

Kids hawk papers on Ctg streets



Eight-year-old Ujjal is one among the many children who earn their livelihoods by selling newspapers on the streets, unwary of the accident risks they are exposed to. This photo was taken from GEC intersection in the Chittagong city recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

MD TYMUR JAHAN CHOWDHURY, Ctg

As a bus pulled over to drop passengers at the GEC circle stop in Chittagong city, Ujjal ran to it and got on board, he had only a few minutes to sell some newspapers before the bus departed. A couple of people handed him Tk 4 and bought newspapers. He hurriedly got off, as the bus started to pull out. With a bundle of newspapers under his arm, and one in his hand that he was waving and yelling out to pedestrians, "Paper, paper, for just four taka you will get all the fresh news."

Ujjal Hossain, an eight-year-old boy, sells newspapers on the streets from morning to till early afternoon in the port city Chittagong, and then he goes to an afternoon school run by a non-government organisation.

"Everyday I come out from home around 6:30am and collect newspapers from my uncle at Jhawtala. Then I go through different points of the city and sell those newspapers. Sometimes I sell newspapers on the Chittagong University shuttle train also."

"I can sell about 50 to 60 copies in a day. But the number decreases on holidays because many people do not come out from their houses on those days."

"With one taka commission for selling a copy of newspaper, I earn around fifty taka to sixty taka daily. I give all the money to my mother," he said.

Ujjal said he lives in Jhawtala slum with his parents and his brother and two sisters. His father is a vegetable seller who is unable to meet the expenses of the family with his income, so Ujjal has to help out with the earning.

The boy, also a student of class II, said he can read newspapers now, and dreams to be a police officer.

Like Ujjal, there are many other children who sell newspapers on the streets risking accidents in the port city.

According to Chittagong Newspaper Hawkers Multipurpose Co-Operative General Secretary Delwar Hossain around 30 to 40 boys sell newspapers by collecting them privately from some hawkers. He, however, claimed that there is no member in the association aged below 15.

Mohammad Hossain, a newspaper hawker in Kadamtoli area, said some six boys take newspapers from him and sell those at different areas in the Chittagong city.

"The boys can help their family by selling the papers, and I also get some money," he said.

Talking to some boys who sell newspapers on the streets this correspondent learnt that the average ages of the children are between 8 to 12 years, and most of them from poor families.

An 11-year-old boy, Sohag, sells newspaper in Bahaddarhat area. He said he is only the breadwinner of his family.

"My father died three years ago. I

have to look after my mother and two younger sisters," he said adding, "Some buy copies of newspaper, some don't, some even get annoyed also."

Nine-year-old Sumon was busy in selling newspapers in the city's New Market area. He said he has to face some problems in this job.

"Older hawkers often create obstruction to sell newspapers at the spot, while some people do not pay prices after taking a copy of newspaper," he said.

"Sometimes we have to get down from running buses after selling newspapers risking lives," Sumon said.

Sources at Social Welfare Department in Chittagong said there is no statistics of the child labours in the city.

Hasan Masud, social welfare officer at unit office-1 of the department, said the department has no direct project to stop child labour.

"But, we have a project for the street children to provide them basic needs, including foods, shelters and education," he said.

Aparajeyo Bangladesh, an NGO, is implementing the project titled "Protection of Children at Risk" (PCAR), he added.

Mahab-ul-Alam, the NGO's project manager in Chittagong region, said they are operating three shelter homes under the project in the city.

"We are providing foods and education to some street children at the shelter homes," he said.

3 children rescued from trafficker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police rescued three children while being trafficked to India through Sadipur Border at Benapole in Jessore yesterday morning. The victims were Raju, 11, and Rayhan, 10, of Khulna, and Bablu, 10, of Satkhira.

Police also arrested the trafficker, Nasiruddin, 30, of Gazipur, while he was trafficking those children through the Sadipur border area, said Hasan Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port Police Station.

A case was filed in this regard.

Five killed in road accidents

Road blocked in Sirajganj

METRO DESK

Five people were killed in separate road accidents in Magura, Sirajganj, Chittagong and Jessore on Thursday and yesterday.

