

# Doping gangs target cattle traders

Doping gangs and armed robbers have become active targeting cattle traders in different parts of the southwestern region of the country ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Doping gangs robbed around Tk 70 lakh from twelve cattle sellers using sedatives to make them unconscious in five incidents in the region during the last four days. Of the incidents, one occurred in Rajbari and another in Kushtia.

Police said four cattle traders of Meherpur were robbed of Tk 6 lakh on Saturday night while returning their homes on a night coach in Mujibnagar upazila from Dhaka after selling their cattle. They were found unconscious in their seats when the bus reached Mujibnagar on Sunday morning, police added.

The traders went to Gabtoli Bazar in Dhaka on Thursday to sell their cattle.

Bus supervisor Tushar Hossain said they found the four unconscious when the vehicle reached Kedarganj Bazar of Mujibnagar. He said they informed the matter to police who sent the victims to Mujibnagar Upazila Health Complex. Doctors at the hospital said sedatives were mixed with their food.

Fifteen cattle sellers were robbed of Tk 30 lakh and their belonging on Sunday night by a gang of around 30 masked criminals while returning homes to Phulbaria village in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia on Sunday night after selling cattle at Baniapara Bazar under Kushtia Sadar upazila. The robbery was committed in Koimara area on Bheramara-Mirpur road at about 11:30pm.

Rashiduzzaman, a cattle farmer of Chourangi under Kumarkhali upazila of Kushtia, said the sellers feel insecure after they sell the cattle and get the money.

Police said incidents of doping and robbery increase ahead of any festival like Eid. The miscreants commit the crimes mostly in buses, shopping centres, launch terminals, railway stations and branches of commercial banks, police added.

Members of the gang pose as hawkers and sell food items, sugarcane juice, lemonade and coconut water mixed with sedatives, police said. Some posing as passengers offer bus passengers foods mixed with sedatives, police said, adding that the miscreants rob the passengers when they become unconscious after taking the food or juice.

Meherpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Anisur Rahman said he talked to the victims and investigation was going on if any local gangs were involved with the crimes.

All police stations and outposts have been asked to keep special vigils on cattle markets.

*Members of the doping gangs pose as hawkers and sell food items, sugarcane juice, lemonade and coconut water mixed with sedatives to rob the bus passengers.*



Amid erosion by the Sugandha River during the last few days, a portion of the guide wall and protection embankment collapsed, posing threat to Bir Shreshtha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bridge on Dhaka-Barisal highway at Doarika in Babuganj upazila of Barisal. Inset, the mosque of Rasheda-Mosharrif Academy Complex on the riverbank collapsed due to erosion on Sunday night.

PHOTO: STAR

# River erosion threatens Jahangir bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Erosion by Sugandha River is increasing in the district, endangering an important bridge and threatening to cut-off road communication between the southern region and other parts of the country.

Locals allege that the situation is getting worse due to lack of coordination between Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and Water Development Board (WDB), who are trying to transfer responsibility of erosion prevention to each others' shoulders.

The Rasheda-Mosharrif Academy ground and a mosque on the river bank were washed away within a few hours on Sunday.

Bir Shreshtha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bridge (BSCMJB) in Babuganj upazila of the district is also under threat. A large portion of the guide wall and bridge protection embankment has gone into the river within the last few days, endangering the bridge and the highway connecting the southern region with other parts of the country.

Locals said the river will soon devour BSCMJB, Rasheda-Mosharrif Academy, a mosque, 30 residential and eight commercial houses, and around 100 acres of cropland at Mohishadi village if immediate steps to stop erosion are not taken.

Vehicles ply the bridge approach road amid risk of acci-

dent as it (road) has been damaged at different points due to the impact of the river.

Though properties worth cores of taka are being destroyed every year, the authorities concerned have not yet taken necessary steps to save the area from erosion.

A sustainable master plan is needed to prevent erosion. Dumping of sand bags and geobags into the river are not the proper steps for that, said Advocate Sheikh Md Tipu Sultan, lawmaker of Worker's Party.

Executive engineer of RHD, Barisal, Shah Muhammad Shams Mokaddas said RHD can only repair the damaged roads and highways and prepare diversion roads, and WDB is responsible for

not taking steps to check river erosion.

However, they have called a tender for repairing the roads after allocation of Tk 2 crore, and requested WDB to make a plan to prevent the erosion, he added.

It is the duty of RHD to protect the bridge and road from damage. We have not received any request from RHD for saving the highway and the bridge, said Ramzan Ali Sardar, chief engineer of WDB Barisal region.

A master plan to check erosion by the Sugandha was submitted to the water resources ministry. Necessary steps will be taken to stop river erosion after allocation of funds, he added.

## Madrasa teacher serves 16 years with fake certificate!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A madrasa teacher of Dinajpur was suspended yesterday 16 years after getting his job by submitting 'fake' academic certificate.

He is Md Aminul Islam, 44, an agriculture teacher of Dakkhin Sukdebpur Darun Nazat Dakhil Madrasa in Chirirbandar upazila.

Madrasa Superintendent Moyen Uddin Shah issued the suspension letter.

The authorities said Aminul joined the madrasa as a teacher in 2000 placing his master certificate of Bangladesh Open University.

A probe committee was formed to investigate into the allegation, said Upazila Secondary Education Officer Monjurul Haque.

Contacted, Aminul Islam refuted the allegation.

## 100 sued for grabbing market

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least 100 shopkeepers were sued on Wednesday by the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Dhunat for grabbing government marketplace.

UNO Mohammad Ibrahim lodged the case in a court here.

The UNO office and locals said the marketplace, situated on 1.39 acres of land in Goshabari haat in Goshabari union under Dhunat upazila of the district, was leased by local trader Mahbub Hossain in 2004, who later sub-leased it to Rasheduzzaman Ujjal, a former chairman of the union.

