

Robber killed in 'gunfight' with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

An alleged robber was killed in a 'shootout' between his cohorts and police in Deora village under Sarail upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Mamun Miah, 33, son of late Shafiuddin of Sayedtula village.

Police said he was arrested on Wednesday for involvement in killing an old man after robbery in Deora village.

"When we took him to Deora village, his accomplices opened fire on us and tried to snatch him away. Mamun was hit by a bullet when we fired back," said Officer-in-Charge (Inquiry) of Sarail Police Station Md Quamruzzaman.

Mamun was taken to Sarail Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, he added.

2 Neo JMB men on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A court here yesterday placed two Neo Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants on a three-day remand in connection with the Shibnagar raid on April 26.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Shahidul Islam passed the order after Soheli Mahfuz, an explosives expert and the bomb supplier of last year's Holey Artisan café attack at Gulshan in the capital, and slain JMB man Abu's wife Sumaiya Begum, were produced before the court.

Shibganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Habibur Islam, also the investigation officer, sought a seven-day remand.

Earlier, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit under Dhaka Metropolitan Police, jointly with Chapainawabganj and Bogra police, conducted a raid at a mango orchard in Pushkuni village of Shaibganj on July 8 and arrested Soheli along with his accomplices Jamal, Hafijur and Jewel.

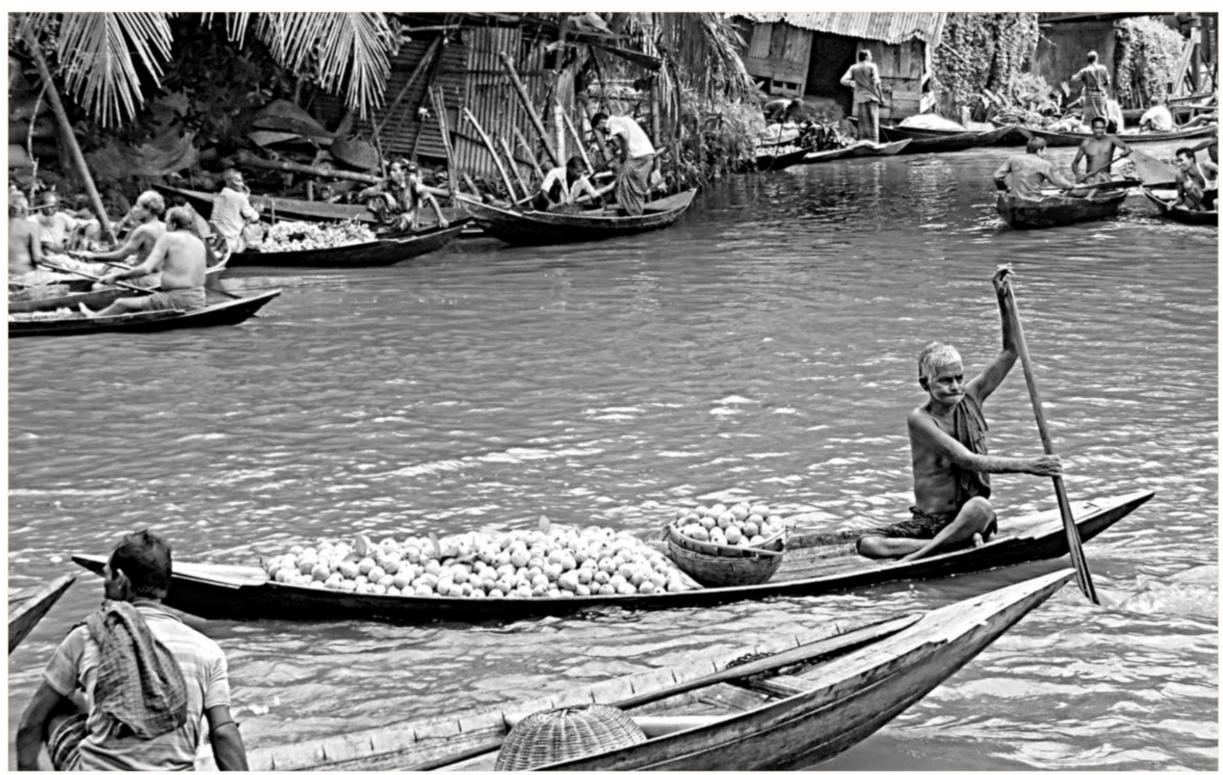
Soheli, one of the prime accused of Dhaka café attack, was handed over to the CTTC unit.

