

'Free' textbooks on sale in Khulna city

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Primary school textbooks, meant for free distribution among students, are selling openly at different bookshops of Khulna city.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) authorities have requested the deputy director of Primary Education and the commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) to help detect illegal sellers of the textbooks.

Accordingly, a team comprising men of intelligence agencies and plainclothes police have been engaged in KD Ghosh Road, Ferryghat area and Clay Road of Khulna city where most of the bookshops are located, said Ratan Siddiqui, NCTB official in charge of Khulna district.

These books, printed in India through an international tender, are meant for free distribution among primary school students and so, their sale

in open market is a punishable offence as declared by the government, he said.

Six lakh out of 2 crore and 98 lakh textbooks printed in India went missing either from Petrapole landport in Indian or Benapole landport in Bangladesh when they were being brought to the country for free distribution among the students, said an informed source.

Probably, these missing books have been smuggled into the country through unauthorised routes and are now being supplied to retail shops for open sale, the source said.

While inquiring about the sale of free textbooks on Sunday, this correspondent purchased a class three arithmetic book for Tk 90 from a bookshop at Helatala Road.

Class one textbooks 'Amar Bangla' and 'English for Today' are available for Tk 85 and Tk 70 in several bookshops in Khulna city. The sellers have set the price tags after erasing the words 'for

free distribution'.

Without mentioning the name of the printing press, they have attached the name of a computer composing firm.

"We have got these textbooks for open sale from some wholesalers in Khulna city. These wholesalers, who have a strong syndicate in here, supplied these books secretly," said a retailer requesting not to be named.

Echoing the same, a few other retailers said a few printing presses and some educational institutions are behind supply of the textbooks to local market for illegal financial gain.

"Stern legal action will be taken against sellers of free textbooks, if detected. A team is already in the field to detect sellers of NCTB textbooks meant for free distribution among primary school students," said Ratan Siddiqui, who is in charge of looking into distribution of textbooks in Khulna on behalf of NCTB.



Women workers nurture a potato field at Char Kaliaya in Baufal upazila of Patuakhali district recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Price-drop discourages potato farmers in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Potato growers in the district, discouraged by low prices last season, are showing less interest in cultivating potato on their lands this year.

Only 85 hectares of land have been brought under potato cultivation this year as against 180 hectares last year, said sources of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

The district sees potato cultivation for the last 20 years. Especially Baufal, Galachipa and Dashmina upazilas are famous for potato as the soil is suitable.

Late varieties of potatoes are usually

grown during December to February between amon and boro crops.

But cultivation of this crop faces setback this year, as farmers failed to get back even their production cost last season.

Sudarshan Howlader, a potato farmer of Char Kaliaya under Baufal upazila, said, "I incurred a loss of Tk 7 lakh despite a bumper production on my 20 hectares of land last year. And so, this year I cultivated potato only on five hectares of land."

As there is no storage facility in the area, huge quantities of potatoes got rotten last time, he added.

Mahub Akon, another potato farmer of the same area, said, "I cultivated potato on one hectare of land this year as I counted a loss of Tk 80,000 on three hectares last year."

"Like me, most of the farmers refrained from large scale potato cultivation for fear of loss although prices of fertiliser, insecticides have remained almost the same as last year's," he added.

"Farmers are not interested to cultivate potato due to storage problem although there is huge prospect of its cultivation in the area," said DAE Deputy Director Nihil Ranjon Mondol.

Youth murder triggers protest

Two bodies recovered in Natore, Bogra

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two youths were murdered in Natore and Bogra on Sunday.

A college student was 'beaten to death' in Bhabanipur area under Boroigram upazila of Natore on Sunday night, triggering protest by locals, reports our correspondent.

Victim Sarwar Hossain Robin, 19, was son of Afsar Ali of Begunia village under the upazila and a first year HSC student at Bagatipara Degree College.

Officer-in-charge Anwar Ali of Boroigram police station said at around 9:00am on Sunday local people informed the police that a body was lying at a sugarcane field in Bhabanipur area.

Police recovered the body and Nur Mohammad, uncle of the deceased, identified it. Robin 'went missing' on Sunday evening after he left his residence with a bicycle, family sources said.

Officer-in-charge Mirza Abdus Salam of Bagatipara police station said rivals abducted Robin and killed him in the sugarcane field over a love affair related dispute.

Locals yesterday formed a human chain and held a



PHOTO: STAR

Locals form a human chain at Tomaltala Bazar in Natore yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of college student Sarwar Hossain Robin.

rally demanding punishment to the killers of Robin.

Robin's father Afsar Uddin Mollah, a school teacher, filed a case with Bagatipara police station accusing the victim's seven 'friends.'

Police yesterday arrested six of the accused. They are Dipok, 24, son of Haripodo, Arif, 22, son of Afsar Ali, Goutom, 24, son of Bokul, Sohel, 20, son of Omar Ali, Akbor, 45, son of Sahad Ali and Alamgir, 22, son of Idris Ali of different villages of Bagatipara

upazila. In Bogra, body of a young man was recovered from a vegetable field at Jaguli village in Gabtoli upazila Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Shafiqul Islam, 20, son of Dhalu Fakir of the village, reports UNB

Police and locals said there was an enmity between Shafiqul and Anisur Rahman of the village over sharing of gambling money.

Family sources said receiving a call over mobile

phone, Shafiqul went out of his house Saturday night and since then he remained missing.

Locals found Shafiqul's body in a vegetable field beside his house on Sunday at about 10:00am and informed police.

Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police also arrested Anisur who later confessed that he strangled Shafiqul following a dispute over share of money.

Rivals stab JCD leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Madan Mohan College unit president Kazi Meraj was stabbed by his rival party men on the campus yesterday afternoon.

Police and campus sources said JCD activists Madhab, Pallab and Prince swooped on Meraj near the college mosque at around 4:30pm. They stabbed in his shoulder and legs and left the campus on a motorbike.

The JCD leader was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. No case was filed in connection with the incident as of 7:00pm yesterday.

Meanwhile, a Sylhet court yesterday acquitted seven JCD men of the district and city units in a case filed against them under the Speedy Trial Act last year.

They are JCD district unit assistant secretary Azizul Hossain Aziz and city unit activists Liton Kumar Das, Mostafa Kamal Farhad, Emdad, Abu Saleh Shamim, Aminul Islam Saju and Maidul Haque.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Enayet Kabir Sarker passed the order as charges brought against the seven could not be proved.

Businessman Abdul Hasib Chowdhury filed the case under the Speedy Trial Act on May 5, 2010, alleging that the JCD men assaulted him and vandalised his car.

Robbers loot house in Ctg

UNB, Chittagong

Robbers looted cash and gold ornaments from a timber trader's house at Rampur under Halishahar Police Station in the port city early yesterday.

Police said a gang of armed robbers entered the house of timber trader Mohammad Faruk at around 2:30am, breaking open the door and confined the family members to a room at gunpoint.

The gang took away money and 30 tolas of gold ornaments. A case was filed with Halishahar Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

From top: Voters wait in queues at Bakpur Forkania Madrasa polling centre in Shahrasti municipality under Chandpur district, Khagrachhari Government Girls' High School centre, Jogindra Dewan Government Primary School centre at Rangamati, and an elderly woman drops her ballot paper into the box at Paschim Gohira Public High School centre in Raozan under Chittagong district during yesterday's polls.



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