

8 'Neo JMB' members, 4 'robbers' held in two dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Police arrested eight suspected Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) members from a house in Arpara village under Shalikhā upazila of Magura on Friday.

They seized jihadi books, electronics devices, some small pieces of brass and twelve bundles of counterfeit money.

The arrestees are house owner and ex-ameer of upazila Jamaat-e-Islami advocate Farid Ahmed, Bachchu Mia, Obaidul Hossain, Abul Bashar, Anwar Hossain, Jahangir Alam, Ohidul Islam and Rabiul Islam. They all, except Farid, hail from Pিরerchar village in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur.

Farid is an accused in several subversion cases.

On getting information, police launched a drive at Farid's house on Friday at around 8:00pm and arrested the JMB members, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) in Magura Tarikul Islam said. The detained members had taken the house on rent from Wednesday for twenty days.

Away in Jhenidah, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested four robbers along with firearms from a mahogany garden near Miakundo-Katakhalī bridge under Sadar upazila early yesterday. They recovered a foreign gun, a double-barreled gun, a .303 rifle, five bullets, three rubber bullets and a machete from their possession.

The arrestees are Bikash Biswas, 38 Tibbat Shikdar, 54, Kumud Sarkar and Sukunur Rahman.

Major Monir Ahmed of Jhenidah Rab said, acting on secret information Rab launched a drive at the mahogany garden and arrested them with the arms. A case has been filed against the arrestees under the arms act.



A paddy thresher machine in operation at Kochukata village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Threshers get popular with paddy farmers in N dists

EAM ASADUZZAMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Threshing machines are particularly active across the northern districts of the country this year, during the harvest of Boro paddy. The diesel-run machines are proving economical and efficient for many, in light of a scarcity of available labour at reasonable rates.

In Nilphamari many farmhands head south during the harvest months to districts such as Comilla, Feni and Noakhali, and also to the Sylhet region where they can sell their labour at higher prices. It's a trend that creates a labour scarcity in the north, pushing up labour costs for farmers in Nilphamari too.

As a result many small-scale farmers are compelled to engage family labour to harvest the paddy,

and to engage machines for threshing.

"Boro paddy was grown on 83,000 hectares in Nilphamari this year," reports sub-assistant agriculture officer Anwarul Islam. "As a result, the district is on track to produce 3.5 lakh tonnes of rice."

"To harvest each 30 decimals of paddy," he continues, "including cutting the paddy, carrying the bundles to the farmer's yard, threshing, drying and storing the crop, about six or seven labourers are needed."

For wealthy farmers the increased labour rates are often manageable but for small-scale and marginal growers enlisting family labour can be the only feasible solution, with threshing completed by hired machine.

"Two labourers need up to nine

hours, at a cost of about Tk 800, to thresh 30 decimals of paddy," estimates large-scale farmer Atiqur Rahman from Angarpara village in Nilphamari sadar upazila. "But a threshing machine along with an operator will complete the same task in around half an hour at a cost of only Tk 400."

"Threshing machines separate paddy from straw more effectively than labourers can," says another farmer, Sirajul Islam from Gayabari village in Dimla upazila. "The straw left from the mechanised process is so soft that cattle prefer it as fodder."

Both farmers note that the time saved by threshing machines also adds value, allowing them to complete other work.

Each Nilphamari village these days houses five or six portable

threshing machines, manufactured in local engineering workshops and selling for around Tk. 50,000 each.

"The thresher works day and night in peak Boro season," says the owner of one machine, Afsar Ali of Domar upazila's Sonarai village. "We can thresh paddy from up to 25 bighas of land per day. After paying for diesel and the salaries of two operators working separate shifts, we can earn a daily profit of as much as Tk 10,000."

"Around 80% of Boro paddy farmers in the northern districts now rely on threshing machines," says Nilphamari district's deputy director of the department of agriculture extension, GM Idris. "Threshing machines are nowadays easily available, and save on labour, time and costs for farmers."

Man held for killing wife, daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A woman and her nine-month-old daughter were murdered allegedly by her husband at Pashchim Joynagar village in Daulatkhā upazila of Bhola yesterday.

The victims were identified as Shahnaz Begum, 30, wife of Billal Hossain, a truck driver of the village, and their daughter Mohona.

Locals said Billal, his wife Shahnaz and daughter Mohona slept in their house while their only son Mehedi, 6, was in Billal's mother's house. At about 2:00am Billal hacked his wife to death and set fire to his house. Hearing the hue and cry, neighbours brought the fire under control.