The law enforcers conducted an operation codenamed "Eagle Hunt" after cordoning off a house at Shibnagar on April 26.

They entered the hideout next day and found four bodies, including that of Rafiqul Islam alias Abu, an operative of Neo JMB. They brought out Sumaiya and her six-year-old daughter Khadiza alive. Soheli and Sumaiya were accused in the Shibnagar incident case.

Soheli, who played a key role in organising the JMB in Bangladesh and India's West Bengal, was most wanted in both the countries. He is one of the prime accused in the 2014 Burdwan blast case.

Earlier, Soheli was placed on 19 days' remand in phases in connection with Gulshan attack and Kalyanpur raid.



Guava at Vimruli floating market in Jhalakathi is selling for as low as Tk 2 to 3 a kg, much to the frustration of growers in the area famous for quality guava cultivation.

PHOTO: M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

Tortured Shefali's newborn baby dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The newborn premature baby of torture victim Shefali Begum died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Wednesday evening.

Shefali Begum, 32, who was tortured at Uttar Baishpukur village in Dimla upazila on last Friday, was admitted to the hospital on Saturday in a traumatised condition.

As she felt a strong labour pain, a caesarean was conducted on her and she gave birth to a daughter on Monday afternoon.

"After its birth, the premature and underweight baby was kept in intensive care unit (ICU) but the baby girl died within two days, foiling all the efforts of doctors and nurses," said Lovely Begum, a nurse of gynaecology department in RMCH.

"The baby, born nine weeks before the usual delivery time, weighed only 900 gram and showed various signs of complexities," said gynecologist Prof Ferdousi Sultana, who monitored the surgery at the hospital.

Shefali Begum said she was severely tortured after being tied to a mango tree over a family feud on Friday afternoon as Abdul Kader, president of ward No-4 unit of Awami League (AL) in Khalisha Chapani union of Dimla upazila, ordered his men to do so.

Police later rescued the victim from the spot.

Moni Akhtar, the victim's younger sister, said their father was killed by some local men in 2012 who forcibly grabbed their land and regarding this a murder case is running with the District and Sessions Judge's Court in Nilphamari.

"The accused were very close to AL leader Kader and the latter was putting pressure on Shefali to settle the matter outside the court, which she turned down. Angered by this, he ordered his men to torture Shefali," she said.

The victim's maternal uncle Shahidul Islam filed a case regarding the matter accusing 19 people including the AL leader and police arrested three people by this time.

Low price frustrates guava growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Frustration grips several thousand guava growers in Jhalakathi due to low price of guava in the local markets though their produce is bringing high profit to the traders, especially the middlemen, by selling those in the city markets.

A grower said per maund of guava is being sold for Tk 80 to Tk 150 at Vimruli Bazar, the largest floating guava market in the country, in the last couple of days.

A number of growers said every day hundreds of farmers bring their produce for sale but they are not getting fair prices for the fruits.

If such situation continues, they will incur a huge loss this season, the farmers said.

According to Jhalakathi agriculture office about 10,000 farmers of Vimruli, Kirtipasha, Satodoshkathi,

Guava growers in Jhalakathi are frustrated due to low price of the fruit in local market that brings high profit to the traders as well as the middlemen.

Baukathi, Dumuria, Khejuria, Jagadishpur, Atgar, Kuriana and Nabogram villages under Jhalakathi Sadar upazila depend on guava farming.

Dilip Mistry, a guava farmer of Vimruli village, said he has to pay Tk 1,500 to four workers at his guava orchard as daily wages, but only manages Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 by selling

eight to ten maunds of the item.

Meanwhile, Shahidul Islam, a buyer from Dhaka, said "I purchase each maund of guava for Tk 80 to Tk 200 from the growers and sell those for Tk 600 to Tk 1,000 at wholesale markets in the capital."

Shahidul said he earns a profit of Tk 30,000 to Tk 60,000 in each trip.

Some farmers said they cannot bargain for fair prices as there is no cold storage in the area where they can preserve their produce.

Deputy Director Sheikh Abu Bakar of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Jhalakathi said, "It is a misfortune for the guava growers as middlemen are pocketing a huge profit but they are not getting fair prices."

Some high officials of the ministry concerned visited the area recently for setting up a cold storage there, the DD added.

Aircraft fuel tanks handed over to BAF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Two empty fuel tanks of a flying aircraft, recovered from a cropland in Nabinagar upazila on Tuesday, were handed over to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) on Wednesday.

