

SNAPS

ASP among 10 hurt in Kishoreganj BCL factional clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Ten persons including a police official were injured in a clash between two factions of Chhatra League (BCL) in Kishoreganj town on Monday. According to police and witnesses, the clash ensued when a discussion on the historic March 7 was progressing at local Awami League office. Both the groups armed with lethal weapons attacked each other. The injured persons included Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Kishoreganj Nasir Uddin, Chhatra League activists Tipu and Azad. Agitated persons also rampage and damaged a few shops.

Agri-tech traders' fair at Muktagachha

BSS, Mymensingh

A three-day agri-technology traders' fair was held at Muktagachha recently.State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain opened the fair on the premises of the Upazila Parishad. Upazila Krishi Office organised the fair. Twenty stalls were set up in the fair, according to official sources.



PHOTO: STAR

(Left) Empty beds of the eye unit set up by the Sight Savers International at Nilphamari Modern Hospital while (right) sophisticated equipments are seen lying unutilised at the same unit.

# A gross violation of medical ethics

## Because of apathy of doctors, thousands being deprived of free eye treatment facilities at govt hospital in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A local NGO has operated upon 942 eye patients in a year by well-utilising the free treatment facilities provided by an international organisation named Sight Savers

International (SSI). On the contrary, a government hospital performed only six operations in four years. The NGO, Rangpur Development Social Service (RDSS) treated the eye patients last

year under an agreement signed with the SSI. Under a similar five-year accord with the Health and Family Planning Ministry, the SSI has, so far, provided a 10-bed eye unit, sophisticated microscope, slit lamp, lense, air cooler, renovation of Eye Operation Theatre (EOT) and medicine to Nilphamari 50-bed Modern Hospital at a cost of Tk 5,50,000, according to its Coordinator Md Kamruzzaman. The SSI also trained up concerned surgeons, nurses and other staff and purchased sophisticated surgical instruments, he said.

According to the agreement, the SSI has been providing surgical and treatment facilities in hospitals in Chapai Nawabganj, Noakhali, Jhalkathi, Gopalganj and Nilphamari. But because of apathy of eye specialists of the hospital, thousands of patients are being deprived of free treatment facilities provided by the SSI.

Dr Abdul Majid, Medical Officer of the Civil Surgeon's Office here told this correspondent that the eye unit is equipped with sophisticated equipment to perform cataract operation and intracular lense operation. It also provided medicine for surgical patients. Hundreds of eye patients from the entire district and surrounding areas throng the hospital every day for treatment. But they are returning home untreated due to negligence of the hospital authorities and reluctance of specialists and sur-

geons. As a result, the noble gesture of the SSI is being foiled. Many patients already became permanently blind and others are about to lose their eye-sight. Sources in the hospital told this correspondent, only two patients were operated upon last December while three others were operated upon in February this year.

Former eye specialist Dr Shariful Islam took transfer to Rangpur after conducting one month training by the SSI. Incumbent eye specialist and Senior Consultant Dr Md Siddique Hossain is also trying to take transfer to his home district, Rajshahi after taking one month training in Dhaka by the SSI.

When contacted with Dr Siddique, he told this correspondent that attitude is very important for such a job. 'Young and local doctors are fit to do the job,' he added. He suggested for employment of medical officer for a better result. He informed that every week 250-300 eye patients visit him.

During his visit to the hospital on Monday, this correspondent found no eye patient in any bed of the 10-bed unit. Even he saw valuable surgical equipment still remained intact.

Fatema Begum, wife of Nazrul Islam of Kukhapara village in Sadar upazila who is one of the six patients who were operated upon told this correspondent, she had to buy all medicine from stores although she was supposed to get those free from the hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

A small entrepreneur, Rina Begum (extreme right) working side by side with two female workers, she appointed at her tailoring shop in Kewatkhal area of Mymensingh town recently.

# Micro-credits change poor women's lot

## Once a poor woman, enterprising Rina earns now Tk 4,000 each month from her tailoring shop in Mymensingh

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A little economic assistance has changed the lot of poor enterprising women here in two years. Twenty-six-year-old Rina Begum is one of the women who became self-reliant making good use of the assistance.

Through wedlock, Rina became the wife a worker of a tailoring shop here named Saju Miah 15 years ago. Since marriage she had to live with extreme poverty. Her husband could not meet up the demand of the family with his meagre income. Life became much miserable when she became mother of three children.

