

'Drug dealer' held after 'gunfight' with cops

Firearm seized, 3 policemen hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An alleged drug peddler was arrested with bullet injuries following a 'gunfight' with police in Chatiyani Pashchimpara area of the district town yesterday.

Three policemen were also injured during the gunfight. Arrestee Apel Sheikh alias Apel, 42, son of Shamsher Sheikh of the area, is now undergoing treatment at Pabna General Hospital under police custody.

Apel is a listed drug peddler and arms cadre in the area. He is accused in nine cases, said Additional Superintendent of Police Goutam Kumar Biswas.

Goutam Kumar said informed that a gang was carrying out illegal drug peddling in the area, a police team raided there early in the morning.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire. In retaliation, police fired back, triggering a gunfight which continued for about 15 minutes.

Later, police arrested Apel with bullet injuries in his right leg from the spot and sent him to the hospital. However, his cohorts managed to flee the scene.

They also seized a pistol, eight bullets, one magazine and five grams of heroin from the arrestee's possession, said the police official.

The injured policemen are assistant sub-inspectors Md Nuruzzaman and Shahid Akter and constable Md Shahadat Hossain of Sadar Police Station. They were also admitted to the hospital.

Abducted trader rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A fish trader was rescued yesterday, an hour after his abduction from Satai Amlai village in Jashore's Sharsha upazila.

He sustained serious injuries in an attack allegedly by the men of a local money lender.

Injured Mukter Gayan, 40, son of Abul Gayan of the village, is now undergoing treatment at Jashore 250-bed General Hospital.

Moshiur Rahman, OC of Sharsha Police Station, said four years ago, Mukter took a loan of Tk 2 lakh from Tanoy Pearl.

Mukter paid off the loan within two years, but failed to pay interest of the loan money.

Recently, it was decided to pay interest of the loan money very soon. The decision was taken at a meeting between Mukter and Tanoy held in presence of the Goga union parishad chairman.

Around 8:00am yesterday, a group of 10 to 12 men of Tanoy, equipped with firearms, picked up Mukter from his house to get back the interest money.

About an hour after the abduction, Mukter was left abandoned in the area in a pool of blood. On information, police went to the spot and rescued Mukter.



Many such village roads in Lalmonirhat are facing threat of collapse as influential brick kiln owners continue removing the topsoil from roadside farmlands, using excavator machines. The photo was taken from Devirpat village in Aditmari upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR

REMOVAL OF TOPSOIL

Rural roads face threat

Many influential brick kiln owners in Lalmonirhat continue the illegal act

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Many rural roads under different upazilas of the district have been facing threat of collapse as local brick kiln owners continued removing the topsoil from roadside farmlands, using excavator machines.

Locals alleged that although Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) authorities are well informed about the matter, they are yet to take any legal action in this regard due to unknown reason.

Besides, fearing unnecessary harassment by the influential brick kiln owners, local people are not dared to protest or complaint to the authorities concerned.

As the brick kiln owners' are taking away five feet to six feet deep topsoil from the roadside

farmlands, it may trigger sudden collapses to the government roads during the rainy season, Azizul Islam, 50, a resident of Devirpat village in Aditmari upazila, said, adding that although they have informed the LGED authority about the menace, they are yet to take any steps against the perpetrators.

"Random movements of trucks to and from the nearby brick fields' have been gradually damaging the newly constructed road of our village," Nabiar Rahman of Nawdabansh village in Hatibandha upazila said.

Schoolteacher Shahenur Rahman, 45, of Dalgram village in Kaliganj upazila, said although owners of the nearby brick fields earlier used to collect the topsoil by hired labourers, this year they are collecting it by engaging excavator machines.

Shahidul Islam, operator of one of the excavator machines at Devirpat village, said Habibur Rahman, owner of Tapati Brick Field, pays him Tk 1,300 per hour for running the machine.

"I can dig up to around 2,000 cubic feet (CFT) soil in an hour," Shahidul said.

Brick kiln owner Habibur Rahman, however, declined to make any comment in this regard.

Lalmonirhat LGED Executive Engineer AKM Amiruzzaman said he already visited some spots and was taking preparation to submit a written complaint to the local administration, seeking their intervention," he said.

Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner Shafiul Arif said he will take necessary legal action against the dishonest brick kiln owners if anyone files any written complaint.

SIRAJGANJ BOY MISSING

Victim's four friends on 2-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Sirajganj court yesterday placed four friends of missing college boy Parvez Rana on a two-day remand in connection with a case filed by the victim's grandfather on January 28.

Earlier, police detained Nayan Hossain, 19, Mohammad Rajon, 30, Mobarak Hossain, 35, and Lutfar Rahman, 20, from different villages in Sirajganj Sadar upazila and produced them before the Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday noon.

Meanwhile, students of different educational institutions in Sirajganj town formed a human chain and held a protest rally in front of Sirajganj Press Club yesterday noon and gave an ultimatum to the authorities concerned to trace out Rana, 19, within the next 24 hours.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said Rana, an HSC first-year student at Sirajganj Collectorate School and College and son of Babul Akter of Veramara village, went out of his house after receiving a phone call from one of his friends on January 28 and remained missing since then.

