

SNAPS

2 die from poisonous gas in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons died after inhaling poisonous gas inside a safety tank in the city on Tuesday.  
They are Md. Hannan, 22, and Dulu, 40.  
Police and witnesses said, they fell sick immediately after entering a sewage safety tank at the house of one Abul Basher in Ambagan area under Khulshi thana at around 3 pm.  
They were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

'Kidnapper' held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

People at Bhurulia village in Shyamnagar upazila caught a youth while he was allegedly kidnapping a girl on gunpoint on Tuesday.  
The youth -- Piar Ali, 32, son of Ronjan Ali of Sola village in Kaligonj upazila-- was handed over to police.  
Police said the villagers told them that he was caught while kidnapping one Julekha Khatun, 16, daughter of Abu Bakkar of Bhurulia village from near her house.

Loans given for goat rearing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The district livestock department on Monday distributed Tk three lakh 75 thousand loans among 66 people for goat rearing.  
Half of the loan recipients are women.  
This was part of a programme to distribute Tk 18 lakh 75 thousand in five upazilas in the district except Jaldhaka, sources said.  
The loans were distributed at a simple function held at the Sadar upazila auditorium. The interest-free loans will be realised in five installments in six months.  
Presided over by Sadar Upazila UNO ABM Sharif Uddin, the function was attended by, among others, Deputy Commissioner Saful Alal and district Livestock Officer Noor Alam.

3 children die in wall collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Three children were killed on the spot and two others injured when a mud wall collapsed at Kalapara village in Nokla upazila in Sherpur district on Tuesday.  
The dead are Litton, 8, daughter of Nazimuddin; Sajib, 7, son of Faridul and Rina, 7, daughter of Mia Hossen.  
The injured children -- Sumi, 5, and Faruk, 6, were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical conditions.  
Police said the children were playing when the mud wall collapsed while being made.

# BSF thwarts power supply to Pathgram enclaves

## Teen Bigha corridor cannot be used for power supply to Dahogram-Angorpotha

**RAFIQUE SARKER** back from Dahogram-Angorpotha

**RANGPUR:** Electricity can not be supplied to Dohogram-Angorpotha enclaves due to objection by Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

BSF is not allowing extension of power supply lines and laying of sub-soil cable through Teen Bigha corridor, the lone passage to the Bangladesh enclaves from the mainland, sources in Lalmonirhat district administration and at Rangpur BDR Sector Commander's office said.

Power Development Board (PDB) sources in Lalmonirhat said BSF thwarted their several attempts to supply electricity to the enclaves.

They are ready to supply '2

megawatt electricity to the enclaves.

The PDB sources said BSF at Panbazar outpost raised the objection first in February this year when they attempted to hang a 11 KV power supply line over the Teen Bigha corridor.

BSF had said that they had no order to allow installations for power supply to the enclaves. They would let Bangladesh use the corridor for this only when the Indian government gave permission.

The Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner then wrote a letter to the District Magistrate of Kouchbihar seeking permission for use of the corridor for power supply.

In response, the Kouchbihar DM wrote to the Lalmonirhat DC

that Bangladesh would have to wait till the Indian foreign ministry gave permission, the PDB sources said.

When contacted, sources at Lalmonirhat DC's office said the DC wrote to the foreign ministry (of Bangladesh) requesting for communication with the Indian foreign ministry to settle the matter.

Since then, they did not get any letter from the foreign ministry, they said.

Asked, they said they do not know whether Bangladesh foreign ministry took up the matter with the Indian foreign ministry.

Source at Rangpur BDR Sector Commander's office said the matter was also raised at the last BDR-BSF Director General level meeting, held in Dhaka in March. But the meeting ended without any decision on the issue.

About 20,000 people living in 25 Sq KM area in Dahogram-Angorpotha enclaves in Pathgram upzila in Lalmonirhat are deprived of all facilities from the mainland. The lone health complex at Dahagram virtually remains useless for lack of power supply.

The corridor remains open for 12 hours from 6am to 6 pm. Even BSF does not allow taking of serious patients to health centres in the mainland after 6 pm, local residents told this correspondent.

