

Abducted boy found dead in septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Detectives Branch (DB) of Police recovered the body of seven-year-old school-boy from Musulli village in Nandail upazila on Wednesday night, two days after his abduction.

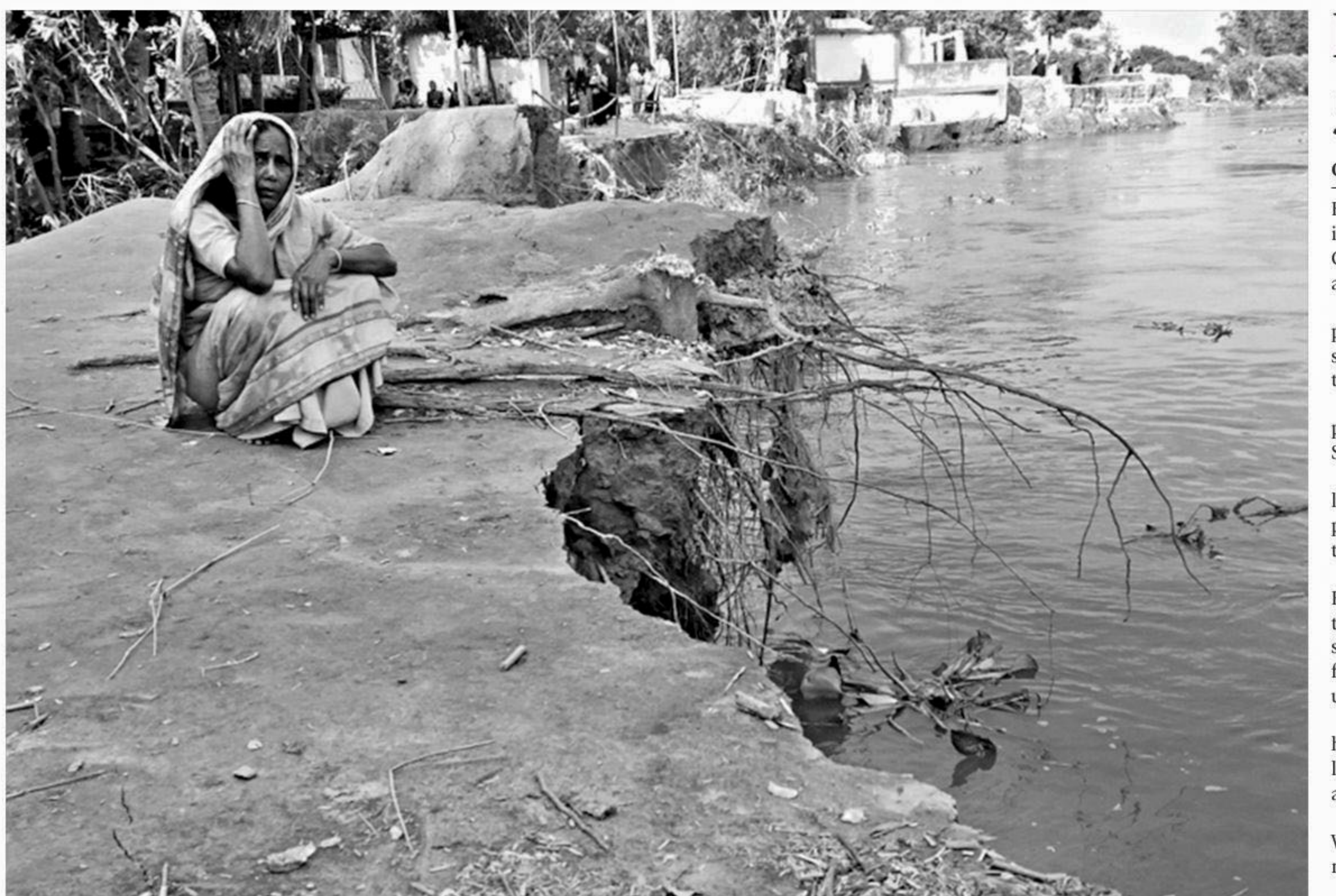
The deceased, Tachhin, son of Abdul Qaiyum of the village, was a Class I student at a local primary school.

