



PHOTO: STAR

Doctors grouped under Basanta Welfare Foundation prescribing medicine to the poor at a camp in Chanduria village in Tanore upazila, Rajshahi.

A band of brothers heals the poor

ANWAR ALI AND ABU KALAM,
Rajshahi

They are seven, working together and moving from place to place to reach medicare to the doorsteps of poor people in villages.

Grouped under Basanta Welfare Foundation, they move on holidays with costly and sophisticated medical equipment, examine poor patients, performs diagnostic tests and prescribes medicines.

The team includes specialist doctors who carry equipment like Ultra Sonogram and ECG machines to serve the poor, destitute and agriculture labourers.

They set up a temporary camp and examine 150 to 200 patients and perform at least 50 diagnostic tests on a day.

"We have just started. We want to be a model for others who will help the destitute. Only a desire is needed for this. I dream of a day when none of the poor will be left out of treatment facility", said group leader Dr Shafiqul Alam, his eyes shining with determination.

Well-known for his personal charity and involvement in socio-cultural activities, Dr Alam thought of creating such a group long ago, seeing the plight of destitute people desperately seeking treatment at hospitals.

Lack of poor patients' ability, harassment by brokers, poor facilities at hospitals and pathologies made him decide to float the Basanto Welfare Foundation several weeks ago.

Senior Medical Officer of Rajshahi University Dr Fakir Abu Zahid and Dr Sheikh Akhtar Ahmed joined him first with a mission to treat the poor at remote villages.

College teacher Dilip Ghos, cultural activist Naimul Huda Liton, development worker Abdul Latif Chanchol and social worker Saifur Rahman Zintu joined hands to help the doctors.

On Friday, their camp at Chanduria village was a blessing

for some 300 indigenous families in five villages. Poor indigenous people from nearby Babul Dang, Chumra Pukur, Ratoil and Nichpara villages in Tanore upazila flocked to their camp to avail facilities they never got earlier.

Many of them were suffering from various diseases like Kala Azar, night blindness, intestinal disorder, bronchitis, kidney ailment and gallbladder stone.

Two government community heath centres in the villages are closed for long. The villagers seldom go to the Upazila Health Complex because of what they say lack of attention and hassle by brokers.

A total of 175 indigenous men, women and children were examined at the camp on Friday. Tests for diseases were done for many of the patients. Thirty-six of them were selected for better treatment at hospitals.

Five-year old Joy Saren was detected having a swollen lever. The group took the child to Rajshahi for better treatment free of cost.

"We wish they come (to our village) once a month", said Bikas Marandi, an indigenous man in the village.

Forty year-old Prokash Saren had no words to praise the team. "We did not know so many of us were suffering from complicated diseases", he said.

Basanto Welfare Foundation so far organised about a dozen such medical camps in rural areas.

"We are performing costly tests free of cost and prescribing medicines ", said Dr Alam while talking to this correspondent.

"We hope to distribute free medicines at camps in future", he said while examining a patient.

"We have limitations. We dream of a charity hospital in Rajshahi", he said.

Rehabilitation project on cremation ground

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A project has been taken up to rehabilitate the landless on land of a 300 year-old cremation ground at Banshtala in Kaliganj upazila in the district.

The cremation ground on the bank of Galghasia river is being filled up with earth. This has created resentment among members of the Hindu community as this is the only place for cremation in the area, local people said.

Alleged occupation of the land has been protested by leaders of Banshtala Mohashshan Sangskar and Unnayan Committee (committee for reconstruction of Banstala crematorium).

It's leader Nirapada Ghosh at a press conference at Kaliganj on

Saturday demanded shifting of the proposed rehabilitation project to some government lands in the area.

He also sought intervention of the Prime Minister, Land Minister and Religious Affairs Minister to take steps to protect the age old and lone cremation ground in the area.

According to sources, Hindu communities in 26 villages in two unions in the upazila use the cremation ground.

Earlier, clashes took place twice centring felling of trees on the two-acre ground. Bloody clashes may erupt any moment, they said.

It was gathered from local people that there are government lands in the area for the rehabilitation project.

Its lands have been chosen for the rehabilitation project by the

Kaligonj Upazila Parishad and the Chairman of Bishnupur Union Parishad, they claimed.

On contact, Kaligonj UNO Sheikh Moniruzzaman said the question of destroying the cremation ground does not arise at all. He claimed that the rehabilitation project is being built on government land.

Bishnupur UP Chairman Mizanur Rahman claimed that the project is being built after discussion with members of the Hindu community. A cremation ground will be built on another place in the area, as agreed upon with Hinhu community people, he claimed while talking to this correspondent.



PHOTO: STAR

The two-acre cremation ground at Banshtala village in Kaliganj is being filled up for a rehabilitation project.



PHOTO: STAR

Rab in a drive in Rangunia hills on Sunday arrested alleged BNP cadre Nasir Uddin alias Naishya (R), his accomplice Salam and recovered arms.

Moulvibazar flood costs Tk 30 cr

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Flood losses in the district in May have been estimated at Tk 30 crore in various sectors.

Agriculture sector has incurred a loss of Tk 9 crore, according to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE). According to official statistics, standing crops on 2,848 hectares of land were damaged. Standing 'Aus' on 400 hectares and 12 varieties of vegetables

on 528 hectares were also damaged.

Upazila-wise break-up of crop losses were: Sadar upazila- 605 hectares, Baralekha-684 hectares, Kamalganj-533 hectares, Srimongal-315 hectares, and Kulaura upazila-201 hectares.

Fishes from 67 fish farms were washed away. Loss in fisheries sector has been estimated at Tk 50,000. Thirty-five tube-wells and 182 ponds and waterbodies were damaged. Most of the ponds and water bodies were silted up.

A total of 53.50 kilometre long roads were damaged. Of them, 40.87 kilometre roads were damaged completely and 12.63 kilometre roads partially. About 1.613 kilometre embankments were completely damaged and 27.16 kilometre dams were damaged partially. Six culverts of different roads were also damaged.

Thirty-nine mosques and temples were damaged.

According to official calculation, 2,505 houses were completely damaged and 37,543 families were affected by flood. Of them, 5,998 families were worst affected.

A total of 499.63 square kilometre areas of the district were inundated.

KCC exempts insolvent FFs from taxes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Khulna City Corporation (KCC) has taken a decision to exempt insolvent freedom fighters and families of martyred freedom fighters from paying holding tax and other municipal dues.

The decision will be effective from the current financial year.

The unanimous decision was taken at the 9th general meeting of the city corporation, held on Sunday with Mayor Shaikh Tayabur Rahman in the chair.

It was one of may election commitments, the Mayor told Daily Star yesterday.

It was also unanimously resolved at the meeting to accord a reception in Khulna to players of Bangladesh cricket team, coach Dav Whatmore and BCB President Ali Asgar Lobi MP for the historic victory in the ODI against reigning World Cup Champion Australia.

The meeting, attended also decided to introduce 'Mayor Cup Football Competition' in cooperation with Khulna District sports Association.

Timber 'smuggler' shot dead by forest guards

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

An alleged timber smuggler was shot dead by forest guards in Chaowtoll Forest in Srimangal upazila on Sunday evening.

The victim is Abdur Rouf, 35, son of Somon Miah of Lamua in Sadar upazila.

Three forest guards, Nazrul Islam, Harunur Rashid and Abu Rayhan were also injured seriously during the attack.

Forest guards fired four rounds of gunshots at the smugglers when they attacked them with lethal weapons like bow, arrow and 'ram da', according to sources in Forest Department.

Injured Forest guards were admitted to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

PDB goods auctioned at 'throwaway' prices

Probe begins in Satkhira

OUR CORESPONDENT, Satkhira

A high-powered team of Power Development Board (PDB) is investigating alleged irregularities in an auction in which goods and accessories reportedly worth about Tk 50 lakh were sold at only about Tk two lakh in Satkhira.

The investigation was ordered after news on the irregularities were published in regional and local dailies recently.

The six-member probe team headed by PDB's Western Zone Chief Engineer Md Abdullah includes Assistant Chief Engineer Pradip Kumar Sarkar, Accounts Director Masud Hassan, Khulna PDB's Deputy Director Shankar Lal Nandi, Mustafizur Rahman and Md Iqbal.

The team started its work on Thursday and are recording statements of officials and employees in

Satkhira PDB.

Meanwhile, sources at Satkhira PDB office claimed that some files were tempered to cover up the irregularities, which deprived the government of several lakh Taka in revenue earning. Satkhira PDB had invited tender, published in a Jessore-based newspaper, to auction 'unused iron, empty drums of transformer oil, GI pipe, wire and other items and accessories.

This was done in an alleged understanding with some farms and contractors in Jessore, the sources claimed. Local PDB contractors did not participate in the auction.

Eighteen categories of items were auctioned at Tk 2,03,374 on May 18.

Following the auction, all the goods were taken away on May 21.

The goods were sold at throw-away prices, they claimed.

To mention a few, a drum was sold for Tk 105 against its market price of Tk 400, GI pipe at Tk 11 per foot, and 33 KV underground pvc pipe at Tk 35 per metre, they said.

Some usable items were sold showing those 'abandoned, unfit and destroyed'.

At least 50 drums containing transformer oil were sold showing them 'empty'.

When contacted, Chief engineer Md Abdullah said the probe is on and they have detected some irregularities.

"Stern action will be taken against those found involved in the scam", said the probe committee chief.

He said the probe report will be submitted to authorities soon and auction will be taken as per the report.

Nor'wester hits 7 Gaibandha villages

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

A severe nor'wester lashed seven villages in Sunderganj upazila Monday night, injuring 15 people. At least 300 houses were raged to the ground.

Most of the injured are from house collapse, as tin-shed roofs of

many of the houses were blown away.

The nor'wester also uprooted trees and electric poles, plunging the areas into darkness.

The affected villages are Satirjan, Palpara, Kumarpura, Kanchibari, Panchgachi, Santiram and Dupni.

At least ten educational Institutes

have been badly damaged by the storm. Among these, Dupni College and Satijan Madrasha were damaged completely, said Durlav Chandra Mondal, chairman of Kanchipara Union Parishad.

Many of the victims are under open sky now, he said yesterday.