Ujjal erected 130 brick-built shops in the marketplace without having any permission of the concerned authorities. He later handed over ownership of the shops to 100 people of the area for Tk 2 lakh per shop.

## STALKER'S BRUTALITY

# Zakia fighting for life in Rangpur hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Brutally stabbed by a rejected stalker on Wednesday, eighth grader Zakia Sultana, 14, is fighting for life at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The victim, earlier admitted to Bochaganj Upazila Health Complex in Dinajpur, was sent to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, and then to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

"We have referred Zakia to the orthopaedic hospital at Shyamoli in the capital as her condition is critical. Her right hand may require amputation. Never before have I seen such serious stab injuries," said Dr Shariful Islam, consultant of surgery at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

In the face of threat by the alleged attacker, Ibrahim Ali, 21, of Sugar Millpara in Bochaganj municipality, Zakia, a student of Setabganj Ideal Academy in Bochaganj, and resident of Labour Linepara in the municipality, earlier stopped going to school, said family members.

Zakia's father Jamshed Ali is a jawan of Border Guard Bangladesh, now working in Satkhira.

Teachers and students of Setabganj Ideal Academy besieged the office of Bochaganj upazila nirbahi officer (UNO)

yesterday, demanding capital punishment of Ibrahim Ali who entered Zakia's house and stabbed her indiscriminately on Wednesday morning.

They also demanded trial of the accused under the Speedy Trial Tribunal.

The students and teachers holding placards stayed in front of the office of UNO Rabiul Hasan for about an hour to press for the demand.

They also demanded creating a safe environment so students can go to school safely. Later, they handed over a memorandum to the UNO in this regard.

The agitating students left the spot around 4:30pm following an assurance by the UNO of taking steps to meet the demand.

Police have arrested Ibrahim in connection with the incident on Wednesday noon, said Habibul Haq Prodhan, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bochaganj Police Station.

On December 25 last year, the victim's father filed a general diary (GD) with Bochaganj Police Station after receiving a death threat to Zakia from Ibrahim, family members said, adding that earlier they rejected stalker Ibrahim's marriage proposal to Zakia.

As police remained inactive in spite of filing GD Zakia stopped attending classes.

## Intercity train service from Panchagarh demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Citizen's rights activists brought out a procession from the District Bar Library in the town on Thursday demanding immediate intercity train service between Dhaka and Panchagarh.

Under the banner of Panchagarh Nagorik Committee local elites from different sectors submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner after the procession for handing over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. In the memorandum, they requested the PM to take steps to start the long-awaited intercity train service.

The procession followed a discussion where the speakers said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction of 150-kilometre broad-gauge line from Panchagarh to Parbotipur on January 30, 2013 for faster and safer journey.

The PM also declared in a public meeting held at Panchagarh Sugar Mills ground on the day that the intercity train service would start plying from Panchagarh just after completion of the track.

The Railway Department completed the work, costing Tk 982 crore, in the first quarter of the current year, but it is yet to take initiative to start intercity train service from Panchagarh.

Rather, the department inaugurated the newly-built broad gauge lines on September 2 in Dinajpur, which has frustrated the people of Panchagarh and Thakurgaon.

The speakers said intercity train service from Panchagarh and Thakurgaon to Dhaka is a long awaited demand of the people of the districts.



The five-kilometre road from Pukurijana to Mankisundar in Rajapur upazila under Jhalakathi district remains in an awful state for years, much to the nuisance for commuters. The photo was taken from Pukurijana a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

## PUKURIJANA-MANKISUNDAR ROAD Villagers suffer as road in awful state for years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

People of eight villages in Rajapur upazila of the district are suffering immensely as the Pukurijana-Bashtola-Mankisundar connecting road remains in a dilapidated condition for years.

The five-kilometre road connecting eight villages with the upazila headquarters has become awfully dilapidated, causing an untold suffering to thousands of locals.

Constructed in 2002, the road has never been renovated in more than a decade, a number of locals claimed. As a result most part of the muddy road is full of potholes, they added.

Due to its dilapidated condition rickshaw passengers and bicycle riders often get stuck when vehicle wheels fall into the holes, madrasa superintendent Mahbubur Rahman said.

A large number of culverts and bridges on the road can hardly be used by the vehicles as the approach road is low and becomes narrower, several Shitalpati (cold mat) makers at Napiterhat village said.

The farmer, day labourers and school going kids of Pukurijana, Mankisundar, Napiterhat, Mathbari, Daharshankar, Indrapasa Bashtola and Badurtola villages are the worst sufferers.

Due to the potholes, critical patients, especially elderly people and expectant mothers, face serious trouble to go to the local health complex.

Kamal Sikdar, chairman of Mathbari Union Parishad, said he has already contacted the authorities concerned to reconstruct the road as soon as possible.

Upazila Engineer Lutfar Rahman of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) said the reconstruction work will resume soon.

## Stepmother, father to die for killing 7-year-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Rangpur court yesterday sentenced a man and his wife to death for killing his seven-year-old daughter in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur in 2007.

The convicts are Abu Taher, 41, and his second wife Laboni Begum, 30, of Boro Falia village.

According to the prosecution, Taher and Laboni, who got married in 2007, strangled the girl in December 6 in the same year.

Locals caught Taher and handed over to police while Laboni fled. Later, Taher got bail and went into hiding.



Teachers and students of Setabganj Ideal Academy in Bochaganj upazila of Dinajpur yesterday submitted a memorandum to upazila nirbahi officer demanding capital punishment of attacker Ibrahim Ali.

PHOTO: STAR