

# Journalist hacked, then sued

*Alleged drug trader also injures the newsman's brother in Jhalakathi*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A journalist was hacked to unconsciousness allegedly by a local union parishad member at Uttampur village of Rajapur upazila under the district on Wednesday.

Md Ramjan Ali, reporter of natunsomoy.bd, also editor of weekly magazine Mokabela, faced the wrath of UP member Monir Hossen after publishing a few reports about the latter's criminal activities, said Ramjan's younger brother Md Barkot Hossen, who was also hacked by the attacker.

Ramjan and Barkot are sons of Md Abul Howlader of Rajapur. Monir, also president of ward BNP, hacked the two brothers with a billhook when they were returning home, said an eyewitness.

Ramjan and Barkot were first taken to Rajapur Upazila Health Complex, then referred to Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barisal, and finally Ramjan was referred to Dhaka as his condition was critical, said doctors.

Police did not know anything about the hacking till Wednesday late night while they arrested a relative of Ramjan following a case filed by Monir against the journalist and his family on charge of injuring Monir's men, said Sheikh Munirul Giash, OC of Rajapur Police Station.

Monir Hossen and his gang are involved in criminal activities including drug sale in the area, said several villagers.

Monir refuted the allegations and said, "Ramjan has published different false reports against me. I did not attack him. Rather, he attacked my family when villagers came to save us. Ramjan might have been assaulted by villagers."

"None filed any complaint on behalf of the journalist. Police will take action after getting complaint," said the OC.

## 4 robbers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkhira

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested four alleged robbers from the bank of Kalagachhiya river in the Sundarbans.

They are Al Amin Morol, 45, Asadul Islam, 29, Babul Gain, 25, and Milan Gain, 35, of Shyamnagar upazila of the district.

Commanding Officer of Rab-6, also Additional Deputy Inspector General of Police, Khandker Rafiqul Islam said the elite force launched a drive on information that a gang of robbers had gathered on the bank of Kalagachhiya river.

They arrested the robbers from there and handed them over to Shyamnagar Police Station, he added.

Al Amin said they realise ransom from the fishermen after holding them captive.

Officer-in-Charge of Shyamnagar Police Station Syed Mannan Ali said Deputy Assistant Director of Rab Moniruzzaman filed a case under the Arms Act in this connection.



PHOTO: M. JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

The broken bridge on Jhalakathi canal at Betra village in Baukathi union under Sadar upazila has been lying unrepaired for nearly ten years, hampering movement of vessels.

# Bridge lying broken for 10 years

*The bridge over Jhalakathi canal was hit by a sand-laden cargo ship in 2007*

M. JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, Jhalakathi

Thousands of people have been suffering as a broken bridge on Jhalakathi canal has been lying unrepaired for about ten years.

The bridge broke in 2007 when it was hit by a sand-laden cargo ship, said farmer Bimol Das of the village. It was constructed at Betra village in Baukathi union under Sadar upazila in 1999 by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), he added.

Sadar upazila and Swarupkathi

of Pirojpur with Banaripara of Barisal were connected by the bridge.

The broken part of the bridge has been lying in the canal, hampering movement of hundreds of goods-laden trawlers that cross the canal every day.

The canal is used as a shortcut for going to Swarupkathi, a renowned business centre, from Jhalakathi, said Rabiul Islam, an agro-businessman of the area.

Farmers have to spend more money to cross the canal on ferry

boats as most of the farmlands are on the opposite side, many farmers said.

"I and some of my workers cross the canal four times a day, and I have to pay Tk 5 per person every time," said Manotosh, another farmer.

"My large trawler passes the broken portion of the bridge at great risk, and we are afraid of accidents at night," said Nurul Alam, a trawler driver.

Children and students are the worst sufferers due to the broken

bridge.

"I cross the canal on ferry boat, but sometimes I cannot catch it. Then I cross the canal by swimming," said Tuhin Ahmed, a school student.

"The road was a good source of earning because passengers used to take the shortcut for going to Banaripara or Sarupkathi. Our income decreased after the bridge broke," said Saidur Rahman, a rented motorbike driver of Jhalakathi College More area.

Villagers said day told the

public representatives and officials of LGED about the problem many times, but no one took any action.

LGED Upazila Engineer Md Sharifud Daula said he and a group of engineers from JICA visited the spot, and a bridge will be built very soon under a JICA project.

"The broken portion of the bridge will be removed as soon as possible after a meeting of the upazila law and discipline committee," he added.

## Giver of blessings

*Man offers free attar to Dinajpur townsfolk for last 25 years*

KONGKON KARMAKER with ANDREW EAGLE

Abdul Jalil, 52, from Nayanpur in Dinajpur municipality is well-known throughout the district town, but not always by name. For the last twenty-five years Jalil has been roaming the streets every day providing town-dwellers with a dab of free attar, often associated with purity in Muslim prayer. It's his way of offering a blessing to all in the community.

"We often call him attar-wallah," says Shamim Reza of Dinajpur Satellite Town. "Wherever he goes, people gather around him to receive a dab of the perfume."

"I leave home at about 9:00am," says Jalil, "and return after almost twelve hours. It's my daily routine and I never feel tired from it."

He walks around twenty-five kilometres daily with his basket of pint-sized attar and surma oil bottles, which cost him about Tk 70 to buy. He dabs the wrists of up to six hundred people with attar per day, more than double as many on Fridays.

