

## 3 kidnapped in Bandarban

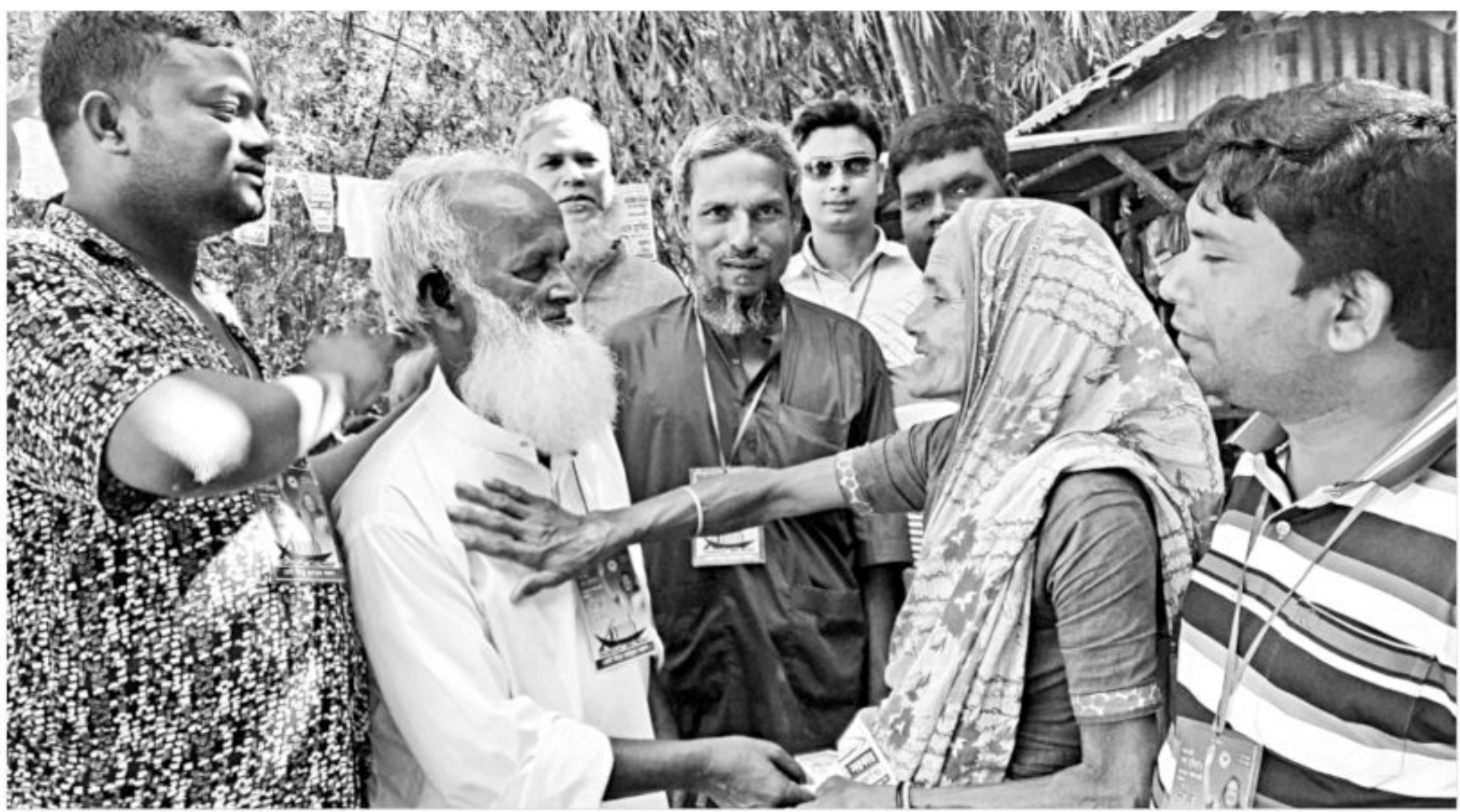
OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bandarban

Armed criminals abducted three night guards for ransom from a rubber garden in Nykkhongchhari upazila of the district early Sunday. The victims, Azizul Haque, 30, Abdus Shukur, 42, and Nurul Alam, 35, are residents of Betduri. Police said a gang picked up the trio from PHP Rubber Garden at gunpoint around 3:20am. Azizul's elder brother Abdul Hamid said after an hour of the abduction, the gang phoned his mother and demanded Tk 3 lakh ransom for her son's release.

