

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court yesterday granted five-day remand for two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants in connection with the gun attack on the president of Iskcon temple committee in Chirirbandar upazila of the district on November 30 last year.

They are Shariful Islam, alias Danish, 28, and Mosabberul Islam, 22.

Judge of the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court Krishna Komol Roy granted the remand following a prayer for seven days by the police.

Police said some unidentified criminals shot Dhirendranath Roy, a homeopathy doctor, also president of Chirirbandar upazila Iskcon temple in Ranirbandar area under the upazila, on November 30 last year while he was returning home from his shop.

Police have so far arrested six people in connection with the incident.

Hilsa festival kicks off

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

The 8th hilsa festival began in Chandpur town yesterday.

Chandpur municipality Mayor Nasir Uddin Ahmed inaugurated the weeklong festival in the Shilpakala Academy premises.

Organised by 'Chaturanga Sangskritik Sangathan', the festival began with a colourful procession led by Chandpur Superintendent of Police Shamsunnahar that paraded through different roads of the district headquarters.

Chandpur Deputy Commissioner Abdus Sabur Mondal was present as the chief guest at the festival.

Eleven noted personalities will be accorded a reception for their contribution to different fields.



Indigenous women reap paddy grown on a hill in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila. The traditional cultivation on slopes of hills, known as jhum cultivation, serves as means of subsistence for many indigenous people in Chittagong Hill Tracts region for centuries.

PHOTO: STAR

Rawhide prices fall in Gaibandha

Traders to count loss

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Traders of the district are suffering loss due to sharp fall in prices of rawhide in Palashbari hide market after Eid-ul-Azha.

Kalibari market in Palashbari upazila is the largest trading place of rawhide in the northern region. Sellers and buyers from distant areas come here for trading in hides, which reaches the peak after Eid-ul-Azha.

The rawhide market this year has been very dull compared to last year due to the sharp fall in prices.

The seasonal traders who collected skins of sacrificial animals from door to door with the hope of getting profit sustained loss due to the unusually low price of hides in the market.

They procured cow skin for Tk 1,200 to Tk 1,400 per piece and goat skin for Tk 50 to Tk 60. Hide traders are, however, purchasing cow skin for Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 per piece and goat skin for Tk 30 to Tk 35.

Solaiman Mia, a seasonal hide trader of

Ghoraghat upazila, said he procured 28 cowhides for Tk 22,500, but was compelled to sell those to wholesale traders for Tk 14,000.

Josizol Mia of Katlamari village under Fulchhari upazila said he bought 15 cowhides for Tk 1,800, but had to sell them to a trader for Tk 1,000.

The hide market in Palashbari is still dull as tannery owners are yet to start procuring hides. Warehouse owners are now purchasing hides from middlemen at low prices and stockpiling them so they can sell them when market price rises, said Altaf Hossain Mollah, president of Palashbari Hide Traders' Association.

Due to the low price, hides are being smuggled out of the country, Altaf added.

This year we had a target of trading over one lakh pieces of hides in Palashbari market, but the dull market discouraged buyers of other districts to purchase hides here, Altaf said.

Every year, large quantities of animal hides would be brought here from distant places just

for getting fair price. Rawhide traders of Bogra, Joypurhat, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Thakurgoan, Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Kurigram depended on Palashbari hide market for a good profit, but this year the market has disappointed them, said Shamim Sardar, hide trader of Palashbari.

Tanneries and companies manufacturing leather products will procure huge quantities of hides in due course. Small traders will be ruined if the market price remains static, said Abdul Hannan, another trader of Palashbari.

The administration has deployed mobile teams to avert any untoward incident in the hide market and taken adequate measures for the security of sellers and buyers, said Tofazzal Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Palashbari.

All security measures have been taken to stop smuggling of rawhide from Palashbari market, said Ashraf Islam, Superintendent of police in Gaibandha.