At prayer times Jalil will position himself outside any of the town's mosques to bless Muslims headed for prayer.

Jalil also sells attar if people wish to buy a bottle. It's his only income source. "I only earn money when someone buys a bottle of attar from me," he says.

Despite financial hardship, the father of four chil-



Abdul Jalil offering a dab of free attar with his blessings to passengers of a three-wheeler in Dinajpur municipality.

PHOTO: STAR

dren who built a small house for his family on two decimals of land has never considered taking up a more lucrative profession, says his neighbour Julfikar Ali.

"There are still people in society who can't afford even a tiny bottle of attar," says Jalil. "I am here for them. It brings me spiritual satisfaction to do this. I hope to continue this work until my last breath."

"I am proud of my father," says his younger son Jahidul Islam.

## Two killed, 35 injured in Sirajganj clash

*At least 30 houses at two villages were vandalised in dispute over divorce of a woman*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least two people were killed, 35 others injured and at least 30 houses were ransacked as the villagers clashed over a dispute over divorce of a woman in Kamarkhand upazila of Sirajganj on Wednesday.

The victims are Md Faridul Islam, 25, son of Danaz Ali of Paikosha village, and Shipon Hossain, 18, son of Jahangir Hossain of Bagbari village.

Faridul died on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital about 10:00pm while Shipon succumbed to his injuries at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra in the evening.

The victims were injured critically during the clash, police said.

Meanwhile, the rival villagers launched a fresh attack on each other at night to retaliate as news of the deaths spread, leaving at least 30 houses vandalised at both villages.

"Additional police force has been deployed in the villages to avoid further

clash and keep the situation under control," said Basudeb Sinha, officer-in-charge (OC) of Kamarkhand Police Station.

Basudeb told this correspondent that the clash began between the people of Paikosha village and Bagbari village over a dispute over divorce of a woman. The villagers used lethal weapons during the clash, leaving at least 35 people injured, he said. Most of the injured were admitted to Sirajganj General Hospital and Kamarkhand Upazila Health Complex, the OC added.

Of the injured, Faridul succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka and Shipon died in Bogra hospital. They were shifted from the local hospitals as their condition deteriorated.

A tense situation is prevailing at the two villages.

Police arrested seven people of both villages while separate cases were filed with the police station yesterday over the killings.

## 17 held while entering India illegally

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Members of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) arrested 17 alleged smugglers while they were trying to enter India illegally through Charaldanga and Bivison borders in Gomostapur upazila of the district yesterday.

All the arrestees are from different villages under Radhanagar union in the upazila, said Officer-in-Charge SM Jakaria of Gomostapur Police Station.

Of them, twelve were arrested from Charaldanga border while the others from Bivison border while trying to enter the neighbouring country without valid documents around 5:00am, the OC said.

After lodging a case with Gomostapur Police Station the bordering troops later handed over the arrestees to police.

## Three muggers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police is separate drives detained three alleged muggers from different areas of Brahmanbaria town on early Tuesday.

The law enforcers also seized some gold ornaments and money from their possession.

The arrestees are Sharifur Rahman Apu, 31, son of Mujibur Rahman Babul, Sohag Mia, 20, son of late Rafiq Mia, and Raju, 22, son of late Kuddus Mia of Kazipara area in the town.

Officer-in-Charge Nabir Hossain of Sadar Model Police Station said detainees Sohag and Raju mugged a passport, an aeroplane ticket and money from a man on June 22.

Meanwhile, Apu was arrested while trying to mug an auto-rickshaw passenger near Dakkhin Poirtol Bridge, he said.

## ROW OVER PRICE TAG

# Physically challenged youth, woman assaulted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Three members of a family, including a physically challenged youth and a woman, were brutally beaten allegedly by a makeshift clothes shop owner and his men following a row over pricing of clothes in Lalmonirhat town on Wednesday afternoon.

The gang also snatched away a gold chain worth Tk 20 thousand from the woman's neck during the assault.

The victims are Bina Rani, 26, daughter of freedom fighter Amulya Chandra Roy, her younger brother Prodip Chandra Roy, 21, and nephew Biplob Chandra Roy, 19, a physically challenged youth, of Karnapur village under Mogholhat union in the upazila.

A team of patrol police rescued the victims and admitted them to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

The shop owner and alleged attacker Nur Islam, son of late Liakat Ali of Jummapara in the town, and his men went into hiding soon after the incident.

"Shop owner Nur Islam was hurling abuses towards us while we were checking price tags of different clothes at his shop," said victim Bina Rani, adding, "And when we came out of the shop Nur and his eight to nine men encircled us and started beating us on the road."

"They did not even spare my physically challenged nephew and took away my gold chain," she added.

Amulya Chandra Roy said he has already informed the police of the matter and is making preparation to lodge a case in this connection once his daughter, son and grandson gets better.

Dr Jasim Uddin, on-duty doctor at the emergency department of Sadar Hospital, said all the three victims received injuries on the face, hand and back.

Lalmonirhat Superintendent of Police SM Rashidul Haque said he heard about the incident and asked Sadar Police Station to take necessary steps after receiving a written complaint.



Beaten by a makeshift clothes shop owner and his men, Bina Rani, her brother Prodip and physically challenged nephew Biplob are undergoing treatment at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR