

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Two held with Yaba

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*
Police arrested two alleged drug peddlers with 200 Yaba tablets in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat on Tuesday. The arrestees are Shahin Alam, 25, son of late Abdul Mannan of Panikhur village, and Zakia Begum, 32, wife of Saidur Mandol of Kuatpur village. On secret information, a police team raided the house of Zakia Begum and arrested the two with the Yaba around 8:30pm, said Superintendent of Police Nazrul Islam Mollah.

Man kills wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*
A housewife was killed allegedly by her husband in Sakhipur upazila of the district yesterday. The deceased was Jobaida Begum, 25, wife of Hussain Ali of Bagerbari Burichala village. Police and locals said Hussain, 35, beat Jobaida, leaving her dead on the spot following an altercation over trifling matter. Hussain went into hiding soon after the incident. Police arrested Hussain's younger brother Danes Ali, 32, in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

Fifty-four girl students get bicycles as Bhajanpur union parishad in Tentulia upazila under Thakurgaon district made the arrangement on Monday under Local Government Support Programme for their smooth movement to and from schools.

Boy stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*
A teenage boy was stabbed to death allegedly by rivals over a disputed land at Napteragli village in Gouripur upazila of the district on Tuesday. The deceased was Md Palash alias Babu Miah, 17, son of Dulal Uddin of the village. Police arrested Abul Hashem, 55, and Aminul Islam, 38, in connection with the killing. Police and locals said there was a longstanding conflict between the victim's father Dulal Uddin and his neighbour Hamid Miah over the land. On Tuesday afternoon, when Babu was going to the local bazar, the rival group stabbed him, leaving him critically injured. He later died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

Five years into its opening, the cost effective natural cold storage at Jogdal village in Birganj upazila under Dinajpur district continues to function well, bringing hope for small farmers who cannot afford to keep their agricultural products in electricity-run cold storages.

DINAJPUR'S NATURAL COLD STORAGE

5 yrs on, still works properly without electricity

KONGKON KARMAKER with ANDREW EAGLE

More than five years ago, seed trader Touhidul Islam Bakul, from Kamalpur village in Dinajpur's Kaharol upazila had a dream. He decided to build a cold storage facility, but one with a difference. Built using traditional cooling features it requires no electricity.

With an outer structure of earth, brick and bamboo, and paddy residue covering its rooftop, the 110 tonne facility was constructed in Jagdal area of nearby Birganj town in 2011. It features bamboo flooring and shelves and beneath the building is a reservoir which acts as a cooling device but can also accommodate a fish farm. The unique building has small holes to allow for the passage of air and light.

"I spent Tk 5.62 lakhs to build

my cold storage warehouse, on 2 decimals of land" says Bakul. Inaugurated on February 2, 2012, the facility has long since proved itself. It still works properly.

"We call it natural cold storage," says Bakul, "The structure and cooling systems rely on natural resources only."

Perishable crops including potatoes, pointed gourds and cucumbers can be stored without difficulty for up to six months, while cauliflowers can be stored for a month and cabbages for up to 75 days, all for an electricity bill of zero.

According to local farmer Puren Roy, the electricity-run cold storage facilities charge them up to Tk 350 to store a 75 kg sack of potatoes, while the storage rate for the same produce at the natural cold

storage facility is only Tk. 75.

"Besides," Puren says, "in the last five years there has been no report of produce rotting at Bakul's storage facility. But the electricity-run facilities run into difficulties during periods of extensive load shedding."

Local Department of Agriculture Extension official Nikhil Chandar Biswas says natural cold storage has raised local farmers' hopes in being able to store their produce effectively and cheaply. "It costs to build the facility," says Bakul, "but maintenance expenses are negligible; and storage costs are zero."

With the proven success of Bakul's facility, the innovative return to traditional design is being replicated elsewhere.

Shahidul Islam, a farmer of

Kuatpur village in Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila has built his own small facility. "I've used it to store potatoes since March this year," he says, "and they are still in good condition. Farmers will not face produce loss if they rely on natural cold storage."

