



PHOTO: STAR

Birds fluttering and chirping in the farm area of Bangladesh Agriculture University in Mymensingh. Thousands of migratory birds arrive here at this time of year.

Jute workers of 7 state-owned mills to go on 48-hr strike tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Workers of seven state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt will go on a 48-hour strike from tomorrow to press home their demand for implementation of the recommendations of the National Wages and Productivity Commission with effect from July 1, 2009 instead of July 1, 2010.

In Khalishpur industrial area, workers of all the state-owned jute mills yesterday took out processions and held rallies to make their 48-hour programme a success.

Patkal Sramik-Karmachari Sangram Parishad yesterday announced that it would hold rallies in front of all seven state-owned jute mills during the strike and also block Khulna-Jessore highway for two hours from 9:00am today.

Security forces have been deployed in the industrial areas to prevent any unwanted situation during agitation of the workers.

Earlier on February 15, the workers of the state-owned jute mills went on a 24-hour strike to realise their demand for implementation of the recommendations of the wages commission.

Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, President of Jatiya Sramik Federation, has urged the government to meet the demand of the seven jute mills as soon as possible. "They will launch a tougher agitation programme if the recommendations of the wages commission are not implemented with effect from July 1, 2009," he said.

Md Sohrab Hossain, joint secretary of Khulna-Jessore unit of Patkal Sramik-Karmachari Sangram Parishad, has said that they won't accept any further delay in implementing the recommendations of the wages commission.

A section of bureaucrats must be held responsible for creating deadlock in jute industries, he added.

Housewife murdered for dowry, another fighting for life

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A housewife succumbed to burn injuries in Naogaon on Friday while another burnt severely in Khagrachhari on Saturday is fighting for life at hospital.

In Khagrachhari, a teenage housewife was set ablaze by her husband for dowry, succumbed to her burn injuries at Manda upazila health complex in Naogaon on Friday night after fighting for life for 45 days.

The victim was identified as Shaptami Rani, 22, wife of Nikhil Chandra, 28, of Tantipara in Joypurhat town, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Family sources said, Shaptami, daughter of Biswanath Chandra of Prashadpur village in Manda upazila of Naogaon district, was married off with Nikhil Chandra, son of Nibarun Chandra, about four years ago.

Shaptami was often tortured by the husband and his family members as her parents could not meet their demand for dowry.

On the fateful night of January 11, Nikhil and his parents asked her to bring money from her parents. As she refused, they poured kerosene on her person and set her ablaze.

Hearing her screams, neighbours rushed to the spot and took her to Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

Later, she was shifted to Manda upazila health complex where she died at about 9pm on Friday.

Victim's father filed a case with Joypurhat police station at night.

Police arrested Nikhil's father Nibarun Chandra and mother Laxmi Rani early Saturday in this connection.

Nikhil went into hiding immediately after the incident.

In Khagrachhari, a teenage housewife was set ablaze by her husband for dowry, succumbed to her burn injuries at Pailotfarm in Panchhari upazila, reports our correspondent.

Victim Rahima Bagum, 18, wife of Mohammad Jamal Hossain, is now fighting for life with severe burn injuries at Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital.

At the hospital, Rahima told this correspondent that her husband Jamal locked in an altercation with her around 05:30pm on Saturday as she refused to ask her parents to pay Tk 50,000 as dowry. At one stage, Jamal poured kerosene over her person and set her on fire with the help of her sister-in-law Jahanara.

Rahima was rushed to Panchhari upazila health complex. The duty doctor there referred her to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital yesterday noon as her condition became critical.

Residential Medical Officer at Panchhari upazila health complex Dr. Bidorshi Chakma told this correspondent that 40 percent of Rahima's body sustained severe burn.

Contacted, officer in-charge of Panchhari police station Alamgir Hossain said police arrested Jamal and Jahanara after the victim's mother, Rufia Bagum, filed a case in this regard.

Bogra road project itself loses way

Stops midway, now seems uncertain

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

The project for construction of the road connecting Mohammed Ali Hospital to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH) in Bogra has remained suspended for an indefinite period, much to the worry of people concerned.

