

15-year-old girl weds in 'child marriage-free' Kaunia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Just four days of declaring Kaunia upazila in Rangpur free from child marriage a 15-year-old girl becomes victim of early marriage on Friday.

Local anti-early marriage campaigners said despite informing the matter to the authorities concerned the wedding of the underage girl could not be stopped.

The girl, an HSC first-year student of Mirbagh College and a resident of Chandipur village under Kursha union, was married to Saiful Islam, 25, of neighbouring Mashari village on Friday.

Hearing the arrangement of the programme Kaunia Press Club Secretary Mizanur Rahman went to the spot and informed the local administration to stop the ceremony.

Villagers alleged that they requested local UP Chairman Mohammad Hossain Sarkar to take necessary steps to prevent the marriage but he kept silent due to reasons unknown.

Marriage registrar Kamal Uddin said he declined to administer the ritual and left the bride's house when she came to know that the girl is only 15-year-old.

Later, Ashraful Islam, Imam of Chandipur mosque, administered the marriage, he added.

UNO Syed Farhad Hossain asked the UP chairman to take necessary steps.

On July 25, the local administration declared the upazila free from early marriage.

Faraaz, not militants, symbol of Bangladesh

Speakers tell Mymensingh and Sylhet discussions

STAR REPORT

Speakers at programmes in Mymensingh and Sylhet on Friday recalled the rare sacrifice of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, the 20-year-old youth who embraced martyrdom in a bid to save his friends, held hostage by terrorists inside Holy Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan on July 1.

Mymensingh Sahitya Sangsad, a community study circle that has long been central to the town's intellectual and social life, organised a discussion in memory of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain on Friday.

At regular meetings of the circle, participants discuss topics as varied as literature, politics, war, and even the national budget.

In light of the recent Gulshan and Sholakia terrorist attacks it was inevitable that for the circle's recently held 1690th meeting a related topic would prevail. But instead of focusing on mourning the victims or the sense of shame and despair that lingers nationwide, the circle chose for their topic the beacon of hope to be found in the brave self-sacrifice of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain.

Faraaz was the grandson of Transcom Group's Chairman Latifur Rahman and Shahnaz Rahman, and son of Simeen Hossain and Muhammad Waqer Bin Hossain.

As is widely known, on the fateful night of first July, Faraaz, though permitted by the terrorists to leave

the Holy Artisan Bakery, chose instead to stay with his two foreign friends, a choice that ensured his death.

The title of the discussion was "Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain: By sacrificing your life, you saved us; the true Bangladesh is not in the example of the militants, but in your example."



Mymensingh Sahitya Sangsad organises a discussion in Mymensingh on Friday in memory of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. PHOTO: COLLECTED

"After the Gulshan attack," said Yazdani Qureshi, general secretary of the study circle, "when the national image internationally is on the wane, when our heads are bowed in shame, Faraaz offers us a new chance to dream. His sacrifice proves that militancy and terrorism are not the face of Bangladesh."

"Though the Gulshan attack has given immense pain," said the study circle's president, poet and journal-

ist Ashiq Chowdhury, "Faraaz has made us victorious over darkness. He has shown us the true path towards light."

"At this time when Bangladesh is deeply disturbed by the terrorist activities of a few youths who went astray, it is another youth, Faraaz, who rekindles our spirit," said law-

A correspondent reports from Sylhet: Cultural organisation Nagarnat arranged songs and dramas at the central Shaheed Minar in the city on Friday, at an event titled "Come, Let's Sow Courage from Heart to Heart," to protest the Gulshan killings. The event began with a rendition of "You will return again to make flower buds bloom," a song written following the murder of science-based writer and blogger Ananta Bijoy Das on May 12, 2015, in Sylhet. Songs were performed by artistes Sanjeeb Chowdhury, Arup Baul, Arifa Khatun, Tanveer Hasan and Aparup Dutta. Several youths spoke against militancy. An anti-militancy drama, "Adam Test" written by Masum Reza and directed by Arup Baul was also staged. "Resistance to militancy must be built up through cultural awakening," said Nagarnat's president, Arup Das, at the event. The victims of the July 1 Gulshan attack were solemnly remembered and Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain was heralded as a symbol of great courage. Speakers expressed the sentiment that in Sylhet, people's eyes are filled with tears at the thought of the brutal Gulshan killings, but that one of the victims, our Faraaz, showed through his valiant deed a soul which could conquer even death.

yer Badruddin Ahmed. "Now is the time to challenge evil. Political and social commitment is needed to check militancy. All the political and social forces of good must stand united in this task."

