

# Lone warrior longing for a pat on the back

## Despite no patronisation, farmer Abu Musa grows quality tea in Nilphamari

**EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari**

Nilphamari holds good prospects of cultivation of world famous flavoured Darjeeling variety tea, opening up a new chapter in the country's tea industry.

This has been proved by educated farmer Abu Musa. He planted 7000 tea saplings on his one acre land at Bhogdaburi village in Domar Upazila in 2003.

He was inspired after Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB) scientists tested the soil in Domar and found it suitable for cultivation of Darjeeling variety tea.

Abu Musa had collected sapling from a private nursery in Sona Patila village in Panchagarh, where this variety is now grown well.

As there is no activity of BTB in

Domar, he consulted tea farmers in neighbouring Panchagarh district and learnt nursing tea plants.

Abu Musa is harvesting tea leaves in a limited scale since April this year.

He processes tea leaves in a rudimentary way by crushing those in manually driven husking peddle (Dheki) and drying in frying pans. He sells tea in local markets.

The tea is of very good quality and flavour, he told this correspondent during a recent visit to his garden.

But there is no facility in the area for mechanised processing of tea leaves, he lamented.

April to October is the peak time to collect tea leaves, he said.

Many in the area now want to plant tea saplings but their spirit has

been daunted as there is no patronisation either by BTB or any government agency, he regretted.

BTB Development Officer at his Panchagarh regional office, Ameer Hossain, when contacted, said tea plantation has good prospects in Nilphamari but they can not assist farmers there as they do not have resources. It needs planning and finance from the government, he said.

He said production will start in full swing in Abu Musa's garden from the fifth year of plantation.

Panchagarh district is on the north of Nilphamari and India is on its north-east.

Vast green tea gardens are visible in Indian territories a few kilometres from bordering Chilhati Bazar in Nilphamari.

Even Panchagarh district in Bangladesh is now producing high quality tea.

Scientific Officer at BTB's regional office at Panchagarh, Ismail Hossain, told this correspondent that Nilphamari has the same temperature and the same low acidity soil like that of Panchagarh. Both the districts have the same rainfall and same heights from the sea level. All these factors are ideal for tea cultivation, he added.

He also said Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district is also suitable for producing good quality tea.

After the BTB soil test, a local NGO conducted a survey and found that about 5,000 hectares of land in Chilhathi, Bogdaburi, Niz Bhogdaburi, Dangapara, Gosaijanj, Chandkhana, Ghunuram, Ketkibari, Gonnati, Ambari, Jorabari, Bamunia, Boragari and some other villages of Domar Upazila are fit for tea cultivation.

Earlier, after newspaper reports, a BTB team from Dhaka headed by its Chief Scientific Officer tested the soil in Panchagarh and Thurgaoan in 1999 and found the lands suitable for tea cultivation.

BTB then set up a regional office in Panchagarh town in 2000 and took up a 20-year plan including a five-year pilot project (2002-2007). Now tea is being cultivated in Panchagarh in three categories--small farmers, small holdings and big holdings by tea companies.

Seeing the prospect for growing good quality of tea in Panchagarh, the European Commission (EC) also provided fund there.

Mentionably, Darjeeling variety tea produced by a Bangladeshi company in Panchagarh, earned fame in international auction in last several years, sources said. Their high quality tea is being sold at good prices abroad.

Despite such good prospect, neither BTB nor any government agency has taken any initiative to patronise tea plantation in Nilphamari.

## CHILD MURDER Naraji petition against charge sheet accepted

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

A magistrate court here has accepted a 'naraji' petition against the charge sheet in Alamin murder case and ordered police for reinvestigation.

Twelve year-old Al Amin, son of Bablu Par of Parulia village in Debhata upazila, was abducted on November 11 last year. His body was later found floating on a pond in the village.

Debhata police after investigation submitted charge sheet accusing three persons- Ansar Ali, Saddam Hossain and Ismail Hossain-- under Section 302/201/34 of BPC.

Bablu Par in his 'naraji' petition alleged that the three masterminds behind his son's murder were dropped in the charge sheet. They are Khan Jahan Ali, Rupali Khatun and Rashed.

After a long hearing, First Class Magistrate Mina Masuduzzaman accepted the 'naraji' petition and ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Debhata thana to take legal action in this regard and to re-investigate the case.

## RU teacher faces death threat

**RU CORRESPONDENT**

The chairman of Rajshahi University (RU) Chemistry department on Friday received death threat from some telephone callers who identified themselves as his daughter's kidnappers.

Prof Saidul Islam told newsmen that the callers threatened him for the last one week demanding immediate withdrawal of cases filed against them, otherwise all his family members will be killed, they threatened.

According to family sources, Islam's 24-year-old daughter was kidnapped in front of the coffee house on June 2. Prof Islam filed an abduction case on June 4 accusing Ramjan and Khokon, both residents of Rani Bazaar in Boalia Police Station.

Police and Rab jointly raided the houses of Ramjan and Khokon several times but in vain.

After the incident, Prof Islam prayed to the university authorities for allotment of a house. The university authorities have allotted a house to him following his prayer.

## Token hunger strike by hospital staff

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur**

About 40 staff of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital (DMCH) observed a token hunger strike in front of the civil surgeon's office here yesterday.

They observed the strike for seven hours from 10 am to 4 pm to press their two-point demand. The demands are payment of their outstanding salaries for seven months and enrolling themselves under revenue head.

Earlier on June 7, they held a press conference urging the authorities concerned to fulfill their demands without further delay. Sufferings of patients increased during the hunger strike.

## 29 kg katal with 6.5 kg eggs

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban**

A fisherman caught a giant Katal fish

weighing 29 kilograms with six and a half kg eggs inside from the Shankha river in Bandarban yesterday.

Local elderly fishermen said they did not see such a big fish in last several decades. It was netted by Dulal Jaldas in Kawchinghata area in the river.

The district administration took an initiative to release the fish in water. As soon as locals heard the plan, they cut it to pieces and shared it.

Twenty-eight local people bought the fish for Tk 7,000.

It was cut to pieces at the official residence of Bandarban thana officer-in-charge in presence of the District Fisheries officer, locals told this correspondent.

As its belly was cut open, a large bag of eggs weighing six and half kilograms was found.



## A lifebuoy for the distressed

### Terre Des Hommes floating hospital in Patuakhali treats over 3 lakh since 2000

**SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali**

"It's a blessing from God", said Mobarak Ali, 50, who came from far away Panpattee village in Galachipa upazila for treatment of rheumatic fever at the floating hospital.

Sitting beside him at the congested waiting room at the ship were Mannan, 45, Kalam, 35, Mahubb, 30, Monir, 10, Monwara, 45, Rashida, 30, Mamela, 35 and Rabeya, 22. They were all praise for doctors and other staff at MVHS-Shapla Ship Clinic run by Terre Des Hommes of Netherlands under its Coastal Island Health Project. It has all facilities for treatment of common diseases and minor operation.

The waiting room was crammed with women, children and men of different ages. Long queues stretched beyond the corridor. The floating hospital moves from place to place and provides medical services to poor people in riverine Patuakhali district since 2000. It is of great help to the people of remote shoal areas as government hospitals are far away and hard to reach.

Marium, 18, cradling her six-month daughter, was preparing to leave. She came for treatment of her frail daughter. The doctor told her she will be alright if she is fed enough breastmilk.

"This is a good advice I did not know. They (doctor) also advised me to take vegetables. If I take enough good food, my daughter will get enough milk", the smiling mother said.

Many women like her were happy after getting free medicine or advice. Abul Kalam Azad, manager of the clinic, said over 200 patients came to the hospital for treatment every day.

About 3,00,000 patients have been treated since January 2000. "Those who went to quacks earlier now come here for free advice or medicine".

"If necessary, we refer patients to upazila health complexes or hospitals in the district town," he said. There are three doctors including a female one at the hospital, all well trained.

Common diseases including cardiac problems, skin diseases, ENT problems, rheumatic problem are treated at the hospital. Minor surgery is also done. Besides family planning and health education services are provided.

Only Tk 10 is realised as registration fees from each patient. The clinic is providing service six days a week in different places in Galachipa and Kalapara upazilas in the district. It is available at Amkhola Bazar on Saturday, at Baliatali Bazar on Sunday, at Tegachia Bazar on Monday, at Panpty Bazar on Tuesday, at Tulataly Bazar on Wednesday and at Bazar Char on Thursday.

It has a well-equipped pathological laboratory where patients can test blood, urine and stool at nominal costs. There are modern ECG machines, auto analyser machines, glucometer and nebuliser machine.

All the 23 staff including doctors are available during day time six days a week. An team from abroad evaluates their activities after every three months.