Our Magura correspondent reports: Schoolgirl Zilfi Khatun 10, daughter of Chand Ali Molla, died as a truck ran over her while she was crossing Magura-Jessore highway at Jagla village in the sadar upazila at around 8:00pm on Thursday.

In another accident, human hauler driver Noor Islam was killed when the vehicle overturned on the same highway at Bhabonhati in the upazila on the same day.

In Sirajganj, a truck knocked down Taslim Uddin, 30, of Kadda Bistupur in the sadar upazila, on Bangabandhu Bridge West Approach road at Kadda Mor in the

upazila yesterday evening, killing him instantly.

Following the accident, agitating people blocked the road for long disrupting the traffic movement.

The trucker was given mass beating and handed over to police.

In Chittagong, a speeding truck hit another tuck from behind in Banur Bazar area in Shitakunda upazila early hours of yesterday, killing an unidentified mechanic instantly while he was repairing the standing truck.

Our Benapole correspondent says: Atiar Rahman, 44, was killed as a motorbike hit him on Navaron-Satkhira road at Pipragachhi in Sharasha upazila of Jessore yesterday morning.

Masked men stab 2 BCL leaders at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Two Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders of Rajshahi University were hospitalised with severe injuries after being stabbed by four masked men on the campus Thursday night.

Witnesses said the attackers arrived on two motorcycles and stabbed Masud Parvez and Rubel Hossain, undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, near Talaymari intersection at around 10:00pm.

Masud, doing his masters in Islamic history and culture, is a BCL joint convener of Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall while Rubel, doing his masters in accounting and information system, is BCL joint convener of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall.

After one hour, some 100 BCL activists staged demonstrations on the campus demanding arrest and punishment to the attackers, whom they believe are Shibir activists.

TK 92 LAKH 'FRAUDULENCE' Pvt company office ransacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Agitated employees ransacked and locked up the office of a Dhaka-based company in Barisal city Thursday evening, alleging that it has defrauded them of around Tk 92.16 lakh.

Famous Bangla Welfare Society, which used to operate partly as an MLM company, opened its branch at a rented building in Zia Sarak area last November.

It collected different sums of money from more than 100 employees as security deposit before their recruitment, offering salary ranging from Tk 7,200 to Tk 15,000.

The company, however, stopped paying after disbursing the first month's salary this January.

Against the backdrop, the agitated staff besieged the company office Thursday evening and demanded refund of their security money.

Though the officials escaped the wrath, the agitators looted stored products from the office.

Arif Hossain Apu, an assistant manager of Famous Bangla, told the correspondent over phone that the looted and damaged goods were worth Tk 10 lakh.

He reasoned that salaries became irregular due to temporary problem of sanctioning fund. The company will sue those who looted the office, he said.

Kotwali police brought the situation under control.

On April 12, Famous Bangla was forced to pay back Tk 6.34 lakh to its employees alongside handing over two motorcycles and a cheque for Tk 5 lakh.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar
Khadya Odhikar o Samajik Nirapatta Andolon will organise a seminar; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 10:30am.

Dialogue
Centre for Policy Dialogue will hold a dialogue; Venue: Lakeshore Hotel; Time: 10:00am.

Human chain
Members of Maasranga Television will form a human chain; Venue: before the TV office; Time: 11:30am.

Bird festival
Earth Club of North South University (NSU), IUCN Bangladesh Country Office, Prokriti o Jibon Foundation, Channel-i and Bangladesh Bird Club will host a bird festival; Venue: NSU campus, Bashundhara, Baridhara; Time: 10:00am.

Pigeon exhibition
Dhakabasi Sangathan will arrange a pigeon exhibition; Venue: Hazaribagh park; Time: 3:00pm.



A mother feeds oral saline to her child under treatment for diarrhoea at International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) in the capital yesterday. About 370 patients were admitted to the hospital with diarrhoea from the morning till 5:00pm yesterday owing to the scorching heat outside.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka

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