



Set up on the same ground and only a few feet apart, these two schools at Futani Bazar in Dariapur union of Sakhipur upazila under Tangail district bear the same name -- Protima Bonki Uttarpara Registered Primary School, according to the record of the education department.

SAME NAME, SIDE BY SIDE

'Peaceful co-existence' of two registered schools!

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Believe it or not, two government registered primary schools are running in the same name and on adjoining lands at Futani Bazar in Dariapur union of Sakhipur upazila under the district.

Both the two schools, one housed at a two-room tin-roof building and the other in a three-room tin-made structure, bear the name Protima Bonki Uttarpara Registered Primary School.

With four teachers each, the two schools have 168 and 253 students respectively.

Abdul Malek, a former ward commissioner of Sakhipur municipality, founded the first institution as a community school in 1994. Later, it got

government registration in June, 2011.

On the other hand, Malek's cousin Billal Hossain founded the second school just a few feet away in 2002 and it got government registration in July, 2010.

To identify the two schools separately, local people as well as staff of Sakhipur Upazila Education Office call them "Keya's School" and "Shamsul's School" after the names of headmasters -- Keya Akter of the school housed in the tin-roof building and Shamsul Alam of the other one.

Both the headmasters admitted that running two schools at adjoining places in the same name is unjustified.

"We the students of the

two schools play together at the common ground," said Ishtiaq Ahmed Rakib, a class V student of one of the schools.

"Bells are not rung at the end of our classes as it can create confusion among the students and teachers of the two adjacent schools," said Masum Al Mamun, another student of class V.

Expressing surprise over giving government registration for the two schools on the same ground and in the same name, Sakhipur Upazila Education Officer Kazi Halima said, "I came to know about the matter after joining the post recently. The name and location of one of the schools will be changed as soon as possible."

Water worries in Pabna

Tap water supplied by municipality too risky for consumption

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR  
TOPU, Pabna

Water supplied by the Pabna municipality has been found 'highly contaminated by faecal coliform', exposing nearly 1.5 lakh residents to serious health risks.

Although the municipality officials brushed aside the findings of the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), sources in the municipality said the dilapidated network of underground water pipes and lack of water treatment were definitely causing the contaminating the pipe water.

The Civil Surgeon's office in Pabna reported outbreaks of diarrhoea affecting over four thousand within six months between January 1 and June 30. More than half of the total patients are residents of Pabna municipality area, hospital sources said.

Complaints from the local people and a rise in the number of diarrhoea patients in the local hospitals prompted the DPHE to conduct bacteriological analysis on samples of supply water in the municipality area.

"The DPHE collected six samples of supply water in sterile laboratory jars from key points of the municipality in April and June this year," said Monzur Morshed, the upazila officer of the DPHE.

"DPHE laboratory in Rajshahi examined the samples and found that five samples tested positive for high count of coliform bacteria," Morshed said adding that presence of high count Iron was also detected in the samples.

The samples were collected from Library Bazar, Radhanagar, Nurpur, BSCIC

area, Abdul Hamid and Hospital Roads of ward no 9 under Pabna municipality area.

Md. Zamanur Rahman, executive engineer of DPHE, Pabna told this correspondent that although the iron count in the water was not so serious but faecal coliform poses serious threat to human health.

"It is clear that the extracted underground water is free from contamination but once the water gets into the broken pipes it quickly gets contaminated and I suspect that 80 per cent of the volume of supply water is contaminated in Pabna municipality area," Rahman said.

Md. Tobibur Rahman, executive engineer of Pabna municipality brushed aside the DPHE test reports and said Pabna supply water is free from contamination. "The municipality authori-

ties strictly maintain quality and the contamination found by DPHE tests might have come from contaminated laboratory jars in which the samples were collected," Tobibur said.

DPHE officials, however, maintained that all laboratory jars used for collecting samples were thoroughly sterilised prior to collecting samples.

Seventy-eight lakh litres

of water is pumped through a network of 112 kilometre long pipelines. The actual requirement of the municipality stands at 1.45 lakh litres, Md. Ataur Rahman, assistant engineer of Pabna municipality, also the head of the water section told this correspondent.

Sources said that lack of maintenance of the pipelines is causing the contamination. At many places

water pipes are broken and getting linked with sewerage lines. Consumers at different localities complained of bad odor in the pipe water. DPHE and district health department sources claimed that lack of proper water treatment and poor maintenance of pipelines makes supply water risky.

Ironically, a water treatment plant built at a cost of Tk 68 lakh in 2002 by the Pabna municipality authorities now remains 'abandoned' for five years.

"A pump at the treatment plant broke down. It could not be repaired for lack of funds" Ataur Rahman said.

"Water treatment plant is too costly for us to build it immediately and solve the problem. We are now giving priority to ensure potable water for all. Then we will think about the treatment plants," Tobibur Rahman, the engineer said, adding that the pipeline maintenance work was continuing.

District health department officials warned that cases of patients with diarrhoea are very high due to bad water. In 2011 alone, 4,801 people were admitted to the diarrhoea ward at Pabna Medical College Hospital (PMCH).

Dr. Tahsina Begum, Civil Surgeon of Pabna termed the situation alarming for public health.

"We found that residents of the municipality suffer most in cases of diarrhoea outbreaks and other water borne diseases. And it is mainly due to continuous exposure to contaminated water," Dr. Tahsina said.

"We are now advising people to boil water before consumption," she added.



