



PHOTO: STAR

Ismat Ara supervises the works of women employed by her for making *nakshi kantha* at Jorapukuria village in Harinakundo upazila of Jhenidah.

Diligence, handiwork pay

Once in hardship, Ismat Ara now employs other needy housewives at her village

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Otherwise an ordinary homemaker, Ismat Ara of Jorapukuria village under Harinakundo upazila in Jhenidah is now a well-known name in the area.

Through her diligence and entrepreneurial skill, Ismat, wife of sharecropper Shafiuddin Biswas of Jorapukuria village, has not only brought solvency to her family, but also opened employment opportunity for poor women in the area.

She is the president of 'Jharna Nari O Shishu Unnayan Sangstha' in Harinakundo upazila where 35 women work to make different kinds of bags, petticoats, blouses and handicrafts.

She has also employed nine poor housewives of Jorapukuria village to stitch *nakshi kantha* (embroidered quilt) at her house. "Earlier we spent days amid hardship as my husband works as a sharecropper to maintain the family. To add to my family income I started making hand bags, ladies' bag, school bags and purses," said Ismat.

After taking a three-month training from Kathaltala bag factory in Jessore in 2009, she started making bags at her house.

Wholesale buyers collect different kinds of bags from her and supply it to different

work for two or three months to make a *nakshi kantha* at Ismat's house.

It costs Tk 4000 to make an ordinary *nakshi kantha* and over Tk 5000 for a finer one and each of the items sells for Tk 5000 and Tk 7000



markets in Jhenidah and neighbouring districts. A portion of those also goes to the capital city Dhaka.

She can make 20 bags everyday.

A big size bag is sold for Tk 70/75, a small size one for Tk 40/45 and a mobile bag for Tk 20.

A woman does stitching

respectively.

Shirina Khatun, a housewife of Jorapukuria village, said she gets Tk 1500 as wage for stitching a *nakshi kantha*.

"Doing the work in the spare time between my household chores, I can add to my family income," she said.

Bashona Khatun, a class

seven student of Mandartala High School in Harinakundo upazila, said the money she earns by stitching *nakshi kantha* during the leisure time is used to buy her study materials.

Pintu Mia of Meherpur district said he buys bags from Ismat's shop and gets good profit by supplying it to different markets in the area.

Ismat, who is now in need of 'handsome capital' to develop her business, said, "If I get loan or financial help from any organisation or bank to invest in my business, I can provide jobs for more unemployed women in the area, especially widows and helpless women and poor girl students who find it hard to bear educational expenses."

She is also hopeful of getting order for *nakshi kantha* from clients of home and abroad when the production increases and quality improves.

Mahmudul Islam Foton, president of Jhenidah Chamber of Commerce, said he will try to provide necessary financial help for development of Ismat's business.

EIGHT NORTHERN DISTRICTS

No fire stations in about half of 58 upazilas

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Properties worth crores of taka are gutted every year as there is no fire service and civil defence station in about half of the upazilas in eight northern districts under Rangpur division.

There are also reports of casualties due to fire incidents.

Only 27 of the 58 upazilas in eight districts have fire service and civil defence stations, said official sources.

In Rangpur region, there are six fire service and civil defence stations in Rangpur district, one in Gaibandha, three in Lalmonirhat and three in Nilphamari district.

Nineteen other upazilas in the region are without any fire station.

Under Dinajpur regional office, there are fire stations in eleven out of 23 upazilas under Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts.

In each fire service and civil defence station, there are one water-carrying vehicle having capacity to carry 1200 gallons of water and one vehicle for carrying water pump, pipes and firemen. But all the vehicles are old and traditional.

Except Rangpur, no other district in the division has any vehicle or arrangement to deal with combustible substances like acid.

In absence of adequate fire service and civil defence stations in the division, each station has to cover up to 40-50 kilometres surrounding areas, including

those in neighbouring upazilas, with old modelled vehicles.

Consequently, fire fighters often fail to reach the spots in time and fire causes huge destruction, said several affected people.

Unplanned urbanisation makes roads and streets narrower, hindering easy movement of fire brigade vehicles while filling up of ponds and water reservoirs in towns and villages make fire fighting a difficult task.

