

Elderly man killed in feud over irrigation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A ninety-year-old man was killed and his two sons sustained critical injuries in an attack by their rivals, centring a feud over supplying irrigation water at Dakkhin Chikashi village in Dhunat upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased is Sikandar Ali of the village. Sikandar's injured sons Abdul Latif, 42, and Sanaullah Mia, 45, are undergoing treatment at Bogra Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH).

Police and local people said till the previous season Sikandar and his sons used to irrigate their farmland with water from a nearby shallow tube-well owned by one Afaj Uddin. They have been irrigating their farmland from other's tube-well water this season.

Being aggrieved, Afaj along with 12 to 15 others went to Sikandar's land and started beating him and his two sons mercilessly, leaving them critically injured. Locals took them to SZMCH, but Sikandar died on way to the hospital.



Picturesque Dhol Samudra Dighi at Baribathan village, four kilometres west of Jhenidah town, is considered by many locals as having supernatural powers.

PHOTO: AZIBOR RAHMAN

Enigmatic and beautiful 'sea of drums'

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Jhenidah local Archana Rani was worried about her young son. He was experiencing nightmares every night and used to wake crying with fear. Archana decided to seek help from an historical tank, the nearby Dhol Samudra Dighi, a water body called "the sea of drums" which is said to have supernatural powers. She offered 'mannot', a promise to make an offering to the dighi should prayers for her son's sound sleep be answered. The Daily Star found her at the bank of the dighi ready to give the promised offerings. Her son no longer has bad dreams.

Construction of Jhenidah's largest dighi on 52 bighas of land, in Baribathan village four kilometres west of the district town, was organised centuries ago by Mukut

Roy, the local king who held court in adjacent Bijoypur, and his general Raghupati Ghosh Roy from modern day Shailakupa upazila. The Jessore Government Gazetteer records that at the time many people were dying of thirst. The new reservoir's construction was aimed at alleviating their suffering.

Hardly could the builders have foreseen that in addition to a new water source, they were also bringing to life folk tales of strange occurrences and miracles that would endure.

Even the dighi's construction is shrouded in mystery. It is said that when it was first dug no water came from the earth to fill it, no matter how deep it became. Then, strangely, from the bottom of the dighi but not from its bank, could be heard the sound of drums, hence the water body's name. So goes the legend that

the king dreamt that if the queen offered puja prayers inside the dighi, water would appear.

To this end the king's people went to the dighi one day to beat drums and play flute as part of the puja worship. The queen went down into the dighi to perform prayers. Sure enough water began to appear, and in all the din and bustle of the puja nobody noticed the queen sinking. Sad news of her disappearance reached the king and he began to mourn for his wife. But the legend has an upbeat ending: after a frantic search the missing queen was found.

Surrounded by hundreds of trees, the picturesque dighi attracts many visitors, foremost among them Lalon devotees. "We come here to play baul songs on the bank," says one devotee Siraj Hossain from Baribathan. "This dighi has curative powers. Local

women bring offerings if prayers are answered for them or their relatives to recover from illness."

Yet, according to caretaker Rahima Khatun, the dighi isn't only a site of mystery. "On public holidays people throng here for recreation," she says. "In the winter months many groups from across the district choose the dighi for their picnics." In addition, the dighi has an economic role, being leased for Tk 6 lakhs per annum as a fish project. "Advocate Chand Ali and his brothers, who inherited the dighi also visit regularly," Rahima says.

For its enigmatic and historical qualities and as a place of natural beauty Dhol Samudra Dighi is renowned. "I heard so much about this big dighi," says one visitor, Sumon Shikdar from Kotchandpur upazila. "I wanted to see it with my own eyes."

Husband burns wife to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A pregnant woman, who was set on fire by her husband on May 25, succumbed to burn injuries at Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital on Monday.

The deceased was three-month pregnant Fatima Begum, wife of Sobhan Gazi of Kalapara upazila, said GM Shah Newaz, officer-in-charge of Kalapara Police Station.

Sobhan maintained his family by catching and selling crab and frog, said locals.