The four-year project at an estimated cost of Tk 13.70 crore was taken in 2003 to construct 4.5 kilometre (km) road but the Roads and Highways (RHD) Department suspended it after spending Tk 3.24 crore as the ministry is yet to sanction required fund for the purpose.

Md Moniruzzaman, executive engineer of RHD in Bogra Division, admitted the matter and said later a Revised Development Project Proposal (RDPP), shortening the road by 1.86 km, was taken to complete the project by June 2012 but the communications ministry is yet to finalise the revised proposal.

The revised proposal increased the estimated project cost by Tk 11.00 crore.

Moniruzzaman said Infrastructure Development Wing under the Planning Commission in a meeting on January 6 last year approved the proposal and decided to send it to the ministry concerned for required fund.

"Meanwhile we have completed nearly 40 percent earthwork for 700 metre road from SZMCH to Mohammed Ali Hospital in Bogra town," said Moniruzzaman.

The RHD authority already paid Tk 3.05 crore for land acquisition cost and Tk 0.19 crore was spent for earth filling about six years ago, sources said.

Local RHD authorities acquired only 0.78 hectare out of a total 2.906 hectare land for the completion of the project but they are yet to take any initiative to acquire rest of 2.126 hectare due to shortage of fund.

According to the project plan, RHD

will construct 6.20-metre-wide road to ensure smooth and risk-free movement between the two important establishments in Bogra but now it seems quite uncertain due to the lack of decision from the ministry concerned, RHD officials said.

Md Rezaur Rahman Shamim, 38, a resident of Salimpur in the project area, said the RHD acquired his nine decimal of cultivable land for the project at a minimum price.

"I didn't protest acquiring my land, thinking that it would be used for the betterment of the people. Now I am very frustrated to know that the project has been suspended for an indefinite period," he said.

Another local Md Farukul Alam, 58, said the RHD authority acquired his eight decimal of land in the same area for the same purpose but the land is still unutilised.



PHOTO: STAR

Construction of this road linking Mohammad Ali Hospital to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH) in Bogra has remained suspended for an indefinite period because of alleged indecision of the authorities.

'Punish killers of Saad'

Human chain, rally in C'nawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Chapainawabganj Contractor's Association yesterday formed a human chain, held a rally in the town and submitted a memorandum to home minister through the deputy commissioner, demanding exemplary punishment of the killers of a college student.

Nadimuzzaman Saad, a first year student of Rajshahi Model School and College was abducted allegedly by his 'friends' on January 17 for ransom from his house in Rajshahi city.

They called him out of home on that day in the name of picnic, police said.

Later they murdered the boy at a students' mess in Sheroil Mothpukur area with the help of a blanket and sharp weapons after feeding him drugs. They dumped the body into a septic tank on the following night.

Later, Rab members recovered his

decomposed body from the sewer. Saad's father Aminul Islam is a member of Chapainawabganj Contractors Association and a wealthy person of Chapainawabganj. The family lives in Rajshahi.

The murder shocked the contractors of Chapainawabganj as extortion is rampant in different sites of the district.

We informed about the matter to local administration several times, but to no effect, several contractors allied.

Had the administration taken necessary steps against the toll collectors in time, the criminals would not have dared to kill Saad, they said.

They demanded exemplary punishment of the killers.

They also brought out a procession from Chapainawabganj Press Club and paraded different roads of the town before submitting the memorandum.

UP chairman sells roadside trees illegally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A union parishad chairman in Gobindaganj upazila has allegedly sold 872 roadside trees to a timber trader without permission from the authorities concerned.

According to an allegation, Shariful Islam, chairman of Darbasta union parishad (UP), recently sold the immature mango, jackfruit, eucalyptus, neem, and mahogany trees, planted along Kalitola-Haritola road in 1995 under the afforestation programme, jointly sponsored by LGED and Care.

Timber trader Sajadur Rahman of Nakaihat in the upazila bought the trees worth Tk 80 lakh at a throw-away price of Tk seven lakh.

When local people reacted sharply to the incident, UNO MA Wahed asked the chairman to stop felling the trees and formed a four-member probe committee.

Punitive measures will be taken against those responsible for the offence after the investigation, said MA Wahed.

Refuting the allegation, the chairman said he sold the trees as per the government rule.

PHOTO: STAR
Members of Chapainawabganj Contractors' Association take out a procession in the town yesterday demanding exemplary punishment to the killers of college student Nadimuzzaman Saad, son of a member of the association.

A YEAR INTO MURDER Schoolteacher Arifa's killer still at large

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police could not arrest the killer of schoolteacher Arifa Khatun one year into the incident.

Arifa Khatun, assistant teacher of Vainapara Government Primary School under Ataikula Police Station, was hacked to death inside a classroom on February 27 in 2011.

The killer left the scene in a three-wheeler van immediately after the killing. Following a case filed by victim's brother Anisur Rahman with Ataikula Police Station the same day, police arrested the van driver, Rabiul Islam, of Chowbaria village under the same police station.

hold a *doa mehfil* on the school premises today.

Contacted, the officer in-charge of Ataikula Police Station said the main accused Nazmul had gone into hiding soon after the



Arifa Khatun

incident. "Police are trying to arrest him," he added.

After Arifa's murder, Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Amin visited the school and announced construction of a new school building, which will be named after the slain teacher, said Md Sariful Islam, headmaster of Vainapara Government Primary School.

"We have already submitted a proposal to the Education Engineering Department, but the department is yet to take any initiative to build the new building," Sariful Islam added.

FIRE IN FIVE DISTRICTS Over 100 houses, 14 shops gutted

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 110 houses and 14 shops were gutted in fire incidents in Panchagarh, Munshiganj, Sunamganj, Jamalpur and Laxmipur districts on Saturday.

At least 70 dwelling houses were gutted in Atwary and Tentulia upazilas of Panchagarh district, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

about 2:15pm.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit at a shop and soon engulfed the nearby two shops.

The affected shop owners claimed that goods worth about Tk 10 lakh were damaged in the fire.

In yet another incident, a house was gutted by a fire at Pura village in Tongibari upazila at about 2:30pm. The house owner estimated the loss at Tk 10 lakh.

Locals said a fierce fire originated from the kitchen of Khairul Alam at Sadarpara village of Atwary upazila on Saturday noon and soon engulfed the adjacent 43 houses.

On information, fire fighters from Panchagarh and Boda rushed in and brought the fire under control after several hours of frantic efforts.

In another incident, fire gutted 26 houses at Bamonpara village in Tentulia upazila.

Fire service sources said the fire originated from the kitchen of one Rafiqul Islam's house and soon spread to the adjacent houses.

The victims claimed that the extent of damage caused by the both fires could go up to Tk 50 lakh.

In Munshiganj, 26 houses and three shops were gutted in separate fire incidents in Tongibari and Sadar upazilas on Saturday, reports UNB.

Locals said 25 houses were gutted by a devastating fire which broke out from the kitchen room of Malek of Hat Baligaon village in Tongibari upazila at about 12 noon.

The loss caused by the fire was estimated at Tk 15 lakh.

In another incident, three shops were gutted in a fire which broke out at Hatimara in Sadar upazila

In Sunamganj, at least 14 houses were gutted by a fire at Dumra village in Shalla upazila in the afternoon.

Sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a house at about 2:30pm and soon gutted the adjacent 13 houses. The loss caused by the fire was estimated at Tk 25 lakh.

In Jamalpur, a devastating fire which broke out at a grocery shop at Kamalkhan Bazaar in Sadar upazila gutted nine shops and other valuables in the morning.

Police and locals said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at the grocery shop of Hasmot Ali and soon engulfed eight other adjacent shops.

Fire brigade sources estimated the extent of loss from the fire at Tk 10 lakh.

In Laxmipur, a fierce fire originating from an electric short circuit at a shop at about 4am and soon engulfed the adjacent four other shops at Jaksin Bazaar in Sadar upazila.

On information a team of fire fighters from Laxmipur town reached the spot and doused the flame after one hour of frantic efforts.

The loss caused by the fire was estimated at Tk 10 lakh.