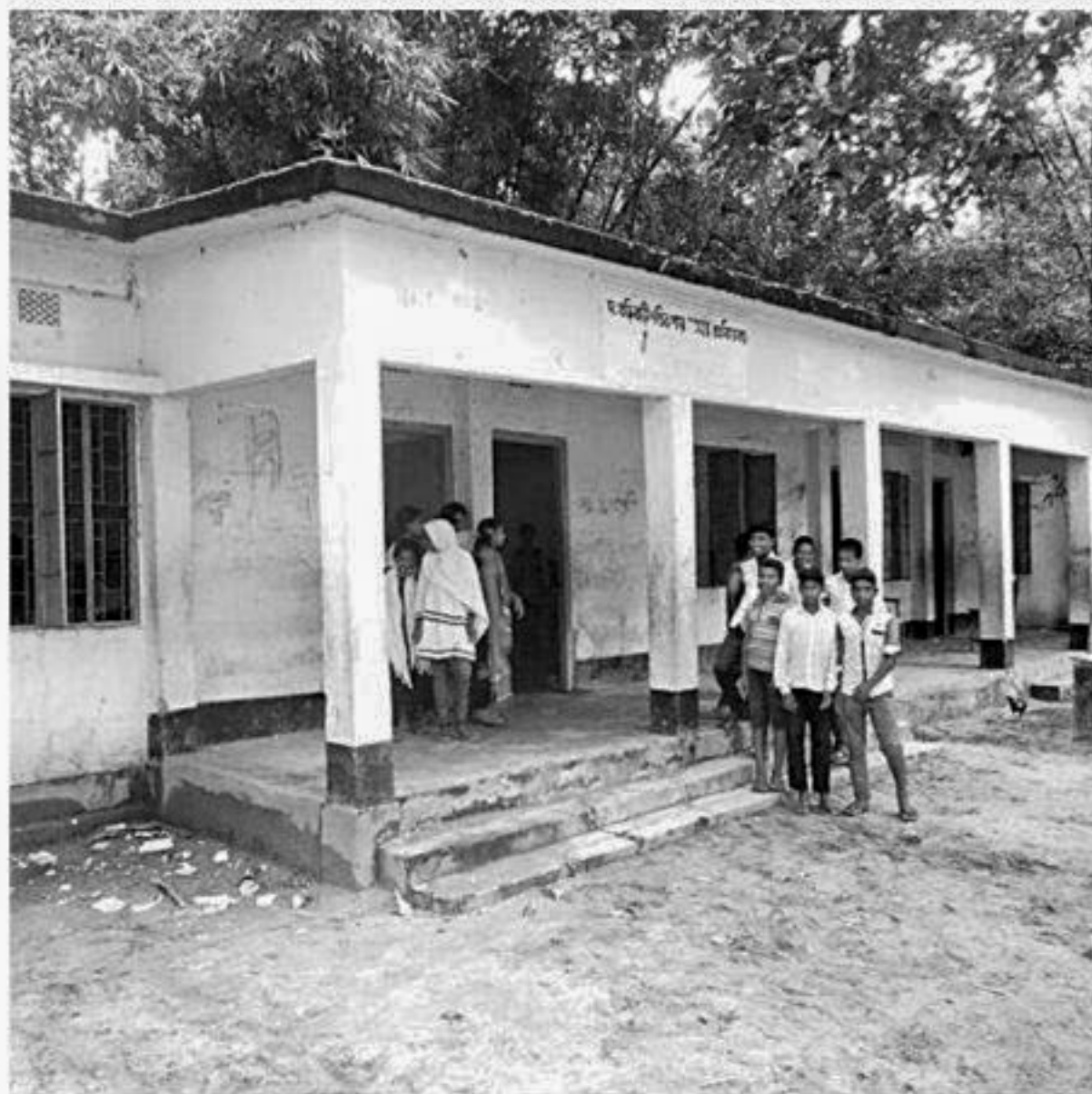


PHOTO: STAR

No solar power set-up is installed at Tapa Kharibari union parishad building and the house of Dakkhin Kharibari Panditpara Government Primary School in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari district, although the project implementation officer has withdrawn the money sanctioned for the purpose. Similar anomalies have been reported in case of different government-funded projects in the upazila.

for buying solar panels for Borobari Puraton Jame Masjid. But no solar panel was seen there.

