

# Modhyapara project to cost Tk 588 cr more

## Handover still 6 months away, discontent brewing among mineworkers employed by Bluestar

**RAFIQUE SARKER** back from Modyapara, Dinajpur

Rangpur: Modhyapara hard rock project will take at least more six months to be ready for operation as the North Korean company NAMNAM is yet to complete the mine development work even after time extension thrice, said a Petrobangla official.

The delay will involve a total of about Tk 588 crore additional expenditure for the government, the official disclosed to this correspondent on condition of anonymity. The original involvement in the project was Tk 650 crore.

As per the original project profile, the company was to prepare the mine in June 2000 and hand it over to Petrobangla for operation.

NAMNAM took one-year extension till June 2001. This involved additional Tk 207.41 crore but the company failed to complete the work.

The company then sought one year more but ECNEC Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) disagreed to sanction additional money.

The company stopped work leaving the project in an uncertain condition.

At last, after 18 months, the company started work as ECNEC approved additional Tk 380 crore.

Some sources said NAMNAM could not complete the development work in time due to shortage of funds.

As per the modified project profile, NAMNAM is scheduled to hand over the project to Petrobangla this month.

Petrobangla officials at the site said about 20 percent work is yet to be completed. The remaining work will take at least six months, they said.

Meanwhile, complexities have arisen over employment of mineworkers.

A total of 322 mineworkers have been NAMNAM workers engaged in mine development work, snapped recently.

employed who will extract granite after handover of the mine to Petrobangla.

Many of the workers talking to this correspondent said they appeared for jobs, knowing that they would be Petrobangla employees. They had applied for jobs seeing a Petrobangla advertisement. But now they are being asked to work under an outsourcing agent, Bluestar, a Bangladeshi contractor.

They urged the Petrobangla authorities on several occasions to sit with them to settle the

issue but in vain, they said.

Asked about this, a source in Petrobangla said mineworkers should work under the outsourcing agent because this would be the best way to avoid trade union in future.

The worker said they are thinking of agitation programmes.

When completed, 50500 tonnes of granite will be extracted from the mine annually. The project will last 46 years.



PHOTO: STAR

# Papaya brings fortune

## Once unemployed Keshob Chandra now earns Tk 4 lakh a year from three-acre papaya garden

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali**

Once unemployed Keshob Chandra, 40, is a successful farmer. He earns about Tk two lakh a year since he began cultivating papaya on about three acres of land two years back.

Keshob was the first man in Mirjagonj village in Mirjagonj upazila to cultivate papaya. Following his example, Shahid, Arif, Kamal and Mannan of the village are now free from the curse of unemployment. They have also started commercial cultivation of vegetable. Mirjagonj village is about 10 kilometres from the district headquarter.

After completing HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate examination) in 1980, Keshob looked for job but was disappointed. He then started banana cultivation on half an acre of land. But the result was not up to the expectation.

He then started vegetable cultivation and earned about Tk 50,000 from the small land.

One day, in 2001, Keshob read a feature on papaya cultivation in a newspaper and visited the papaw garden of Shirajul Islam at Kuarchar village in Kaliakair upazila in Gazipur district. He learnt the method and collected saplings.

He planted those on one acre of land. After one year, he leased some lands and expanded the garden to three acres.

There are 4000 papaya plants in his garden and each plant earns him Tk 200 to 250 a year, Keshob to this correspondent during a visit to his garden recently.

He sells the papaya to wholesal-

ers at Tk 4 to 5 per kilogram. After meeting all expenditures, his net profit is about Tk two lakh a year, her said.

Five labourers work in his garden

round the year. He pays them Tk 2000 per month.