"Most of the 31 water reservoirs under the railway department in this town have been illegally occupied and filled. I have brought the matter to the

notice of the railway department concerned to recover the reservoirs several times but in vein," said Abdul Wadud, fire service and civil defence station officer in Saidpur.

In five months from January to May this year, 2627 fire incidents occurred in Rangpur division, damaging properties worth about Tk 45 crore, said sources in fire service department.

Three people were killed and 50 others were wounded while about one thousand cattle and domestic fowls were burnt alive, they said.

Unofficial sources, however, said a number of fire incidents, especially in

remote areas, are not reported to the fire service department and damage at those spots are not mentioned in the official reports.

Nitya Gopal Das, assistant director of fire service and civil defence department in Rangpur, informed that new fire stations were being constructed in three upazilas of the region while two other fire stations are waiting for approval.

Assistant director of the department in Dinajpur, Liakat Ali said one fire station is being constructed in the region and construction of another station is going to start soon.



PHOTO: STAR

Fire service station in Nilphamari is in bad shape as it is poorly equipped with old fire fighting vehicles like many other stations in Rangpur division.

Housewife set afire for dowry, 5 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A housewife was set afire allegedly by her mother-in-law for dowry at Loshkarpur village in Sadar upazila yesterday noon.

Masura Khatun, 25, wife of Sumon Sheikh of the village, was shifted to the bun unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in critical condition.

Police and family members said after marriage, Masura was often tortured by her in-laws for Tk 25,000.

On the fateful day, Masura was set on fire by Momena Khatun, 60 when she was cooking in the chicken, said victim's mother Rajia Khatun.

She was rushed to Pabna Medical College and Hospital and then shifted to DMCH as her condition deteriorated.

Following the incident, police arrested Momena and her sons Md Sujon Sheikh, Md Raju and their wives Selina Begum and Mukta Begum, said Md Nure Alam, officer in-charge at Sadar police station.

5 Hizb-ut Tawhid men held, jihadi books, leaflets seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Chandpur Model Police yesterday arrested five members of banned Islamist outfit Hizb-ut Tawhid and seized jihadi (Islamic uprising) books, leaflets, and CDs from their possession at Koralia road in the district town.

The arrestees were identified as Manik Mian, 27, Shahadat Hossain, 24, Helal Uddin, 25, Naim Al Hossain, 25, and Ershadul Kabir, 35.

Of them, Manik hails from Ujani village in Kachua upazila of the district while the rest come from different areas of Feni.

Sub-inspector (SI) Mostafa Chowdhury of Chandpur Sadar Model Police Station said the arrestees were under police vigil for their suspicious movement in last few days.

The five disclosed to the police that all of them had been distributing books and CDs in buses and trains

for the last two years, the SI added.

Meanwhile Railway police arrested Mizanur Rahman, 38, while distributing leaflets at local trains in Chandpur-Laksham route on Thursday.

SI Abdul Matin of Chandpur Railway police said Mizan identified himself as a member of the aforesaid Islamist outfit. He hails from Karoia union under Kachua upazila of Chandpur.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Chandpur police yesterday arrested five members of Hizb-ut Tawhid from the district town and seized jihadi books, leaflets from them.

Gaibandha panel mayor feared drowned

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Matiur Rahman Liton, ward councillor and panel mayor of Gaibandha municipality, went missing as he fell into the Jamuna River from a country boat on Friday evening.

The incident occurred at around 7:30pm when Liton, 47, along with 25 members of 'Bhorer Dak', a physical exercise centre of Gaibandha, was returning to the town from a picnic held at Louchapra in Jamalpur.

When the boat was entering the main channel from a tributary at Bulbuli Char, Liton suddenly fell into the river and drifted with the strong current.



PHOTO: STAR

Pick up van drivers wait for customers, keeping their vehicles on Boro Bazar Road in Mymensingh town. Although the illegal parking of the vehicles creates traffic chaos in the main business area, the authorities concerned are indifferent to such problems.



“যুদ্ধান্ত্র মারণান্ত্র তৈরিতে যে অর্থ ব্যয় হয় তা দিয়ে অনুন্নত দেশের কোটি কোটি শিশুকে বাঁচানো সম্ভব। পৃথিবী থেকে ‘দরিদ্র’ শব্দটি যদি মুছে ফেলা যেত।”

