

## One rapist gets life, two others 14 yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A court here yesterday awarded life term imprisonment to a youth and 14 years' rigorous imprisonment to two others for raping a schoolgirl after abduction over seven and a half years ago.

The life term recipient is Md Rafik, son of Faraj Ali of Boitora village, while the 14 years' jail awardees are Md Humayun, son of Helal Uddin of Uchutia, and Jewel, son of Lal Mia of Boitora village of Manikganj Sadar upazila.

After examining 11 witnesses, Judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Hasina Rowshan Jahan pronounced the verdict around 12:30pm in presence of the convicts.

However, the judge acquitted Moksed Ali and Kazi Abul Kalam as the charges brought against them court could not be proved.

The court also fined Tk 10,000 to Rafik, in default he has to serve six months more in jail, and Tk 5,000 each to Humayun and Jewel, in default three months' jail.



Showing utter callousness to environment, workers of Khagrachhari municipality dump garbage just beside Khagrachhari-Chittagong road on the outskirts of the town.

PHOTO: STAR

## BSF returns 7 fishermen's bodies

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The bodies of seven Bangladeshi fishermen, drowned when a trawler caught in a storm and sank in the Bay, were handed over to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday.

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed over the bodies following a flag meeting between the two border forces at Bhomra border in Satkhira around 4:00pm, said Subedar Sirajul Gani Bhomra camp commander of BGB 38 Battalion in Satkhira.

Sub-inspector Nazrul Islam of Sadar Police Station said Subedar Sirajul Gani received the seven unidentified and decomposed bodies and later handed those over to the police station.

SI Nazrul said they have already contacted trawler owner Nabir Uddin of Jahajmara area of Noakhali's Hatiya upazila and informed him of the matter.

Over two weeks ago, a Bangladeshi fishing trawler carrying 17 fishermen sank in the Bay of Bengal after being caught in the rough sea.

## Temple vandalised in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Criminals vandalised Sachchidananda Sebashram temple at Nithok Shialkhowa village in Kaliganj upazila yesterday.

A worshipper, Sharat Chandra Roy, 58, said he saw the iron made structure atop the temple on the road beside the temple when he went to pray there around 6:15am.

Such an incident took place for the first time in the 150-year old temple, he said.

Fanibhusan Roy, general secretary of the temple management committee, filed a complaint with Kaliganj Police Station in this regard.

Police are investigating the incident, said Arju Md Sazzad Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station.

# Mindless waste dumping on Alutilla Hills slope

### Khagrachhari town authority blamed for pollution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Massive dumping of waste materials collected from the district town on a slope of Alutilla Hills beside Khagrachhari-Chittagong Road causes serious environment pollution, much to the sufferings of the residents of nearby areas.

Shilachhari canal, the only source of water for dozens of families at Uttar Mohalchhara Para and Bangalkathi Tripura Para, is badly polluted due to the callous act. The garbage also finds way to the Chengi River.

During a spot visit, this correspondent saw raw waste as well as plastic goods, bottles, broken glasses, and ceramics scattered in the canal area.

A number of women and children were bathing in the polluted water.

Chingmra Mogini and Krajai Mogini, two housewives at Uttar

Mohalchhara Para, said the canal served as the only source of water for the local residents but it has become badly polluted and stinky due to garbage dumping.

Now they have to walk a kilometre to collect drinking water.

The dirty water is also breeding ground for mosquitoes and flies.

Most of the villagers have to toil throughout the day, collecting juice from rubber garden and doing jhum cultivation but they often fail to get water for a refreshing bath, locals said.

Several residents said they repeatedly requested the municipal authorities not to dump garbage there but to no effect.

Meghnath Tripura, member of ward No 3 of Golabari union, said 35 families of nearby areas earlier used water from the small stream but now the water has become unusable.

He demanded urgent steps to provide alternative source of water for the locals.

Twenty-five tonnes of garbage are accumulated in Khagrachhari town daily and of it, 20 to 22 tonnes cleared by the municipality workers are dumped at Alutilla garbage depot, said a worker engaged in garbage management in the municipality.

Khagrachhari municipality Mayor Rafiqul Alam said they have to dump garbage at Alutilla due to lack of any alternative arrangement.

"A project has been taken for garbage management on 11 acres of land at Comilla Tila area near Khagrachhari town. If the project gets approval from the authorities concerned, it can be implemented within next one year and then the environment pollution will be minimised," he said.

## 2 die as tree falls on their motorbike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Two men were killed as a roadside tree fell on their motorcycle in Gangra area under Monirampur upazila of Jessore yesterday.

The deceased were Kumaresh Biswas, son of Kalipado Biswas of Dakuria village, and Abdul Hamid, son of Abdus Samad of Malanchi village.

Police and locals said one Motaleb Gazi was cutting a tree beside Monirampur-Dakuria road in the area around 12:30pm. When the tree fell on their motorbike.

They died on the spot.

The bodies were sent to Jessore Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Biplob Kumer Nath, officer-in-charge of Monirampur Police Station.