PHOTO: STAR

The lone water treatment plant of Pabna municipality that went out of order five years ago remains shut for lack of funds, below, the pipes that supply water from Poilanpur through dirts and sludge itself tell the tale of risks and contamination.



PHOTO: STAR

This herbal garden named Murolya Daru Tarum, meant for helping preservation and development of indigenous herbal treatment, saw its inauguration at Goboghona in Moghban union under Rangamati Sadar upazila yesterday. Inset, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, speaks as chief guest at the inaugural function.

HERBAL GARDEN OPENS IN RANGAMATI

'Protect culture of jumma people'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Speakers at a programme marking inauguration of a herbal garden in Rangamati Sadar upazila yesterday emphasised protecting the environment and traditional culture of the jumma people for development of the community as well as overall interest of the whole country and its people.

With support from Manusher Jonno Foundation, Centre for Integrated People's Development (CIPD), a local non-government development organisation, arranged the programme.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), inaugurated the herbal garden named 'Murolya Daru Tarum' developed by CIPD on 15 acres of land at Goboghona in Moghban union under Rangamati Sadar upazila.

"The indigenous *boidyas* (healers) in hills will get the opportunity to provide better treatment to backwoods people as hundreds of species of different medicinal plants will be available from the garden," Shaheen said in her speech as the chief guest.

"The traditional healers will get the opportunity for skill development through research work on herbal medicines and it requires a long term plan involving the people concerned," she said.

Urging all to remain alert about the violators of human rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and build up social movement against the evil force, Shaheen said the indigenous people must be united for full execution of the CHT peace accord.

Since time immemorial, the indigenous healers have been playing a very

significant role in providing treatment to people, mostly living in rural areas. But the traditional healing community sees decline due to lack of herbal medicines and proper practice," said Ushatan Talukder, member of CHT Regional Council.

"We have to conserve the herbal medicines available in the hills. We have to give importance on growing and creating bamboo clusters too," he added.

He thanked Manusher Jonno Foundation for coming forward for the welfare of the hill people.

Nirupa Dewan, member of National Human Rights Commission, was also a special guest at the function presided over by Jana Lal Chakma, executive director of CIPD.

An indigenous cultural function was arranged on the occasion.

LAND DISPUTES

Two beaten to death in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Brahmanbaria

Two people were beaten to death by their opponents in two villages following land disputes in the last two days.

A man was beaten to death at Taltala village under Kasba municipality on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Md. Jasim Uddin, 52, son of Abdur Rashid of the village.

According to eyewitnesses, police and hospital sources, there was a long-standing enmity between Jasim and neighboring Emdad over a piece of land.

On Monday night, while a village arbitration was going on to solve the problem, Emdad group started beating Jasim mercilessly.

Jasim later succumbed to his injuries on the way to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested Emdad Hossain, 30, Md. Jahangir Alam, 25, and Kamal Pasa, 35, after the murder, the OC added.

Another man was beaten to death by his rivals at Noagong village under Sarail upazila on Sunday night due to a similar land dispute.

The deceased was identified as Md. Habib of the village.

According to locals and police, Habib and neighboring Md. Nurul Islam's family had been in loggerheads over a piece of disputed land.

On Sunday night, Nurul Islam's group beat up Habib mercilessly.

Habib succumbed to his injuries on the way to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital the same day.

Contacted, Uttam Chakrabarty, officer in-charge of Sarail PS said that a case was filed in this connection.

LAND GRABBER'S DESPERATE BID

Houses of indigenous family looted, burnt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Criminals looted and burnt the houses of an indigenous family at Kasimnagar village in Birganj upazila under the district in brought daylight yesterday, triggering panic among the community.

Led by an alleged land grabber of the area and his two accomplices, around 15 to 20 men equipped with bamboo and wooden sticks attacked the house of Kazra Besra at Kasimnagar village at around 12:30pm, witnesses said.

The criminals assaulted the family members including females and children and dragged them out of the house. After looting things from there, the attackers set at least four houses on fire.

Before leaving the area, the criminals set fire to the kitchen at the house of one of the accomplices of the alleged land grabber, locals said.

"Nobody dared to come forward to help us as the criminals stayed here until the houses were burnt to ashes. The criminals set fire to the house of one of them with an

evil intention to brand us as criminals," said Kazra Besra, the victim.

Local indigenous people said they informed Birganj police of the matter but the law enforcers arrived around 90 minutes later although the distance could be covered in 20 minutes.

Kazra, a day labourer, have been living on 15 decimal land with 12 family members including two sons and daughters-in-law. The land belongs to Kedara Besra, another indigenous person at Kasimnagar village in Birganj upazila.

"A local land grabber and his two accomplices have been intimidating us to leave the area in a bid to grab our land and finally they burnt our houses," said Kazra's son Bisu Besra.

Around 40 indigenous families live in the village, locals said.

Arzu Ara Begum, upazila nirbahi officer of Birganj, Shahab Uddin, additional superintendent of police of Sadar Circle and Shamsun Nur, officer in charge of Birganj police station visited the area yesterday afternoon.



PHOTO: STAR

People belonging to Buddhist community took out a silent procession at Ramu upazila headquarters on Monday protesting barbaric attacks on their houses and monasteries on the night of September 29. Organised by Central Ramu Bouddha Jubo Parishad, around seven to eight thousand people from 14 villages of the upazila joined the procession, wearing black badges.