The floating hospital in Patuakhali-- MVHS-Shapla Ship Clinic--run by Terre Des Hommes.



Abu Musa (inset) and his small tea garden at Bhogdaburi village in Domar upazila in Nilphamari district.

PHOTO: STAR

## Bidding bye to child labour

### Children taken out of tobacco factories in Kushtia to celebrate 'freedom' today

**AMANUR AMAN, from Kushtia**

Different organisations have chalked out programmes in Daulatpur in Kushtia to observe the 'World Day Against Child Labour-2005' today.

The programmes undertaken by NGOs like SETU, BTUK and PIPASA and supported by ILO (International Labour Organisation) include rally, human chain and discussion meeting to highlight their achievements in taking out children from tobacco factories and future strategy to eliminate child labour from the hazardous work.

The children taken out from eight

tobacco factories in Daulatpur upazila under the ILO programme in last three years will take part in the programmes.

The ILO project styled PEWFCL (Preventing and Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour), launched in Kushtia in 2001, was implemented by SETU, BTUK and PIPASA, all NGOs.

In three years, they took 2586 child workers out of the factories. Most of them are now going to school and others are being trained in different vocations by the NGOs with assistance from the United States Department of Labour (USDOL).

The ILO also initiated programmes to bring poor parents of the children under income generating programme so that they are not forced to send their children to tobacco factories again.

The ILO also helped workers to form trade unions, which absent earlier in tobacco factories.

The three years ILO project ended last month. Another 'time bound' project may be launch soon to preserve the successes, AT Siddique, Section Coordinator of USDOL project Bangladesh told this correspondent over cell phone yesterday.



Children taken out of tobacco factories at one of the schools in Daulatpur, Kushtia.

STAR FILE PHOTO

## SNAPS

### Father, son die on the same day

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari**

Death of father and son on the same day has amazed the people of the district town. Abul Kalam Khan, 60, a renowned businessman of New Market area in the town died on Thursday night following chest pain. Observing father's death, Sabir Khan, 32, fell sick. He was immediately rushed to Nilphamari 50-bed Hospital where he died the next morning within a span of six hours of his father's death. His mother Anjuman Ara Begum, 55, fainted hearing the death news of her husband. She was yet to regain consciousness at 4 p m on Friday till filing of this report. She was not aware of her son's death. Both the father and the son were buried at the central graveyard in the town after Jumma prayers on Friday.

### Unidentified fever kills 2 in Dinajpur

**A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur**

Two persons have died of unidentified fever in Parbatipur upazila in three days. The victims are Tapan Kumar, 15, son of Parimol Kumar of Abdulpur village and Kamal Hossain, 17, in Parbatipur upazila, according to sources in Parbatipur Health Complex. Local people have suspected it to be Kala Azar. However, Dinajpur civil surgeon (CS) Abul Kalam did not confirm outbreak of Kala Azar, rather he told this correspondent the patients became sick due to heat wave. Five others who were admitted to the health complex in a critical condition are Jashim Uddin 55, Dulal Chandra 6, Manik Kumar, 5 Rebeka Khatun, 10 and Ataur Rahman. Many children were also attacked with the fever, according to relevant sources. Wishing anonymity, a few officials of the health Complex told this correspondent the hospital runs short of medicine to treat the patients.

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## A laudable step for good governance

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira**

It was a different day for the people of villages under Jalalpur Union Parishad in Tala upazila.

Hundreds of enthusiastic people from all walks of life took part in a day-long budget session yesterday.

Jalalpur UP Chairman Prof Rafiqul Islam presented the budget for his UP for fiscal 2005-06.

It was aimed at ensuring trans-

parency in activities of the UP.

The UP chairman replied to questions from participants at the meeting, rich and poor. They asked various questions on how the money would be spent and also gave suggestions for better utilisation of funds and development of the area.

It was held at Jethua Jagarani High School ground in Tala upazila.

Two NGOs--Agragati Sangstha

and Manusher Janney -- organised it with a motive to ensure transparency in activities of local governments.

With Prof Rafiqul Islam in the chair, it was attended by among others Tala Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mostafizur Rahman, OC Shah Mashur Rahman, Khalishkhali UP chairman Prof Sabbir Hossain and officials of the NGOs.

Speakers at the budget session said such programmes will help establish good governance which is precondition for institutionalising democracy at grassroots level.

They said spontaneous participation of people proves that they are conscious about their rights and all round development of the area.