

## Neo JMB leader Rajib confesses violence

3 JMB suspects on five-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Militant outfit Neo JMB leader Jahangir Alam alias Rajib Gandhi, also a plotter of last year's June 1 massacre at Holey Artisan Restaurant in the capital, yesterday made confessional statement under Section 164 in two violence related cases in the district.

Amid tight security, he was produced before the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate SM Taskinul Huq.

Rajib confessed before the court that he conducted meetings at different places to re-organise Neo JMB activities and got involved with violent activities to unsettle the administration, said Shafiqul Islam, public prosecutor, Gaibandha court.

On March 30, the court granted him seven days' remand after Masudur Rahman, officer in charge of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, sought ten days' remand to interrogate him in violence related cases.

On that day, following four days of interrogation under an earlier granted remand, Rajib gave statement before the court, confessing his involvement in the murder of village physician Mahbubur Rahman upazila on June 2, 2015.

Meanwhile, Senior Judicial Magistrate Jainul Abedin yesterday granted five days' remand for three suspected Neo JMB activists -- Mehedul Islam, 35, of Palashbari, Delwar Hossain, 30, of Gobindaganj, and Ataur Rahman Montu, 35, of Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

They were arrested from Palashbari on Tuesday as per confession of Rajib, said DB SI Protap Kumar Shingha, the investigation officer.



The Kansat Zamindar Palace in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj is getting ruined due to lack of proper maintenance. Inset, the nameplate on the palace premises.

PHOTO: STAR

## Zamindar Bari on verge of ruin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Kansat Zamindar Bari, which has great historical value, is a deserted house now and on the verge of ruination after years of neglect.

Locals say the building, erected in 1867 in Shibganj upazila of the district, is gradually falling apart due to negligence of the local authorities.

Surjya Kanta came to Kansat village from Muktagachha in Mymensingh and built the big, decorated mansion, originally called Surjya Garh, on about 2.24 acres of land on the bank of the Pagla river, around 25 km from the district town.

The exquisitely decorated two-storied mansion has 16 rooms.

Surjya Kanta had two sons, Shashi Kanta and Shitangshu Kanta. Shitangshu was the last zamindar.

Shitangshu went to Kolkata after the partition of India in 1947, and the Pakistan government took ownership of the building.

It remained unused until after the liberation of Bangladesh, when it was made the union land office. The office was later shifted to the kachari bari in front of the mansion.

Prof Mazharul Islam of the Department of Bangla in Chapainawabganj Government College, and a local historian, said

the zamindar bari is a heritage in the district. This building has historical value because it is a physical connection with our past, he added.

"It was built around 1867. At that time, the place was crowded because many people built their houses around the zamindar bari. So, it will help us know about the culture and religion of the people of that time," he said.

Abdul Mannan, 60, of Kansat bazar, said the local authorities have never taken any steps to preserve the building.

It is the only zamindar house in the district, but now it has turned into a dumping spot for garbage and a den of drug addicts, he

added.

Nurul Islam, assistant land officer of Kansat union, said the building is seriously damaged. He urged the authorities to take immediate steps for preservation of the building.

Locals said if the historic Zamindar Bari is not renovated it will be destroyed and the memories of the zamindars will be lost forever.

Kansat Union Parishad Chairman Benaul Islam said the government should renovate the building for its historical value.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Shibganj Shafiqul Islam said he will take necessary measures for preservation of the building.

## Hailstorm hits Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Hailstorm coupled with rain damaged crops on around 80 thousand hectares of land in Sadar, Dirai, Dharampasa and Shalla upazilas of Sunamganj in the last two days.

Besides, a number of houses along with trees were damaged when the storm hit over 100 villages in the upazilas, said locals.

Farmer Prosanto Das of Perua village in Dirai upazila said big hailstones, some weighing about 20 grams, damaged roofs of many houses.

Md Mukshed Ali, chairman of Jahangirnagar Union Parishad in Sadar upazila, said at least 70 percent of the crops were damaged as the hailstorm during the last two days hit 20 villages in the area.

Another affected grower Monirul Islam of Chamordani village in Dharampasa said "I made my house with money borrowed from an NGO. But now it is broken and seven acres of my land have gone under water."

At least five people were injured during the hailstorm, said schoolteacher Shamsul Haque of Naraontola village in the upazila.

Dirai upazila Chairman Kamrul Islam said big hailstones during the storm and rain damaged scores of houses at least 30 villages in the area. Besides, hundreds of trees and many electric poles were uprooted during the hailstorm.

A number of houses were damaged as the storm hit 20 villages in the area, said Dharampasa upazila Chairman Abdul Motaleb Khan.

Md Zahidul Haque, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension in Sunamganj, said the hailstorm damaged boro and vegetables on over 79 thousand and 790 hectares of land in the upazilas.

## 7 militant suspects on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A court here yesterday granted three-day remand for each of the seven militant suspects who were arrested on Monday from the district town.

Police produced them before Judge Md Billal Hossain of Cognizance Court No-1 seeking 10-day remand each, but the court granted three-day remand each, said Nawajesh Ali Mia, inspector of the court.