## Patient falls from hospital balcony, dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Dinajpur

A patient at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital died after falling from a balcony of the hospital early yesterday. The deceased, Mahbubul Alam, 32, son Mohammad Ali of Nimtala area in Dinajpur municipality, was admitted to the hospital with a stomach infection on October 15. Amir Ali, acting director of hospital, said Mahbubul slipped from the edge of a balcony on the third-floor of the hospital building while he was walking its terrace, which do not have any safety fence.



Shahjahan Ali, Awami League nominated chairman candidate in Kulaghat union under Lalmonirhat Sadar, on a door to door campaign at former enclave Bhitarkuti, and right, a member candidate in a seat reserved for women woos voters at Thakurpara village in Kajoldighi Kaliaganj union in Boda upazila of Panchagarh on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Former enclave people taste voting right

Hectic campaign on ahead of October 31 UP polls in Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Campaign for union parishad (UP) elections is getting momentum in 16 unions under Panchagarh and Lalmonirhat districts ahead of the October 31 polls while enthusiasm of the newly included voters in former Indian enclaves (now part of Bangladesh territory) adds a new dimension to it.

The people of 36 former enclaves in eight unions under three upazilas of Panchagarh district are happy to get their right to vote for the first time through the UP elections.

The candidates with their supporters are conducting door to door campaign and making different pledges to develop the areas and improve living standard of people, especially those in former enclave areas.

During a visit on Saturday, our Thakurgaon correspondent Quamrul Islam Rubaiyat saw people engaged in lively discussions over the UP elections.

"I feel happy as I am going to cast my vote for the first time in life," said Jyotish Chandra Roy, 60, of Garati village (a former enclave) in Haribhasa union of Panchagarh Sadar.

Former enclave people Bijoy Barman and Sona Mia, who have become voters for the first time, are contesting for the post of UP member from Ward No 1 in Hafizabad union of Sadar upazila.

Of the 8,935 voters of 36 former enclaves in eight unions under Panchagarh, 1,025 people are in seven erstwhile enclaves in Hafizabad and Haribhasa unions in Sadar, 1,690 people in 23 enclaves in Moidandighi, Kajoldighi Kaliaganj, Barashashi and

Marea unions under Boda and 6,220 voters in six former enclaves in Chilahati and Teprikanj unions under Debiganj upazila, official sources said.

As many as 463 candidates including 39 for chairman posts, 326 for member posts and 98 for the posts of members reserved for women are contesting in the eight UPs.

District Election Officer Dewan Mohammad Sarwar Jahan said they are taking necessary measures to ensure a free, fair and credible UP election in the district.

In Lalmonirhat, electioneering in eight unions, including 59 former enclaves, gets momentum ahead of the October 31 polls in the areas of three upazilas under the district.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent S Dillip Roy saw candidates of these unions are moving door to door to woo voters.

Thirty-one chairmen candidates, 288 member candidates and 118 candidates for the reserved seats for women are contesting at Kulaghat union in Lalmonirhat Sadar, Gotamari of Hatibandha and Jongra, Patgram, Sreerampur, Burimari, Kuchlibari and Jagotber of Patgram upazila.

There are 59 former enclaves -- two in Kulaghat union under Lalmonirhat Sadar, two in Gotamari union under Hatibandha, and 55 in Jongra, Kuchlibari, Burimari, Sreerampur, Patgram, Jagotber and Bawra unions under Patgram upazila, district election office sources said.

Of the total 10,019 people living in these former enclaves, 3850 people have been listed as voters, they said.

Ataur Rahman, 42, a voter of former enclave Bhitarkuti at Kulaghat union in

Lalmonirhat Sadar, said, "Candidates are us for votes and giving promises for development in future. We are feeling happy as we will exercise our voting right for the first time on October 31."

"All the candidates have promises to me of giving widow or old age allowance card if they get elected," said Hafiza Bewa, 68, at former enclave Bhitarkuti of Kulaghat union.