Police said Shahid, son of Abu Taher of the village, abducted the boy on August 15 and later phoned Tachhin's father and demanded Tk 30 lakh as ransom for his son's release.

Officer-in-Charge Imarat Hossain Gazi of Mymensingh DB police said after tracking the kidnapper's mobile phone location detectives arrested Shahid from his house around 10:00pm.

Later, according to his confessional statement police recovered Tachhin's body from a septic tank near Shahid's house.

Police produced Shahid before a Mymensingh court yesterday that sent him to the jail, the OC added.



A hapless Hazera Begum gives a bleak look as the Kaliganga River has devoured her homestead at Barta village in Chandhar union of Singair upazila under Manikganj district. Fifty houses of the same village went into the riverbed during the last seven days.

PHOTO: STAR

Kaliganga devours 50 houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Erosion by the river Kaliganga took a serious turn devouring about 50 dwelling houses at Barta village under Chandahar union in Singair upazila of the district within a week.

Shawkat Hossain Badal, chairman of Chandahar union parishad, said the river devoured nearly 50 houses in the last seven days and several other families have taken shelter at their neighbouring houses.

The intensity of the erosion is so cruel that many affected people had no time to shift elsewhere with their belongings, Shawkat said.

During a visit in the area, this correspondent found that local people dumped sand, bamboo and tree branches to protect the area but the strong current of the river foiled their entire bid.

Hajera Begum, a resident of the village, said the Kaliganga onslaught has brought sorrow for her as the river engulfed her homestead before she could save it. Like Hajera, many others along with their family members have been living in utter fear and uncertainty.

Many other erosion-hit people of the village said no steps have yet been taken to check the river erosion and the homeless families did not get any help from the government or any other organisation.

UP chairman Shawkat said he has already informed the Water Development Board (WDB) authorities about the matter.

Hasan Mahmud, executive engineer of WDB in Manikganj, said WDB officials visited the affected areas and they will take necessary steps to check the erosion as soon as possible.

60 injured in clash over water body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At least 60 people were injured in a clash over taking control of a water body at Moula village in Chhatak upazila of Sunamganj on Wednesday.

Of them, seriously injured Sajit Miah, Sujit Miah and Firoz Ali were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while others to the upazila health complex and Sunamganj Sadar Hospital.

Police and locals said there was a longstanding conflict between Hashmot Ullah and his neighbor Mosabbir Ali over taking possession of the water body.

Orphaned by lightning, 8 siblings in despair

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The seven sisters and one brother had a somewhat happy life under the care of parents at their Purbo Jalalpur village home in Adampur union of Kamalganj upazila under the district but a lightning strike on Saturday night turned everything upside down.

Their parents -- Azir Ali, 40, and Alima Akter, 34, were critically injured as a streak of thunderbolt struck them around 8:00pm on Saturday when they were working in their courtyard, said Abdal Hossain, chairman of Adampur union parishad.

They were admitted to Kamalganj Upazila Health Complex where they died at about 9:25pm the same night, he added.

As this correspondent talked to the eldest of them, Hamida Begum, 18, she started crying.

She could hardly speak a few words about their plight.

His younger sisters, Samina, 13, and Amina, 10, Sharmin, 8, Naznin, 6, Fahima, 5, and Beauty, 3, looked too quiet as the shock of losing parents has snatched away playfulness of their childhood.

Their only brother Koyes Ahmed, 16, seemed hapless, as the thought of maintaining the siblings now creeps into his mind.

Compassionate neighbours have extended their helpful hands to them.

"I took the responsibility of feeding the orphaned siblings for a week. Many others are coming forward and giving money to them," said Mamun Mia, a trader of the village.

Mohammad Mahmudul Haque, upazila nirbahi officer of Kamalganj, said he will try to help the orphan siblings.

