

# Trade on roads as growers have nowhere else to go

KM REZAUL HOQUE,  
Gaibandha

The district sees rise in commercial cultivation of banana, but the growers are facing problem in trading the popular fruit due to lack of suitable places to be used as market.

Growers gather banana for sale at different points on both the sides of Rangpur-Bogra highway, including Dhaperhat, Palashbari, Balua, Golapbagh and Fasitoal in Gaibandha dis-

trict, twice a week.

Often smooth movement of vehicles like buses and trucks is hampered as traffic jam is created due to crowding of growers, vendors, and purchasing agents, and piling up of huge banana on the roadside spaces stretching over one to three kilometres.

Banana farming has continued to increase in Gaibandha Sadar, Sundarganj, Sadullapur, Palashbari and Gobindaganj upazilas as its cultivation is more profitable

than that of usual crops like paddy and jute, said sources at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in the district.

During this season 8,325 bighas of land have been brought under banana cultivation in the district and of it, 7,650 bighas of land belong to Palashbari and Gobindaganj upazilas, said DAE sources.

Several familiar varieties of banana including *sagor*, *jahaji*, *malbhog*, *champa* and *shobri* have great demand in different places,

especially capital Dhaka and huge banana is transported to the city by trucks every market day.

It costs Tk 15,000 to Tk 20,000 to cultivate banana on a bigha of land and the growers get return of Tk 55,000 to Tk 60,000, which is not possible from cultivation of usual crops, said Zahedul Islam, a farmer of Marir Hat village in Palashbari upazila.

In absence of fixed marketplaces for banana, the growers pile up their pro-

duces on the roadside space, and it increases the risk of accidents, said Sultan Ali, another grower of Anduya village in Palashbari upazila.

Sometimes, especially when the demand of banana increases, agents and brokers collect banana from the field for cash payment, said Sharif Mia, a grower of Boglagari village in Gobindaganj upazila.

Although different kinds of bananas are produced round the year, September-October is the most suitable time for its plantation to achieve good yield of the fruit that needs nearly a year to harvest, said agriculture officials.

The growers themselves preserve banana plants for the next season and the DAE extends technical support for its better yield, said Mir Abdur Razzak, deputy director, DAE, Gaibandha.

He admitted the need of specific markets for banana that is being cultivated in larger scale on commercial basis.

Meanwhile, banana buyers have complained that some unscrupulous brokers and traders use harmful chemicals on immature green bananas to earn more by ripening it early and such bananas rot before marketing in distant places but there is none to look after the matter.



PHOTO: STAR

The chairman of Mohammadpur upazila parishad in Magura district has set up this boundary wall around a house of a Hindu family allegedly in a bid to grab 22 decimals of land belonging to the family at the upazila headquarters.

## That's how he muscled in on land of Hindu family

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Magura

Members of a Hindu family at Mohammadpur upazila headquarters are passing worrying days due to pressure by the upazila parishad chairman in an alleged bid to grab 22 decimals of their land.

During a visit to the area on Monday, this correspondent found that upazila Chairman Golam Rabbani, also president of the upazila unit of ruling Awami League, set up a boundary wall, obstructing the entry and the exit of the house and surrounding a room of the family.

A team led by Nanda Dulal Bangshi, district unit president of Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, and advocate Prodyut Kumar Singh, president of P u j a C e l e b r a t i o n Committee, yesterday met the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Mohammadpur and demanded immediate demolition of the boundary wall set up by the upazila chairman on the Hindu family's land.

On November 30, Dr Sanjoy Datta, one of the two brothers owning the land, filed a general diary with

Mohammadpur police station regarding the land grabbing.

In a written plea given to the local journalists on Monday, Sanjoy said his father late Sukumar Datta, former headmaster of RSKH School at Mohammadpur upazila headquarters, sold 22 decimals out of 54 decimals of land of his house adjacent to upazila parishad office, to Golam Rabbani.

"I and my elder brother Samir Datta inherited the rest 32 decimals of land as our father died in April 2008. But Golam Rabbani has set up boundary wall enclosing 44 decimals of land of which 22 decimals belong to us," goes the written statement.

"Due to the pressure created by Rabbani, my brother migrated to India. Afterwards, Rabbani and his men gave death threat to me and my mother. In last October, they felled the trees on the land of our house and took those away. Now they have constructed wall obstructing the entry and the exit of our house," it adds.

Contacted, Golam Rabbani claimed that he gave all the money to Sukumar Datta for purchas-

ing 44 decimals of land but after the registration of 22 decimals, he suddenly died.

When asked, Rabbani, however, failed to show any document regarding the payment of money to Sukumar.

Refuting Rabbani's claim, Dr Sanjoy told this correspondent, "My father sold 22 decimals of land only to Rabbani and the mutation of the rest 32 decimals of land of the house has already been completed in the names of my elder brother S a m i r a n d m e . Mohammadpur union parishad authorities also gave us the inheritance certificate for the land in November 2008."

When contacted, officer in charge of Mohammadpur police station Mohammad Sagir Mian admitted the setting up of the boundary wall by the upazila chairman.

"We have asked for stopping the construction work on the disputed land until settlement of the matter," he added.

Contacted over cell phone, Mohammadpur U N O M o h a m m a d Shamsuddoza said he will take initiative to settle the issue within a short time.

## Armed gang abducts three in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Rangamati

An armed gang kidnapped three people, including the manager of a plywood factory, from Samotaghat (river terminal) area in the town on Monday night.