As per the Indra-Mujib Treaty of 1975, India was supposed to hand-over the enclaves to Bangladesh in exchange for Berubari enclave. Bangladesh handed over Berubari to India, but India is yet to hand-over the Dahogram-Angorpotha enclaves.

# 'Realise money from US co, allow BAPEX a greater role' Speakers at Magurchhara Day programmes demand

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar**

The Magurchhara Day was observed in Moulvibazar on Tuesday with a demand for realisation of compensation from the US oil company responsible for the massive explosion that destroyed the ecology and environment in vast areas there.

At different programmes marking the day, speakers including political leaders from Dhaka also demanded of the government to allow BAPEX (Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company) to explore hydrocarbon in the area instead of a US company.

The main programmes were organised by the Moulvibazar district unit of the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas Wealth, Electricity and Port.

On the night of June 14, 1997, a massive explosion took place at Magurchhara gas field under Block 14, located in Kamalgonj upazila when US company Occidental was drilling a well.

The huge blaze damaged property worth Tk 13826 crore including gas, forest resources, tea gardens, railway installation, roads and habitats of Khasia tribesmen.

The US company Occidental was blamed for this devastation, but compensation for the damage is yet to be realised from the company seven years after the incident.

The government appointed another US company-- Unocal-- to

explore gas in the same field.

The National Committee held two meetings at Moulvibazar pourasava auditorium and at Srimongol.

The Moulvibazar meeting was addressed by, among others, CPB President Monjurul Ahsan Khan and party leader Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed; Engineer Shahidullah, Convenor of the National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas Wealth, Electricity and Port; Al-Haj Abdus Samad, president of Gono Azadi League; Bazlur Rashid Firoze of BSD (Khaleque); AFM Mahbubul Haque, Convenor of BSD (Mahbub); Hazera Sultana, central committee member of Rorkers Party; Abdus Salam, president of Gonotantrik Mojdur Party, Prof Dr Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology; Prof Dr Ahmed Husain of Dhaka University, engineer Golam Kibria of Biswa Shahittya Kendra, Dhaka and Abu Naser Khan of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolone, Dhaka. Advocate Pijush Kanti Sen was in the chair.

The speakers also urged the local people to take up agitation programmes to realise the compensation and assured them of all support.

The Sreemongal meeting was presided over by Syed Ameeruzzaman.

During a recent visit to the area, many affected people while talking to this correspondent expressed

surprise why the compensation could not be realised in seven years.

They also criticised the government for allowing another US company to drill well in the area while compensation from a US company could not be realised.

## Grameen Bank staff shot dead by muggers

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Muggers gunned down a Grameen Bank employee at Kalkini in Madaripur and snatched Tk 10,000 from him on Tuesday.

Rafiqul Islam, Assistant Manager of the bank at Kalkini upazila, was returning to office after collecting the money from Birmohan at about 10 am.

Three motorcycle mounted alleged muggers waylaid him. They asked him to hand over the money. As he refused, they shot him and fled away snatching the money.

Rafiq was rushed to Kalkini Sadar Hospital, where he died at 7:30 pm.

Police said two of the alleged muggers -- Iqbal Munshi and Abu Bakr Siddique-- were later caught by people at Burghata village in Gournadi upazila of Barisal and handed over to police.