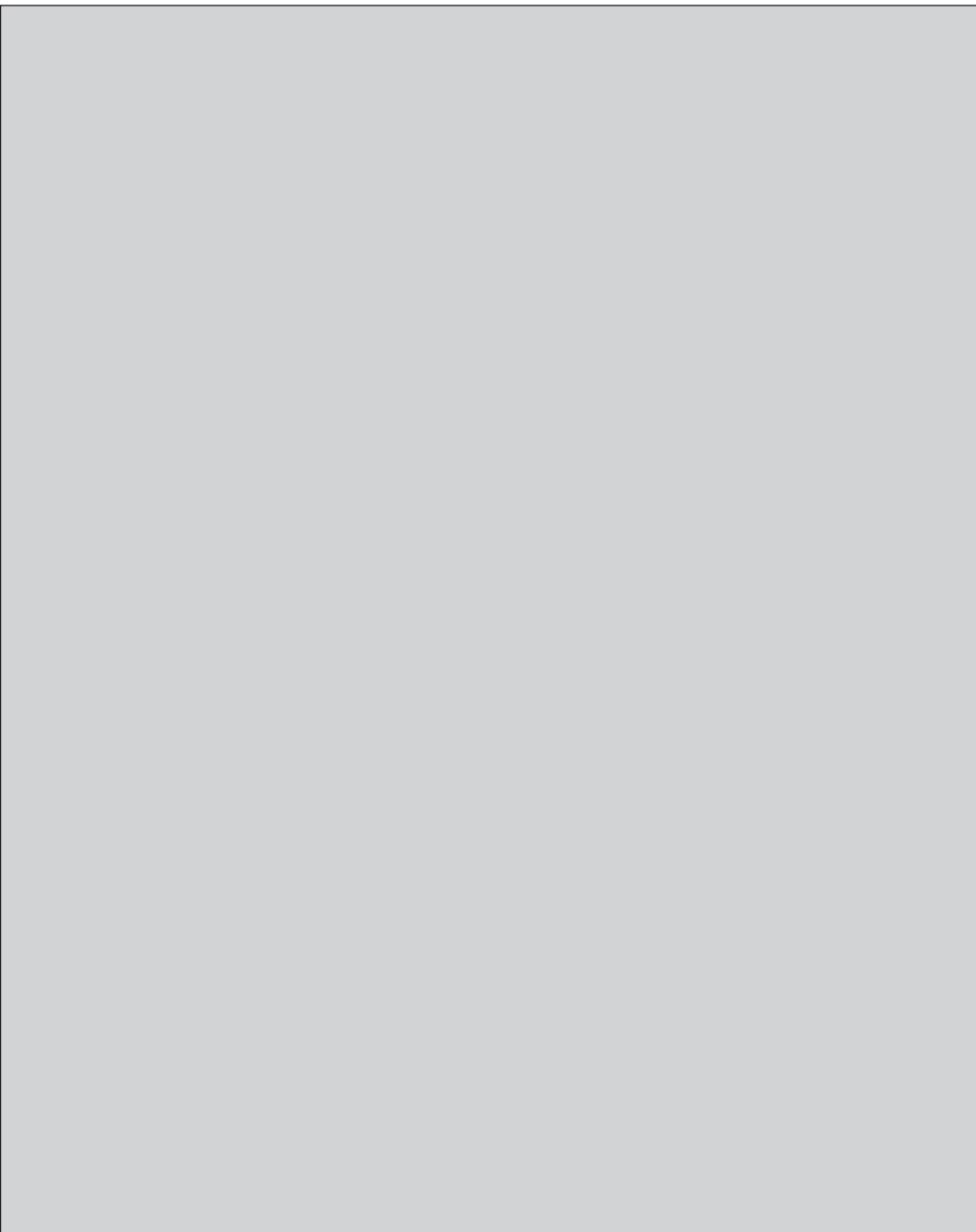
Keshob sues pesticide in his farm, but says it is harmful. He is thinking how to avoid this.

Local people said, seeing Keshob's success, many people in the village now think of commercial cultivation of vegetables.



PHOTO: STAR

Keshob Chandra at his papaya field in Mirjagonj village in Patuakhali.



## SNAPS

No one passes from 8 Kushtia colleges

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia**

No examinee from eight colleges passed in the HSC examination held under Jessore Education Board this year. The college are Mahisdanga Collegiate School, Adabaria Union College and Ramanathpur School and College in Kushtia, Khanjahan Ali College in Bagerhat, Harinakundu Pilot School and College in Jhenidah; Komorpur Ideal College in Jessore and Satanibarua School and College in Satkhira and Chowrangi College in Kushtia. Board sources said action would be taken against these colleges. A total of 72 837 students appeared at the HSC examination from 419 colleges under the Board.

24 out of 49 get GPA-5

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia**

Twenty-four out of 49 examinees from Jhenidah Cadet College got GPA-5 and the rest 25 got GPA-4. Out of the 24, 21 were in science faculty and three in humanities faculty. Last year, only one examinee got GPA-5 from the college, sources there said.

# Crimes up in Chuadanga

## 141 murders in 9 months against 41 in previous 3 months

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura**

The law and order worsened in Chuadanga, a high ranking police official told this correspondent preferring anonymity. Murders have crossed all previous records, he said.

At least 141 people were killed in nine months. Factional killing by outlaws also increased, according to police and newspapers reports. Forty-one murders were committed in previous three months.

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) claimed responsibility for at least 70 killings, the police official further said.

The outlawed parties which are active are PBCP-ML, PBCP-Janajuddho, Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), Banglar Communist Party (BCP), New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP), Ganabahini of JSD and Ganamukti Fouj.

Godfathers of the outlawed parties are political leaders belonging to major parties, said another police official who was not willing to be named.

Godfathers use the outlaws for various purposes including establishment of supremacy or killing political opponents, he said.

Intelligence agencies identified

at least nine such godfathers including 126 professional killers of different outlawed parties and gangs in Chuadanga. They sent lists to the higher authorities but to no effect, he informed.

In the latest incident, two persons were slaughtered and shot dead by outlaws at Nehalpur village in Chuadanga Sadar and Sreenagar in Alamdanga upazila on October 2.