POLICE SURVEILLANCE MOUNTS IN RANGPUR

Shibir-run messes get empty

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Boarders of many privately run dormitories, especially those dominated by Students of Islami Chhata Shibir in Rangpur city, are leaving the rented houses as police strengthened surveillance against the backdrop of recent terrorist attacks in different areas of the country.

There are over 1,000 student messes around different educational institutions including Carmichael College, Begum Rokeya University and Rangpur Government College in Rangpur city.

Of these messes situated at Collegepara, Kamarpara, Binodpur, Balapara, Ashratpur, Chawkbazar, Parkmor, Modernmor, Lalbagh, Darshanamor and Chagatpara, more than 200 are controlled by Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, said police and locals.

"Boarders started leaving the messes as police recently asked the residents to submit their details. We are facing

financial losses due to the situation," said a mess owner.

"The police are closely monitoring the student messes in Rangpur as a preventive measure against any attempt to deteriorate the law and order. We also asked the mess owners to be careful to watch the boarders' activities," Abdur Razzak, the outgoing superintendent of police in Rangpur, told local reporters last week.

Meanwhile, many fresh students possibly not involved with any politics are also avoiding the messes amid the fear of 'troubles'.

Signboards with the names of many messes also vanished, said Shariful Islam, sub inspector of the Detective Branch in Rangpur.

Rangpur police earlier in a meeting with mess owners urged them to maintain details of their boarders in prescribed forms and also to notify police if anyone leaves the mess.

But most the mess owners are not

following the instruction, alleged police.

Seeking anonymity, several mess owners of Ashratpur area in Rangpur city said instead of cooperating, many boarders go elsewhere if they are pressed for detailed information.

"I am trying to follow the instruction of police and at our meetings, told other mess owners to do the same," said Azaharul Islam, a mess owner at Collegepara, an area around Carmichael College.

"I have submitted details of the mess boarders to police as it has become mandatory due to the recent situation in the country," said Rahima Khatun, owner of a mess house at Ashratpur.

Mostafizar Rahman, president of mess owners association at Collegemore, said there are 54 messes in the area.

He claimed that details of the boarders have already been handed over to police.

Indigenous people keep vigil for safety in Bandarban

SANJOY KUMAR BARIUA with ANDREW EAGLE

Life in Dabong Khali Marma Para in remote Baishari union of Bandarban's Nykkhongchhari upazila has been anything but usual of late. Following two brutal murders in the area over the last few months, locals are concerned. Determined to ensure security in their area, villagers decided to be vigilant rather than scared, a strategy that on 4 August 2016 successfully prevented a third murder.

The unexpected hacking death of Buddhist monk U Damma Oaing Cha on 14 May 2016 sent shockwaves through the normally peaceful community. On 30 June 2016 when a second Buddhist, Mong Shwe Lung Marma, 55, was hacked to death the sense of danger only intensified.

Both murders held similarities with those carried out over recent months by militants elsewhere in the country, but according to local headmaster Monghla Marma, the area's authorities seem indifferent to community concerns.

"The thinking is that those who killed the two might be militants connected with the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation," says Monghla. "But the local administration didn't seem much concerned. There are claims they have reached an understanding with the organisation's ringleaders in Nykkhongchhari."

Baishari union's chairman Md Alam agrees that the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) might be involved. "There is a group among them," he says, "who want to create panic among the indigenous villagers in the union. Militants with the help of RSO members might have carried out the murders."

Ching Hla Mong Chak, a leader of Bandarban's Chak community similarly believes Rohingya militants have long been trying to stir up fear and insecurity among indigenous residents across Nykkhongchhari upazila. "Ultimately the gang wants to evict the villagers from their ancestral lands by threatening their lives."

"We have informed the local administration about the problem," he contin-

ues, "But efforts have been in vain since they paid no heed to our concerns; rather, it may be that they have an understanding with the criminals."

"We lost two of our beloved community members, including our religious leader," Monghla says, recalling the murders. "We want no more pain. That's why we decided to be vigilant, and protect ourselves."

