

## Girl stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police recovered the blood-stained body of a teenage girl, who was stabbed to death in Sadar upazila of Noakhali, from near her house on Wednesday night.

Victim Parvin Akter's, 17, body bore injury marks made by a sharp knife.

She was daughter of farmer Zahirul Haque of Haji Bari in East Sullukia village under Dharmapur union.

Zahirul said Parvin went out of the house to the toilet at around 8:00pm. As she did not return, her relatives called her loudly but got no response. Then they searched for her and found her body on the bank of a pond near their house.

Sudharam Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Anwar Hossain said police went to the spot on information, recovered the body and sent it to 250-bed Noakhali General Hospital morgue. They are investigating the incident, he added.

Syed Mohiuddin Azim, resident physician of the hospital, said there were injury marks caused by a sharp knife all over the body of the victim. The autopsy has been completed but the report is yet to be available.

Meanwhile, in the incident of gang rape at Subarnachar in Noakhali, two other accused, who are on remand, gave confessional statements in the court.

District Detective Branch (DB) police Investigation Officer Zakir Hossain said the charge sheeted accused Swapan and Mosharraf Hossain made confessional statements at the court of Noakhali District Cognizance Court No 2 Judge Nabanita Guha yesterday.



The Dharla river near the bridge at Kulaghat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila sees only a lean flow during the ongoing dry season. Inset, people walk on the sandy char emerging from the Teesta river at Paruliya in Haribandha upazila of Lalmonirhat.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

# Teesta, Dharla turn into canals

Miles of char emerge from riverbed

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Twelve small rivers have already dried up and two major rivers -- Teesta and Dharla -- have been turned into canals in the district due to lack of water flow from upstream India.

Mile of chars have developed on the rivers, causing problems for the char people as they have to cross many kilometres of sandy char land to go to the mainland.

As the two major rivers have turned into canals, almost all of the 300 boatmen and over 2,000 fishermen, who depended on the rivers to earn their livelihood, have become unemployed. They are searching for other jobs in the Teesta and Dharla river char areas.

The Teesta and the Dharla used to flow all-year-round a decade ago, but nowadays there is not enough water in winter for

optimal agriculture. Across the villages situated on the two rivers in the district, the situation is similarly gloomy. The Teesta, which can be up to five km wide, is currently reduced to a width of about 30 metres, with only knee-deep water. The scenario is the same for the Dharla.

Teesta char people said the unilateral construction of a barrage across the Teesta at India's Gazaldoba, around 100 km upstream of the Teesta Barrage Irrigation Project at Dalia in Hatibandha upazila, is the reason for the poor condition of the river.

Mamunur Rashid, Agriculture and Environment Coordinator of non-governmental organisation RDRS Bangladesh, said farmers in the country's northern districts depend on Teesta water to irrigate their crop fields during the dry season, but unusually low flow of

the river in Bangladesh due to India's unilateral water withdrawal from upstream badly affects farming and biodiversity in the region.

"There is so little water in the Teesta river that is difficult to ply a boat on it," said boatman Noor Islam, 52, of Kalmati area in Sadar upazila. "Six boatmen who plied boats in this ghat are now searching for an alternative job to earn their livelihood," he said.

Fisherman Supen Chandra Das, 58, of Kulaghat Daspara, said there is no water in the Teesta and Dharla rivers, so there are no fish. They have become unemployed and are searching for alternative jobs, he added.

"The river is all char and no water," said char farmer Nader Ali, 52, of Teesta river Char Paruliya, adding that they have to face suffering to earn their livelihood while

Teesta is dried up. The char people have to walk for miles along the sandy stretches that now connect many char communities with the mainland, he said.

"We also have to face difficulty in transporting agriculture products to the mainland markets," said char farmer Delowar Hossain, 55. "If we had water available in our rivers we could ply our boats, which would make our living more comfortable," he said.

Executive Engineer of Water Development Board in Lalmonirhat Abdullah Al-Mamun told this correspondent that a huge quantity of sediment from upstream India comes into Bangladesh during monsoon and fills up the river bed of the Teesta and Dharla rivers every year.

"It is necessary to dredge the river bed to remove the excess sediment and revive the flow of river water," he said.

## Beekeepers worry as production, price fall

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Reduction in production and price of honey during the mustard season is worrying beekeepers in the district.

Beekeepers of the district and outside collected around 150 tonnes of honey from the local mustard fields last year, but the production will not be more than 100 tonnes this year, said Dulal Hossain, president of greater Mymensingh region of National Apiculturists Foundation.

