

Youth thrown off train, dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The body of an unknown youth, aged about 28, was found beside Dhaka-Chittagong railway tracks near Moniondho area in Akhaura upazila on Monday.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from the spot and sent it to a hospital for autopsy, said Officer-in-Charge of Akhaura Police Station Mossarraf Hossain Tarafder. Police suspect that criminals might have killed the young man by throwing him off the train.



Baby Stand-Battala road in Tangail municipality area, and right, a road in Bogra town give typical picture of many such streets marked by large potholes with stagnant water during the ongoing rains.



PHOTO: STAR

ATTACK ON JOURNOS Jhalakathi mayor's son yet to be held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Police have not yet been able to arrest any of the attackers who assaulted two journalists recently in Sadar and Rajapur upazilas of the district.

The safety of journalists should be ensured for freedom of the press, said Jhalakathi Press Club General Secretary Akkas Shikder. Assaulting journalists for publishing reports is a threat to freedom of the press, he said.

Manik Acharjo, district reporter of Asian TV and daily Janata, and also a lawyer of Jhalakathi court, was tortured by Jhalakathi mayor's son Liton Talukder on July 5 for not obeying Liton's order, added Akkas.

Manik filed a case against Liton with Sadar Police Station.

Police could not arrest the attacker although he is seen in the town, Manik said.

Officer-in-Charge of the police station Tajul Islam said the case is under investigation.

Ramjan Ali, reporter of online news portal notunsomoy.bd and also editor of weekly Mokabila magazine, was severely hacked on June 29 for reporting against a local drug peddler at Uttampur village in Rajapur. Ramjan is undergoing treatment in Dhaka.

Ramjan's brother filed a case with Rajapur Police Station against alleged drug peddler Monir, also a local union parishad member, and six others.

"Police could not arrest anyone about two weeks after the incident, which encourages drug peddlers to assault the reporters who write against them," Ramjan said.

"We have been conducting drives at different places to nab the accused but could not find them," said Officer-in-Charge of Rajapur Police Station Sheikh Munirul Gias.

47 cobras beaten dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Locals beat dead a mother cobra and its 25 babies that were dug out from a rat hole at a house of Hamidpur village in Sakhipur upazila while 21 baby cobras were beaten dead in Kalihati upazila under the district on Monday. Expatriate Ashraf Ali's wife saw a big cobra on a pigeons' cage at their house at Hamidpur village when she went to feed the pet birds in the afternoon, locals said. As she and neighbours tried to kill the snake, it entered a rats' hole at the kitchen of the house. Digging the hole, they found the cobra and 25 young ones there and

beat all to dead.

"We are in fear as we never saw so many snakes together," said Ashraf's son Mohammad Kamal Hossain, a Class VIII student. Earlier in the morning the same day, wife of one Mokhlesur Rahman saw a baby cobra on their house yard at Deopur in Kalihati and it was beaten dead, locals said. They later found out 20 more baby cobras from different rat holes at the dwelling house and beat them dead too. The house members and neighbours are in panic as the mother cobra could not be found immediately, they added.



Bodies of a mother cobra and its babies that locals killed after digging those out from a rat hole at a house of Hamidpur village in Sakhipur upazila under Tangail on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR

Awful state of roads

Commuters face added nuisance during rains

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Commuters have to undergo added sufferings during the ongoing rains as water remains stagnant in large potholes of rundown roads in different districts across the country. Most of the roads in Tangail town are in awful condition due to lack of repair for years, reports our correspondent. Several of the roads are virtually unfit for vehicular movement, said locals, adding that poor drainage system in the municipal area adds to the problem. Hundreds of vehicles and thousands of people, including students of Bhashani University, MM Ali College, and residents of Nagarpur upazila and west Tangail, regularly move through Baby Stand-Battala road. Park Bazar kitchen market, Tangail Rab office, eidgah and stadium are situated just beside the important road. But the thoroughfare and other badly damaged roads at Paradisepara, Kagmara, Thanapara, Adalatpara, Registrypara, Betka, Akurtakurpara, Sabalia, and Deola have remained without repair for over five years, locals said. Often accidents occur on the dam-

aged roads, said auto-rickshaw driver Moktar Ali. The municipality authorities hardly took any step to solve the problem during the last few years, said rights activist J Saha Joy, a resident of Paradisepara. Although the municipality increased its holding tax recently, nothing has been done to develop facilities for the dwellers of the century-old municipality, said several senior citizens residing in the town. Jamilur Rahman Miron, mayor of Tangail municipality, said, "The previous mayor had done nothing for developing the town, including its roads and drainage system. And we could not start repair work of several roads so far due to rain." "The re-constructions and repair works of all the damaged roads in the municipal area will be started just after end of the rainy season," he added. Our Bogra Correspondent reports: A large number of people in Gabtoli, Sariakandi and Sonatola upazilas of the district are suffering immensely due to the dilapidated state of the three km Bogra-Sariakandi and three km Bogra-Chandonbaisha roads under the Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

From Chelopara in the town via Shabgram and Gabtoli to Sariakandi, and from Chelopara second bypass and Golabari to Chandonbaisha, the roads see numerous holes and cracks as the carpeting was washed away due to heavy rain and rush of goods-laden vehicles. Vehicles including ambulances and fire service vehicles find it hard to move on the roads. Locals formed a human chain at Satmatha in the town a few days ago to draw the authorities' attention to the problem. Mahbub Hossain, a teacher at Bagbari Shaheed Zia Model College, said it has become difficult to use the road, either on foot or on any vehicle. Auto-rickshaw driver Based Ali of Bogra-Gabtoli route said movement of passengers has decreased as it takes too much time to cross the risky road. Bogra municipality Mayor AKM Mahabubur Rahman said he requested the executive engineer of district RHD to take steps to get the roads repaired. The executive engineer, Md Abdul Halim said, "Ignoring our instruction, heavily loaded vehicles use the roads, causing much damage. The road repair work will start as soon as the funds are allocated."

