

ROW OVER URS IN NOAKHALI

# 3 shot, 22 others injured in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 25 people were injured in a fierce clash involving the followers of Sureswar Darbar, villagers and police at Haider Ali Munshi Bari in Laxmipur Sadar upazila yesterday.

Police fired 80 rounds of bullets to bring the situation under control and detained 10 people in this connection.

The injured including the officer-in-charge (OC) of Laxmipur Sadar Police Station, eight other policemen and a few villagers were admitted to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital and different private hospitals, police said.

Three of the injured were bullet-hit. Every year the followers of Sureswar Darbar observe the three-day Urs at Haider Ali Munshi Bari in Tumchar union under Sadar upazila, police and locals said.

The villagers alleged that dhol and other musical instruments are played and 'anti-social' activities take place in the name of Urs.

Around 10:00pm on Friday, a group of villagers attacked the Urs venue and went

into an orgy of destruction there.

The attackers also beat the on-duty policemen and vandalised a police vehicle there.

On information, Sadar Police Station OC Abdullah Al-Mamun along with additional police force reached the spot and tried to quell the situation.

At one stage, police opened fire to bring the situation under control.

In the clash involving the villagers, police and Sureswar Darbar followers, three villagers named Rakib Hossain, Yusuf and Rahid Al Zihad sustained bullet injuries.

The OC, eight other policemen including Shahjahan, Farid, Aslam and Zakir, and several locals were also injured in the fierce clash.

Later a large team of law enforcers including Rapid Action Battalion were deployed at the spot to bring the situation under control.

Laxmipur Superintendent ASM Mahtab Uddin said, "When the Sureswar followers were observing their programme, some miscreants attacked them and it led to the fierce clash that left eight policemen including the Sadar Police Station OC, and several people injured."

## Alleged rapist arrested in Jessore

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Police yesterday arrested Esrafil, one of the accused in the case for raping two female SSC examinees in Monirampur upazila of the district on February 12.

Tipped off, a police team conducted a raid in Monirampur and arrested the culprit, said Biplob Kumar Nath, officer in charge of Monirampur Police Station.

While returning home together after appearing at the SSC examinations, the two girls were allegedly raped by five youths on February 12.

The criminals also recorded the scene on a mobile and later aired it through Internet.

On Thursday, father of one of the victims filed a rape case accusing Esrafil, 17, Yakub, 20, Alamin, 18, Alamgir, 17, and Emon Sheikh, 20, of Monirampur.

Earlier, villagers, having seen the video footage that went viral, identified three alleged rapists and handed them over to police after a good beating.

The two victims gave statement before a court on Thursday, said investigation officer SM Shahadat Hossen, sub-inspector of Monirampur Police Station.

## 2 teachers assaulted by a student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police arrested a college student of Sonakhali School and College in Amtali upazila of Barguna yesterday on charge of assaulting two teachers of the institution.

The arrestee is Sohag Gazi, 18, an HSC examinee of the institution.

Quoting teachers of the institution, police said Sohag made indecent gestures towards the female students of the institution while the latter were attending assembly around 10:00am.

After noticing the indecent act, Mohammad Azizul Haque, an English teacher of the college section, asked Sohag not to do so. But Sohag ignored him and at one stage, he physically assaulted the teacher.

Seeing the matter, Zahidul Islam, assistant headmaster of the school section, went to the spot to rescue Azizul but Sohag attacked him too.

Later, teachers and staff of the institution caught Sohag from the spot and informed its managing committee members of the matter, who handed Sohag over to the police, said Fazlul Haque, vice-chairman of the committee.

Assistant Headmaster Zahidul Islam said they were making preparation to file a case in this connection.



The dilapidated house of renowned Bengali litterateur Kazi Kader Newaj at Mujdia village of Sreepur upazila in Magura.

PHOTO: STAR

# Poet's home on verge of ruin

The dilapidated building of Kazi Kader Newaj in Magura's Sreepur needs immediate repair

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

For a poet, a dilapidated building might well be a source of inspiration, but it does not make for a befitting commemoration. Sadly, the palatial memorial building of renowned Bengali litterateur Kazi Kader Newaj, in Mujdia village of Magura's Sreepur upazila, is in an advanced state of disrepair.

Newaj, who published several volumes of poetry in his lifetime, as well as novels, was born at his grandfather's house in India's Murshidabad on 15 January 1909. The English graduate who achieved a Master's degree from Calcutta University in 1929 also taught in

several high schools across North Bengal, retiring as the headmaster of Dinajpur Zila School in 1963. He died twenty years later.

The two-storied house that was his family home is nowadays on the verge of collapse. With ten rooms and several verandas, 25-inch thick walls and 30 pillars, the formidable building, originally set on a 200-decimal plot yet attracts tourists keen to see the many artistic designs incorporated in its architecture. Students and teachers of Newaj's work are particularly eager visitors.

But while the site holds significant heritage value, with plaster falling from the ceilings and plants growing along its walls and in the

roof, it looks set to be lost. Worse still, the rooms are filled with dirt, rubbish and human waste.