On May 25, Sobhan set his wife on fire following an altercation over family issue. The incident took place when the couple's only daughter Rupa was out of the house.

Fatima was admitted to the hospital with 75 percent burn injuries on May 26.

Slain journo's wife seeks security

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Wife of slain journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul, Shahzadpur correspondent of the daily Samakal, yesterday sought security for herself and her two children after one of the accused in her husband's murder case got bail recently.

Shimul's wife Nurunnahar Khatun at a press conference in Bogra town around 4:00pm also urged the government to try the accused under a speedy tribunal.

Expressing her deepest concern over the issue, Nurunnahar said she and her two kids are feeling insecure as one of the prime accused in her husband's murder case Habibul Haque Mintu, brother of Shahzadpur municipality Mayor Halimul Haque Miru, who came out of jail on bail on Sunday, is locally very influential.

Nurunnahar, who is currently living in Bogra town with her two school going children, also demanded cancellation of Mintu's bail.

Earlier, Miru, who won the mayoral race with Awami League ticket, allegedly fired gunshots during a factional clash in Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj on February 2.

Shimul, who was covering the incident, was hit by bullets and died from his injuries the following day.



A man makes baskets with bamboo splits at Ghorapakhia village in Sadar upazila of Chapainawabganj. Many people in the famous mango producing district are engaged in the work as the item, used for safe packing of fruits, sees high demand during the mango plucking season.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

Bamboo basket makers smile in mango season

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Many people in rural areas of the district are passing busy days making bamboo baskets, locally called jhuri or tukri, as the item is widely used for safe packing of mangoes to send it to different areas of the country from the famous mango producing district.

The trade serves as an additional income source for many poor and lower middle class rural people.

"I can make two big sized jhuris with bamboo splits in a day and each sells for Tk 300. I will be engaged in the work for over two months and earn around Tk 30,000," said Imran Ali of Ghorapakhia village in Sadar upazila.

Rabiul Islam of neighbouring Bohrom village said he makes small baskets with bamboo splits round the year and sells those at Tk 55 each. He earns over Tk 10 thousand in a month.

Over 150 people of the two villages, mostly farm labourers, are engaged in this work when they are free after harvesting paddy, they said.

However, many people left their former profession of bamboo basket making during the last several years as cases made of plastic are more popular now.

Shafiqul Islam of Ghorapakhia village, a wholesaler, said he buys the baskets from the local weavers and supplies it to different markets in Chapainawabganj, Baniswar in Rajshahi and Iswardi in Pabna as the item has high demand, especially during the mango season.

"I will earn over Tk 2 lakh by selling baskets during this season. Mangoes carried in bamboo made baskets remain safer than those in plastic cases," he said.

People of Moharajpur in Sadar upazila and Abbas Bazar in Shibganj upazila also make baskets that are used for carrying mango.

They urged the authorities concerned to arrange easy term loan to save the traditional business.

"I use bamboo baskets for safe packing of mangoes that are sent to different districts. Many people like it

as quality and taste of mangoes remain unaffected when carried in bamboo baskets. I use over 100 baskets daily during the mango season," said trader Hasan Al Sadi.

Abdul Wahed, president of Chapainawabganj mango traders association, said around 30 percent of mango traders use bamboo baskets for packing mangoes.

Mangoes are the most important agricultural product in the area that has long tradition of producing around 350 varieties of the popular summer fruit, said agriculturists and growers.

A large number of people are engaged in different jobs, including nursing and harvesting of mangoes, weaving baskets and packing, during the mango season every year.

Monjunul Huda, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, said 2.40 lakh tonnes of mangoes are expected from 19 lakh mango trees on 26,150 hectares of land in Chapainawabganj district this season.

Tk 1 cr Indian goods seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Customs officials yesterday seized clothes, imitation jewellery and cosmetic items imported under false documents from Benapole port area.

Sources at customs estimated the value of the goods to be over Tk 1 crore.

On secret information, the officials seized the valuable goods from a covered van in the area, they added. The driver and his helper were arrested.