The victims are Julfiker Ali Bhutto, manager of the plywood factory, and Bacha Miah and Nur Mohammed, workers of the factory.

Police quoted locals as saying that a gang of criminals came to Samota ghat in an engine boat at around

9:00pm, stormed into the nearby factory and picked up the three at gunpoint.

The gang fired several blank shots and also set fire to a timber-laden engine boat at the terminal, they said.

Law enforcers could not rescue the three as of filing of this report at 5:00pm yesterday. Contacted, Officer in-Charge (OC) Saiful Islam of Sadar Police Station, said operation is going on to rescue the manager and workers of the plywood factory.



PHOTO: STAR

Two UPDF men were held with arms from Paillabanga in Ramgarh upazila of Khagrachhari early yesterday.

## Two UPDF activists arrested with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Khagrachhari

Two activists of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) were arrested along with arms and ammunition in Paillabanga area under Ramgarh upazila of the district early yesterday.

The arrestees are Shruti Mohan Chakma, 32, son of Kalachan Chakma of Dhupchhari area, and Babul Kumar Chakma, 22, son of Bagar Kumar Chakma of Maldhanpara area in Manikchhari upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, an army team from Shindukchhari army zone raided one Subrata Chakma's house in Paillabanga area at around

3:00am and arrested the two UPDF activists.

Subrata managed to flee, sensing the presence of the army men, said Major Mahfuzul Bari of Guimara army region.

The army men seized two guns, 15 bullets, two magazines and toll collection from their possession.

The two activists of anti-peace treaty organisation were later handed over to Ramgarh Police station. A case was filed against them with the police station, said Officer-in-Charge Humayun Kabir.

UPDF Press Secretary Niran Chakma alleged that army men picked up their two innocent activists. He demanded immediate release of the two.

## Sporadic clashes mark day-long shutdown

### Jamaat-Shibir activists vandalise vehicles, set many afire

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Sporadic clashes marked the daylong shutdown enforced by Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami in districts across the country yesterday, according to our correspondents.

Over 50 pickets were arrested and scores of vehicles were vandalised and set afire by Jamaat-Shibir men in different districts during hartal hours.

In Narayanganj, Jamaat-Shibir activists blocked Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Mouchak and Sanarpar areas under Siddhirganj Police Station for an hour from 6:30am by setting fire to at least 50 tyres.

Vehicular movement resumed on the road after police and Rab members removed the burning tyres at around 7:30am.

The pro-hartal activists also ransacked around ten vehicles and set fire to two buses in Bhuigarh Delpara and Dapa areas in Fatullah during chase and counter chase with law enforcers.

Shibir activists set a bus of 'Bandhan Paribahan' afire on Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road in the morning, halting traffic movement on the road for half an hour.

In another incident in Dapa area, pro-hartal activists vandalised a bus of 'Ananda Paribahan' and later set it on fire, leaving several passengers injured.

Police arrested Shibir activist Shafiqul Alam from Bhuigarh Chowrapara area on charge of setting fire to a bus, said Sheikh Nazmul Alam, superintendent of police of Narayanganj.

In Barisal, eight Jamaat-Shibir activists were arrested in Barisal city, four in Muladi upazila, two in Mehendiganj upazila and one was arrested in Babuganj upazila during hartal.

BCL activists beat up

Barisal polytechnic unit Shibir President Ahsan Habib and later handed him over to the police.

In Satkhira, at least 13 Jamaat-Shibir men were arrested from different areas of the district on charges of vandalising vehicles, including a police van, and putting barricades on roads during hartal hours.

In Cox's Bazar, police Sub-Inspector Kabir Hossain was injured during a clash with pickets at Eidgah bus stand in the town. Pro-hartal activists vandalised at least 10 vehicles in the area.

In Feni, Jamaat-Shibir activists vandalised at least 10 vehicles and set fire to a rickshaw in the town.

Two passenger buses were ransacked in Meghnatola area on Bagerhat-Khulna highway and five Jamaat-Shibir men were arrested in Kishoreganj and Kurigram on charge of vandalising vehicles.

In Khulna, pickets vandalised two trucks in city's Muzgunni and Sonadanga areas and two auto-rickshaws at Daulatpur.

In Dinajpur, At least eight Jamaat-Shibir activists were arrested on charge of vandalising vehicles in Birganj and Dinajpur town, police said.

Pickers vandalised a Panchagarh-bound BRTC bus and a truck at Doshmail on Dinajpur-Dhaka highway. At least 15 bus passengers were injured during the attack.

In Sylhet, pro-hartal activists vandalised at least 20 vehicles and torched two motorbikes in Sylhet Railway Station area and at Chandipool point. Police arrested at five pickets from both areas.

In Chittagong, Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised a bus, two tempos and one auto-rickshaw near Rajakhal area at around

7:45am. Police picked up three pro-hartal supporters from there.

Jamaat activists damaged a CNG-run auto-rickshaw near Nasimon Bhaban, the office of BNP city unit, at around 10:00am. Police arrested two pickets from Majhirghat area at around 11:00am as they were blocking vehicular movement by setting fire to tyres on the road in the area.

Pro-hartal activists damaged a city service bus near City Gate at the same time. They also set fire to an oil tanker and beat up its driver near Sitakunda Bazar at around 12:00noon.

Pickers torched a police van in Brahmanbaria town bypass road at around 7:10 am and set two good-laden trucks in front of Palli Bidyut Samity office near NAZ Garden in Bogra town.

At least 18 Jamaat-Shibir activists were arrested from different places of the district during hartal hours.

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