

An unsung friend of farmers

In six Rangpur villages agri officer Porimal is a man in need for growers

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Porimal is a name that means a lot to the farmers of six villages under Payerabond union in Mithapukur upazila.

Among the villagers he is known as the 'friend of farmers'. For the farmers toiling from dawn to dusk in the fields, Porimal Chandra Sarker is a friend in need.

Whenever crops are attacked by pests or germination of seeds fails or the soil suddenly loses fertility, farmers know exactly where to go for help. With his position as the sub assistant agriculture officer at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Porimal makes himself available round the clock to the farmers.

Abdul Baten, a farmer-college-teacher from Salaipur area said Porimal's biggest success lies in turning the farmers' attention to organic fertiliser from that of chemical fertiliser for growing crops.

Porimal trains farmers how to prepare organic fertiliser. This year, he said, he personally oversaw 700 pits to produce organic fertiliser for potato cultivation.

"Continuous use of chemical fertilisers decreases land fertility. Therefore, I suggest farmers to prepare organic fertiliser themselves for potato cultivation. Many of the farmers of Zafarpur area are now using organic fertiliser prepared by themselves."

Porimal is also in favour of integrated pest management (IPM) as pesticides in vegetables and crops are hazardous to human health and environment.

Golam Hossain, a farmer from Ovirampur village under Payerabond union



PHOTO: STAR

Agriculture officer Porimal Chandra Sarker, better known as 'friend of farmers' in the area, visiting a field comprising a vegetable garden and an orchard in Payerabond union of Mithapukur upazila under Rangpur district.

said his aman paddy on two acres of land was saved from attack of neck blight last season thanks to Porimal's quick intervention.

Touhidul Islam of Salaipur village said he failed to get good yield of potato from his land in 2007 and 2008. Later he met Porimal.

"Porimal immediately tested the soil at the Payerabond union council complex and solved the problem by administering certain amount of potash and magnesium. The following season in 2009 I had a bumper harvest," Touhid said.

Aminul Islam, a farmer from the same village, said before Porimal arrived in 2006

they did not even know who their supervisor was in Zafarpur area.

Local union council chairman Rezaul Islam said that every farmer in the area is fond of Porimal because he never refuses to help.

"He is always busy serving the farmers. He is found in the fields everyday sharing his knowledge with the farmers and talking about their problems," said Rezaul.

"He is also training farmers on integrated crop management (IPM)." Most of the vegetable farmers have achieved very good harvests following his instructions on IPM and use of snares for pest management," he added.

Porimal also volunteers for the local landless farmers. He has formed several working groups with landless people who are trained on cultivation of beans and vegetables on the strips of land by the roadside.

A landless farmer, Abbas Ali, of Shalmara village said, nine members of his working group earned Tk 36,000 by selling vegetables cultivated on the roadside last year.

"Porimal babu provided seeds and trained us how to cultivate them," Abdul Halim of the village said adding, "We'll continue to cultivate it as it's an extra source of income."

Porimal's senior colleagues at the upazila level are also all

praise for his love for the work.

"I am overwhelmed to see how an official can be so devoted to his profession. He really needs to be recognised so that others in the field are encouraged to follow his path," said Mohammad Ali, Mithapukur upazila agriculture officer.

Porimal's love for farmers and agriculture has prompted the neighbouring Mithapukur DAE to set up an Integrated Crop Management Club at Zafarpur block. There will be computers and internet services in the club. The farmers will be able to get updated information on agriculture from the club, the upazila agriculture officer added.

2 outlaws arrested, bombs recovered

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Law enforcers in Chuadanga and Khulna arrested two outlaws on Sunday and recovered bombs from one of them.

In Chuadanga, police arrested a top cadre of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) faction Lal Pataka on Sunday night and recovered five bombs.

The arrestee was identified as Rakib Uddin, 30, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

Acting on a tip off, a team of Chuadanga Sadar police led by officer-in-charge (OC) Kamruzzaman raided a spot in Buzrokgargari area under Sadar upazila where the outlawed leader was holding a secret meeting with others at about 7.30pm.

Sensing the presence of police, the outlaws threw bombs at police and fled away from the scene. Police chased them and at one stage caught Rakib when he

fell down on the street.

On his confessional statement, police recovered five bombs and a sword from the area.

In Khulna, a team of Rapid Action Battalion-6 arrested a notorious outlaw at 7-30pm on Sunday from Dakbunglow Road under Khulna Sadar police station.

The arrestee was identified as Golam Mostafa alias Taara Mosto 34, son of Abul Hossain of Taltala Road at Labonchora under the same police station, reports our staff correspondent.

Rab handed him over to Khulna Sadar police at 11-30pm after intense interrogation.

According to police, the arrested outlaw was a most wanted criminal in connection with seven cases including three murders.

Besides, 12 general diaries were filed against him with Khulna Sadar police station by those who were given death threats by the outlaw for not paying toll, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

The School Club Road in Chapainawabganj town remained virtually off limits to vehicles for over two hours as worried guardians of students seeking admission to Chapainawabganj Government Boys' High School and adjoining Chapainawabganj Government Girls' High School keep occupying the road during the admission tests yesterday. The two schools attracted much larger number of admission seekers than previous years following their opening of double shifts for the next academic year.

38 RIFLES BATTALION IN SYLHET Verdict today in case against 61 mutineers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The special court-14 will deliver the judgement in the case against 61 mutineers of 38 Rifles Battalion under Sylhet sector today, said a BDR official yesterday.

Argument of the prosecution witnesses by all the 34 accused, who had earlier claimed innocence, completed at the three-member special court headed by Col SM Farhad on December 7. Two other members are Lt Col Akhtaruzzaman and Major Maksudul Alam.

During the argument, the prosecution witnesses, including the then commanding officer Lt Col Gazi Salah Uddin narrated how the accused had revolted at

the battalion on February 26, 2009.

The court, set up at Sylhet sector headquarters, also completed recording statements of the prosecution witnesses in the case on December 7. Earlier, on 20 October, the same court read out the allegations against the accused.

In their depositions, the prosecution witnesses said the jawans took control of the 38 battalion in the city's Akhaila area on Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway on February 26, 2009.

They looted firearms from armoury, fire blank shots and blocked the highway, he added.

Deputy Attorney general Farhad Ahmed represented

the attorney general while special public prosecutors Gazi Zillur Rahman and Habibur Rahman Sheikh were present.

The then officer-in-charge of Sylhet Kotwali Police Station filed three separate cases with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court on May 17 last year against the BDR men of Sylhet sector and its two battalions as they had revolted against their officers, expressing solidarity with the mutineers of BDR headquarters at Pilkhana in the capital.

They were immediately arrested and produced in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court that sent them to the jail hajat.

Robber beaten to death Jewellery shop looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

An alleged robber was beaten to death by a mob and two members of a house were stabbed in Bunti area under Atraihat upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Elem, 35, son of late Sona Mia of Girda village of the same upazila.

Police said, a gang 15 to 20 robbers swooped on the house of Julhash Mia, a cloth trader of the village by breaking open the door early yesterday and took the house members hostage at gunpoint.

Then they looted Tk 3 lakh cash, gold ornaments and four mobile sets.

The criminals also seriously stabbed Julhash, 60 and his son Manzur Hossain, 28

Hearing the screams of the victims, locals chased the robbers and managed to catch one of them and beat him up mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot.

In Rajbari, robbers took away 101 tolas of gold ornaments from a jewellery shop from a market in the district town early Tuesday.

Police said, breaking open the collapsible gate, a gang of robbers entered the

shop of Annonya Jewellers at Poura Millennium Market at about 3:30am and looted 101 tolas of gold ornaments worth about Tk 40 lakh.

None was arrested in this connection. A case was filed.

Another report from Narayanganj adds: Robbers looted Tk 1 lakh cash from five shops of NS Super Market at Shimrail in Siddhirganj upazila early Tuesday.

Police said, breaking open the doors a gang looted the amount from five shops late at night. But the robbers did not touch other valuables of the shops.

SUST student expelled for injuring 6 BCL men

SUST CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) at a meeting on Monday night expelled Habibur Rahman, a student of Food Engineering and Tea Technology (FET) department, for injuring six BCL men.

Earlier, a two-member probe body headed by SUST treasurer Dr Elaseddin Biswas was formed with Dr Neaz Ahmed, associate professor of social work department as the member.

The SUST authorities also filed a case against Habibur Rahman with Sylhet Kotwali PS handing him over to the law enforcers.

Sources said, police also seized a few things while raiding Habibur's room in Surma residential area in presence of proctorial body members on Monday night.

Meanwhile, critically injured BCL men Rabiul Awal Robin of public administration department and Ashraf of chemical engineering department underwent operation on Tuesday. They needed 16 bags of blood, according to hospital sources.

On Monday seven SUST students were seriously injured in a clash over a trivial matter near the campus.

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Housewife burnt to death in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

A young housewife was burnt to death allegedly by her in-laws at Jamtala in Fatullah upazila yesterday.

Denying the allegation, the in-laws said, Ruma Rani Das, 25, committed suicide by setting herself on fire. She was rescued breaking open the doors of the kitchen on the 5th floor of a rented flat at 8 am, they said.

Police arrested her husband Pradip Chandra Dey and mother-in-law Kana Rani Dey for their suspected involve-

ment in the killing.

Ruma, mother of a child, was married to Pradip in 2005.

Her father Dharendra Chandra Dey filed a case with police accusing Pradip, his parents and three others of torturing and burning her daughter to death.

Fatullah PS officer Jiban Kanti Sarkar said they were investigating the reason behind the death of Ruma Rani Das.

Body recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Police recovered the body of a class five student from a pond at Chator village under Singra upazila on Sunday evening.

The deceased was identified as Bakul Hossain, 12, son of Mojibur Rahman of the village. Family sources said Bakul was missing from Saturday night. Police suspected that criminals killed Bakul and left the body in the pond.

Officer-in-charge in Singra police station said the body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

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