Locals took Mohona to Daulatkhā Upazila Health Complex where on duty doctor declared her dead. Shahnaz's body was sent to Bhola General Hospital for autopsy.

Billal was arrested from the district town. Billal confessed to the murders during primary interrogation, Superintendent of Police in Bhola Md Moktar Hossain said.

Md Shipon, a local union parishad (UP) member, also an eye witness, said there were cut marks on Shahnaz's throat.

Billal's mother fled with Mehedi after the incident, locals said.

"Billal killed my sister and her daughter, and we are demanding capital punishment for him," said Hafsa Begum, sister of Shahnaz.

Jahanara Begum, mother of Shahnaz said, "Billal had tried to kill my daughter several times before."

Locals said Shahnaz was the 2nd wife of Billal and they got married 12 years ago, adding that Billal had illicit relation with another woman and he often quarreled with Shahnaz over the matter.

Officer-in-Charge of Daulatkhāna Police Station Enayet Hossain said the murders could be due to a family quarrel.

Fire kills boy, guts 100 shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A twelve-year-old boy was killed and at least 100 shops were gutted in a fire in Burichong upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased, Nazmul Hossain Khokon, son of Tara Mia of Gopalnagar Brahmanpara village in the upazila, was an employee of a cloth shop.

Quoting shop owners and locals, police said the fire originated from a cloth shop at Kongshonagar Bazar and soon engulfed over 100 adjacent shops, including hardware shops, jewellery shops, cloth stores and other varieties stores.

Khokon was locked inside a cloth shop of the market and could not come out when the fire broke out, said Officer-in-Charge Monoj Kumar of Burichong Police Station.

On information, four fire fighting units rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after four hours of frantic efforts, the OC added.

Local lawmaker Abdul Matin Khasru and high officials of the district administration visited the spot.

It all started

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Acting on a tip-off, police, however, found the weapon in the house and arrested Sharif on May 29. Shaheen, Russel and Shanto were arrested later.

Based on information gleaned from them, the law enforcers scoured the canal on Friday and recovered a huge cache of firearms and ammunition, including two RPG launchers, 61 Chinese SMGs, 58 anti-tank propellants, 44 magazines of SMGs, a huge amount of bomb-making materials and bullets, said a top official of Narayanganj police, who is investigating the incident.

Hridoy is believed to have fled the country.

Contacted, Dhaka Range Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that the four arrestees, during primary interrogation, said that the arms might belong to an Indian separatist group, which once used Bangladesh territory as its hideout.

Meanwhile, based on information gleaned from the four arrestees, five more SMGs were recovered from the Shitalakha river yesterday, said Mamunur Rashid, deputy director, fire service and civil defense of Narayanganj.

Police claimed that some of the arrestees threw the weapons there sometime before their arrest. A case was being filed

with Rupganj Police Station, said its OC Islamil Hossain.

Proloy Kumar Joarder, deputy commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, declared an end to the drive on the canal around 5.00pm. No more arms were found yesterday.

CTTC officials had earlier said the recovered arms and ammunition looked quite similar to those recovered from Diabari in the capital's Uttara on June 18 last year.

Two general diaries were filed with Turag Police Station regarding the Uttara arms recovery and the CTTC unit is now investigating the matter.

Low-income people in the district are deprived of getting essential commodities at lower prices during the holy month of Ramadan this year due to shortage of supply by the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) to local dealers.

TCB started selling of commodities like sugar, edible oil, chickpea and pulses from May 15 at different points of Nilphamari town with an insufficient supply, which may fail to make a positive impact on the prices of essentials during the Ramadan.

Local dealers said initially TCB allotted only 400 kilograms of sugar, 200 litres of edible oil, 500 kilograms of chickpea and 300 kilograms of pulses to each dealer from its warehouse, which is inadequate, compared to the people's demand.

A consumer can only buy a package consisting of 4 kg sugar, 5 litres edible oil, 5 kg chickpea and 2 kg pulses. The government has fixed Tk 55 for per kg of sugar, Tk 85 for one litre of edible oil, Tk 70 for per kg of chickpea and Tk 80 for per kg of pulses. Mohammad Rahmatullah, president of district TCB dealers' association, said the dealers in the district are to sell the commodities from 9:00am to 4:00pm everyday except the holidays, but due to insufficient supply they finish their sales within two to three hours.

Although over 500 people stand in the queue everyday, only 100 to 150 people can purchase the commodities, Rahmatullah added.

Schoolboy killed by lightning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A schoolboy was killed by lightning at Pach Kaiba village in Sharsha upazila of Jessore on Friday night.