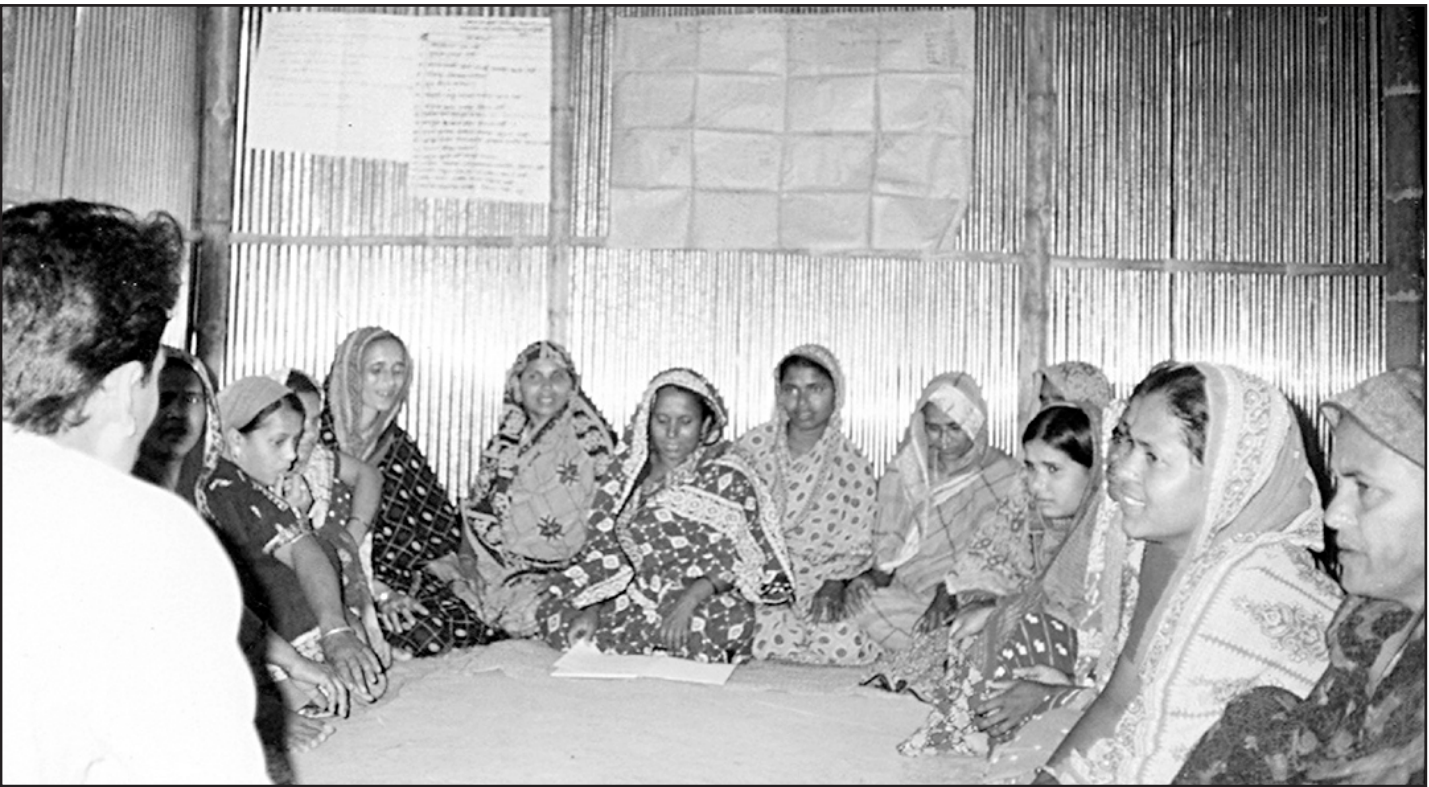


PHOTO: STAR

Women members of a cooperative society holding a group discussion at Mohonpur village to share their experiences. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

# Care project fulfils their dream

## Landless, marginal farmers in Rajshahi form co-operatives, learn improved farming, marketing

**ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi**

Five years ago, Monwara Begum could hardly market any crop her sons produced on their land.

Now they produce plenty of vegetables and food crops on their four-bigha land and sell the surplus quantities at fair prices to wholesale traders coming from Dhaka and other districts.

Buying a television was a dream for landless farmer Morshed Ali. Villagers now come to his house to enjoy TV programmes.

Landless sharecropper Abdul Gafur never thought of leading a society. He is now general secretary of Samota Socio-Economic Development Organisation, a farmers' cooperative formed at the village in 2001.

Like them, all in Alai Bidirpur village in Nawhata union under Paba upazila in Rajshahi have a changed life.

They are well off and organised, thanks to the Care's LIFE-NOPEST project which has modernised their method of cultivation and

helped them market their products at fair prices.

After conquering poverty, they now think about social problems like drug addiction, child marriage and petty crimes.

The LIFE-NOPEST (Locally Intensified Farming Enterprises and New Options for Pest Management project) project, supported by the European Commission, has also brought about a demonstration effect in neighbouring villages.

With cooperation from some local NGOs, the villagers now use new farming techniques including integrated pest management and dike cropping and are also growing fish in paddy fields.

"We learnt scientific cultivation methods and are earning profit through collective marketing system", said Abdul Gaffar.

Mamta Rani said, "Once we had no money to buy seeds or pesticides at time of need."

"The problem is gone. We formed farmers' cooperatives and collectively raised a fund and take interest-free loan when needed".

Members of the cooperative society leased two bighas of fallow land in the village for two years at Tk 6000 per year and cultivated papaya. They have started earning profit from this.

Nomita became helpless when her husband Cripesh Chandra passed away eight years ago, leaving three children. She took a loan of Tk 2000 from the Samota Socio-Economic Development Organisation in June, 2001 and set up a grocery at the village. She now earns Tk 300 to Tk 400 per day from the shop.

Although only 30 families out of total 65 in the village are members of the society, it changed the life of all in the village. Their success story also spread to neighboring villages.

"Following the example of Alai Bidirpur, we can now eat three meals a day, our children go to school and our society is now free from drug addiction and crime", said Meraj Ali Sarkar of Darshanhat village in Dhuroil union in Mohonpur upazila.

Darshanhat villagers formed

Shapla Multipurpose Cooperative Samity in 2002.

The Samity led by Ayub Ali and Habibur Rahman helps poor villagers buy rickshaw vans to earn livelihood, get jobs and medical treatment, and sometimes bear marriage ceremony costs.

The villagers think the entire village as one family. "We are very happy", said 45 year-old farmer Meraj Ali.

"We did a lot to change our life. Now the government should help us in building roads, supplying electricity and extending education facilities.

Beginning on April 1, 2001, LIFE NOPEST project ended on June 30 last year, covering seven districts -- Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Natore, sources said.

But villagers under the project in Rajshahi now fear that their hard earned success may be lost as there will be no more guidance and held from Care.

## 5 cops, 9 held accused hurt in B'baria road mishap

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria**

Five policemen and nine arrested persons were injured when the autotempo in which they were travelling fell into a roadside ditch at Sayedabad in Kasba upazila on Tuesday.

The policemen were bringing the arrested people to a court in the district headquarter from Kasba, police said.

The injured constables are Jane Alam, Musleh Uddin, Nurul Amin, Abdul Lotif and Asaduzzaman and the arrested accused are Makbul Hussain, Roni Mia, Farooq Mia, Sanu Mia, Ershad Mia, Murad Md Topon Moni Rishi, Md Sumon Mia and Md Zilani Mia.

All of them were sent to Kasba Upazila Health Complex.

Brahmanbaria Police Superintendent ATM Tarek visited the spot.

## Kala Azar claims 6, afflicts 30 in Rajshahi

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

Kala Azar, a fever, claimed six lives and infected over 30 people in last ten days in Godagari upazila, an area in the district mainly inhabited by indigenous people.

The dead include Rajani Kisku, 3, Nicholas, 10, Sonamoni Hadsa, 12, Marshal Hembrom, 14, Paul Hadsa, 27, and Sabina Hadsa, 35 of Deopara and Gogram unions. The people suffering from the disease now are in Lobaihattala, Daungpara, Nimhutpara, Barsapara and Daharlongi villages.

Godagari Upazila Health Officer Dr Abdus Salam, in a report submitted to Rajshahi Civil Surgeon (RCS) on Tuesday said the disease has taken a serious turn. The disease is spreading because of unawareness among the indigenous people about the disease and their reliance on quacks, he added in the report, sources at the Civil Surgeon's office here said.

A copy of the report has been sent to the Health Directorate in Dhaka.

The Sources said the government in early 90s ordered monthly monitoring of Kala Azar situation in Godagari upazila, deemed as the lone Kala Azar prone area in the country.

But the instructions are not being followed for the last few years, they claimed.

## Now Islam Raksha Mujahidin Committee in field

**A CORRESPONDENT, Natore.**

ABNP activist was critically injured in an attack by some people allegedly belonging to the Islam Raksha Mujahidin Committee (IRMC) at Yearpur village under Naldanga thana in Natore district on Tuesday.

The injured was identified as Raton, 22, son of late Nader Ali Shah of Ramshahkazipur village.

According to family sources, the IRMC activists called Raton over mobile phone. As he came they beat him with hockey sticks and hacked him with sharp weapons.

He was admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital in a critical condition. The cause of the incident could not be known. Any case is yet to be filed.