

Madrasa girl raped: None arrested yet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The youth accused of raping a female madrasa student in Bhaluka upazila on Thursday has not been arrested yet.

The girl, 12, is a Class VII student at a madrasa in Hobirbari Paschimpara area in the upazila.

The victim's father lodged a case with Bhaluka Police Station on Sunday.

Locals said the victim was returning home after watching television at a neighbour's house when college student Tushar, 19, son of Mofazzal Hossain of the area, forcibly took the girl to his house and raped her.

Hearing the screams, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the girl, but Tushar, however, managed to flee the scene.



An artisan makes the idol of a deity at a Durga temple of Saptana village in Lalmonirhat district as preparations are on to celebrate Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bangali Hindus, early next month. PHOTO: STAR

'Abductor' dies in Rangpur gunfight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An alleged abductor was killed in a gunfight with policemen in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur early hours yesterday, said police.

The deceased was identified as Humayun Kabir, 27, son of Abdus Sattar of Dhefulia village under Barisal Sadar upazila.

A police team arrested five people including Humayun Kabir from Chandipur village on charge of abducting a trader on Monday evening, said Rezaul Karim, officer in charge (OC) of Pirganj Police Station in Rangpur.

"Later police went to Chandipur village taking Humayun with them to recover arms as per his statement.

"As police arrived there, Humayun's cohorts snatched him away, firing several gunshots. Police also fired back, leaving Humayun dead on the spot.

"Nazim Uddin, assistant sub inspector, Mizu Mia and Abdul Motin, constables of Pirganj Police Station, were also injured during the incident. They were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

"Police recovered two sharp weapons, a one-shooter gun and two bullets.

Humayun's body was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy," the OC said.

Police said Humayun Kabir and his four accomplices abducted Hafizur Rahman, a jute trader of Pirganj upazila, with Tk 13 lakh on Monday afternoon from Pirganj town.

Later locals of Chandipur area of the upazila caught the gang with a microbus from Shalti Gopalganj village under Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur on Monday evening. Abducted Hafizur was also rescued there.

"Being informed, police arrived there and arrested the five robbers with Tk 13 lakh," police said.

Preparation on for Durga Puja Three Gaibandha roads in sorry state

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Hindus in different districts in the country are buzzing with excitement as sculptors give last minute touches to statues of Durga in preparation for the five-day Sharodiya Utsab.

Durga Puja, the biggest festival of the Hindu community, will begin on October 7.

In Jhenidah, sculptors are busy putting the final touches to the idols in six upazilas of the district. The biggest festival for Hindus will be held in around 350 temples in the district.

The sculptors are earning Tk 30 thousand to Tk 2 lakh per temple.

Gopal Paul said he has been running this business after the death of his father. He earns a lot ahead of Durga Puja. He has completed 60 per cent of his work and expects to finish it in time.

Secretary of Kaliganj unit of Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad Puja Udjapan Committee said the priests are very worried due to the killings of some priests a few months back. If tight security is provided, the priests will go to the temples, he added.

Assistant Superintendent of Police in Jhenidah Ajbahar Ali Sheikh said security measures have been taken in each temple. A team of policemen along with ansars will be deployed at the temples during the puja.

Five upazilas in Lalmonirhat are humming with preparatory activities for celebrating the upcoming five-day Durga Puja, reports our correspondent.

The artisans are having a busy time now making clay images of Goddess Durga.

Artisan Narayan Chandra Roy,

46, of Saptana village under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said his four-member team was making statues for 19 temples in the district.

"A team of five to seven people needs seven to eight days to make a big statue, and five to six days for smaller images," said artisan Narayan Chandra Roy.

"Our charge varies from Tk 20,000 to Tk 35,000, excluding the supply of materials and other expenses," he added.

A total of 398 puja mandaps are being set up in the district this year, said district Puja Udjapan Parishad President Pradip Kumar Roy.

The best decorated mandaps and the best artisans will be awarded as in previous years, he added.

"Members of the Puja Udjapan Parishad will monitor all the mandaps to ensure that the festival is celebrated

peacefully," said Gopal Chandra Roy, general secretary of Lalmonirhat District Puja Udjapan Parishad.

Special security measures, uninterrupted electricity supply and traffic management would be ensured, said Superintendent of Police in Lakmonirhat SM Rashidul Haque.

Our correspondent in Barisal reports that sculptors are busy making statues of Durga in the district as Durga Puja draws nearer.

At least 500 statues of Durga will be made in the district this year, of which 35 will be in the city, Barisal City Puja Committee sources said.

"There were around 500 sculptors in Barisal, but the new generation have left their inherited profession due to lack of support. Now they are facing hardship," said Rakhal Chandra Dey, president of the Barisal District Puja Udjapan Parishad.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Three roads in Saghata upazila of the district have become too risky for vehicular movement due to lack of proper renovation.

The roads are bumpy, as huge potholes, cracks and ditches developed at different points. Due to this, a 10-minute journey takes an hour. Road accidents have become an everyday affair.