"Our greatest work now," added lawyer Moazzem Hossain, who referred to Faraaz as a martyr, "is to make our young generation vocal against militancy. This is a task that we have started from Mymensingh."

SNIPPETS

Four sued for snatching

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Four unnamed men have been sued on charge of snatching Tk 16.75 lakh from two businessmen in Kawkhali upazila. Babul Saha, one of the victims, filed the case with Kawkhali Police Station on Friday night. Police arrested a suspect in this connection. In the afternoon, four snatchers attacked Babul Saha of the district and Ashim Kundu of Barisal when they were returning to Nesarabad from Kawkhali upazila with the money. The gang also hacked the duo and blasted several bombs before taking away Tk 10, 25,000 from Babul and Tk 6, 50,000 from Ashim, said Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kawkhali Police Station.

Fake Rab man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Law enforcers in separate drives arrested an alleged drug peddler and a fake member of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Sadar upazila of the district on Friday. The arrestees are fake Rab member Ali Ahmad, 25, son of Habib Ahmad of Kumarpara, and drug peddler Meher Ali, 23, son of Sabur Ali of the town. On secret information, the elite force arrested Ali with a visiting card of Bangladesh Police when he posing himself as Rab man was demanding illegal toll from a confectionery shop in Maharajpur area, ASP Shahidur Rahman. In another drive, Rab arrested Meher with 152 litres of liquor from Rehichar area.

Housewife killed for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A woman was beaten to death allegedly by her husband for dowry in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur early Friday. The deceased was Shahnaz Parvin, 28, wife of Zahrul Islam, 35, of Dorjipara village. The victim's father alleged that Zahrul often tortured Parvin for dowry. The husband killed Parvin following an altercation over the issue, said locals. The body was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said police.

Fratricide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Maulvibazar

A man was killed allegedly by his brother at Tikapara village in Rajnagar upazila yesterday. The deceased was Faizul Haq, 45, elder brother of Saiful Haq, 35 of the village. Police said Saiful attacked Faizul with sharp weapon, leaving him dead on the spot following an altercation over selling cattle. Police later arrested Saiful from the spot, said Md Abdul Based, officer-in-charge of Rajnagar Police Station.

Youth jailed for stalking

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Maulvibazar

A mobile court here sentenced a youth to one year's imprisonment for stalking a schoolgirl yesterday. The stalker is Saiful Mia, 23, son of Yusuf Ali of Kalimabad village in Kulaura upazila. Family sources said Saiful used to stalk the ninth grader on her way to school in the area. On information, police arrested Saiful from the area yesterday morning. He was later produced before the court, led by Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tahsina Begum, which punished him.

2 drown in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two children drowned in ponds at Dokropara and Jalashi villages in Panchagarh municipality area yesterday. The deceased were a one-and-a-half-year old Rohan, son of Mofidul Islam of Jalasi village, and Md Manik, 13, son of Ashraful Islam of Dokropara. Family sources said the two fell into ponds near their home while playing on its bank and drowned.

Gang dopes 3, loots cash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Criminals doped three passengers of a bus on Jessore-Magura highway and looted Tk 1 lakh and gold ornaments from them on Friday night. The victims are Salma Begum, 30, her daughter Soma khatun, 16, and son Rabbi, 13. When the bus reached Paturia ferry ghat in Manikganj, the three took sugarcane juice and became senseless. Later, the gang looted the money and gold ornaments from them, said Salma.



Vehicles move through water as erosion by the Padma River damages two landing stations of Daulatdia ferry terminal in Manikganj. PHOTO: STAR

PATURIA-DAULATDIA Ferry service vulnerable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Ferry movement on Paturia-Daulatdia river route may be disrupted any time as two landing stations of Daulatdia terminal were washed away into the river and the two others are under threat of erosion by the Padma River, said Shafikul Islam, manager (commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Daulatdia office. Thousands of passengers from 17 south-western districts are suffering due to damaged landing stations, shortage of ferries and strong current on both sides of the Padma - Paturia in Manikganj and Daulatdia in Rajbari - for the last ten days. At least 600 vehicles, including 400 goods-laden trucks, were lined up at Paturia while 800 vehicles were stranded at Daulatdia ghat at noon yesterday.

Barguna growers worried as aman farming uncertain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Farmers of nine villages in Athorogachia union under Amtali upazila of Barguna are uncertain of cultivating aman paddy as their farmlands are now under water due to heavy rainfall and tidal surges, which cannot flow out as an influential local has kept the sluice gate on the Amtala canal closed.

Water cannot flow out from the agricultural land as the sluice gate on the Amtala canal is controlled by local union parishad (UP) member Mamun Sikder, who has engaged some fishermen to catch fish on the canal, he added.

Humayun Akon, a farmer of Sonakhali village, said aman seeds on his two bighas of land were destroyed due to the stagnant water. "We can't prepare fresh seedbeds as the land is still under water," he added.

Md Ibrahim Akon of the same village, said, "We requested Mamun Sikder to open the sluice gate considering the interest of the local farmers, but he didn't listen to us."

Over 100 farmers submitted a complaint to the Gazipur Police Station on July 22, demanding steps to free the canal, but in vain, he added.

Mostafa Gazi, one of the fishermen, said Mamun member asked them to catch fish on the canal.

Mamun Sikder said, "The canal was full of water hyacinth and I requested the fishermen to clean the canal. After cleaning I asked them to catch fish there," he said. Md Harun-ur-Rashid, chairman of the local UP, said they will take steps to free the canal immediately. Md Fazle Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Gazipur Police Station, said they would take steps to clean the canal.

Robber killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

An alleged robber was killed in a 'gunfight' with the law enforcers in Moheshpur upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased, Ramzan Ali, 45, was son of Kuran Mondal of Krishnapur village in the upazila.

Two constables, Ahsan Habib and Selim Reza of Moheshpur Police Station, also sustained injuries during the incident.

Police said a team of the law enforcers, acting on a tip-off, raided Katakhal area when a gang of criminals was planning to commit robbery on Kaliganj-Jibonnagar road by felling logs around 2:30am.

Sensing the police presence the gang opened fire at them, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate with gunfire triggering a 'gunfight'.

During the 10-minute 'gunfight' Ramzan was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot while his cohorts managed to escape.

OC Aminul Islam of Moheshpur Police Station said Ramzan was wanted in at least five cases.

One year of enclave exchange today

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

The government has taken steps to expedite work for the socio-economic development of the former enclave people of Panchagarh.