Both Shahjahan Ali and Idris Ali, Awami League and BNP nominated chairman candidate for Kulaghat union in Lalmonirhat Sadar, expressed optimism about winning with the support of former enclave people.

District Election Officer Fazlul Karim said tight security measures will be taken in the eight unions during before, during and after the polls.

## In-laws' brutality for dowry

Housewife and her kid starve in confinement for five days

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A housewife and her infant daughter were confined to a locked room for five days without food by her husband and his mother at Khutamara village under Jaldhaka upazila of the district.

During the five days, the woman was allegedly made to starve while her kid lived on breast milk, which also dried up at one stage.

Dimla upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) rescued them yesterday after hearing of the matter from some local people.

The victim is Parvin Aktar, 20, daughter of Mahfuzar Rahman of the village.

Victim's mother Kobita Begum said her daughter was married to Rokonzazzaman, 28, son of Abdul Hye of the village in 2014, and they have a one-year-old daughter.

As per demand of bridegroom's family, Parvin's family gave Tk 2 lakh as dowry, along with a refrigerator, bed, a steel almira and a milking cow.

Parvin said, "A few days after the marriage, my husband started putting pressure on me to bring Tk 1 lakh from my father for doing business."

As she refused, Rokonzazzaman and his family members started torturing her, she added.

After the birth of their daughter, their torture increased further, which she bore silently for the sake of her daughter, Parvin said.

"At one time, my husband entered into a love affair with a girl of a neighbouring village to inflict mental

torture on me. His mother Monowara Begum supported him, though I objected against the illicit affair and vowed to resist it by any means," she said.

Five days ago, Rokonzazzaman and his mother confined Parvin and her daughter to a locked room, said locals.

"On that night, my husband went to Dhaka with his lover and started living there in a relative's rented house passing as a married couple. My confinement continued as my husband's mother feared that if I was freed I would file a case against my husband for marrying again without my consent," Parvin said.

Learning of the matter from some local youths, Jaldhaka UNO Rasedul Huq Prodhan directed the Khutamara Union Parishad (UP) chairman and village police to rescue them, but they failed.

The UNO along with police and UP officials went to the spot yesterday and found Parvin in confinement. He broke the lock and freed Parvin and her child. They looked for Rokonzazzaman's family members but they had fled.

"I rescued the housewife and her minor daughter, who were very weak, and sent them to Dimla Upazila Health Complex," the UNO said, adding that the culprits must be brought to book.

Officer-in-Charge (investigation) of Jaldhaka Police Station Mofiz uddin said the victim's family is preparing to file a complaint with the police station.



PHOTO: STAR

Parvin Aktar with her kid, under treatment at Jaldhaka Upazila Health Complex in Nilphamari, shows signs of trauma as her dowry greedy in-laws had kept them confined to a room without food for five days.

## College boy murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Tangail

A college boy was stabbed to death by a fellow student over a trifling matter in Kalihati upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased, Al-Amin, 17, son of Abdul Ali of Khaluabari village, was a student of Alauddin Siddique Degree College.

Police said Al-Amin had an altercation with his fellow Chand Mahmud, 18, son of Jahir Uddin of Joyair village, over a trifling matter on Sunday morning.

At one stage, Al-Amin and his friends vandalised Mahmud's motorcycle the same afternoon. Angered over the vandalism, Mahmud called Al-Amin out of his class around 11:30am, took him to the college playground and stabbed him indiscriminately with a machete, leaving him critically injured.

Locals rushed Al-Amin to Kalihati Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

## 11kV PDB transformer threat to pedestrians

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A transformer of Power Development Board (PDB) has been set up dangerously on the road instead of 10 feet above the ground as required by the rules, posing a threat of serious accident.

Locals said the 11kV (11,000 volt) transformer was set up at the crowded Chowrangi intersection in the district town when the previous one went out of order over one month ago, adding that the officials concerned seemed indifferent when the matter was brought to their notice several times.

The transformer on the road is connected to the main transmission line of the national grid with heavy metal wire attached to the eastern boundary wall of the Sadar Upazila Health Complex.

Thousands of people pass by the risky spot every day, and there are also five educational institutions nearby. Cars, trucks, buses, battery-run three-wheelers and rickshaw vans ply there to different directions all the time.

