

# A gloomy picture of pry edn

50 pc students from schools, 20 pc from madrassahs fail in evaluation test in class six

AKTER FARUK, Barisal

About fifty per cent students who crossed the primary level failed in the newly introduced evaluation test in class six.

The percentage is 20 among students who came from madrassahs, sources at the district education office said.

The present government introduced the test at the beginning of secondary (SSC) level to evaluate the standard of education at primary level.

The test, based on the syllabus for Class V, was held on February 16.

A total of 28,089 students of class six at different high schools in the

district, who crossed primary schools and madrassahs, took part in the test.

Among them, 15,756 passed and only 5 per cent got 60 per cent and above marks. Some examinees got zero.

Over 31 per cent got up to 19 marks, 21.11 per cent got 20-29, 27 per cent got 30-40 and 13.78 per cent got 45-59 marks.

The result has been sent to the Directorate of Primary Education.

Of the students, 5,542 were from 82 schools and madrassahs in the Sadar upazila.

Many of the students who failed were from some reputed government and non-government schools

in Barisal city.

They include six from Government Zila School, 71 from Government Sadar Girls School, 30 from Udayan Missionary School, 35 from BM School, 19 from Jagadis Swarashati Girls School. These high schools have primary sections also.

But Barisal District Education Officer Mokammel Huq differed with him. Huq said the questions were easy and any examinee could easily get at least 33 to 40 marks.

The questions for both school and madrassah students were set by the same persons.

"How a student gets zero after spending five years at school?" he posed the question.

were also higher those in their respective schools and madrassahs, he said.

He claimed that the question for students coming from primary schools was tougher than that for students coming from madrassahs.

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PHOTO: STAR

Two disabled persons on wheelchairs (left) and SUS workers helping a disabled child to play with a ball (right) at the SUS health centre at Netrakona town.

# Criminals say goodbye to crimes

Unique role played by Nilphamari SP, local UP Chairman, Grameen Bank

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Kisamat Dogachi, known as a village of thieves, thugs and criminals for over 100 years, will now have a different identity.

Eighty-five thieves of the village along with their 10 sardars (leaders), who were criminals for generations, have vowed to lead honest life.

The credit goes to Nilphamari Police Superintendent Chowdhury Abdullah al-Mamun, Grameen Bank AGM for Nilphamari Zone Jahangir Hossain, Area Manager Altaf Hossain and Tupamari Union Parishad Chairman Babul Chowdhury.

The 85 made the public pledge at a solemn function on Kisamat Dogachi mosque premises on Monday, where

Grameen Bank gave loans to wives of all of them for income generating activities.

Besides the SP and Grameen Bank officials, Nilphamari thana OC Ziaul Kabir, local UP Chairman Babul Chowdhury, Headmaster of Nilphamari Girls High School and local elite were present at the function

attended by a large crowd.

Babul Hossain told the function that more thieves would surrender soon.

The village is only six kilometres from the district town.

"We ruined our lives but we want to see our children as good citizens", Tojam told this correspondent at the function.

Many of Tojam's former gangmates including Azira, Ripon, Sumon and Tashi expressed the same sentiment. Their fathers and grandfathers were also known criminals in the area.

Some of them said good sense started haunting their minds when their children started going to school under government grants.

"On return from school, my son wept and said he was called son of a thief by his classmates", lamented Tojam while talking to this correspondent.

"Others hate our children at school and do not mix with them, Samad said.

It was learnt from the villagers that some of the children guard their fathers at night to prevent them from

going out for stealing.

UP Chairman Babul Chowdhury played a key role when some of the thieves told him that they want to lead a normal life.

Babul consulted with the SP.

"After joining I came to know about the village of thieves" the SP said talking to this correspondent.

"I instructed my force to keep an watchful eye on the village. I also thought about alternative professions if they give up crimes".

The SP talked to officials of a number of local NGOs for loans if they return to normal life. But none agreed to operate in the village of criminals.

Only Grameen Bank came forward, the SP said.

The SP in his speech at the function said that every body has equal rights in the society if that person abides by law.

"I want to consider the matter from humanitarian ground", the SP added.

"Their children have the right to be educated and grow up as good citizens", he said.

Grameen Bank AGM Jahangir

Hossain said his bank accepted the SP's proposal to help criminals bring back to normal life.

If they repay loans properly, they will be given bigger loans and their children will get scholarship and education loan, he said.

UP Chairman Babul Chowdhury said he would personally supervise that the loans are properly utilised.

"I want to erase the ill reputation of my village".

At the function, Tk two lakh 81 thousand was distributed among wives of the 85 former criminals.

The women promised that they would buy rickshaws, rickshaw vans, start groceries, cloth business and rear cows and goats.

While taking the loan money, Joy Mala, wife of Shamaj, expressed the fear that her husband could be victim of false cases in future.

In reply, the SP said in such a case, he would order proper investigation to find out the truth.

116 cured, rehabilitated last year by a local NGO

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

Physical disability is not a problem. The main problem is ignorance and superstitions about disability and creating confidence among the victims.

Once this is done, they overcome disability and can start a new life.

This has been proved by Sabolomby Unnayan Samity (SUS-society for self-reliance), a local NGO, which treats and rehabilitates disabled people.

Specialist doctors treat the disabled through physiotherapy at the SUS health centre at Netrakona town.

Once cured, SUS trains them in various vocations and gives them loans for self-reliance.

Of them, physical fitness is developing in 174, SUS officials told this correspondent during a recent visit.

They come to the health centre two days a week for physiotherapy as

each.

Schoolteacher Sankuri Sarker, 45, said his left leg and left hand along with the left side of his body became paralysed after a mild stroke. He is now leading a normal life following physiotherapy at the SUS centre.