Swelling Monu poses threat as dykes risky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

People of 19 villages of Rajnagar, Kulaura and Sadar upazilas of the district are passing their days amid fear of losing homesteads due to erosion by the Monu River at different points during the last couple of days.

Embankments at five points collapsed a few days ago and if immediate steps are not taken to repair the damaged parts, vast areas would be devoured by the river, said locals, blaming the authorities concerned for reluctance to solve the serious problem.

During recent visits, this correspondent found people of Kunagaon, Malikuna, Doni-Ashrakapon, Bagharhat, Kakirchak, Uzirpur and Premnagar villages under Rajnagar, Belertol, Kolirkona, Tilagaon, Asroygram, Chaksalon, Tajpur, Khondokar gram, Miarpura and Nischintopur under Kulaura, and Noyarhat, Chanpur and Borohat village under Sadar upazila facing threat of erosion as the river was flowing just below the danger level near the embankments.

"We are in panic as around 30 houses here were washed away due to embankment collapse in different times," said Dulal Miah, a resident of Kunagaon village.

"We often pass sleepless nights, guarding the embankment by turns," said Jalal Ahmed, 45, of the same village.

"Farmers have to count losses as their boro paddy and vegetables in vast areas have been flooded. We earlier urged the authorities concerned to repair the risky points of the flood control embankments but to no effect," said Ashkir Miah, chairman of Rajnagar upazila parishad.

Contacted, Md Fajir Rob, executive engineer of Moulvibazar Water Development Board, said there is no budget to repair the risky spots of embankments immediately.

Madhabkunda now less attractive to tourists

Visiting the waterfall has become risky due to cracks in hill, park loses beauty for negligence

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Madhabkunda waterfall, a most favourite destination for the tourists especially during the Eid holidays, has become risky and less attractive due to various reasons.

Tourists are no longer allowed at the main spot of the waterfall in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar as cracks developed following landslides on May 17 and 18 and June 14 this year.

Lack of renovation of the roads and steps to the waterfall adds to the risk for the visitors.

The tourist spot is also losing natural beauty due to negligence of the authorities concerned.

In 2001, an eco-park was established in a 500-acre area with a view to conserving biodiversity in the area around the waterfall.

The park is adorned with segun, garjan, chapalish and many other species of trees as well as wildlife and there are many hillocks around.

Forest department took the responsibility from the beginning to maintain the beauty of the park while Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has set up picnic spots, restau-

rants and parking facilities near it.

During a visit to the area a few days ago, it was found that the park has lost much of its greenery. The benches, where the tourists sit for relax, are covered with dirty things. Many electric lights are lying inoperative.

The number of tourists has decreased recently, said Saidul Ahmed, a security guard of Madhabkunda waterfall.

"We have come here to enjoy natural beauty, but we feel scared after hearing about long cracks that appeared at the hill of the waterfall," said Monirul Islam, 35, a visitor from Dhaka.

"I am upset to see the mismanagement here," said Shamsuddoha, a student coming from Chittagong.

Md Kamrul Mujahid, range officer (additional) of Barlekha range office, said, "I have sent letters to the leaseholders to keep the park clean along with their other works." "They have violated the terms of agreement," he added.

A monitoring cell should be formed to keep the park clean, said ASM Abdullah Mamun, upazila nirbahi officer of Barlekha.



Madhabkunda waterfall, a famous tourist spot in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar, now gives a deserted look as authorities suspended allowing visitors there due to the risk following development of cracks there in May and June.

PHOTO: STAR



New building of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

Bid to make hospital of quality

Patients happy as Mymensingh Medical College Hospital provides better services

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The authorities of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) are making patients and their attendants happy by delivering better service than before.

The number of patients coming to the 1000-bed hospital has increased due to better service, said a doctor.

To ensure best service, the hospital authorities led by its Director Brig Gen Md Nasir Uddin Ahamed started working hard since January this year.

While talking to this correspondent, some patients said they are now getting prescribed medicines from the hospital.