Officer-in-Charge Md Aslam Sikder of Nabinagar Police Station said a 20-member team of BAF led by Warrant Officer Shafiqur Rahman came to the police station and received the fuel tanks on Wednesday night.

The air force officials said the incident took place due to a technical glitch, the OC added.

Earlier, two empty fuel tanks fell down from a BAF aircraft in a paddy field in Nilnagar village around 11:00am on Tuesday. However, none was hurt in the incident.



Labourers are busy separating raw fibre from jute stalks at Mostofi village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, using the newly invented fibre extraction machine.

PHOTO: STAR

Fibre Extraction Machine A method to produce quality jute fibre in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Jute growers of 15 villages in two upazilas of Lalmonirhat are delighted after having the facility of using newly mechanised 'fibre extraction machine' to thresh their jute plants and produce quality raw jute fibre, a product the country is known for.

Farmers in Sadar and Aditmari upazilas said the machine can separate raw fibre from the jute plants and cut the jute sticks into pieces.

Besides, the machine can ret jute plants in only eight to ten days and in less water.

Farmer Nurul Haque, 62, of Mostafi village in Sadar upazila, said generally it took 20 to 25 days for the jute plants to ret in traditional method.

The process could not deliver quality raw jute and earn expected price in local markets, he added.

"We are hopeful of getting a good price of our produce as we are producing quality fibre this year, using the fibre extraction machine," Nurul said.

Mafizur Rahman, 58, another farmer of the village, said generally growers pay Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,200 as labour cost for threshing jute plants of one bigha of land, whereas they spent only Tk 1,500 for using the machine and got quality fibre.

A farmer produces eight to twelve maunds of raw jute and four to six maunds of jute sticks in each bigha of land spending Tk 6,000 to Tk 7,000, Mafizur said.

Aiming to improve jute retting process with water saving technology, 15 such machines were distributed among jute growers and local entrepreneurs under the project 'Securing Employment and Economic Development around Jute, Textile and Light Engineering Sector in North-

West Bangladesh.'

Funded by the European Commission, the project is being implemented jointly by two non-governmental organisations-- Practical Action Bangladesh and RDRS Bangladesh.

Maidul Islam, project manager of RDRS Bangladesh in Lalmonirhat, said the major challenge in producing jute-diversified product is getting quality fibre.

The newly-introduced fibre extraction machines are currently in operation at 15 villages in two upazilas and growers in other upazilas will also receive the facility gradually, said the project manager.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension in Lalmonirhat, about 5,800 hectares of land in five upazilas of the district were brought under jute cultivation this year.

Four lakh cow fattening pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized around four lakh cow fattening pills worth about Tk 1.15 crore from Hili border area in Hakimpur upazila early yesterday.

They also arrested one Younus Ali, son of HedayetUllah of village Muharapara in this connection.

On secret information, a team of Basudevpur camp under Joypurhat BGB-20 Battalion raided the area and arrested with the pills, said Mahmud Alam, company commander of the camp.

Indiscriminate garbage dumping in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Indiscriminate dumping of garbage on Nuru Mia bypass road under Sadar upazila is causing many problems for the people of the area.

The municipality has been dumping garbage on land belonging to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in the district for the last six months without any permission from RHD.

Locals said the garbage, including waste from clinics and hospitals, has spread to around two acres and 60 decimals of paddy fields in Korirpur area in the upazila. Farmers cannot cultivate their lands as they are covered by needles of discarded syringes from hospitals and clinics.

Khondokar Monjur Ali, owner of a paddy field, said, "The municipality did not take permission from me for dumping garbage

on my land." He added that he put up a signboard prohibiting the dumping of garbage, but to no avail. He could not plant paddy on his land as it is covered by garbage, he added.

Ahad Mollah of Kabirpur village said the odour emanating from the garbage is unbearable.

Abdul Mozid Mondol said, "It is the proper time to plant paddy, but we cannot work on the fields for fear of the needles."

Executive Engineer of district (RHD) Md Jahangir Alam, said, "The municipality has been dumping waste on our land without permission. We talked with the municipality authorities about it, but they have not taken any steps yet."

Secretary of the municipality Tanjilur Rahman said, "We have bought land in Adampur area, and we shall start dumping garbage there soon."



Employees of Faridpur municipality dump garbage just beside Nuru Mia bypass at Kabirpur in Sadar upazila, much to the nuisance of the people of the nearby areas.

PHOTO: STAR