

Sirajganj Qaumi Jute Mills laid off

5,000 workers, employees become jobless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

About 5,000 workers and employees of Sirajganj Qaumi Jute Mills have become jobless as the management laid-off the mill two weeks ago.

The mill was laid-off due to lack of jute and other raw materials due to financial crisis.

Jobless workers and employees are now passing days with their families in great hardship. The mill authorities did not pay their arrear dues and salaries which stood at Tk. 6 crore, they claimed.

Qaumi Jute Mills was one of the largest state owned enterprises in the northern region. But the mill incurred losses due to inefficiency of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government. . The government did not

supply adequate fund to the mills in a bid to lay off it..

Official sources said they failed to procure adequate raw jute, Mobil and spare parts to keep the mill it running due to fund crisis. Mill workers and employees staged demonstrations several times during the four-party alliance rule, but to no effect.

At present, all kinds of production in the mill remained off for the last two weeks.

Meanwhile, the employees are facing uncertainty due to non-payment of salaries for six months while the workers are deprived of wages for 25 weeks.

Ramjan Miah, 50, a loom operator of the mill said, he had been working in the mill for last 35 years. He is now unable to do any other

work due to his old age. As a result, he is facing uncertainty along with his family members.

Jamser Ali, 45, another worker of the mill said his wife died of woman related disease without treatment. This is because he did not get salaries for 25 weeks from the mill authorities.

Abdul Khalek, president of Sirajganj Qaumi Jute Mill Mojdur Union and Sujabot Ali, secretary of the union said, some workers have already started pulling rickshaws in the town due to non payment of salaries by the mill authorities. Others are looking for jobs to earn a living. They are now compelled to change their profession.

The leaders said the mill area has virtually turned into a graveyard following its closure.

Five private clinics closed in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The joint forces have closed all five private clinics in Patuakhali town for running without valid papers, untrained manpower and low quality services.

The forces sealed off three out of five clinics while two others were closed by the owners themselves on the same ground.

The sealed off clinics are Abdullah Clinic, Patuakhali Clinic, Himi Poly Clinic and Nova Diagnostic Centre and Prime Diagnostic Centre.

Many patients are now crowding Patuakhali General Hospital for treatment. Most of them are flooring due to acute accommodation crisis in the hospital.

Five separate cases were filed with local police station in this connection.

Counting on edn

51,700 benefited by Dhaka Ahsania Mission's Educate to Empower project

STAR NATIONAL DESK

'My schooling stopped when I was in class four, but I want my three children to have a proper education. They are my future.'

Anwara Begum of Batikamari village under Chowgachha upazila in Jessore district smiles fondly at her eldest daughter who is an SSC examinee this year.

Fifteen years ago Anwara had to stop schooling due to sheer poverty of her father Hamezuddin Sarker at Kongsharipur village in Chowgachha upazila. Hamez had a big family with seven children. Anwara was the eldest child among them. She could not continue her education because of poverty and superstition.

Ultimately, she had to marry a poor farmer named Md Delwar Hossain. Anwara was destined to lead a miserable life in her husband's house. She passed her days half fed or unfed. Over the years she gave birth to three children increasing her misery. She started thinking how to come out of the vicious circle of poverty.

'I was desperate for money', Anwara said. At that time, I came to know about the Educate to Empower (ETE), a community based poverty alleviation programme of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) through a neighbour. She became a member of Mukti Ganokendra, a community centre, at Batikamari village. The centre was established in 1999.

Anwara learnt the technique of goat rearing there. She undertook the goat rearing project with three goats at the initial stage. Later, she took loan amounting to Tk 5,000 from Mukti Mohila Unnyan Samity under the micro-credit programme of Dhaka Ahsania Mission. She bought 10 goats with the money. She reared them and earned Tk 25,000 by selling five of them during the Eid-ul-Azha. Luck smiled on her. The former distressed woman is today a well-off woman. Her economic solvency speaks for her success.

Well-known as a cattle rearer in the locality, Anwara is role model for many.

Anwara said 'I did not give up and Dhaka Ahsaina Mission provided me the support I needed.'

Anwara said rural women can change their lot by undertaking small scale projects at home. Handbooks on goat rearing are

published regularly by Dhaka Ahasnia Mission. These are available at Ganokendro which can be helpful to the women in creation of self-employment, she added.

Komol Kumar Joarder, programme officer of Community Capacity Building (CCB), Dhaka Ahsania Mission said the project started in January, 2004 and ended in December, 2006 The programme was materialised through 517 Ganokendra. The target group was 51,700 Ganokendra members. The programme was implemented in Sadar, Keshobpur and Chowgachha upazilas of Jessore, Sadar and Moeshpur upazilas of Jhenidah and Sadar upazila of Narsingdi.



PHOTO: STAR

Policemen escorting Amjad Hossain Sarkar, ex-BNP lawmaker of Nilphamari-4 constituency and an accused in Kazi Rubek Murder Case towards jail after surrender in a court yesterday (Story on Page-1).

AMENA BAKI RESIDENTIAL MODEL SCHOOL

A laudable initiative to ensure quality edn for rural children

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Students at Amena Baki Residential Model School in Chirir Bandar upazila in Dinajpur now have access to computers, which are the first computers ever in a rural school in remote north.

opportunities for us,' says Prof Dr M Amjad Hossain, a veteran freedom fighter and head of the Department of Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgery, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital who founded the school at the backward village in 2000. 'These skills will enable us to perform our work more efficiently

from our small village school,' he said.

'With 730 students at the school, 35 of them girl students, 80 teachers are extremely busy and yet they gladly embraced the opportunity to spend their leisure learning and improving their professional skills,' said Dr Amjad.

The school stresses cross-disciplinary approaches to complex problems. It mobilises science and modern technology to advance sustainable development while placing special emphasis on the needs of poor students.

Established on five acres of land in a serene atmosphere, the school emphasises on computer and science based education. A mini children's park has increased the attraction of the school to a great extent.

Among the students, 220 are resident students. Forty-five of them got scholarships last year. The school provides an opportunity to study up to class ten to the students, many of them disadvantaged ones. The school has a modern library. Resident students have separate dormitories for boys and girls with dining and prayer room facilities. A large playground on the campus is another attraction of the dchool. All necessary implements of games and sports are supplied to the students as regular exercise is mandatory to them.

The school is surrounded by flower and fruit gardens. Improved health care services are provides to students. Milk and fish are supplied to students from the school farms. Students participate regularly in extra-curriculum activities. They take part in various programmes chalked out to mark various national days such as Victory Day, Independence Day and International Mother Language Day. The institution earned fame in the region by fetching laurels in sports and cultural meets. Regular art and debate competitions are held on the campus.

Efforts are taken to make pupil aware about human value, patriotism, fellow-feeling and respect to elderly people.

The founder of the school, Prof Dr Amjad said the institution was founded aiming at creating an enlightened nation by providing quality education to rural boys and girls. . The school earned popularity due to relentless efforts of its dedicated teachers, he said adding the learners receive a high standard of education sincere efforts of founder principal Mizanur Rahman. A great enthusiasm was marked among both the teachers and students following joining of former vice principal of Dhaka Residential Model College Prof Shamsul Islam as director of education of AB Foundation in 2004.

The foundation is involved in various social welfare activities. As for example, poor rural women are being rehabilitated in the society through its needle work and sewing programme. Job opportunities are being created for distressed women.

Last but not the least, the foundation provides free health care service to war wounded freedom fighters every Thursday.

2 held while taking bribe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

A lawyer and the GRO (Court Daroga) of a court were caught red-handed by DGFI members while taking bribe here on Sunday.

Court sources said Rafiul Islam Khaza, lawyer of a plaintiff of a case gave Tk 100 to the GRO of Saidpur court in Nilphamari as bribe for his signature in the Okalatnama. At that time the DGFI members caught them.

The incident has created sensation in the entire court area. The police superintendent of Nilphamari, AB Siddique Majumdar instantly formed a two-member inquiry committee. As per report of the inquiry committee, police authorities suspended the GRO, Abdul Gafur the same day.

Lawyer Rafiul Islam Khaza was arrested by police and sent to jail. The bar association is preparing to take steps against the accused.

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