The deceased was Kabir Hossain, 12, son of Abdur Rahman of the village.

Hasan Firoz, chairman of Kaiba Union Parishad, said a thunderbolt struck a group of people while they were catching fish in a canal at the village. Kabir died on the spot.

Apan's

FROM PAGE 2
according to the testimony of one of the two girls.

Invited to Shafat's birthday party on March 28, the two girls went to The Raintree Dhaka around 9:00pm. After the party ended around midnight, Shafat and his friend Nayem Ashraf alias Halim raped them in two rooms, alleged one of the two girls who filed the case.

Shafat, and Nayem confessed to raping the girls while three other accused, Shafat's driver Billal Hossain, bodyguard Rahmat and the victims' friend, Shadman Sakif, admitted their involvement in the incident.

Guideline soon

operate any app-based transport service, a pool of at least 100 vehicles is set to be the minimum requirement. An official of the BRTA said according to the proposed guideline a car owner has to pay the BRTA Tk 1,200 a year for each vehicle while a motorcycle owner has to pay Tk 800.

The BRTA in its proposed guideline stipulated a provision that in the apps there should be a feature through which the customer could file complaints and review the service.

Apart from these, there should be a feature through which a customer could get the contact numbers of the law enforcers, BRTA officials and other law enforcers to lodge complaints directly with them, said the draft guideline.

According to the draft, the BRTA shall have the right to cancel the registration of a car if the vehicle was used in a serious crime. For security purposes, the owner and driver of a vehicle would have to provide their Tax Identification Number (TIN), National ID card number (NID) and copy of the driving licence to the BRTA officials along with the required documents of the vehicle.

Regarding the fare, the BRTA officials said if there

was any public outrage over the fares, the BRTA could set the fare.

"We might not fix the fare of the app-based vehicle services. There is a monopoly of CNG auto-rickshaws and other taxi services. We would like to create a healthy competition among the service providers. Passengers will get more options ...," said BRTA Director Nazmul Ahsan Majumder.

An Uber spokesperson told The Daily Star, "We commend the BRTA and key government stakeholders for their efforts towards determining regulations that can redefine our urban mobility landscape and help build smarter cities. Their vision on the future of transportation in Bangladesh is very forward looking, and one that will help the industry serve riders, drivers and cities like Dhaka better."

"We are committed to a constructive engagement with the BRTA and key government stakeholders to demonstrate how we can bring technology solutions to solve some of the most complex problems faced by cities today- namely, growing congestion and pollution, creation of economic opportunities and contribution to skilling initiatives."

DAILY COMMODITIES AT LOWER PRICES

Consumers deprived as TCB supply scanty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal-Fired Power Project (RHD Part)
Roads and Highways Department
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Invitation for Bid (Local Competitive Bidding)

Date: 31/05/2017
JICA Loan Agreement No: BD-P76 & BD-P88
IFB No: MATARBARI/RHD/01/2017

1. The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GOB) has received a loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) towards the cost of Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal-Fired Power Project (RHD Part). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for: **The Construction of 7.35 KM Road from Rajghat to Mohoriguna (Works Package No-03, JICA Access Road Package-3.3).**

2. The Project Director (SE, RHD) Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Project (RHD Part), Roads and Highways Department now invites sealed bids under **Local Competitive Bidding (LCB)** from eligible bidders for the construction and completion of "The Construction of 7.35 KM new road from Rajghat Bridge, Matarbari to Mohoriguna, Dhalghata under Maheshkhali, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh consisting of construction of new Embankment and Embankment Slope Protective Works, Flexible Pavement, Soft Soil Treatment works, Structures and Sluice Gates". The detailed descriptions of the works are given in the Scope of Work in Part 2 of 3 of the bidding documents.

3. Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the Office of the Project Director (SE, RHD), Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Project (RHD Part), Setu Bhaban, Airport Road, Level-5, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh, during office hours.

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of BDT 10,000.00 (Bangladesh Taka ten thousand only) in cash during office hours.

6. The provisions in the instructions to bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents under Japanese ODA Loans for the Procurement of Works.

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 02:00pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) on 30 July 2017 and must be accompanied by a security of BDT 55.00 million (Bangladesh Taka fifty-five million only) or USD 688,000.00 (USD six hundred eighty-eight thousand only).

8. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at **2:30pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) on 30 July 2017** at the Office of the Project Director (SE, RHD), Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Project (RHD Part), Setu Bhaban, Airport Road, Level-5, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh.

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