"We had no other option but to keep watch over the temple and our community every night since the murders," says local Mya Mya Ching Marma.

Mong Mrau Marma, the Karbari or chief of Dabon Khali Marma Para agrees. "Who else will protect us and provide security when the local administration has already failed to identify the masterminds behind the killings?"

On the Thursday evening of 4 August 2016 the community's preparedness was put to the test.

"The militants broke the door of the temple at around 8:20 p.m.," says Tain Dima, 62, chief monk of Dabong Khali Marma Para Buddhist temple. "They

tried to enter my room."

But the monk was ready. As planned, he turned on the loudspeaker and called the villagers to help him. When the attackers heard the calls over the loudspeaker, they fled.

The community is understandably relieved and satisfied that through their efforts the life of their chief monk was almost certainly saved; an outcome only made possible by their vigilance.

Bandarban police chief, Sanjit Kumar Roy, meanwhile, denies there are links between police and the RSO. "Police are investigating the Baishari murders, including looking into whether there were any links to militancy or the RSO."

The officer-in-charge of Nykkhongchhari police station, Abul Kyer, offered the same response.

On 18 August 2016 the state minister for Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs, Bir Bahadur U Shwe Sing, visited Baishara, urging the area's locals to stand united against terrorism and militancy.



PHOTO: STAR

Indigenous villagers in remote Dabong Khali Marma Para in Baishari union of Bandarban's Nykkhongchhari upazila arrange guarding by turns at night, following two gruesome murders during the past few months. On August 4, they successfully prevented a murder attempt on the chief monk at the local Buddhist temple, thanks to their decision to be vigilant rather than scared.



The three-century-old Payradanga temple at Kachari Payradanga village in Nageswari municipality of Kurigram lying neglected for years, thanks to the authorities' callousness.

PHOTO: STAR

Principal jailed for five years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday jailed former principal of a college for five years in a case filed for misappropriating funds of the institution and misusing power and position.

The convict, Professor Abdul Mannan, 55, former principal of Shaheed M Monsur Ali College in Pabna town, was also fined Tk 7.1 lakh.

Special Judge Mohammad Liakat Ali Mollah of Paban Anti-Corruption Tribunal handed down the verdict in presence of the convict and sent him to the jail.

According to the prosecution, Abdul Mannan embezzled Tk 7.1 lakh through issuing a false check during the construction works of a newly built college building in 2013.

Negligence leaves 300-yr-old Kurigram temple in ruins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A centuries-old Payradanga temple at Kachari Payradanga village under Nageswari municipality of Kurigram has remained neglected for long by the authorities concerned.

The temple is situated beside the Kurigram-Nageswari-Bhurungamari road on 15 decimals of land at Kachari Payradanga village in Nageswari municipality under Nageswari upazila of the district.

No one knows exactly when it was built, but locals say it is around three hundred years old.

The temple was constructed with bricks and *choon-surki* (powdered lime and brick). Due to neglect, a 180-foot-high banyan tree has grown on it.

There are 21 Hindu families living beside the temple. They requested the mayor and local lawmaker several times to take up maintenance of the temple and build a boundary wall around the land, but no steps have been taken for that purpose.

Amol Krishna Sarkar, 48, secretary of the temple committee, said, "We requested the local public representatives to renovate the temple. They said before the elections that they would do it, but they forgot about the temple after getting elected."

"We, have been observing Durga Puja, Shitali Puja and Haribash (Mahanam Jago) here for years. Thousands of Hindus come here from Hasnabad, Kaliganj and Bhitbarband unions, and from Nageswari municipality. We have erected a 27-foot long tin-shed for conducting our activities," said Amol.

Hasen Ali, ward commissioner of the municipality, said, "Payradanga temple is one of the oldest temples in the northern part of the country. Here, thousands of Hindus observe various pujas every year. I raised the issue in our development meeting, and the mayor agreed to give some allocation in the coming budget for constructing its boundary wall."