Victim's grandfather Abdul Kuddus filed a case with Sirajganj Sadar Police Station against Rana's five friends the same day, Inspector (Operation) Nurul Islam said, adding that they were conducting drives to rescue the victim.



A farmer processes vermicompost in concrete beds at his house in Tengrakhali village of Bagerhat's Kachua upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Vermicompost replaces chemical fertiliser

Bagerhat farmers producing organic fertiliser in 2,000 concrete ring wells, beds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Vermicompost fertiliser is gaining popularity in all the nine upazilas of the district as it gives higher yield of crops than chemical fertilisers and also increases fertility of the soil.

Farmers process vermicompost in more than 2,000 concrete ring wells and beds at their houses in the areas, said Aftab Uddin, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Bagerhat.

The growers said they need to spend little money to buy vermicompost, whereas chemical fertilisers are costly.

When the cost of one kilogram of organic fertiliser is Tk 20 and at the same time chemical fertiliser is Tk 30 per kg, they said.

Faruk Bali of Tengrakhali village in Kachua upazila said using the natural earthworm fertiliser he has been getting more

vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage and tomatoes for the last two years.

A resident of the village, Hedayet Bali, who has been commercially producing vermicompost for the last two years, said he bought 40,000 Thai earthworms at Tk 40,000 in 2017 and mixed them with cow dung. After a couple of weeks, it is ready for use as compost fertiliser after separation of the earthworms.

Currently he is producing the fertiliser in 12 concrete beds at his house. It needs 100 maunds of cow dung for 35 to 40 days. He sells per kg of earthworm fertiliser at Tk 20, said Hedayet.

As the vermicompost or earthworm fertiliser is gaining popularity day by day, the dependence on chemical fertiliser is reducing, said the DAE official, adding that the fertiliser is cheaper and increases the fertility of the land, and it is also environment friendly.

Man to walk gallows for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his wife in Brahmanbaria town in 2013.

The convict is Jishan Chowdhury Ziku, 32, son of Sanaullah Chowdhury of New Mourail area of the town. He was tried in absentia.

According to the prosecution, Jesmin Akter Akhi, 23, daughter of Muslim Munshi of Demra area in Dhaka, married Ziku in 2012. Ziku strangled Jesmin over an extramarital affair on August 27 in 2013.

The next day, Akhi's father filed a murder case with Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station against Ziku.

Police later pressed charge-sheet against Ziku after investigation.

After examining witnesses and evidences, Brahmanbaria District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Shafiul Azam found Ziku guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Bamboo artisans in hardship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Families of many bamboo craftsmen in Lalmonirhat are passing days in hardship as demand for bamboo made items is gradually falling.

Nowadays, only a few female members from the craftsmen's families are engaged in their ancestral profession as almost all the male craftsmen in the area have changed their ancestral trade and engaged themselves in various alternative jobs to earn their livelihood and maintain their families.

One of the female artisans at Mahishkhocha Daspara in Aditmari upazila Sunati Rani Das, 28, said usually she makes different bamboo made items like winnowing-fans and baskets.

"Although we still produce a good number of bamboo items, sale of such items has declined in the local markets in recent times," Sunati said, adding that the number of items she produces now is hardly about 20 percent of what she used to produce 10 years ago.

Sunati's husband Nagen Chandra Das said he maintains his family working as farm labourer because earning from his ancestral trade is a bid uncertain now.

"Although the price of bamboo is gradually getting costlier, demand for bamboo made items is witnessing sharp fall day by day," Nagen said.

Fifty-year-old Malati Rani Das, another artisan of the same village, said one can produce 10 pieces of winnowing-fans or baskets everyday, but there is hardly any market to sell those, adding that, "We produce only four to five such items now and can earn Tk 50 to Tk 60 from selling the items."

Dhirendranath Das, 78, an elderly craftsman of Chaklarhat Daspara in Kaliganj upazila, said people nowadays prefer to use plastic items, adding that as plastic items are much cheaper consumers are losing interest in bamboo made crafts.

However, as some individuals still prefer to use bamboo made items, a few craftsmen from their community are still

producing the items for them on a small scale, Dhirendranath added.

Another craftsman of the village Manik Lal Das, 75, said around 1200 craftsmen's families in the district were involved in producing items made of bamboo, but all the male artisans of those families have said goodbye to their ancestral trade.



A woman makes bamboo made winnowing fan at her house at Mahishkhocha village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Scientists lay importance on safe seed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Scientists at a programme said healthy seed is the prime demand to grow safe agricultural produces.

They said this at an event titled "To detect diseases in winter vegetable and their prevention" held at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) campus in the district yesterday.

BAU Seed Pathology Centre organised the training programme for farmers.

For a healthy nation, safe food and safe vegetable are needed and the scientists must go for produce safe seed, said the speakers at the programme.

They also urged the farmers to implement their knowledge gathered from the training at field level.

Some 25 male and female farmers took part in the programme. BAU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Md Ali Akbar was the chief guest.

Prof Dr Mohammad Shahjahan Monjil, director of BAU Seed Pathology Centre, presided over the programme.