

### THREE KIDS' TORTURE Police asked to interrogate main accused at jail gate

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Moulvibazar

Habiganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Kawsar Alam on Tuesday ordered police to interrogate the main accused in the four kids torture case at the jail gate. Earlier, the investigation officer prayed for a 7-day remand for Shah Alam, the main accused.

Locals said the three children were tied to a tree and beaten up in Sadar upazila of Habiganj for allegedly stealing a mobile phone on July 27.

They are Rony, 12, son of Abdul Khalek; Rubel, 13, son of Bachchu Mia; and Mahin, 12. They are all residents of Joseabda village under the upazila.

Rajkumar, sub-inspector of Habiganj Model Police Station, was closed on charge of negligence over the torturing of the children, Raselur Rahman, assistant superintendent (south) (ASP) of Habiganj police, told this correspondent yesterday.

Rajkumar went to the scene, but he did not take any measure to rescue the victims, the ASP added. As per instruction of the superintendent of police, Md Nazim Uddin, officer-in-charge of the local police station, rescued them, he said.

It was alleged that Shah Alam tortured the three children, accusing them of stealing a mobile phone. Someone recorded the entire incident, which took place in front of local people.

Superintendent of Police Joydev Kumar Bhadra decided to close SI

Rajkumar after the video of torture was broadcast by different private television channels and later went viral in social media.

The six-minute video, which went viral, shows a man torturing two of the victims with their hands and legs tied up. The man was beating up one of them with a bamboo stick and the boy was screaming, "I was not with him." Later, police identified the torturer as Shah Alam.

Police detained Shah Alam and two others in connection with the incident.



Erosion by the Kirtonkhola River has taken a serious turn, devouring around a kilometre area of the Charbaria-Lamchari road in Barisal Sadar upazila during the last one month. Inset, Aroj Manjil Public Library will also be under threat if urgent protection measures are not taken to check the menace.

### Rapist of two orphan girls sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Kushtia

A Kushtia court on Tuesday sent an employee of a government-run girls' orphanage in the district, to jail for allegedly raping two minor girls of the institution.

Police arrested Munshi Nasir Uddin, from a hideout in Courtpara area of the town on the day.

Nasir had been absconding since the incident came to light. The orphanage authorities suspended him the same day.

According to the victim's family members, Nasir raped the girls, aged about eight and seven, in his office for three days from July 22.

The eight-year-old girl fell sick, and informed Hasna Hena, waiting-maid of the orphanage, about the matter on July 25.

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 another girl, who was close to the victim, informed the matter to the victim's family on July 26.

Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department in Kushtia, Rokasa Parvin, sent the girls to Kushtia General Hospital for medical test.

## Thousands suffer as erosion by Kirtonkhola turns serious

Traditional Aroj Manjil Public Library is also under threat

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

The Kirtonkhola River has badly damaged around 1000 feet area of the road from Charbaria to Lamchari under Barisal Sadar upazila within the last one month, much to the sufferings of 20 thousand people of the two unions.

Aroj Manjil Public Library, founded by late Aroj Ali Matubbar, a self-taught philosopher, is also under threat due to the situation.

"As the Kirtonkhola washed away at least two kilometres of the embankment, river water entered the main road and damaged its different parts. If the erosion continues, the library will come under risk," said Shamim Matubbar, grandson of Aroj Ali Matubbar, also

librarian of Aroj Manjil Public Library.

"We urge the authorities concerned to start emergency work to protect the area including the library," he said.

Aroj Ali Matubbar founded Aroj Manjil Public Library at his home village Lamchari in Barisal Sadar upazila in the Bengali year of 1386.

This library got a Tk 3 lakh development work two years ago, but the number of readers has recently decreased due to snapping of the road communication, said Mosaref Hossain Khokon, secretary of the library committee.

"The Kirtonkhola River flow now merges with its branch Taltali. If we fail to prevent river erosion in Charbaria-Lamchari road, the joint

flow may wreak havoc in large areas," said Mahatab Hossain Suruj, chairman of Charbaria union parishad.

The recent erosion has rendered homeless at least 50 families in Charbaria and Lamchari unions while around 500 families have shifted their houses, local sources said.

Now thousands of locals including a large number of students have to cross the eroded areas of the road by trawlers or country boats, but they often face problems due to shortage of vessels.

"When we miss trawlers, we cannot join our classes in time," said Marjina, a Class III student of Lamchari Primary School.

Erosion by the Kirtonkhola

River threatens the Charbaria-Lamchari road while tidal surges often damage dwellings, crops, and fish farming, the affected locals said.

Babul Akther, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Barisal, said, "We have submitted a project proposal to the authorities concern but the Planning Commission returned the project proposal with some directions. Now we are conducting only an emergency work at this place."

"If we fail to protect the main embankment from erosion by the Kirtonkhola, the whole area including Aroj Manjil Public Library may be washed away," he added.

### Barguna college students go berserk

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Hundreds of students of Patharghata Degree College in Barguna yesterday vandalised college property and demonstrated on the campus demanding immediate nationalisation of the institution.

The agitated students also confined the principal of the college to his room for about one and a half hour.

Sources said although Patharghata Degree College, established in 1985, is the oldest institution in the upazila but recently the education ministry enlisted Patharghata Women's College as nationalised.

As per the government policy, one educational institution in each upazila will be nationalised.