Bonarpara-Mohimaganj, Bonarpara-Bharatkhal and Bati-Daldalia roads have seen no major renovation since their construction 10 years back.

Despite repeated pleas, the authorities are yet to take any major initiative to repair the damaged roads, alleged locals.

At Bonarpara-Mohimaganj road, many portions have collapsed, creating ditches and potholes. Bitumen carpeting on the road scaled off due to lack of

proper repairing. Reckless driving of heavy loaded vehicles on the road turns it bumpy.

Due to damage to the roadside, Bonarpara-Bharatkhal route has become narrow, hampering movement of heavy loaded trucks and tractors. A large portion of the road from college turning point to fire service has developed potholes and large ditches.

Besides, Bati-Daldalia road is in a very bad shape, disrupting movement of all modes of transport, even three-wheelers. During monsoon, the situation turns worse, as rainwater remains stagnant in the potholes and ditches, causing road mishaps.

Contacted, Shabiul Islam, engineer of Saghata Upazila Parishad, said renovation work of the roads is going on, but fund constraint often hampers it.

He, however, said it will take time to improve road communication.

Golam Shaheed Ranju, chairman of the upazila parishad, said local lawmaker Fazley Rabbi Mia has already assured that renovation of the roads will be done.

Homes for war heroes

28 poor FF families get sweet abode

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Families of 28 underprivileged freedom fighters in the district are happy to have decent home, thanks to the government's initiative for ensuring residential facilities for the heroic sons and their successors.

Of the two-bedroom houses titled "Birimbash" (home for the heroes) ten are in Sailkupa, five in Jhenidah Sadar and Moheshpur each, four in Kaliganj, three in Harinakundu and one in Kotchandpur upazila.

"It gives me immense joy that the government has provided a shelter for me and my family, although a long time after the Liberation War," said freedom fighter Dukhi Mondol of Trilochonpur village under Kaliganj upazila.

Shahera Banu of at Royera village in the same upazila said she with her two small children faced a hard time after her husband freedom fighter Wazed Ali Dudu Mia died a few years ago.

"We were living in an abandoned store of the local agriculture extension

office. At last we have got a house on our own land. I am grateful to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her commitment for the freedom fighters' families."

Showing the house, Shahera Banu said it contains two bedrooms, a dining space, kitchen, toilet and a cowshed, although electricity facility is lacking.

"Due to the noble initiative taken by the government, the families of underprivileged freedom fighters have got nice home to live in," said Helal Uddin Sarkar, commander of Kaliganj upazila unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

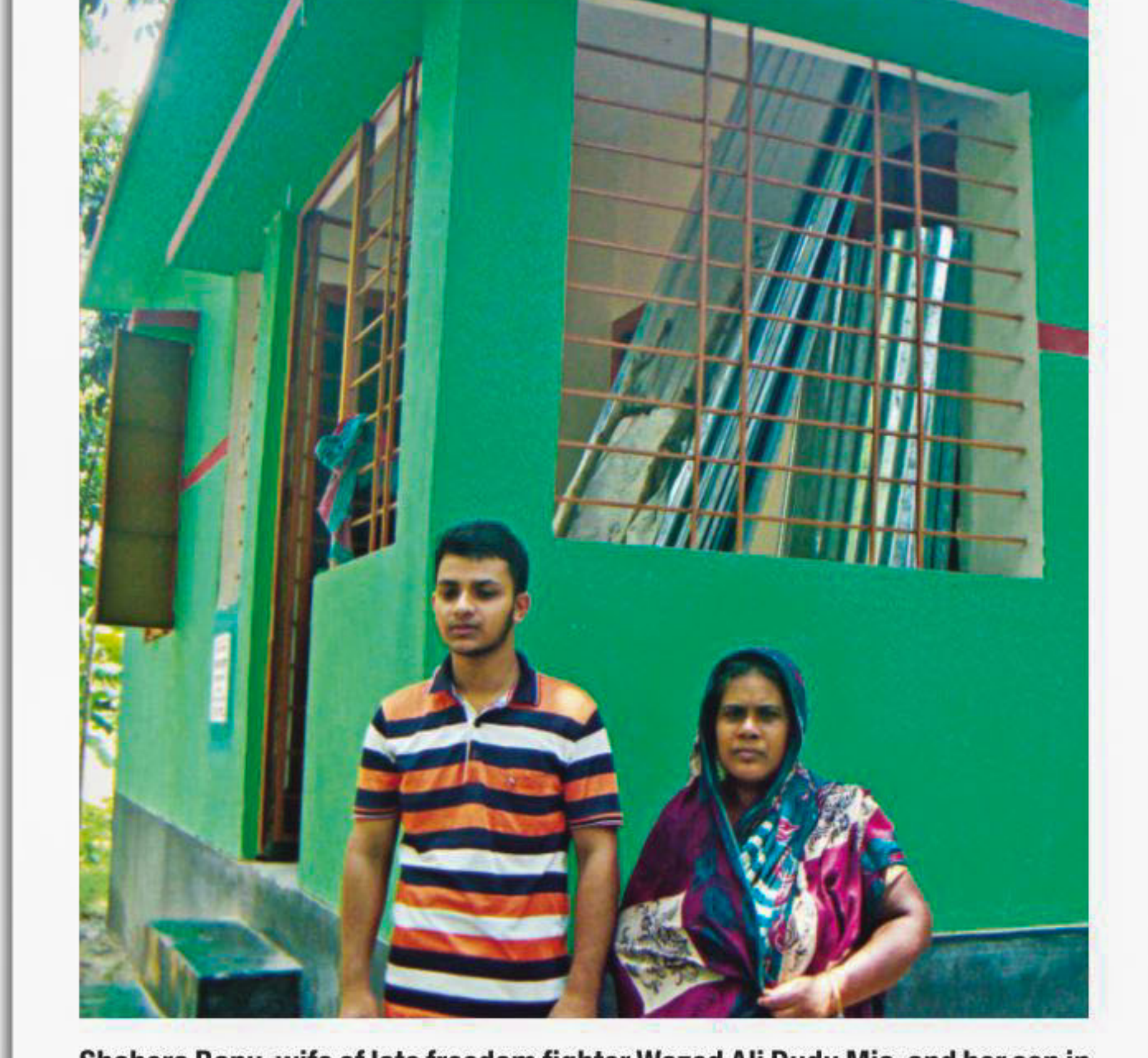
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) under a project titled 'Construction of Housing for Landless and Underprivileged Freedom Fighters' built the houses.