PDB has surrounded the transformer with a metallic net as a protective measure without ensuring safety as many people, especially children, try to touch the transformer through the net's wide gaps.

"There might be a fatal accident any time due to the high-voltage electricity and the combustible oil," said Dr Sirajul Islam, upazila health and family planning officer of Sadar Upazila Health Complex.

Monira Afroz and Tamanna Zerin, students at Nilphamari Girls' High School, said many students like them cross the risky area twice a day. "We feel scared whenever we go close to the transformer as the road is always crowded," said Laila Sultana, another student.

Hotel owner Abdul Hafiz said they felt afraid as the transformer emitted sparks whenever something touched it. Even short-circuits occur daily, which may become devastating any time.

Municipal Councillor Anisur Rahman said he had brought the matter to the notice of local PDB officials many times but they are yet to respond.

Executive Engineer of Nilphamari PDB Abu Sayed Sarker said they set up the transformer on the road temporarily as the damaged old one was sent to PDB workshop in Dinajpur for repairing.

"We expect to get the repaired transformer back very soon and then it will be set up on high poles in the proper way, replacing the old one on the road," Sarker added.

## Substandard cables flood Bogra markets

Eight electrocutions caused by short circuit, 870 fire incidents occurred in two years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Substandard cables, which are flooding the markets in Bogra, expose townspeople to the risk of electrocution, burns, property damage and even short circuit, thanks to authorities' ignorance of the matter.

At least eight people died from electrocution caused by short circuit in the district in the last two years, Senior Assistant Police Superintendent Gaziur Rahman said, adding that the damage caused by fire went up to Tk three crore during the period.

During a recent visit to some markets in the town, this correspondent found a section of unscrupulous traders making the substandard electrical accessory, which appears to be look-alike of major brands like BRB, Paradise, Super Shine, MQ, BBS, Acme, Aftab Imperial and Evana.

"With similar names and looks of the popular brands, people tend to get confused. Cheaper prices play a big role here," said Executive Engineer of Bogra Power Development Board (PDB) Dewan Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal.

However, Md Al-Amin Sarkar, manager of BRB Cables in Bogra, said there is no way to cheat the customers as the company recently offered 20 percent discount on the item.

Some dishonest cable traders of Khan market, Shahir Uddin market, BRTC market, Nodibangla market and other markets in the town continue cheating the buyers by selling old and used cables purchased from Chittagong, alleged Dinesh Roy, a customer of Railway market.

Refuting the allegation, Manik Ratan, cable trader of BRTC market, said they bought the cables from ships in the port city.

Inspector of Bogra Fire Service and Civil Defense Bazlur Rashid Titu said at least 870 fire incidents at business centres, markets, shops, houses, mills and factories occurred due to short circuit in the last two years.

Old and substandard cables can cause fires, said the PDB engineer.

Punitive action will be taken against those responsible for the offence after getting complaint in this regard, said the police official.

## Embezzlement of school fund alleged

S DILLIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Most of the Tk 3.24 crore allocated under School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) for 732 government primary schools in five upazilas of the district have been allegedly embezzled by the headmasters and managing committee presidents of the schools.

Purbo Amjhol Government Primary School in Amjhol village under Hatibandha upazila got money from the SLIP fund and the special fund for repairing the school, but no improvement work has been done.

Headmaster Akhtara Banu said, "It isn't true that I and the School Managing Committee (SMC) president embezzled the allocated fund."

SMC president Saidul Islam said repair work is going on.

However, students and guardians said, the school headmaster and the SMC president built only a veranda spending Tk 20-25 thousand in the last one week.

Similar picture of misusing the SLIP and special fund is found in all government primary schools, especially in 21 schools in Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas.

Several headmasters and SMC presidents alleged that secretary of Hatibandha upazila unit of Awami League Mahmudul Hasan Sohag controls the special government fund.

Sohag refuted the allegation and said the authorities of the schools get the fund through cheque from the ministry concerned. "Why and how can I embezzle the government fund? It is not true," he said.

District Primary Education Officer in the district Nobez Uddin Sarker said departmental action will be taken against any school authority found guilty of embezzlement.



An 11kV transformer set up at Chowrangi intersection in Nilphamari town poses risk of fatal accidents to pedestrians, thanks to the callousness of the authorities.

PHOTO: STAR