

Ferdousi: A torchbearer of education

Daughter of a freedom fighter, she provides free uniform and stationery to children of two schools she established in a remote village

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Paschim Barua village used to be pervaded by some typical social ills -- superstition, child marriage, and child labour. A remote village of 20,000 people in Kulaghat union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, it has now been transformed by education.

Villagers have built awareness against such social ills and on the importance of sending their children to school for learning.

All this has come about in the village, say locals, since the establishment of two educational institutions -- Paschim Barua Government Primary School and Paschim Barua Rotary High School.

While visiting the village from Lalmonirhat town around a decade ago, Ferdousi Begum, a poet and social worker, noticed children working in the fields rather than going to school. She then set up the schools there.

"We were not able to study before. Our children aren't literate but our grandchildren are now studying," said 97-year-old villager Moyez Uddin.

"This is good. I did not understand the importance of education before."

Though there are many wealthy villagers in Paschim Barua, they did not think about taking such an initiative for the rest of the villages as they sent their own children to town to study, said another villager, 98-year-old Subal

Chandra Mohanta.

"Children of poor families grew up illiterate before. Now, the light of education has spread across the village where once these children used to work in the fields instead of reading books," he said.

Ferdousi works as an accountant in a private company and spends around 80 percent of her income in these philanthropic endeavours, which have been instrumental in bringing about social reform in Paschim Barua.

Ferdousi, 48, is daughter of late freedom fighter Ayet Ali Bhuiyan and late Hasnara Bhuiyan of Saptana road in Lalmonirhat town. Her husband, Matiar Rahman, is a noted lawyer in Zila Parishad area of the town.

"My husband inspires and supports me in my social work. As long as I live, I will continue working for the society," said Ferdousi.

The majority of the students in the schools are from relatively poor families in the village. Ferdousi also helps pay for clothing and other accessories the children need for school.

Ferdousi is not just working to educate children in Paschim Barua. Her social work also includes providing financial assistance and connecting homeless women and women freedom fighters with legal assistance.

**CHANGE
MAKER**



Ferdousi Begum with students of Paschim Barua Government Primary School in Paschim Barua village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR



Budding mango trees spread fragrance all around. The photo was taken from Court area in Chapainawabganj town yesterday.

PHOTO: RABIULHASAN

Woman held with Phensedyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A woman was held with 80 bottles Phensedyl in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj yesterday noon.

The arrestee was identified as Monwara Begum, 45, wife of Abul Kashem of Sharika Hatti in Bhairabpur village under Bhairab Police Station in Kishoreganj district.

On secret information, a police team raided Madhabpur bus stand area and arrested Monwara.

The police team then searched Monwara and found 80 bottles of Phensedyl from her body, said Golam Dastagir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Madhabpur Police Station.

Three Pabna roads named after FFs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, PABNA

Pabna municipality authorities on Saturday named three important roads of the district town after freedom fighters.

Pabna Doi Bazar road was renamed after freedom fighter Anjan Chowdhury Pintu, also managing director of Square Toiletries LTD, Chadakhar Bashtola road after freedom fighter Habibur Rahman Habib and Library Bazar road after late language hero Aminul Islam Badsha, also an organiser of freedom fighters.

Anjan Chowdhury Pintu inaugurated Freedom Fighter Habibur Rahman Habib Road, Habibur Rahman inaugurated Freedom Fighter Anjan Chowdhury Pintu Road and Aminul Islam Badsha's son Sabirul Islam Biplob, also joint secretary of the Cabinet Division, inaugurated Aminul Islam Badsha Road.

Pabna municipality Mayor Kamrul Hasan

Mintu, Pabna Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Saiful Alam Swapan Chowdhury, and journalist Rabiul Islam Robi were present, among others, at the three programmes for renaming the roads.

"Freedom fighters are the best sons of our soil. It is our duty to keep their memory alive for the future generation. We appreciate Pabna municipality's initiative for naming the roads after three freedom fighters," said Sabirul Islam Biplob.

Talking with The Daily Star, Mayor Kamrul Hasan Mintu said, "Following an earlier resolution, the municipality authorities took the initiative in the month of independence to rename the three key roads of Pabna after the names of three great freedom fighters."

"We will continue such steps to keep the memories of the heroic sons of the soil alive for the future generation," he said.

700 girls getting free self-defense training



School and college girls are learning karate for self-defense at Rafiqul Islam Mohila College campus in Bhairab of Kishoreganj.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Around 700 school and college girls are learning karate for self-defense in Bhairab of Kishoreganj.

Of them, 650 girls of Rafiqul Islam Mohila College and the rest from different local high schools are taking free karate training to defend themselves against stalkers and torturers of women at the college campus since March 8.

The college authority has organised the weeklong training workshop on "Self-Defense and Karate Training" at the campus.

The workshop was inaugurated on March 8, marking the International Women's Day. It will end on March 14, said college sources.

A seven-member team of 'Japan Karate India' are conducting the

workshop.

The trainers are team leader Parosh Kumar Mishra, Bijoy Sharma, Asha Mishra, Sreedam Saha, Prodyuth Kumar Ghosh, Laxmi Das Linda and Kabita Projapoti.

Sharif Ahmed, principal of the college, said there was a three-day programme of 'Khelaghar Asor' at the college and many other local educational institutions took part in the programme.

"At that time, three members of 'Japan Karate India' --Sreedam Saha, Prodyuth Kumar Ghosh and Laxmi Das Linda-- attended the programme where Laxmi Das had a session on 'Karate' that inspired us most," said the principal.

"We later contacted them and

arranged such training workshop for the first time this year," he said.

Mohana, one of the participants, said the workshop is an extra-ordinary experience in her life. She is getting full support from the family and teachers in learning the martial art.

"We are lucky to get an opportunity to learn karate besides our academic activities because it is difficult to take such training after completion of student life," said another participant Setu.

She also thanked the college authority for organising such martial art.

Lt Commander of Bangladesh Navy Fatema Zeny, also the former student of the college, inaugurated the weeklong training workshop. Mymensingh District and Sessions Judge Md Helal Uddin was the chief guest with principal Sharif Ahmed in the chair.

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