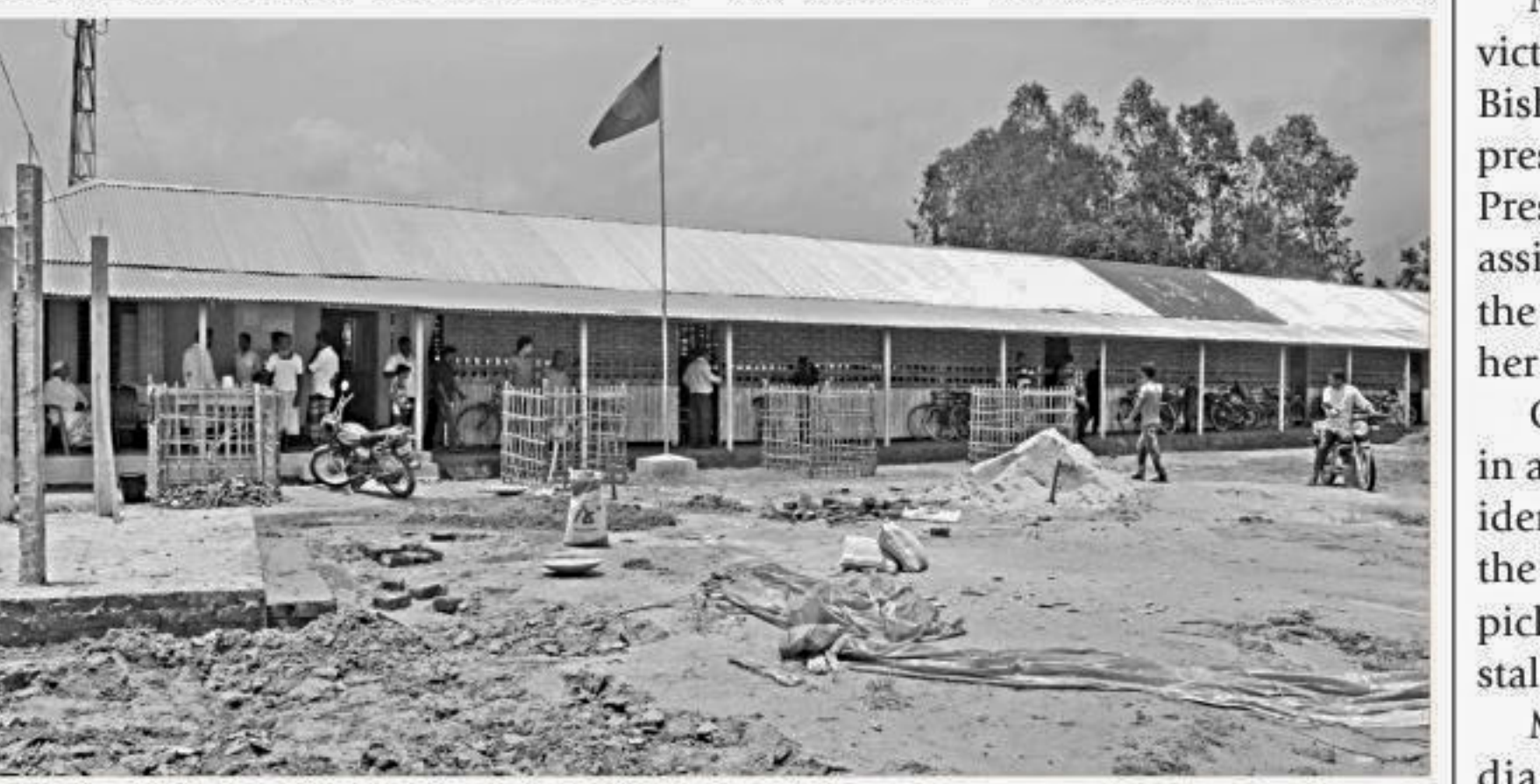
Palli Biddut Samity under Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB) set up 226 kilometres of electricity supply line costing Tk 27 crore, and gave electricity connection to 8,504 families in the last one year.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has given work order for construction of 43 kms of road and about 100 kms of bridges and culverts in the former enclave areas in three upazilas of the district under rural infrastructure development project. LGED has also started construction of two educational institutions at Garati village in Panchagarh Sadar and at Kaliganj in Boda upazila of the district.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) is conducting two schools for farmers, providing training to 570 farmers, and has given 12 tree saplings to each of them. The government has also brought 1,109 old people under elderly allowance programme, 474 under widow allowance and 247 under disabled allowance. Youth Development Directorate

provided training on knitting and linking machine operation to 82 youths of the enclaves while 255 were given cow rearing training. Deputy Director of district Youth Development Directorate Abul Hossain said. Preparation of voter list of former enclave people was conducted from

in Panchagarh went to India in five separate batches on November 22, 23, 24, 26 and 30 last year. A total of 979 people from 111 former Indian enclaves in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Panchagarh districts opted to be Indian nationals. Following the historic swap on July 31, some 111 former Indian enclaves



A Shaheed Minar in memory of the Language Movement martyrs is being constructed on the Mafizer Rahman College premises at Rajmahal in Panchagarh Sadar upazila. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

July 17 to July 25. Hira Mohon, 60, of Doikahta village said they would elect the chairman and members in the next UP election as the list would be completed soon.

As many as 478 people of 95 families from 36 erstwhile Indian enclaves situated inside Bangladesh including Panchagarh, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamary districts became the part of Bangladesh, while 51 Bangladeshi enclaves went to the possession of India, ending nearly seven decades of sufferings of over 40,000 people.

Abducted cable operator yet to be rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A cable operator of Gobindaganj upazila, who was allegedly abducted 25 days ago, is yet to be rescued.

Moyna Begum, wife of victim Chinu Mia, 35, of Bishawnathpur village, at a press briefing at Gaibandha Press Club yesterday sought assistance from police and the administration to rescue her husband.

On July 6, a gang of five in a CNG-run three-wheeler identifying themselves as the men of administration picked up Chinu from a tea stall, she said.

Moyna filed a general diary with Gobindaganj Police Station in this connection the same day.

On July 20, she filed an abduction case with Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court which ordered Detective Branch (DB) of police for investigation.

Mozammel Huq, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj PS, said they are investigating the matter.