"The poet and his brother were once zamindar landholders in the area," says Sharafat Ali who is currently in charge of the property. "After his death his successors sold the house. A lot of money is needed to renovate the building. At the moment, stray animals and drug addicts gather there."

"Protecting the memory of the poet is paramount," says associate professor of nearby G.K. Ideal Degree College Musafir Nazrul, who is also an adviser to the Kazi Kader Newaj Society. "The home was constructed around 1900. Although the district administra-

tion has taken the welcome initiative to erect a boundary wall, substantial funds are required to repair and protect the home. We are also trying to motivate adjacent landholders to sell back portions of the original estate, which were sold after the poet's death."

"There is no doubt this building of the reputed poet is a national treasure," one visitor to the site, Bachchu Mia from Kushtia University, told The Daily Star. "Immediate steps to renovate the building should be taken."

Sreepur's recently-joined Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ahsan Ullah Sharif says he will look into the matter after visiting the site.

## CRISIS OF IRRI-BORO SAPLINGS

# Farmers buy seedlings for high prices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Taking advantage of Irri-boro seedling crisis at the peak season of cultivation, a section of traders are doing brisk business by selling the saplings at high prices in the local markets of the district this year.

Many farmers in the district said most of the lately prepared seedbeds and seedlings were damaged due to severe cold and dense fog at the fag end of winter.

A good number of growers are

facing trouble for not getting enough seedlings for farming as it is the peak cultivation season. As a result, they are compelled to buy the saplings for high prices from the local markets.

Marginal and poor farmers are the biggest sufferers as a bundle of 280 to 300 seedlings is being sold for Tk 10 against Tk 6 to Tk 7 last year.

The production cost of each bundle is not over Tk 3, farmers said, adding that about 150 bundles are required to cultivate one bigha (30

decimals) of land.

Kobad Mia, 55, a farmer of Etapota village in Sadar upazila, said sapling crisis has made the paddy cultivation uncertain this season due to the situation and high price at local markets.

Farmer Ranjit Chandra Barmon, 58, of Kamlabari village in Aditmari upazila, said, "Around 40 percent seedlings on my 20 decimals of land were damaged due to heavy fog and I have to purchase seedlings from

the local market for high price."

Soleman Ali, 48, a sapling trader at Durakuti Haat (weekly market) in Sadar upazila, said they are selling the saplings at high prices as they are purchasing the item from different districts at high prices.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension in Lalmonirhat, farmers prepared seedbeds on 2,125 hectares of land to cultivate 54,000 hectares this season.



Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah

# 1952 still etched on his memory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Too feeble to speak and walk, Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah still narrates the days of his participation in Language Movement in heroic mood.

"I was a Class IX student then and when the wave of Language Movement accelerated in Mymensingh region in 1952, I along with other schoolboys brought out processions protesting the move," said the 82-year-old language hero.

A former member of the provincial assembly, Shahidullah hails from Nandibari area in Muktagachha upazila.

Recalling the days of 1952, the language movement veteran said "I along with eight students of Cooperative High School was expelled for joining the movement, but all except me, got back their studentship seeking apology."

"My medical officer father did not allow me to apologise, and eventually my education life stopped for ever", he said.

Shahidullah, also an organiser of the Liberation War, was the organising secretary of Awami League in grater Mymensingh when Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam was its president.

Now the Language Movement veteran is suffering from various old age complications, including respiratory disease, said family members.

Advocate Emdadul Haque Millat, president of Communist Party of Bangladesh in Mymensingh, said Shahidullah deserves 'Ekushey Padak' for his contribution in the Language Movement.



Onrush of water from the Dhonu river flooded 125 acres of cropland in Soitankhali haor area under Dharmapasha upazila of Sunamganj as the flood control embankment collapsed on Thursday night.

PHOTO: STAR

## COLLAPSE OF SUNAMGANJ EMBANKMENT IN HAOR AREA

# Vast paddy field flooded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Onrush of water of the Dhonu river has flooded paddy fields in Soitankhali haor area under Dharmapasha upazila of Sunamganj as the 300 metre long flood control embankment collapsed on Thursday night.

The affected areas are Chandra Sunarkhal, Soitankhali, Ekpota, Pererkhew, Uirbond, Maradhaira and Dubail.

Around 125 acres of cropland out of 500 acres were flooded, said Suja-

Ud-Doula, deputy assistant agricultural officer of the upazila.

Farmer Azharul Islam of Mandaribari village said four acres of the five acres of land he cultivated with borrowed money have gone under water.

Deputy Divisional Engineer of WDB in Sunamganj Ranjan Kumar Das said they gave allocation of Tk 14.95 lakh for maintenance work of the embankment in December, adding that the chairman of Soitankhali haor embankment project did not start work on time.

Local farmers complained that the embankment was not repaired properly or in time, which is why it collapsed, adding that this situation was created due to the negligence of the local union parishad chairman.

However, Chairman of Soitankhali Haor embankment project, also chairman of Sukhair Rajapur (Dakkhin) Union Parishad, Amanur Raja Chowdhury rejected the allegations. He said, "I didn't get the money on time. It is the negligence of the Sunamganj Water Development Board."