Protesting the matter, students of the college brought out a procession on the campus around 9:30am.

At one stage, they confined Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, principal of the college, to his office around 10:00am. They also boycotted their classes and blocked the Patharghata-Barguna road for nearly two hours at the same time.

Officer-in-Charge Ziaul Haque of Patharghata Police Station said on information, police went to the college campus first and freed the principal from confinement around 11:30am.

### Road in sorry state

Thanks to authorities' indifference

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Local people formed a human chain in Gouripur of the district on Sunday, demanding immediate steps to repair the five-kilometre Kumri-Mohishatti road in the upazila.

As part of their protest programme, the villagers also planted paddy saplings on the muddy road at Bishampur in the upazila.

Bandhur Bandhan Ekota Sangha, a local student forum, organised the programme addressed by Md Ujjol Miah, president of the forum, schoolteachers Mohammad Atiqullah, Habibullah Miah, Noor Nabi Akanda and businessmen Abdul Motalab, Alamgir Hossain and Omar Faruq.

The road has become almost unfit for vehicular movement due to lack of repair or renovation for over five years.

During monsoon, it is very difficult to walk as the road becomes muddy following a shower of rain.

Students using the road to go to their educational institutions are the worst sufferers.

The situation worsens further when they have to cross the road with critical patients, said college student Azharul Karim, secretary of the forum.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities are yet to take any steps to repair the road, said the speakers.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Marjina Akhter said she is yet to be informed about the sorry state of the road.

"We will take necessary steps immediately to mitigate the sufferings of the villagers," said the UNO.

### Patuakhali madrasa boy missing for 11 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

A madrasa boy of the district town went missing for 11 days.

The victim is Md Saidul Islam, 14, student of Madina Hafijee Madrasa in Launch ghat area of the town, and son of cobbler Abdul Mannan Gazi.

On July 23, Saidul came to the madrasa from their nearby rented house and since then he went missing, said his father.

Mannan Gazi filed a general diary with Patuakhali Police Station in this connection on July 27.

They are trying their best to rescue the boy, said SM Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of the PS.

## Determination shows the way

Physically challenged Shahana achieves study and business success

BY S DILIP ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

When the Teesta River devours a home and farmland, a family is faced with significant challenges. When despite such circumstances a small business is established, even something as humble as a roadside grocery store, it's testament to human resilience. When such a business is established by a physically challenged individual it's inspiring. But perhaps what's most remarkable about businesswoman Shahana Akter of Bagdora village in Lalmonirhat sadar upazila's Khuniyagachh union is that she's only 14 years old.

The daughter of van puller Sakmol Hossain and Morsheda Begum, Shahana was born two months premature. As a result, and compounded by a lack of nutritional food and wrong treatment by a village doctor, Shahana's legs are paralysed. Yet Shahana is a diligent class 7 student of nearby Kalmati Adarsha High School who holds hopes of pursuing tertiary level education in order to become well-established in society.

For the past 3 years, since she was 11 years old, the middle sister of three is also the proprietor of a grocery store. Shahana runs the shop from 7 am to 9 am before school, and from about 5 pm to 9 pm each day when her classes are done. "My mother helps," she says. "My mother looks after the shop while I'm in school. And fortunately the business is doing well. I started with Tk 1,500 in capital and now that has become about Tk 25,000 in cash."

"Our disabled daughter can't move without help," says Morsheda, "but her dreams are big! She might be physically challenged but Shahana is brilliant. She knows how to grow the business."

"My father suffers every day,



Physically challenged 14-year-old Shahana Akter in her grocery shop at Bagdora village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO:  
STAR

carrying me to school," says Shahana. My mother suffers from helping with the business. But I want to establish myself and reach my target of higher education."

According to her father Sakmol, the family once had 8 bighas of cropland, a 2-bigha orchard and a 12-decimal household yard but all were taken by the Teesta. For the past five years, he says, the family has been living on unused government land alongside a road.

"Nowadays Shahana gives 50% of the profits from her grocery store as contribution to family expenses," he says with fatherly pride, "while the rest she re-invests in building her business."

"The stock is worth about Tk 15,000," says Shahana, "and from that I can sell around Tk 1,000 of

merchandise daily, which realises a profit of about Tk 200." Meanwhile, from van pulling Sakmol can earn up to Tk 200 per day.

Her father says that on several occasions he has contacted the local union chairman concerning the possibility of his daughter receiving a disability allowance, but for reasons unknown such assistance has not been forthcoming.

Newly-elected council member Mozammel Haque, however, says he believes Shahana should qualify for a disability allowance and he intends to help her access such an entitlement in the near future.

In the meantime Shahana continues to excel in both her studies and her business. "Our friend

Shahana is best at mathematics," says classmate Samina Akter. Results place Shahana among the top ten students in her class.

"We do our best to provide the facilities she needs," says her high school headmaster Nayeab Ali. "All the teachers take special care of our meritorious student Shahana."

"The girl is always smiling," says local Rezaul Islam, 45, a customer of Shahana's grocery store. "She deals so nicely with her customers and it's made her shop popular."

And if ever business is quiet for a few minutes, Shahana, who by habit studies after work until about 12 a.m., won't waste the moment. She'd rather open one of her schoolbooks, to read until the next customer arrives.



Locals form a human chain on the muddy road in Gouripur upazila of Mymensingh on Sunday, demanding immediate steps to repair it.

PHOTO: STAR