The victims were identified as Mahabul and Kamal. One person named Sumon proclaiming himself as the regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) claimed the responsibility of the murders to local journalists over telephone.

In another incident, Atiar Rahman, 32, an armed cadre of PBCP (Janajuddho) was slaughtered by rivals at Juranpur village in Damurhuda upazila on October 3. Police believed the murder to be a sequel to an internal conflict over supremacy.

Underground political operatives slaughtered five PBCP (ML) cadres when they were holding a secret meeting at a house at Naripota village in Damurhuda on June 23. A PBCP (Janajuddho) faction claimed the responsibility for the killings in a statement to a local newspaper office on the next day.

The victims are Akbar, 32, Abdul

Jalil, 40, Latif, 37, Bazlu, 45, and Lutfar, 35. Of them Akbar and Latif were inhabitants of Naripota village while Jalil, Bazlu and Lutfar hailed from Kultadanga village in the same upazila.

A faction of PBCP (Janajuddho) killed three persons on April 30. The same faction killed five other operatives of PBCP (ML) at Kutubpur village in Chuadanga Sadar upazila on March 24.

Janajuddho cadres killed five persons at Chalerkathi village in Damurhuda upazila in another incident in December last year.

At least seven underground political outfits with at least 1,000 armed cadres grouped into 20 gangs are active in Chuadanga, according to police sources.

Fifty ringleaders control the armed cadres, according to sources in intelligence agencies.

Hardened criminals belonging to the outlawed parties collect illegal toll from people and businessmen, abduct and kill people for ransom and rape and kill girls as per their sweet will.

# Polls bout between BNP rivals today

## Uncle, nephew main contenders for Srimongol poura chairman post

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet**

The curious townspeople are awaiting a bout between an uncle and his nephew belonging to the same party in today's Srimongol pourashava election.

A veritable festive mood prevails in the town, bedecked with posters, fastoons and banners hung by rival BNP activists, now aligned with the two candidates. Hectic campaign by the candidates stopped Tuesday night.

Sitting municipal chairman and Srimongol upazila BNP president Mohsin Miah Modhu and his uncle and former lawmaker Ahad Miah are the main contenders.

Ahad, after being defeated by Awami League's Abdus Shahid in 1996 parliamentary polls with a big margin, quit Jatiya Party and joined BNP. He is now vice-president of Moulvibazar district BNP.

To many voters, Mohsin is a 'strong candidate' because being a ruling party man, he also mustered support from groups in other political parties including Awami League.

But Ahad is also a formidable candidate, they say.

Independent runners Mansur Bakht Chowdhury and MA Malek are in the race for the second time for the post. Two others--former Union Parishad chairman Md Afzal Haque and Jalal Mia are also independent candidates for the post.

Forty-one persons are contesting for nine posts of ward commissioner and seven for the reserved

seats of women commissioners. There are 16,373 voters.

There are concerns as well. The administration has identified eight polling centres as vulnerable. Additional security measures would be taken for these centres, an official said.

In the last pourashava election, gunshots were fired and ballot boxes snatched at Udayan Girls High School and Upazila Parishad Auditorium centres, resulting in armed clashes.

Established in 1935, Srimangal, an important commercial centre and 'tea capital' of the country, was upgraded to Class 1 pourashava few years back. The upazila has the highest number of tea gardens in the country.

## 2 held with fake notes

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

Kaligonj police arrested two persons from in front of Champaful Union Parishad office and recovered six counterfeit Tk 100 notes form their possession yesterday.

They are Arshad Ali Morol, 35, of Talipara village and Nur Mohammad Mollah of Saihati village in Kaligonj upazila.

A case has been filed with Kaligonj thana.

## Netrakona-2

## by-polls tomorrow

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona**

Hectic campaign is going for the by-election in Netrakona2 parliamentary constituency (Netrakona Sadar and Barhatta), scheduled to be held on Saturday.

Seven candidates are in the race. Opposition Awami League is not participating in the election, saying it will not be fair under the present government.

The prime contenders are Fakir Ashraf of Jatiya Party (Ershad) and Abu Abbas of the Four Party Alliance. The rest five are Ayub Ali Fanu of Jatiya Party (Monju), Krishok Mohammad Sadak of Krishok Shramik Party, and independent candidates Shariful Haque, Abul Kalam and Reaz Uddin.

The seat fell vacant following the death of Awami League lawmaker Abdul Momin on July 15.

According to political circles and voters, the contest will be between Fakir Ashraf and Abu Abbas. Campaign by the rest five is hardly seen.

There are 300,330 voters in the constituency with 147 polling centers.

Abu Abbas won the 1991 general election but was defeated in 1996 and 2001 by AL candidates Fazlur Rahaman Khan and Abdul Momin respectively.

Once a journalist, Fakir Ashraf was the third runner in 1996 and 2001 elections.

At a recent press conference, Fakir Ashraf alleged that ruling party activists campaigning for Abu Abbas threatened his party men and that some ministers and ruling party men are availing government facilities in the campaign.

14x3

7x2