Alif Enterprise, a transport company in Benapole loaded the goods under false documents, said the sources.

Sawkat Hossain, commissioner of custom house Benapole, said some locals imported the goods from India without documents.

2 Neo JMB men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested two suspected militants of Neo-Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Monakasha village in Shibganj upazila on Monday.

They are Ruhul Amin, 55, son of late Mokbul Hossain of Shibnagar-Abbasbazar village in Shibganj upazila, and Al Amin, 24, of Rahmatpara village in Gomostapur upazila.

Superintendent of Police (SP) in the district T M Mojahidul Islam said members of Detective Branch (DB) arrested them at around 1:00am.

Ruhul is an accused in a case filed by police at Shibnagar village in April this year.

Al Amin is an accused in JMB activist Salman murder case of 2012.

CHAIRMAN in action!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A union parishad chairman tortured two youths before hundreds of people in Gouripur upazila bringing charge of taking drug and theft against them.

The victims are Rokon Mia, 25, son of Akkas Ali, and Dipu, 20, son of Masud of the area.

Mauha UP Chairman Romiz Uddin Swapan tied the youths to a concrete pillar, beat them and cut off their hair, said locals.

When Romiz, also upazila Awami League's organising secretary, was returning home on Sunday evening, he found Rokon and Dipu sitting idle at Boikharhati.

After a hot chase, the chairman caught the two and tortured them in front of hundreds of villagers, said local people.

Romiz said villagers informed him that the youths are drugs users and also involved with theft.

He could not give any satisfactory answer when asked whether it was justified for a chairman to take the law in his hand.

The chairman cannot punish anyone like that and he should have handed over the youths to police, said OC Delwar Ahmed of Gouripur Police Station.

Advocate Abul Kalam Azad said a public representative cannot do what Romiz did.



Mauha UP Chairman Romiz Uddin Swapan tortures a youth at a public place in Gouripur upazila of Mymensingh on Sunday bringing charge of taking drug and theft against him.

PHOTO: STAR

Newlywed tortured to death for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A newly married woman was allegedly tortured to death for dowry by her husband and his family members in Hakimpur upazila of the district on Monday night.

The woman was identified as Umme Kulsum, 20, daughter of Aftab Hossain of Birampur upazila and wife of Sajjad Hossain, 26, son of Abdul Latif of Hakimpur upazila.

Aftab said their marriage was held in March.

Sajjad and his parents demanded Tk 1,00,000 as dowry, but he could not give the money, so they used to torture Kulsum over the issue, Aftab alleged.

On Monday night, Sajjad, his mother Roksana and sister Ayesha tortured Kulsum and hung her from the ceiling to make it look like she had committed suicide. Locals rushed her to Hakimpur Upazila Health Complex where the doctor declared her dead.

Hakimpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Gafur said police arrested Sajjad and his mother.

Punishment of Masum's killers demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Students of Bangabandhu Textile Engineering College in the district yesterday demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the killers of Masum Sarkar, a first year student of the college.

They brought out a procession from the college campus at Baghutia in Kalihati upazila around 11:00am and paraded the streets chanting slogans. They later held a rally in front of the principal's office.

Among others, first year students Nizamul Haque Roni, Mohammad Imtiaz Ahmed, Mohammad Solaiman Khan, Ashraf Bhuiyan and Shamim Hossain and second year student Arif Khan and third year students Akter Hossain and Mohammad Haris spoke at the rally.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kalihati Police Station Mosharaf Hossain said a group of rival students hacked Masum and Ashraf Islam at the campus on Saturday over a dispute regarding formation of the student's committee of the college society.

Ashraf was admitted to Kalihati Upazila Health Complex and Masum to Tangail General Hospital. Masum was later referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Masum, son of Hazrat Ali of Kokdohora village in Kalihati upazila, succumbed to his injuries on Sunday, the OC said.

Ashraf's father filed a case against 13 students, including Khokon and Mamun and unidentified several others, with the police station on Saturday, he said.