Being disgusted, she took a determination to become self-reliant by earning money independently. With the aim in view, she learnt the art of tailoring from her husband. She wanted to open a tailoring shop in the town. For the purpose, she needed money. She took loan amounting to Tk 5,000 from a prominent NGO, Association for Social Advancement (ASA), and started her business in Kewatkhal area of the town. She appointed three part time female workers in her tailoring shop. Soon, diligent Rina began to earn profit from her shop. Ultimately, she repaid the NGO loan including interest on time. After her loan payment, she took further loan amounting to Tk 12,000 for the purpose of developing her business. This time she appointed more workers in her shop which turned into a more profitable concern. This time also she did not fail to repay her loan on time.

After recovery of this loan, Rina took loan further amounting to Tk

35,000 in January last year. 'I shall repay the entire loan in May this year,' she told The Daily Star in reply to a query.

A happy small entrepreneur, Rina told The Daily Star she had appointed three female tailors on regular basis and six part time workers in her tailoring shop.

'Now I lead a happy life as I can meet up all the family expenses smoothly from my income', said delighted Rina. 'I have sent two of my three children to primary school and I hope to educate them properly in future', Rina said.

Rina also trained 15 women for free so that she can establish a mini garment industry in near future.

'Many women visit her for consultation and I always render them my selfless service,' said sincere Rina.

At present, Rina spends Tk 3,500 to pay her staff salary each month. After meeting all the expenses, her net profit remains Tk 4,000 per month. From her income she procured five decimals of land at Bhatikashari in the town.

Like Rina, other women, Milon Nessa, Rokeya Begum and Shima Shom also became small entrepreneurs by dint of hard work.

ASA provided the loans to them under Small Entrepreneurs Lending (SEL) programme. The programme aims at alleviating poverty. Since its inception in 2003, ASA distributed Tk 60 lakh among 80 ultra-poor women. All of them became well-established in life by pursuing work like tailoring, poultry farming and pisciculture, according to SEL programme manager Mira Ghosh.

## 'Skill development needed for safe migration'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Skill development and information availability are needed to ensure safe migration of the female migrant workers, said the experts at a seminar in Narsingdi recently.

They demanded of the government to fix a minimal wages for the migrant workers, ensure contract documents between the recruiting agencies and the workers, ease passport system and ratify the 1990 convention on the migrant workers.

The seminar was organised by Bangladeshi Obhibasi Mahila Sramik Association (BOMSA), in association with International Organisation for Migration (IOM), at the deputy commissioner's office on the eve of the International Women's Day.

Speaking as chairperson in the seminar, Victor Gomes, an expert, said migration has got an increasing trend due to globalisation.

Rifat Hossain Lucy of International Migrant Workers (IOM) said the number of women migrant workers has increased about 3 times over the last few years as the government lifted ban on the migration of unskilled and semi-skilled women in 1997.

BOMSA General Secretary Sheikh Romana, President Lily Jahan and Narsingdi Additional District Commissioner Mir Mosharraf Hossain also spoke.

## 'Greater media role can ensure food security'

### WFP calls for close collaboration among journalists, development partners

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Participants at a seminar held in Rangamati stressed on stronger partnership among media professionals and development partners to promote food security for the ultra-poor.

The seminar was aimed at improving collaboration with media to advocate for food security issues for the ultra-poor, says a press release.

Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman Dr Manik Lal Dewan opened the seminar organised recently by the World Food Programme (WFP).

While addressing, he termed media a vital development actor in disseminating development messages.

In his address, WFP Representative Douglas Casson Coutts called for concerted effort to promote food security and reduce vulnerability of the ultra-poor.

Rangamati Press Club

President Sunil Kanti Dey, also CHT Correspondent of Dainik Sangbad presented the keynote paper.

Thirty journalists representing print and electronic media from Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari participated in the seminar and shared their perspectives on the issue. They highlighted common challenges in improving their work and emphasised that they could benefit from information shared by development agencies.

## Erratum

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

In a story titled, "Grameen Bank client 'beaten,'" published on the National page of The Daily Star on Wednesday, the version of the Principal Officer of Grameen Bank Zonal Office Sahadat Hossain was mistakenly excluded from the story.

Actually, when this correspondent contacted him, he told him, 'the incident is not true'.