"We have constructed the 28 houses under the project in last three years.

The government spent a total of Tk 2.61 crore for the purpose," said Abdul Malek, executive engineer of LGED in Jhenidah.



The Rangamati hanging bridge over Kaptai Lake has been submerged due to rising water level, prompting the authorities to suspend movement on it from Sunday. PHOTO: STAR



Shahera Banu, wife of late freedom fighter Wazed Ali Dudu Mia, and her son in front of their newly built house, arranged by the government, at Royera village in Sailkupa upazila under Jhenidah district. PHOTO: STAR

Missing youth still traceless in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A youth of Sherpur municipality in Bogra, who went missing seven days ago, still remains traceless.

The victim is Liton Mohanto, 20, son of Montu Mohanto of Uttar Shahapara in the municipality.

Family members said Liton went missing from near their residence on September 11.

Later, a general diary was filed with Sherpur Police Station in this connection.

Mizanur Rahman, inspector of the police station, said they are raiding different areas to rescue the youth.

Local ward councillor Gobindha Bagchi said they are also trying their best to rescue Liton.

Rain submerges hanging bridge

Movement of people suspended

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The hanging bridge over Kaptai Lake in Rangamati has been inundated with rise of water level in the lake, compelling the authorities to suspend movement of people on the bridge from Sunday evening.

Heavy downpour upstream led to the rise in water level. The bridge goes under water during the rainy season every year.

Around 1,200 people of about 175 families living on Dewanpara Island in Kaptai Lake near the bridge are stranded as it is their only link with the mainland. In the absence of water transport, they cannot even go to the market.

"We have managed an engine boat for daily movement, but our neighbours are facing difficulties for want of water vessels," said Mongol Dhan Chakma, 35, a resident of Dewanpara village.

Considering public safety, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC's) Rangamati office and local administration suspended movement over the bridge from Sunday.

"BPC authorities informed Rangamati Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shamsul Arefin and Rangmati Hill District Council Chairman Brisho Ketu Chakma about the matter. The DC instructed us to suspend public movement on the bridge," said Alok Bikash Chakma, manager of Rangamati BPC.

The bridge will reopen after renovation of the bridge and decrease in water level, he added.

BPC earns over Tk 5 lakh during and after Eid holidays every year, but there will be a loss this season due to the inundation of the bridge, a source in BPC said.

Female MP's son arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police arrested Rashed Sarwar Amin alias Rumon, youngest son of lawmaker Refat Amin, in two extortion cases and produced him before a Satkhira court on Monday seeking a five-day remand.

The court fixed September 25 for the next hearing of the cases as the judge of the court is on leave.

Rumon's mother Refat Amin is a lawmaker in a reserved seat for women.

On September 12, Zulfikar Ali alias Ujjal, former vice-president of the district unit of Jubo League, filed a case against Rumon for physically assaulting him and demanding illegal toll, Officer-in-Charge Feroz Hossain Molla of Sadar Police Station said.

Meanwhile, on August 24, shrimp trader Sirajul Islam filed a case against Rumon, 32, for demanding illegal toll.

Police arrested Rumon from Chowrangi intersection of the town on Sunday in connection with the two cases filed against him, the OC added.

SI Rafiqul Islam and SI Emdad Hossain, also the investigation officers of the two cases, placed Rumon before the Judicial Magistrate's Court seeking a five-day remand to interrogate him.