

Security still flawed at Saidpur Airport

Damaged barbed wire fence needs urgent repair, strict vigilance required to check trespassers

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Although security has been beefed up in Saidpur Airport recently, passengers and locals claimed that it was only noticeable at the time of landing and departure of aircrafts but remained lax in other times.

Like the other airports in the country, security arrangement in Saidpur Airport has come under scrutiny following a recent unsuccessful hijacking bid of a Bangladesh Biman aircraft.

A Bangladesh Biman aircraft 'Maiurpankhi' had an emergency landing at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram on February 23 when a youth reportedly carrying a toy gun created a hostage situation. He was later neutralized and killed in a swift commando action. But question remained how the young man boarded the plane with a gun dodging all the security scanners?

"The authorities should be more serious regarding airport security which still seems not up to the mark," said industrialist Siddikul Alam, who frequently travels to Saidpur.

Saidpur is one of the six domestic airports and a busy one with nine commercial flights operating to and from there every day.

Nilphamari's Mizanur Rahman, another regular passenger of Dhaka-Saidpur-Dhaka route, said that it was not long ago the airport experienced security situation.

"Panic still haunts me as I recall the incident of August 27 last year when four youths in the guise of air travellers tried to board an aircraft with sharp knives. They were detected by passengers before being detained by law enforcers," said Rahman.

Airport Manager Shahin Ahmed acknowledged that incident but said, "Round the clock security arrangements in Saidpur Airport has been intensified with additional police force and Ansar while civil aviation's security personnel have been deployed to keep watchful eyes by turn."

He also said that only passengers carrying boarding passes are allowed to enter the airport terminal through series of



Unscrupulous people have dug holes and removed a portion of the barbed wire fence on the western boundary wall of Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari, posing the threat of intrusion by unwanted people.

PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

checking and people who come to receive or say goodbye to near and dear ones are made to stop at least 100 metres away from the entrance.

During a visit on March 3, this correspondent saw people working at the fast food shops inside the airport terminal and a few visitors were entering through the open gate taking advantages of lax security.

Construction work was going on in full swing as part of the government's plan to make it a regional international airport.

But a good number of workers engaged by the contractor concerned were seen

entering inside through the north gate without checking, raising concern about possible trespassing.

Asked about the matter, Shahin Ahmed refuted the allegation and said that each worker is thoroughly checked before entering and an officer is posted there for monitoring.

The airport's boundary is also not fool-proof and it lacks constant vigilance.

During the visit, this correspondent noticed metallic coil of barbed wire fencing on the wall was cut and removed at some places while concrete

wall was dug to make holes.

Unscrupulous people use those holes to climb and cross through the fencing gap inside the airport and this situation may pose serious threat anytime, said locals.

The airport manager, however, said they are vigilant to address problems whenever detected.

Contacted, Mohibul Haque, secretary of Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry, said they have sent written instructions to all airport authorities to ensure foolproof security for the passengers and all concerned.

GANG RAPE, MURDER OF GIRL

4 suspects arrested after seven months in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) arrested four suspects, seven months after a 20-year-old girl was murdered after gang rape in Bahubal upazila of Habiganj.

"We have detained four people including the boyfriend of the murdered girl. Two of the four suspects including the girl's boyfriend Zubayer Ahmed confessed to raping and murdering the girl," Habiganj PBI Additional Superintendent of Police Kutubur Rahman Chowdhury told reporters on Saturday evening.

Kutubur said police traced and detained Saifur Rahman, 24, from Snainghat area of Bahubal upazila on March 6.

Based on Saifur's confession, police detained the mastermind Zubayer and other two accused Mamun-ur-Rashid, 22, and Abu Sayeed, 23, from separate places of the district of Friday.

The victim was lured out of home by Zubayer on the night of August 4, 2018.

"During interrogation, prime suspect Zubayer said that he and his accomplices gang-raped her, and then killed her. His friends gave him Tk 500 for allowing them to rape the victim," Kutubur said while briefing the reporters of the gruesome incident.

"As the victim tried to resist the brutal act, they slashed her throat with a sharp weapon. The perpetrators then dumped the body on a nearby paddy field and fled away," said the PIB's additional ASP.

"Following information given by Zubayer, police also recovered the weapon used for murder from Rajapur village on Friday night," the official said.

"Zubayer and three other were produced before the court on Saturday afternoon, and they were sent to jail following order from the court," said PIB's Inspector Mainul Islam, who is investigating the case.

On August 5 last year, police recovered the murdered girl's body from a paddy field near her house at Rajapur village.

The victim's mother filed a murder case with Bahubal Police Station accusing unidentified people the following day.

After initial investigation, the case was transferred to PBI on December 4 last year with Inspector Mainul Islam as the investigation officer.

Justice a must to ensure human rights

Advocate Sultana Kamal tells Pabna seminar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Justice is a must to save the society from extremism, terrorism, extrajudicial killing and other inhuman activities, renowned human rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal said at a programme here yesterday.

She was speaking at a discussion titled 'Role of women in reforming the society,' organised by non-governmental organisation Pabna Protishruti at Annoda Gobinda Public Library auditorium in the district town.

While attending the seminar as the chief guest, advocate Sultana Kamal, founder of Manobadhikar Shangshkriti Foundation (MSF), said, "When people are deprived of proper justice, when people do not get proper action from the authorities concerned they may become aggrieved and sometimes take the law in their hand."

Criticising the poor state of human rights in the country, she said not only a section of public, sometimes the law enforcers get involved in inhuman activities like extrajudicial killings.



Sultana Kamal speaks at a discussion at Annoda Gobinda Public Library auditorium in Pabna town yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

the country, she said, adding that though many urban women are advancing towards it, most of the village women are still in the dark.

"Keeping our women in the dark we will never get proper development," advocate Kamal added.

Chairman of Pabna Protishruti Abdul Matin Khan conducted the seminar with its Executive Director Momota Chakladar in the chair.

"Without women's empowerment we cannot get proper development of

the country, she said, adding that though many urban women are advancing towards it, most of the village women are still in the dark.

"Keeping our women in the dark we will never get proper development," advocate Kamal added.

Chairman of Pabna Protishruti Abdul Matin Khan conducted the seminar with its Executive Director Momota Chakladar in the chair.



Students of Singair Girls' High School and Singair Pilot High School join a bicycle procession in Singair upazila town of Manikganj yesterday marking International Women's Day. Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge cooperated with the two schools as part of an awareness campaign to prevent child marriage and repression against women.

AL-backed candidate faces wife in UZ polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A local Awami League leader and his wife in Baufal upazila under the district are facing each other in the upcoming upazila parishad election while a man and his sister-in-law in Sadar upazila are contesting as independent candidates.

Elections to seven upazila parishads under the district will be held on March 31, said District Election Officer Ziaur Rahman Khalifa.

In Baufal upazila, Motaleb Hawlader,

party's upazila unit secre-

tary, is AL nominated aspirant while his wife Rehana Motaleb is an independent candidate.

In Sadar upazila, independent candidate advocate Sawkat Mridha

is facing his sister-in-

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