According to Bakul, in recognition of the success of the facility in Dinajpur, over the last four years with the help of NGO Manusher Jonno Foundation, market development project Katalyst and consulting firm Gmark, natural cold storage facilities have been constructed in several other districts including Khagrachhari, Bandarban, Bogra and Joypurhat.

Farmers can also build natural cold storage at any size, from 20 to 200 tonne capacity, for themselves.

1 killed in Jubo League's clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Noakhali*

A Jubo League activist was killed and two others were hit by bullets in a factional clash at East Hajipur village in Hajipur union under Begumganj upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Masud, 26, son of Md Tazul Islam, and the injured are Md Sohel, 18, son of Md Abu Taher and Md Alo, 26, son of Nur Islam of the village. Sohel was admitted to Noakhali Medical College Hospital and Alo to a private clinic.

Sajidur Rahaman Sajid, OC of Begumganj Model PS, quoting locals, said Samrat and Sumon group of Jubo League engaged in a clash in front of Rahim Haji Bari at East Hajipur village.

They started firing and bullet-hit Masud later died at hospital.

BNP MP among 25 hurt in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Comilla*

At least 25 people, including a former BNP lawmaker and policemen, were injured when leaders and workers of Awami League (AL) and its front organisations allegedly entered the Laksam upazila BNP office and beat up the former MP and the opposition workers yesterday.

They also ransacked the car of the former MP, BNP office and business office of upazila BNP president Saiful Islam Hiru, who was allegedly picked up by law enforcers and remained missing since then.

The attackers torched 30 motorcycles.

As police tried to bring the situation under control, the AL men attacked them.

Police said over 70 AL men attacked a milad mahfil organised by the BNP at its office for Saiful Islam Hiru and BNP municipal unit president Humayun Kabir Parvez.



PHOTO: STAR

With large potholes, most of Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway remains in awful condition, much to the sufferings of commuters and drivers on the commercially important road. The photo was taken from Saptibari in Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district.

Lalmonirhat-Burimari road turns risky for traffic

S DILIP ROY, *Lalmonirhat*

Lalmonirhat-Burimari national highway has become risky for traffic movement due to the many potholes that have developed at different points on the road.

Demanding repair of the highway immediately, the motor owners in the district formed a human chain in front of their office at Airport Road in the town yesterday.

"It is a national highway, but its condition is like that of a local road. If you take a patient to the district hospital he will become more ill due to the bad condition of the road," said Manjur Ali of Bhotmari village under Kaliganj upazila.

Sirajul Haque, general secretary of District Motor Owners' Association, said the 120-kilometre journey from Lalmonirhat to Burimari along the highway usually takes about 2.5 hours by bus. But at the moment one would be lucky to arrive in less than five hours due to the uncountable number of potholes.

risky. Even with slight rainfall the highway's condition deteriorates further," said truck driver Jamsher Ali of Kaliganj upazila.

Another truck driver Sunil Chandra Sen of Lalmonirhat town said, "I always try to avoid transporting goods from Burimari land port because the condition of the road is truly awful." "It's very dangerous, with high possibility of serious accidents. Besides, the extra time it takes leads to higher fuel costs for us," he said.

Atoar Rahman Babu, an ambulance driver at Hatibandha Upazila Health Complex, said the state of the road has challenged his ability to transport patients to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in good time. "We have to drive slowly, and the extra time expended is undoubtedly hazardous for emergency patients."

Fazal Miah, a truck owner from Lalmonirhat town, said parts of his truck break very often when using that highway. "The road has been in a bad state for over a year," he says, "But still no step has been taken to fix it perma-

nently." Residents of Kakina area under Kaliganj upazila said they are unable to ride either motorcycles or bicycles on the road due to the potholes, adding that they are using rail communication, avoiding road transport for fear of accident.