The reason behind the reduced production is mainly non-stop rain for a few days in mid-December, which caused damage to mustard flowers, he added.

Dulal, of Panch Terilla village in Bhuapur upazila, said he had set up his 330 bee colonies in the mustard fields at Mirikpur under Basail upazila this season and got around two tonnes of honey.

Dulal, also former president of the central unit of Mou Chashi Kalyan Samity, said he had got three tonnes of honey from the same number of colonies last year.

"I sold the honey to the AP company at Tk 6,000 per maund last year but this year the company is offering only Tk 4,000 per

maund," he added.

The situation of around 100 apiculturists, including around 50 commercial honey cultivators, at 12 upazilas in the district is the same, Dulal said.

The number of apiculturists in the district is decreasing because of different problems, including inability to get right prices of the product due to lack of necessary modern marketing facilities, he added.

"Around 7,500 bee colonies were supposed to be set up at the mustard fields in the district this year, but the number has increased to over 10,000," said Tangail Department of Agriculture Extension Deputy Director Abdur Razzak.

Apiculturists from outside the district, especially from Satkhira, also set up their bee colonies in local mustard fields, he said.

"It is true that rain during December damaged mustard flowers in the district, reducing honey production. However, production target of 50 tonnes by local beekeepers in the district has already been achieved this year," he added.

"Necessary technology-based modern training will be given to the local apiculturists from next year for increasing their number as well as increasing honey production," he added.



An agriculture official looks on as a farmer collects honey from one of the many boxes meant for attracting bees beside a mustard field at Bhadgram village in Mirzapur upazila of Tangail.

PHOTO: STAR

## Villagers suffer as bridge lies damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Thousands of people of three villages in Barguna's Amtali upazila are facing immense sufferings as a concrete bridge, damaged about two years ago, still lies without repair.

In a bid to reduce their sufferings, villagers set

up a wooden platform on the concrete structure of the bridge after its original platform broke down about two years ago.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built the 150-foot-long bridge, on Gajkhali Canal, in 2011-12 fiscal year to ease communication between Amtali upazila head-

quarter and Barguna town as well as nearby Patuakhali district.

Since the construction of the bridge, about 20,000 people, especially school and college going children, of Krishnanagar, Patakata and Rawgha villages in the upazila had been getting benefit by using the bridge everyday.

Locals said the bridge became unfit to use about two years ago due to lack of renovation since its construction about eight years ago.

Later, villagers in cooperation with the local union parishad temporarily repaired the bridge and made it usable by setting up a wooden platform in place of the damaged concrete floor.

Villagers are compelled to use the risky bridge as there are a number of educational institutions, weekly markets and bazars surrounding the bridge.

Many students from Krishnanagar, Patakata and Rawgha villages have to attend their institutions by crossing the risky bridge everyday, Headmaster of Kukua Adarsha High School Mohammad Faruque said, adding that the authorities concerned should take immediate steps to repair the bridge, considering interest of the school kids.

Local resident Abdul Maleque said the local people, especially school kids, have to cross the important bridge amid risk of accident.

Kukua Union Parishad Chariman Borhan Uddin alias Masum Talukder said the damaged bridge badly needs renovation, adding that he has asked the higher authority to repair the dilapidated bridge.

LGED Engineer in Amtali Mohammad Nazrul Islam said he will take necessary steps in this regard after visiting the spot.



People cross this awfully dilapidated bridge on Gajkhali canal in Barguna's Amtali upazila amid risk, as the authorities concerned are yet to take any step to repair their only means of communication with the district town.

PHOTO: STAR

## Paralysed woman burnt to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An elderly woman was burnt to death as a fire gutted her house at Purba Islambag in Panchagarh municipality early yesterday.

The victim was Amena Begum, 70, wife of late Mozammel Haque of the area. She became paralysed about ten years ago.

Family members said the fire originated at the house around 4:00am when Amena was inside her room. She later died at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital with severe burn injuries.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the blaze and rescued the woman and sent her to the hospital, said Niranjana Sarkar, station officer of Panchagarh Fire Service and Civil Defense Office.

The fire might have originated from a mosquito coil inside the house, said Niranjana.

## Muktagachha UZ vice chairman lands in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday sent a female vice chairman of Muktagachha upazila to jail, rejecting her bail prayer.

Earlier, police detained accused Aziza Rahman, 40, joint secretary of Muktagachha upazila unit of Mohila Dal, from her residence at Mujati in the upazila the same morning.

She is an accused in a case filed in December last year for hurling petrol bomb, said Muktagachha Police Station OCAli Ahmed Mollah.