## 2.5 LAKH SAPLINGS PLANTED 'Green Taraganj'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 2.5 lakh saplings of forest, fruit and medicinal trees have been planted in Taraganj upazila of Rangpur with an aim to build a green upazila.

Divisional Commissioner Kazi Hasan Ahmed inaugurated the hour-long tree sapling planting festival with the slogan "Sabuj Taraganj Gori" at the upazila complex around 7:00am yesterday. He later planted a sapling inside the complex.

Over 35,000 local people planted the tree saplings on both sides of 156 roads in the upazila covering an area of 128.64square kilometres. Each person planted at least seven saplings at the festival.

Students of 115 schools and colleges, government and non government officials, bankers, chairmen and members of five union parishads (UPs) in the upazila joined hands to plant the saplings.

Abdul Mannan Pramanik, chairman of Alampur UP, said he planted 20 saplings alone.

Villagers started gathering at roadsides in the morning following announcements over loudspeakers of mosques in the upazila.

For the last seven days, leaflets and banners were distributed among the villagers to take part at the festival, said locals.

Local administration so far held 45 meetings with the villagers to make the festival successful.

## BANDARBAN-RANGAMATI ROUTE

# Bridge collapse snaps road link

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Road communications between Bandarban and Rangamati have been cut off following the collapse of a Bailey bridge in Sadar upazila of Bandarban, causing sufferings to thousands of people in the two hill districts.

The bridge in Bakichhara area under Kuhlalong union collapsed on Wednesday evening when a sand-laden truck was crossing it, said Sanu Prue Marma, chairman of the union parishad.

All modes of transport on the Bandarban-Rangamati route have stopped operation since the incident.

The bridge was repaired just one

month ago as it was in a dilapidated condition for long, said Ashish Kumar Mukarjee, sub-divisional engineer of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Bandarban.

"We have already started our work again following the collapse of the bridge but the repair is not a permanent solution," he said.

Twenty Bailey bridges out of 109 in the district are in dilapidated state which became risky for long time and it becomes urgent to repair the risky bridges permanently," the engineer added.

The RHD authorities hoisted red flags on both ends of the collapsed bridge as a warning signal, asking people and drivers of vehicles not to use the bridge.

## 3 JMB men held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested three JMB operatives from their houses in Ullapara upazila of Sirajganj early yesterday.

The DB police said they arrested the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives while they were making preparation to go to 'jihad'. Police also seized jihadi books from their possession.

The arrestees are Md Israfil, 24, son of late Abu Bakar of village Chaksha, Md Ruhul Amin, 32, of Anwar Hossain of village Char Mohonpur Pashchimpara and Md Almas Hossain, 30, son of Parabat Ali of village Char Mohonpur Uttarpara of the upazila.

The arrestees have admitted their involvement with the JMB, police said, adding that of them, Israfil is a tailor and two others are shopkeepers.

"We have information that some people are regrouping JMB operatives and recruiting new members," said Md Waheduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj DB police.

The arrestees were produced before the Sirajganj Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in the afternoon seeking seven days' remand but the hearing on remand, however, was not held, the OC added.



A worker weaves cloth at a handloom factory in Shahzadpur upazila under Sirajganj district.

PHOTO: STAR

# Weavers in distress due to poor eid-sale

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Weavers of Pabna and Sirajganj districts are distressed due to the poor sale of handloom cloth ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, although they have bumper sale during both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha every year.

"More than five crore handloom clothes, including sari and lungi, were produced here in the four lakh looms in 10 upazilas of the two districts during Eid-ul-Fitr, but the recent poor sale of handloom clothes has disappointed weavers of both districts," said Md Haidar Ali, vice-president of Bangladesh Handloom and Power Loom Owners' Association.

At least 70 to 75 percent of the total

demand of handloom clothes is met by the two districts, so the weavers expected bumper sale round the year. But they are in trouble now due to the poor sale of handloom products, said Haidar, also president of Sirajganj district unit of the Association.

Jalal Sarkar, 45, of Dogasi Kulunia village under Pabna Sadar upazila, made two saris a day before Eid-ul-Fitr, but now he is making only five to six saris a week, and earning around Tk 1.5 thousand a week.

Like him, weavers of Shahzadpur, Ullahpara, Chowhali (Enayetpur), Kazipur, Belkuchi and Sirajganj Sadar upazilas of Sirajganj, and Bera, Santhia, Sujannagar and Pabna Sadar upazilas of Pabna, face similar trouble

as the good Eid-ul-Fitr sale made them happy, but now the poor sale is disheartening them.

Weavers were surprised by the huge sale of handloom clothes during the last three weeks before Eid-ul-Fitr. The sale of clothes on haat day in Shahzadpur was more than Tk 1 hundred crore, but now it is below Tk 50 crore, Haidar said.

"The handloom clothes of Pabna and Sirajganj are sold everywhere in the country. People are buying sacrificial animals, so the trading of handloom clothes has decreased," said Md Badsha Mia, leading weaver of Pabna and also a member of the Association.



Road communications between Bandarban and Rangamati remain snapped following the collapse of a Bailey bridge in Sadar upazila of Bandarban on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR