

Schoolgirl's body found in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police found the body of a seventh grader girl in a river beside a cremation ground in Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila on Monday night, 12 hours after she went out of her school in Joypurhat town.

The deceased, Ritu Paul, 13, daughter of Bishwajit Paul, a teacher residing at Sabujnagar in Joypurhat municipality, was a student of Joypurhat High School.

Like other days, Ritu went to her school on Monday morning, said her family members.

After staying at classroom for an hour, the girl, in uniform and carrying schoolbag, left the school, said Akhtar Hossain, a teacher of the school.

She was looking frustrated, said a few of her classmates, seeking anonymity.

As she did not return home after school hours, her parents went to school and then to different places including relatives' houses in search of her.

Failing to trace Ritu, her father Bishwajit filed a diary with Sadar Police Station, stating that her daughter was missing.

In the afternoon, a local found a schoolbag at the cremation ground in Panchbibi and informed police.

"Police launched a search and found the girl's body in the Chhoto Jamuna river around 10:00pm," said Monsur Rahman, officer in charge (OC) of Panchbibi Police Station.

"Police officials in presence of the deceased girl's grandmother examined her body carefully and no mark of torture or rape was found. However, she had swallowed huge quantity of water," said Siddiqui Rahman, OC of Joypurhat Sadar Police Station.

"The body was sent to Joypurhat Modern Hospital for autopsy. The cause of the death will be clear after getting the report," he added.

The CCTV footages near the school and the cremation ground area showed that the girl went out of her school and got on a rickshaw-van heading toward Panchbibi and later she got down beside the cremation ground from another rickshaw-van, said the OCs of the two police stations.

Land dispute leaves 2 killed in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Two people, including a freedom fighter, were killed and at least 22 others injured in a clash between two groups of villagers over a land dispute at Bilkenduai village in Sadar upazila on Monday.

The deceased are Malai Mia, 45, and Abdur Rouf, 72, a freedom fighter, of the village.

Quoting villagers, Inspector (Investigation) Atiqur Rahman of Sadar Model Police Station said there had been a longstanding feud between Nasir Mia and Malai Mia over the ownership of a disputed land at the village and it took a serious turn during the last union parishad election.

As a sequel to the enmity, a group loyal to Nasir equipped with sharp weapons attacked Malai's house around 5:30pm on Monday, leaving Malai critically injured.

Injured Malai later died while he was being taken to Dhaka Medial College Hospital (DMCH) the same night.

Meanwhile, hearing the news, both the groups locked in a fierce clash that lasted for nearly one and a half hours, leaving 23 people from both sides injured, the police officer said.

Of the injured, 17 were admitted to Brahmanbaria General Hospital while Rouf was referred to DMCH, but he succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment there the same night.

Being informed, police went to the spot and brought the situation under control, the investigation officer said, adding that additional police have been deployed at the village to avert further incident.



One of the two impressive underconstruction buildings at the multipurpose complex in front of Shilaidaha Kuthibari in Kushtia nears completion.

PHOTO: STAR

TAGORE'S SHILAI DAHA KUTHIBARI

Construction of multipurpose buildings in full swing

The two buildings will house an amphitheatre, library, museum, cafeteria and lodging for tourists

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Construction of the multipurpose complex in front of the Shilaidaha Kuthibari in Kushtia, where Rabindranath Tagore lived a part of life, is going on in full swing.

Now there will be two more buildings alongside the picturesque red sprawling building amidst 11 acres of orchards.

The two new buildings will house an amphitheatre, a library, a museum, a 40-room lodging for tourists, and a two-storey cafeteria.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found construction of one building was over while the other one was underway.

Architect Robiul Husain has designed the complex being built on

a six-acre plot in front of the mansion in Kumarkhali upazila, some 20 kilometres off Kushtia town.

During his 2013 visit, former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee promised to fund the complex's construction.

"Bangladesh and India share similar cultural legacy, refurbishment of the site will strengthen the bonding," Pranab had said.

The local administration then recovered six acres of land from illegal occupiers at the north side of the entrance. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone in 2015.

Local Public Works Department started the construction work in 2018 with Tk13crore granted by the Indian government.

"Even though it is a popular tourist spot, lack of facilities and hassle drove away visitors over time. The new look is expected to draw a greater number of visitors," said Kushtia Deputy Commissioner Aslam Hossain.

"Given the pace of work, we hope that the site will be completed by this year," he added.

Mahbubul Alam Hanif, AL lawmaker in Kushtia-3 constituency, said, "I wish to turn Kushtia into a cultural hub. The renovated site will pave way for that."

"Kuthibari is one of the prime spots that helped Rabindranath to write," said Ashoke Shah, general secretary of Jatiyo Rabindra Sangeet Sammelan Parishad Kushtia chapter.

"One has to visit this archaeological site again and again to fully absorb the creations of Rabindranath," said Mokhlesur Rahman, custodian of Kuthibari.