# 7 trafficked boys rescued, one held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Jhenidah Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police in a drive rescued seven teenage boys from Arappur bus stand area of Jhenidah town while they were being trafficked to India on Friday.

The rescued victims are Hafizur Rahman, 14, Jahurul Islam, 14, Mamun Hossain, 15, Roni Ali, 18, Roni Ahmed, 14, Abbas Ali, 14, and Rajab Ali, 14. They all hail from Teghari village in Nandigram upazila of Bogra.

Jhenidah Additional Superintendent of Police Ajbahar Ali Sheikh said a team of CID police, acting on a tip-off, intercepted a Benapole-bound BRTC bus in Arappur area around 7:00pm and rescued the seven boys while they were being trafficked to Tamil Nadu state in India.

The law enforcers also arrested one of the alleged traffickers Ayub Hossain, 43, son of Aynal Hossain of Bethuli village in Nandigram upazila from there.

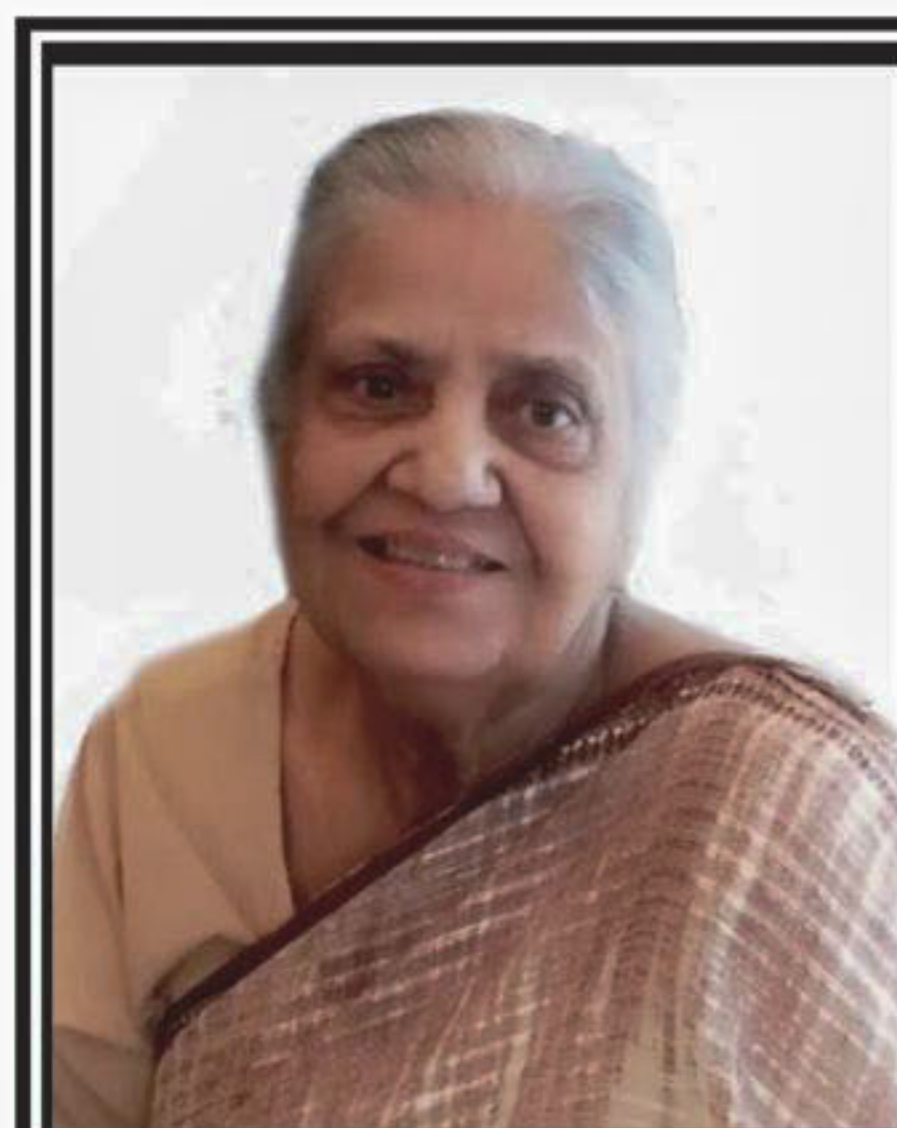
The arrestee was taking the teenagers to India, alluring them to give good jobs there, police said.

## Snatchers kill driver

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The driver of a battery-run three-wheeler, who was stabbed by snatchers on February 20, died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital on Friday.

Two youths in guise of passengers take away the vehicle of Razul Islam, 35, of Kochukata village in Sadar upazila after stabbing him at Khokar bazar in Kishoreganj upazila, said police.



## DUA MEHFIL

Dua Mehfil for our beloved mother Mrs. Muslema Wafa (wife of Late Syed Abul Wafa) will be held on 27th February 2017 (Monday) at 37, New Eskaton (Rangs Eskaton Tower-Near BIAM Foundation) after Maghrib prayers.

We invite all our friends, relatives and neighbors to join the Dua Mehfil and pray for the departed soul.