Project chairman Abul Kalam said the PIO gave him 50% of the money to do renovation work of the Shaheed Minar. He added that he didn't get the rest 50% to buy solar panels, though he heard that the PIO had withdrawn project money from the bank by forging the signature of the chairmen.

Tk 1 lakh was allocated against a project in Dakkhinkharibari Pondit Para Government Primary School beside Tepakarbari union parishad. Project chairman Ibrahim Ali said, "We proposed a project to

construct an underground drain in the school ground, but the PIO rejected it and decided to set up two solar panels, one on the school roof and the other on the UP office for Tk 1 lakh, but I couldn't do so as no money was released in my favour."

Nazrul Islam, project chairman of Hazipara Dakhil Madrasa, said Tk 90 thousand was allocated for maintenance work of the madrasa and setting up of a solar panel on the roof, but the PIO gave him only Tk 40 thousand for doing maintenance work. "I couldn't set up solar panel as I didn't get the rest of the money," he added.

Sadequl Islam, manager of Sonali Bank, Dimla

branch, said the treasury forwarded the bills giving note of advice to pay in cash to the respective project chairmen.

"We paid the money to the PIO as bearer, and before the payment we asked her to attest the signatures of each of the project chairmen for the bank's safety, which she did," the manager said.

Rezaul Karim, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Dimla, said they are trying to find a solution as the agent of officially recommended Itkol Ltd, selected to supply solar panels, has not contacted the upazila rural infrastructure renovation and maintenance committee.

The PIO admitted with-

drawing project money from bank and said she had kept the amount in another account and would release it to the project chairmen soon.

Some project chairmen, on condition of anonymity, alleged that the PIO is still maintaining intentional silence though it has been one month since the end of the fiscal year.

District relief and rehabilitation officer Tajul Islam said it is illegal to draw government money from a bank by submitting false statement of completion of the project and without taking the signatures of the project chairmen. "I'll investigate the matter if I get written complaint," he added.

**Boy poisoned to death in Naogaon**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A six-year-old boy was poisoned to death allegedly by his stepmother over a family feud in Manda upazila of Naogaon on Sunday.

The deceased is Arafat Hossain, son of Mokhlesur Rahman of Madhyapara village in the upazila.

Quoting victim's family members, police said on Sunday morning Mokhlesur's second wife Sathi Akhter, 22, mixed insecticide with milk and fed the minor boy. She also tried to burn the deceased body.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Naogaon General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The law enforcers also arrested Sathi from the house around 7:00pm, Officer-in-Charge Mozaffar Hossain of Manda Police Station.

**HABIGANJ 4-KID MURDER Court orders seizure of 3 fugitives' properties**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A Habiganj court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all the movable properties of three fugitive accused in a case for killing four school kids in Bahubal upazila of the district on February 12.

They are Babul Mia, Ustar Mia and Billal Mia, of Sundrateki village in the upazila.

Habiganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Masruza Parveen passed the order yesterday afternoon.

The court also fixed August 7 for the next hearing of the case, Public Prosecutor Trilok Kanti Chowdhury said.

On June 28, a Habiganj court accepted the charges

against nine people, including the three absconding accused.

The six other accused are Abdul Ali, his two sons Rubel Mia, and Jewel Mia, and Habibur Rahman Arju, Shahed Ahmed Bashir, and Bachchu Mia, of the same village.

Of them, Bachchu was killed in a "gunfight" with the Rapid Action Battalion in Chunarughat upazila of the district on February 25.

Detectives on April 5 pressed charges against the nine people in the case.

Four schoolboys—Monir Mia, 7, Zakaria Shuvo, 8, Tajel Mia, 10, and Ismail Mia, 10 --were the victims of enmity between two groups in local Panchayat (village arbitration council), according to the charge sheet submitted to the court.



PHOTO: STAR

Environmentalists and locals form a human chain at Niral intersection in Tangail yesterday demanding steps to recover from illegal occupiers different water bodies including the Louhajang River and Victoria canal flowing through the town.