Bangladeshi held with 20 gold bars

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian customs intelligence officials recovered 20 gold bars weighing about two kilograms and detained a Bangladeshi passenger at Petrapole border, opposite to Benapole Land Port, yesterday. The arrestee, Abus Salam, 45, son of Abdul Hamid, is a resident of Baliganj village in Munshiganj Sadar upazila. Lt Col Ariful Haque, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 49 Battalion, said their Indian counterpart confirmed that they detained a Bangladeshi passport holder with 20 gold bars at Petrapole border.

Vietnam variety coconut farming gets popular

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Farming of Vietnam variety coconut is spreading rapidly in the southern region of the country as the land here is very suitable for growing it and growers get high prices, farmers and experts said. On a visit to the horticulture centre in the district, this correspondent found that 40,000 Vietnam variety coconuts had been distributed to farmers from the centre for the last one year, and the number was increasing day by day. Faruk Sarder, a farmer of Chouhukathi area in Babuganj upazila, said he got five hundred seeds of Vietnam variety coconut last year and planted those. "After three years, we will get at least 200-250 coconuts from each tree," he added. Local variety coconut trees take a long time to bear fruit, but the Vietnam variety will give full production within three years, said farmer Mainul Shikder of Babuganj area. Mainly Siam Blue and Siam Green varieties have been planted in the region, said Deputy Director (DD) of the district Horticulture Centre Swapan Kumar Halder. "We are introducing Vietnam variety like Siam Blue and Siam Green because they bear fruits within a short time. Farmers will be more benefited farming this variety, and production will rise three times in this region," he said. Swapan said the soil here is suitable for coconut farming as it grows fast in saline water. Vietnam variety has been cultivated on over 1,000 acres of land, he added.

Fake note making computer shop unearthed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police in a drive unearthed a computer shop allegedly involved in making counterfeit notes and non-judicial stamps at Amtoli Bazar in Palashbari upazila yesterday. The law enforcers also arrested Kawsar Rahman Kajol, 20, of Monoharpur village, and Azadul Islam, 22, and Sazzad Manik, 24, of Putimari village in the upazila, for their alleged involvement in this connection. During the drive, police seized 33 pieces of Tk 500 counterfeit notes, 70 pieces of Tk 5 non-judicial stamps, six printer cartridges and 135 pieces of Yaba tablets from the shop, said Officer-in-Charge Mahmudul Alam of Palashbari Police Station.



Nargis Akter at her grocery store beside her house at Uchutia in Manikganj municipality.

PHOTO: STAR

Self-made businesswoman Nargis of Manikganj creates bright future for her family

ZAHANGIR SHAH with ANDREW EAGLE

After covering the daily expenses of her family, Nargis Akter from Uchutia in Manikganj municipality saves around Tk 5 lakh per annum. Such financial circumstances are the envy of many. The family lives well, but it wasn't always that way. From humble beginnings, Nargis has worked hard at cattle rearing and small business to improve her lot. Nargis married garment worker Ariful Islam in 2009, when she was a student of class eight. Back then, Ariful earned a meagre Tk 3,000 per month and making ends meet for their growing family was all but impossible. They both dreamed of running their own business but lacked the capital to get started. Nargis joined a non-government organisation (NGO) women's group in 2010 and, after securing a Tk 20,000 loan, established a local grocery store. Arif meanwhile decided to focus on farming their small landholdings, and he was able to lease more. He also contributes to the grocery business, bringing supplies from wholesale markets. The grocery business allowed Nargis to repay the loan and apply for another, which she did five times, gradually increasing the amount to ultimate reach Tk 1 lakh. Over time, with grocery profits, Nargis was able to purchase another six decimals of land, to a market value of Tk 10 lakh. She also decided to diversify into fattening cattle, through which Nargis was able to realise an additional profit of up to Tk 30,000 each quarter.



Nargis' husband Ariful Islam brings commodities for their shop from a wholesaler.

"Our economic position is much better nowadays," Nargis says, beaming. "We profit around Tk 4 lakh per annum from our grocery store and 1 lakh from farming." The NGO branch manager Jahedul Islam is hardly surprised by the couple's success. "They are hardworking people," he says. "Hard work has been the key to their success." At present the couple's grocery business has Tk 6 lakh in stock and averages daily sales of Tk 15,000. Her focus now is to buy additional landholdings and, with two cows worth Tk 1.9 lakh at present, to expand her cattle business.



Farmers plant trees of a Vietnam variety of coconut, which has become very popular in Barisal. The picture was taken from Horticulture Centre in the district.

PHOTO: STAR