Tagore stayed intermittently between 1891 and 1901 at the three-storied, pyramid-shaped, terraced bungalow.

Sitting at this country house or on a boat on Padma river, the Nobel laureate wrote a number of masterpieces like "Sonar Tori", "Chitra", "Chaitali", "Kotha O Kahini", "Kshanika", most of the poems from "Naibedya" and "Kheya", and songs from "Gitanjali" and "Gitimalya".

Many prominent personalities -- scientist Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, dramatist and music composer DL Roy, and litterateur Promoth Chowdhury, visited Tagore at this location.



Members of Santal community under the banner of Sahebganj Bagdafarm Bhumi Uddhar Sangram Committee yesterday brought out a procession in Gaibandha town, protesting exclusion of names of former lawmaker Abul Kalam Azad and a few police men from a charge sheet over killing of three Santal men and arson attack on their property. The attack on the community took place three years ago in Gobindaganj upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Man held for raping minor girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested an elderly man from Shibganj upazila on Monday in connection with a case filed for raping a minor girl in Chapainawabganj town on Friday.

The arrestee, Shafiqul Islam, 60, is a resident of Baganpara area in the town.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Ziaur Rahman said following a case filed by the victim's mother on Friday night, police detained Shafiqul from Kansat Bus Stand area on Monday night.

According the case statement, Shafiqul picked up the six-year-old girl tactfully while she was playing near her house, took her at his house and raped her, before fleeing the spot.

Later in the evening, the little girl disclosed the matter to her parents, who instantly admitted her at Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital the same night.

ACID THROWN ON MADRASA GIRL

None arrested yet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

None has been arrested in connection with throwing acid on a madrasa girl in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh on Saturday morning.

The victim, Minha Rafida Khanam, 17, daughter of Salahuddin Khan of Ansarnagar village in Gafargaon, is an intermediate first year student of Panchbagh Senior Fazil Madrasa in Gafargaon.

"The victim's father lodged a case accusing two unknown youths on Saturday night. We are investigating the incident. The culprits are yet to be identified," said Md Shahinuzzaman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Pagla Police Station in Gafargaon.

When Minha reached Taratia area of Gafargaon-Hossainpur road on way to her madrasa around 10:00am on Saturday, two unidentified miscreants riding a motorbike threw acid on her and fled, he quoted locals as saying.

"Burqa-clad Minha sustained burn injuries in her face and hands. Hearing her screams, locals rushed to the spot and took her to Hossainpur Upazila Health Complex from where she was shifted to Kishroeganj General Hospital. Finally she was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she is undergoing treatment," said the OC.

Protesting the attack and demanding arrest of the culprits, locals including students and teachers of different educational institutions formed human chains in the area.

FLOODS IN JAMALPUR

Seven thousand fish farmers lose Tk 48 crore

Fish farming plays a vital role in meeting demand of protein for Jamalpur's 23 lakh inhabitants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

As many as seven thousand fish farmers in Jamalpur have suffered huge loss, estimated at around Tk 48 crore, in this year's floods that washed away their ponds.

After the floods inundated 9,032 ponds in the district, about 2,984.32 tonnes of fish from the ponds escaped into floodwaters, according to Fisheries Department in Jamalpur.

Fisheries Officer Abdul Majid said the flood caused Tk 47.95 crore worth of damage to the fish farms and Tk 7.19 crore of it is infrastructural damage. The damage also includes Tk 3.47 crore worth of fingerlings or baby fish that the floodwater washed away.

Fish farming plays a vital role in meeting demand of protein intake for Jamalpur's 23 lakh inhabitants as the local farms, run by 16,500 farmers, produce almost half of the fish required annually in the district, he also said.

Many affected farmers said their loss was extensive this time since most of their ponds were stocked with a large quantity of fish.

While speaking with this correspondent, fish farmer Omar Faruk, from Kotamoni village in Sadar upazila, said this year he spent Tk 3.5 lakh on his five ponds, on 2.5 acres of land, and before getting flooded, the ponds had 40 to 50 maunds of fish, each weighing 500 to 600 grams.

"All the fish have been washed away by the floodwater. Otherwise,



Nets placed around fish ponds could not save crores of taka invested by farmers as fish inside nine thousand ponds escaped with overflowing floodwaters in Jamalpur.

PHOTO: STAR

three months later, I could make Tk 7 to 8 lakh from the fish and 50 percent of it would be profit," he said.

Without assistance from the authorities concerned, especially without loans or subsidies, the fish farmers might not be able to recover the loss and stand up on their feet again, he also said.

Humayun Kabir Jamali, another fish farmer from Sawnia village in the same upazila, said he invested Tk 7 lakh in a netted fish enclosure in an open waterbody. But he lost the entire investment due to the flood.

Now the fish farmers desperately need financial support from the government, he added.