OC of Kotwali Police Station Md Kamrul Islam filed a case against them under Anti-Terrorism Act.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a house in Boro Kalibari area and arrested them from there.

The arrestees are Shahidul Islam, 28, and Ashiqur Rahman, 19, of Haluaghat upazila; Al Amin, 25, Masum Ahmed, 30, Shah Al Hossain Shamim, 27, Ruman Mia, 27, of Netrakona's Purbadhala; and Nasir Uddin, 27, of the district's Mohanganj.

No firearms or explosives were found, but police recovered computers, chequebooks, electronic devices and jihadi books.

## Pagoda an attraction for tourists

Hundreds of people visit Rama Jadi daily

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

The newly built Rama Jadi (pagoda) in Bandarban's Rowangchhari upazila has become the latest tourist spot in the district.

Founded by U Pannya Jota Thera, locally known as Guru Bante, the 108-foot-high pagoda is one of the highest Buddhist temples in the country.

Many Buddhist devotees and hundreds of tourists from different parts of the country visit the Pagoda every day to enjoy the beauty of the temple and its surrounding landscape.

It took nearly twelve years to create its splendid beauty since its construction work began in 2005, said the temple authority.

Located in Bandarban-Rowangchhari road, adopting Arakanese architecture, the temple was opened for all recently.

About three kilometres from the district town and surrounded by the lush green trees

of the forest, the temple can be an oasis of solitude far away from the maddening crowd of the city life in future.

Surrounding the Rama Jadi there are more 27 small pagodas, which are about 15-foot high.

"The magnificent architectural design of the temple enhances its beauty," said Shawkat Islam, a tourist from Dhaka, expressing his satisfaction.

Admiring the panoramic beauty of Bandarban, Sadia Afrin, a visitor from Chittagong, said Bandarban has a great potential to boost the tourism industry.

Its founder U Pannya Jota Thera is also the founder and chief monk of Golden Temple, the largest Theravada Buddhist Temple with the second largest Buddha statue in Bangladesh.

U Pannya Jota Thera said, like the Golden Temple, Rama Jadi will also play an important role in flourishing tourism in Bangladesh.

## Mayor Miru's wife sues 17 AL men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The wife of arrested municipality mayor Halimul Haque Miru, accused in journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul murder case, filed a case against 17 ruling party men in connection with attacking their house in Shahzadpur of Sirajganj on February 2.

Lutfunnesa Piari lodged the lawsuit with Shahzadpur Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court on Tuesday, said Court Inspector Apel Mahmud.

The accused include Shahzadpur upazila Chhatra League President Sheikh Kajal, former BCL leader Abdur Rahim, Jubo League leader Deenar and acting mayor of the municipality Nasir Uddin.

According to the case statement, the accused vandalised the house of Miru on the day.



Hérons are in a relaxed mood in Raja House of Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

## Raja House a safe haven for herons

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Hérons have found a safe haven in Raja House at Sreemangal upazila of the district.

Gulam Mostofa Raja is the owner of Raja House in Motiganj village.

Several species of herons have made the small woods their home, building nests in the trees in the area. The trees also house birds and parrots.

The sight of the birds nesting and gathering food is quite extraordinary, which is why at first glance it seems like a settlement of migratory birds.

Gulam said the heron population in the colony has been growing every year since they started coming there in 1990.

Everyone here likes these heron, and even outsiders do not bother them, he said, adding that a heron sanctuary is good for the ecology.

"It is not possible to have

such a place without love for herons," said visitor Sumona Bosak, who came from Dhaka.

"The people here are very nice as they allow the herons to live here in safety," said Mohammad Ali and Sajal Rozario, who came from Bogra.

"We are helpless when it comes to natural calamities. But we try to ensure that the birds do not suffer. It is necessary for everyone to be conscious about protecting nature and biodiversity as a whole," Gulam said.

Muntakim Mostofa, 25, son of Gulam, told this correspondent that the smell compelled him to keep the windows shut, but living amid the tweeting neighbours is also a pleasant experience. He hoped that the authorities would take necessary measures to conserve the garden.

## PDB engineer assaulted by mayor's men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Executive engineer of Power Development Board (Sales and Distribution) in Ghatail region was beaten allegedly by men of the municipality mayor yesterday.

Engineer Suresh Chandra Paul took treatment at Ghatail Upazila Health Complex, hospital sources said.

Seven to eight youths led by Rabiul Alam Tomal, nephew of the mayor, also general secretary of the student's union of Ghatail CBC College, beat up Suresh over an altercation between him and the mayor the previous night, a PDB staff said.

Suresh lodged a complaint with the police station, accusing Tomal and his accomplices Yamin and Al Amin by name and four to five unidentified others, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ghatail Police Station Mohammad Kamal Hossain said.

The engineer and the mayor had an altercation over construction of a drain, they said.

Mayor Shahidul Islam alias VP Shahid, also joint convener of Ghatail upazila Awami League, said he knew nothing about the attack as he went to Dhaka on Wednesday morning.



Buddhist devotees and tourists crowd newly built Rama Jadi (pagoda) in Bandarban's Rowangchhari upazila.

PHOTO: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA