

## Post-flood rehab scheme for greater Rangpur

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Different government, non-government and donor organisations, with the help of armed forces, have have undertaken a massive post-flood relief, agro-rehabilitation and healthcare programme for greater Rangpur districts, official news agency, BSS said.

At the same time, the government has allocated adequate money for each flood-affected district to help small and marginal farmers to make the upcoming Rabi crop farming successful and recoup the losses they incurred by the recent flood, officials said.

They said the organisations have stepped up their efforts for distributing relief goods, oral saline and providing healthcare services to mitigate the sufferings of the affected people.

Besides, voluntary organisations, affluent people, business community, financial and educational institutions, professional groups side by side with the NGOs and donor agencies including WFP, UNICEF, Oxfam-GB, Save the Children and CARE-Bangladesh have intensified their relief and rehabilitation operation.

The government departments are taking preparations for recon-

struction and repair of the damaged infrastructures including bridges, embankments, educational institutions, dams, culverts and roads from October, officials said.

Distribution of T-Aman seedlings and crop seeds by the Armed Forces, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI) and a number of NGOs are going on.

The government has allocated a sum of Tk 45.48 lakh for Rangpur alone to provide each small and marginal farmer with necessary seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and other agro-inputs free of cost.

Our Netrakona Correspondent reports: Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Ikram Ahmed yesterday morning visited the flood affected areas of K-gati union in Netrakona Sadar upazila.

He distributed relief materials among the flood affected people at K-gati Bazar.

Netrakona Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ayat Ullah Majumder, Superintendent of Police (SP) Sakwat Hossain, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nurul Alam and local journalists accompanied him.

Later, the divisional commis-

sioner inaugurated the Deputy Commissioner's Football Tournament-2007 at Netrakona Stadium in the afternoon.

## Move to sell seedlings at cheaper rate

BSS, GAIBANDHA

Community policing committee (CPC) has taken up initiative for the flood affected marginal farmers of the district to help them through providing with seedlings at cheaper rate.

The members of CPC are selling seedlings among the flood affected marginal farmers at different points of the district.

District police administration and district Motor Malik Samity (DMMS) are also helping the CPC by giving them trucks for carrying the seedlings from buying points to selling points.

Police superintendent Mohammad Tanvir formally inaugurated the seedlings selling centre on the approach road attached to police line of the town yesterday as chief guest.

## Child 'strangled' in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A six-year-old girl child was strangled allegedly by her aunt Bilkis Akhter at Digarkanda village in Baira Union in Sadar upazila here yesterday afternoon.

Jesmin, a pre-primary student of a local BRAC School and daughter of Bachhu Miah and Khodeja Begum of Digarkanda, was strangled following a trifle incident.

Police said, a quarrel ensued following a trifle incident between Khodeja and Bilkis, mother and aunt of Jesmin.

After the incident, Mosharrif Hossain, punched his wife Bilkis that angered Bilkis to take revenge on Khodeja. Later, in the last afternoon when rain started, Bilkis called Jesmin to her house and allegedly strangled her by wrapping a piece of cloth into her mouth and binding rope around her neck.

Bilkis, then kept the kid's body under the mud of her house and put firewood on the top of the digging earth in order to conceal it.

As Jesmin was missing after the incident and after a massive search she was not found till 10pm last night, Khodeja suspected Bilkis that she might have killed her daughter. The house of Bilkis was then found under lock and key and she went out of her house.

Suspicion on Bilkis was raised with the passage of time and other members of the family searched the house of Bilkis and at one stage they found the body of Jesmin under the earth of her house. Family members caught Bilkis and informed the local Union Parishad (UP) chairman.

On information, a police team led Assistant Police Superintendent of Kotwali Police Station Apple Mahmud rushed to the spot and arrested Bilkis.

On contact, Apple Mahmud said Bilkis confessed to her involvement in the killing following a quarrel with her siter-in-law.

The body was sent to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) morgue for autopsy.

## Donation by Garos, Khasias

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Indigenous Garo and Khasia community members here have donated Tk 50,000 to the Chief Adviser's (CA's) Relief Fund.

They handed over the money to Moulvibazar Deputy Commssioner (DC) Md Alkama Siddiquee at his office at a simple ceremony.

Local leaders of the two communities Anil Yang Yungu, Jothish Rangma, Father Joseph Gomez, Monika Khangla and Pastor Payrin Suchian were present during the handing over ceremony.

## Newsman on the run in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A journalist here is now on the run after being entangled in a 'false case.'

The newsman is Saidur Rahman, Daulatpur upazila correspondent of local daily Dainik Aldoloner Bazar.

A bidi factory manager's men in Daulatpur filed the case against the newsman following a clash between two groups of factory labourers on Monday.

Kushtia Reporters' Unity convener Amanur Aman, in a statement, yesterday protested the incident and urged the factory owners to withdraw the name of the journalist from what he said a 'false case.'

Learning that two groups of labourers are at loggerheads at the factory, Saidur Rahman went to Akiz Bidi factory at Hosnabad in Daulatpur.

Saidur wanted to know from the factory manager, Khorsed Alam about the incident. But Khorsed supplied no information, rather he implicated him in a 'false case' with the help of loyal workers for filing a story on the incident.



PHOTO: HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

Faulty sewerage system in Bogra BSCIC Industrial Estate damages many important streets like this one.

## Moulvibazar Pourasabha demolishes 'historic' park

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Moulvibazar Pourasabha has demolished a 'historic' children's park here and hung a signboard inscribing 'Restricted Area' on its main gate.

The Pourasabha authorities have set up a flower garden there without showing any valid reason.

Local people have become annoyed at the action of the municipal authorities and are now demanding reinstatement of the park.

Situated at the heart of the district town, the park has a glorious past. Located in front of the century-old Pourasabha office on the Court Road, the children's park was famous for its many historical events. But the municipality authorities wanted to erase the glorious history of the park.

After a season of gardening, the land has been prepared to sow saplings of flowers for the next season.

Dewan Abul Khair Chowdhury, a student leader of the sixties and former commander of the district Muktijodha Sangsad expressed his concern and said the park was used for holding public meetings of political parties in the past.

Celebrated sons of the soil like the founding father of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Maolana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Major Jalil, Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, Comrade Moni

Singha, Bangabeer General MAG Osmani, Peer Habibur Rahman, Sirajul Alam Khan, ASM Abdur Rab, Nur-e-Alam Siddique, Azam Khan and Fatema Jinnah addressed public meetings here.

Khair said, this was the only place, where political, cultural and social organizations organised their programmes like 'open stage'. Several meetings on our historic Language Movement in 1952 and liberation struggle in late sixties were also held from this park.

Dewan Abdul Wahab Chowdhury, another student leader here in the sixties said the first meeting of the Language Movement was held in this park in February, 1952 with Abdul Aziz Mukter in the chair.

He said the park was the main centre of students' agitation, six-point agitation of 1966, 11-point mass agitation of 1969, and the Liberation War movement in 1970 and 1971.

Torch processions were brought out from here. After liberation of the country, the then municipality authorities had constructed a small Shahid Minar. Besides, a concrete built stage, benches and water tank (known as Jubilee Tank) were also constructed here for convenience of politicians as well as general people. But after 1998, the municipality authorities had removed all these structures from the historic park and set up a flower garden.

Moulvibazar district NAP president and a famous liberation movement organiser Advocate Gajnafar Ali Chaudhury said, 'We have lost the spot where we could express our opinions freely.' The municipality authorities have snatched our basic rights by damaging the park, Gajnafar Ali said.

Sujaul Karim, a freedom fighter and a famous cultural activist in late sixties and early seventies is now living abroad. He came to his hometown after 30 years but found no existence of the historic children's park. He recalled his early life memories and said they had organised cultural events in this park. After liberation of the country, the park was renamed as 'Shahid Mukit Park'.

But he lamented saying the municipality authorities have damaged all the historic witnesses in the park. Now it is a 'restricted area' and a flower garden.

Moulvibazar municipality chairman Fayzul Karim Mayun has been removed from his post and is now under trail in a criminal case. Commissioner Ayas Ahmed who is now its acting chairman said to this correspondent the structures of the children's park have been removed for beautification of the spot. Now people enjoy the beauty of the flower garden, he said.

## A shelter for trafficked girls in Jessore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Ahsania Mission offers a safe haven for trafficked girls who managed to escape their captors and return home.

At the shelter home near the Indo-Bangladesh border in Jessore, the girls find a safe place to stay, heal and recover as they prepare to rejoin the real world. They receive advice, regain their self-esteem and confidence, learn to sew, paint and build a new life.

Morzina (not a real name), a young girl living in the shelter says, 'My story is a simple one.' I got pregnant and had a child by a neighbour who promised to marry me. Shortly after giving birth to the child, the man refused to accept me as his wife. When my stepmother drove me out of house, I managed to find a place to live in but soon started to have financial problems. I could not cope and a woman, a distant relative, suggested that I try working abroad. I thought it might be a good solution for a while until I got back on my feet. The woman took me to Kolkata in India. To my utter aston-

ishment, I found myself locked up in a house during the day and forced to go out with clients at night. Finally, a kind man helped me escape back to Bangladesh.

'I am so mad at myself that I let myself befooled by all kinds of empty promises,' says Morzina. 'I believed all kinds of lies.'

Now I try to calm down and say to myself that I did what I did because I was desperate. I'm looking around me here in the shelter and I realise that I am the oldest the other girls are under 20; I could have been more mature.'

These days Morzina is trying to focus on the future. 'I'm very fearful of how I'll fare out in the real world but I want to do what's right for my baby,' she says.

Kulsum is another girl living in the shelter. She is only 15 years old. In her room there is a television (TV) set for entertainment. A psychiatric, a counsellor and a doctor take care of her and co-inmates round the clock.

Kulsum (not a real name) left home at age 12 and slept on the stairs of an apartment building.

Looking for a job, she stumbled upon a woman who promised her a brighter future. In reality, the woman was part of a trafficking network and Kulsum was soon forced to become a sex worker.

'I became a drug addict,' she says, 'Because it helped me avoid thinking about what was happening to me.'

At age 14, Kulsum was given a passport and sent to Mumbai, India, where she was caught by police and sent back home.

Women have been hard hit by rising poverty in the country and found themselves with little opportunities in the labour market.

It is estimated that over 0.2 million women and children have already been trafficked out of Bangladesh through various routes to different countries, according to DAM sources.

Bangladeshi children are trafficked to Middle East where they are used as 'Jokey' in camel race in deserts.

Both Morzina and Kulsum are hoping to get back on their feet soon and reintegrate themselves in society.

## Abandoned baby doing well at shelter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nine-month-old baby abandoned by a woman in a Dhaka-Jessore bus was doing well yesterday at a shelter home of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) at Vekutia, Jessore, said DAM assistant director (Human Rights & Social Justice) Advocate Shirin Naher.

'We are still searching for the baby's parents,' she said.

A driver of the Eagle Paribahan bus recently discovered the baby in his vehicle and handed over to Jessore Kotwali police, the official said.

On information, Rights Jessore, a human rights organisation, took charge and brought the baby to the shelter home where the authorities named the baby Mitu Moni, said Advocate Shirin.

Sleeping peacefully in a cot with a toy, Mitu Moni was oblivious to the desperate search for parents, a doctor at the shelter home said. Already doctors and staff of the shelter home have grown attachment to the youngster. A doctor at the home said: Mitu is sleeping peacefully and has been very settled.

The authorities have urged the probable parents or near ones of the baby to contact Md Rashedul Islam, regional officer, Vekutia, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Jessore along with proper documents.

## Plastic surgery camp for poor children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A two-day free plastic surgery camp for poor children with cleft-lip and defective palate organised by Ideal Clinic and Nursery Home (ICNH) has ended here on Thursday.

Head of the Department of Neuro Surgery of Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) Prof Dr Lutfar Rahman formally inaugurated the camp at ICNH, Rangpur campus to provide free medical services to children from poorer section of the society on Wednesday.

Plastic surgery and other necessary operations were conducted by the specialist physicians to 60 children.

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