Sahidul Islam, estimator of Roads and Highway Department (RHD) in Lalmonirhat, said ten-wheel trucks loaded with 40-50 tonnes of goods from Burimari land port move on the highway round the clock, causing damage to the road. At least five thousand vehicles include one thousand heavy loaded trucks move on the highway every day, he added.

Sultan Ahmed, sub-divisional engineer of RHD in Lalmonirhat, said repair work of the highway is going on. The repairing started from Burimari land port and has reached Hatibandha upazila, he added.

Other roads in the district, including Lalmonirhat-Kulghat, Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat, Durakati-Chaparhat and Kulghat-Barabari, are also in a sorry state.

Brutality on 2 orphan girls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Two minor girls of a government-run girls' orphanage in Kushtia were violated allegedly by one of its employees.

The accused is Munshi Nasir Uddin, employee of the orphanage in Chourhas area of the town.

The authorities suspended Nasir after the incident came to light. A five-member inquiry committee was also formed to probe the matter.

The victims' family members said Nasir raped the girls, aged about 8 and 7, for three days from Friday at his office.

Of them, the eight-year-old girl fell sick. She informed waiting-maid Hasna Hena of the orphanage about the matter on Monday morning.

Hena tried to hide the fact and gave sanctified water to the girl. In the afternoon, when the girl screamed for pain, Hena gave her Cyprocine tablet and asked her not to disclose the matter.

But a girl, who was close to the victim, informed her family of the matter over phone on Tuesday noon.

On information, Deputy Director (DD) of Social Welfare Department in Kushtia Rokasa Parvin rushed to the orphanage and sent the girls to Kushtia General Hospital for medical test.

The DD then instantly suspended Nasir and formed the probe committee, headed by Assistant Director of Social Welfare Department in Kushtia Hasina Mamtaz.

Yesterday, a rape case was filed, accusing Nasir, said Sahabuddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Kushtia Model Police Station.

The accused went into hiding soon after the incident, said the OC.

Two die from snakebite

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A housewife and a minor girl died from snakebite in Faridpur and Jessore districts in the last two days.

A woman died after being bitten by a snake at Basudevpur village in Boilmary upazila of Faridpur early yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was Nurjahan Begum, 46, wife

of Sukur Sheikh of the village.

Sukur said Nurjahan Begum slept on the floor at their earthen house around 12:00am. A poisonous snake bit her late night. She later died.

A minor schoolgirl died from snakebite at Talbaria village in Jessore Sadar upazila yesterday, reports our Benapole correspon-

dent.

The victim was Kazol Sultana, 7, daughter of Abu Taher Mollah of the village. She was a Class I student of local Nalian Primary School.

Family members said when Kazol was playing beside the house in the morning, a poisonous snake bit her.

She died on way to a hospital.

9 brokers punished in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A mobile court here yesterday sentenced nine brokers -- three of Tangail Medical College Hospital and six of passport office -- to 15 days imprisonment each.

After getting complaints from sufferers, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided the office and hospital in the town and arrested the nine.

They were later produced before the court, led by Executive Magistrate Biswajit Deb, which punished them, said Mohammad Mohiuddin Faruque, commander of Rab-12.

The convicts held from passport office

are Mostafizur Rahman, 38, of Sabalia, Rashedur Rahman, 30, and Saimoon Ahmed Biplob, 32, of Akur Takur Para, Imrul Hasan, 30, of Pashchim Akur Takur Para, and Mamun Chowdhury, 30, and Shahin Chowdhury of the area.

The six with the help of a section of dishonest officials and employees of the passport office have been harassing people for long, sources said.

The brokers held from the hospital are Lutfar Rahman, 50, of Jasihati in Basail upazila, Mohammad Aminul Islam, 25, of Pach Kahonia, and Joytsna Khan, 25, of Kanpara Kumullia in Sadar upazila.



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court yesterday awarded 15 days' imprisonment to each of nine brokers, arrested on charge of harassing patients and service recipients at Tangail Medical College Hospital and local passport office in the town.