Two legs of seven-year-old Suma Akther became paralysed for unknown reasons. She can walk and play, her parents said.

The SUS launched its noble initiative in 1998 with 53 disabled people. Now, 643 people come to it regularly from different areas of the district for treatment of physical disability and training.

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the disabled persons and group theatre.

SUS has given tools including wheel chair to 38 disabled people free of cost.

Ninety-six disabled children are getting education along with therapy at the centre.

It trains the disabled in poultry, sewing, handicrafts making and rehabilitates them by providing loans.

SUS Executive Director Begum Rokeya said their efforts have created confidence among the disabled who visit the centre.

Its aim is to create confidence among the disabled, remove superstitions and wrong ideas about disability, create awareness about their rights in the society and to make them self-reliant by providing training on different vocations and loans.

SUS now runs its activities in 131 villages in five upazilas—Netrakona, Sadar, Atpara, Madan, Kendua and Purbadhal.

To create awareness, SUS men arrange community meetings, discussions on disability at educational institutions, meeting of guardians of

## Girl rescued with help of taxi driver

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A schoolgirl was rescued two hours after her abduction with the help of a taxi driver.

According to Chuadanga police, schoolgirl Julekha Khatun, 15, was returning from Dingadi Girls High School on Monday. She was the daughter of one Abdul Kader of Hanurabdi village in the Sadar upazila.

Jahid Hossain, an activist of Jatiyatatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Chuadanga Government College, whisked her into rented taxicab and sped away.

The kidnapper took her to a house at Uzirpur village in Damurhuda upazila and left the car.

The car driver rushed and informed Sadar police.

Police rescued the girl but the abductor escaped.

A case has been filed with the Sadar police station.

## Farmers protest lease of railway lands to absentee landlord

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishorganj

Several thousand people of Pasda, Patuakandi and Hajirgol villages in Maijupur union under Kishorganj Sadar upazila have been holding gatherings and processions in the area for the last three days for cancellation of lease of about 40 acres of railway land under their possession to an absentee landlord.

Locals claimed that the villagers have been cultivating the lands for about 90 years. The Railway Department recently leased the lands to one Jamilur Rahman who lives in Dhaka.

They said bloody clashes may erupt any time as the lessee is trying to evict the farmers with the help of police and hired hoods. He has brought in goons from Dhaka, they claimed.

Jamilur Rahman came to the area with police on March 31 to take possession of the lands but they were forced to retreat as the villagers faced them with lethal weapons. Since then, hundreds of farmers are guarding the lands by turns.

During a visit to the area yesterday, locals said they will sacrifice life, not the lands because these are means for their livelihood.

Freedom fighter Sirajul Islam Master said that the then railway authorities acquired the lands from

villagers in 1920. In 1966, the then governor of East Pakistan gave the local people permission to cultivate the lands. Since then, they are cultivating the lands.

Baharuddin, a local leader of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), said the railway authorities had acquired the lands for its use. If they decide to lease the lands, farmers who cultivate those should get those.

BNP activists snatch cameras while being smuggled out

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Some ruling party activists snatched 15 video cameras worth Tk 30 lakh from alleged smugglers while those were being taken to India on Monday through the border at Braja Bazaar in Kalabaria upazila.

Eye witnesses said, the BNP activists led by local party leader Rafiqul Islam and Amir Ali snatched the cameras on gunpoint from Abdul Gaffar and Abdus Sobhan. The two alleged smugglers were from Barali village in Kalabaria.

This has angered local people, who are planning demonstrations and submission of a memorandum to the Shyamnagar Upazila Health Complex after being beaten by forest department staff for resisting pilferage of timber from the Sunderbans by thieves.

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Abu Hasna, 26, son of Aziz Dhal of Burigolani village, was fishing in the Keyakhali canal on Tuesdays.

The forest department men confining him in a room, went out and allegedly made a safe passage for the thieves.

After some time, they returned and beat him on charge of giving false information.

Local people later rescued him in an unconscious state and took him to hospital.

## Anti-trafficking body formed in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An anti-trafficking forum was formed here at a daylong workshop, held at Kushtia Zila Parishad auditorium on Monday.

Advocate Manjary Begum, also a social worker, and journalist Amanur Aman, a research fellow at Kushtia Islamic University, were made convenor and member secretary of the forum respectively.

The workshop was organised jointly by Nari-o-Sishi, Unayan Sangstha (NOSUS) a local NGO and Bangladesh chapter of Anti-trafficking Networks (ASTECK).

## Bidi workers on strike at Haragachh in Rangpur

2nd day of agitation passes with a vow to realise 8-pt demand

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

About 50,000 bidi factory workers of Haragachh area here enforced their strike from 8 am to 12 noon on the second day of indefinite agitation programme yesterday.

They were agitating to realise their eight-point demands which include fair wage, medical allowance, festival allowance, separate space at factories for women workers and ban on child labour.

No transport vehicles plied to and from different routes of Haragachh during the strike period as they sat in groups at different points in the area blocking the roads. They forced to halt transaction in all commercial banks at Haragachh and staging sit-in programmes in front of

the banks. The workers boycotted their work at 30 bidi factories for the last two days.

The workers under the banner of Haragachh Bidi Sramik Union brought out a procession which was followed by a meeting at Haragachh High School ground. The union leaders vowed to continue their agitation programme until their eight-point demands are met.

The meeting was chaired by Amin Uddin B Sc while it was addressed, among others, by Khalequzzaman, Obaidul Haque and Tajul Islam.

Their other programmes include workers'

demonstration, road blockade and rally at the district headquarters.

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