Besides, many necessary tests are being conducted at MMCH with low cost, they said.

The authorities are trying their best to ensure reaching of all medicines

allocated by government for the patients, said Dr Lakshmi Nayaran Majumder, assistant director of the hospital.

The medical representatives (MR) of different pharmaceutical companies are not allowed to enter the hospital anytime, he said, adding that now the hospital is totally free from them.

Senior staff nurse Murtuza Khatun said, "During my 18-year career, I have never seen such a better service to the patients at the hospital."

Day labourer Faresh Ali of Sherpur who came to attend his brother Abul Hossain, admitted to the hospital with pain in abdomen, said he bought no medicine from outside after operation of Abul.

We are seriously thinking of introducing one-stop service at the emergency department involving specialist doctors and modern medical equipment to categorise the patients for their required wards, said Dr

Majumder.

The total activities of the hospital are now under CCTV coverage to monitor the hospital staff whether they are rendering the expected service to the patients, he said.

Some 73 new staff have been recently appointed at the hospital through out-sourcing to help producing better services to the patients, he added.

Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association's Mymensingh unit, said, "We are rendering all-out support to the hospital authorities to make the hospital a model one in the country for quality services."

Appreciating the hard efforts of MMCH authorities, engineer Abul Kalam, secretary of Mymensingh Nagorik Andolon, said if necessary, they will render support for continuation of quality service at the hospital.

SNIPPETS

7 held while entering India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested seven people while they were trying to enter India illegally through Benapole border under Benapole Port Police Station on Wednesday night. The arrestees are Sima Biswas, 23, daughter of Ratan Das, Sadhucharan, 44, son of Mohanbashi Mallik, Gita Sarker, 45, wife of Durgacharan Sarker, and her grandson Raj Sarker, 5, Rakib Sheikh, 25, and his wife Sharifa Begum, 17, and Asha Khatun, 21, wife of Rasul Sheikh. They hail from different areas of Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Narail. Habildar Mahub Alam, in-charge of Benapole check-post BGB camp, said they raided the bordering area around 10:30pm and arrested the seven people while they were crossing the border without necessary documents.

Three get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Jessore court on Wednesday sentenced three people to life imprisonment for killing a man in 1997. The convicts are two cousins—Shahjahan Gain, 35, and Monajaat Gain, 45, of Sharsha upazila—and Younus Ali of Jhikargaccha upazila of Jessore. Judge Nitai Chandra Saha of Special Judge's Court delivered the verdict in presence of the convicts. The court acquitted another charge-sheeted accused Hamzer Ali as the charges brought against him could not be proved. According to the case statement, the convicts killed Ayub Ali of Chatkapota village over a previous enmity on October 23 in 1997.

Elderly man punched to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

An elderly man was punched to death over a disputed land near his house at Uttar Shingbhangra village in Islampur upazila. The deceased was Kubbat Ali Mandol, 70, of the village. Locals and family sources said cultivable lands of Kubbat and his neighbours Dulal Mandol, 50, and Ansar Mandol, 55, sons of late Joyanal Abedin, got levelled after floodwater receded this year. Kubbat and his wife Fatema Begum locked in an altercation with the two siblings over demarcation of the lands yesterday. At one stage of altercation, Dulal and Ansar punched on the chest of Kubbat, leaving him injured, said the victim's grandson Piyal Miah, 18, quoting his grandmother. The victim's wife took him to the house where he succumbed to his injuries.

Stalker arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police arrested a youth in a case for uploading a nude video of a schoolgirl on Facebook at Bonmorica village in Sherpur upazila yesterday. The arrestee is Abdul Kahelque, 22, son of Jamal Fakir of the village. Police said Khaleque along with his associates used to stalk sixth grader on her way to school. They took video of the girl while she was taking bath in pond and uploaded on the Facebook. After the incident, the victim's father filed a case, accusing three youths including Khaleque, said police.