



PHOTO: STAR

College students decorating saree during vacations their for some extra cash.

# Decorating for Eid

Over four hundred women decorate saree to earn extra income

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Sabiha Begum, mother of two children of village Fate-Mohammadpur Benarashi Palli in Ishwardi Upazila of the district is busy decorating saree ahead of Eid festival. To maintain her family, she decorates saree with Puthi, Chumki and stone like a fashion designer. "I have received orders for eight pieces Karchupi sarees in the month of Ramadan. She has already completed three sarees last two week, and trying to complete the rest five in two weeks – it is quite tough to complete the entire task before the festival, as she has household duties. She works day-night to complete all the sarees before the festival to get extra income for her poverty-stricken family" she added.

Like her, Shabana Begum Lucky Khatun and four hundreds more women in Fate-Mohammadpur Benarashi Palli in Ishwardi Upazila are busy with share decoration. Decorating one share earns them Tk. 1,000. During Eid season they earn around Tk. 10,000 to 15,000.

Lucky Khatun, another handicraft worker of the village said that she that she had already supplied 6 pieces of sarees and expects to supply 5 more pieces before the festival.

Not only the women, but also, there are many school and college students who are involved in share decoration ahead of the festival. In Benarashi Palli, it is found that Sadid Khan, Mahabub Hossain, Ershad Ali all are students of intermediate but they are decorating a saree in a handicraft shop. At least fifty students work to earn extra

income ahead of the festival as 'Kurchupi Shilpo' in Ishwardi.

Women in most of the houses of the village put decorations in sarees with Puthi, Chumki and fashionable stones with colourful thread: Jori and such other ornamental materials on the occasion of upcoming festival due to increasing demand of sarees.

"There are ten workers, most of whom are students, working in my Karchupi factory. Before, Ramadan we used to get 25 to 30 orders a week. But now we are getting over 50 orders a week", said Md. Asif Ali, owner of 'Asif Karuka Shilpo' also the founder of the karchupi in the village. Some 400 to 500 families are involved in Karchupi shilpo. Women in household level take order and put the decoration on sarees as a designer.

At least 200 to 300 pieces Karchupi sarees gets completed everyday in this village ahead of Eid. So, the workers in all houses of the village are busy.

Karchupi workers said that they use to decorate on various types of shaees like: Katan, Jorject, Tissue and some other sarees using Puthi, stone, Chumki and other luxurious materials. At least 5 to 10 days is needed for each saree for Kurchupi work according to the type of design. Among the Kurchupi workers: Jibon and Rakib said that they are trying to complete designs as quickly as possible on the occasion of festival.

Tk.1,500 to 7,000 thousand is needed for the decorating of each saree with karchupi according to type and design. Each saree is sold for Tk. 3,000 to 16,000 from here after decoration they claimed.

## A poet, a provider

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Madhob Roy, a freedom Fighter at the village Chaparhat of Chandrapir union at Kaliganj Upazila in Lalmonirhat wants to educate all the poor children and orphanage homes. He wants to ensure the health care for free of cost to all.

Also a poet, Madhob Roy, has been helping to educate children of poor background and orphans. Providing them with educational accessories and clothing support in regular basis, he also provides health care and distributes medicine for free of cost to the poor villagers and their children on Friday, every week. Poet Madhob Roy turned his residence a public library in order to educate people in the village.

Suzon Roy, a student of Rangpur Begum Rokeya University residence of Chaparhat village said, he uses poet Madhob Roy's public library to read books. All the educated people spend their leisure reading books in the library.

Lovely Akhter, a class five student of Chaparhat Govt. Primary School said, her father is a rickshaw-puller – he can't support educational accessories but she can continue her education as she gets support from poet Madhob Roy.

Beauty Rani, student of class four at Krishna Kishor Govt. Primary School at Batrish Hazari village said that her father is a farm

labourer who isn't interested to educate her due to high expenditure, but, she continues her study as she gets support from the poet. Aminul Islam, the Headmaster of Chaparhat Govt. Primary School said, Freedom Fighter and Poet Madhob Roy's support is encouraging to the students of ultra-poor families and orphanage homes to do well in exams. "He is dedicated works bringing light to the education and health sector in the village", he said.

Villager Sushil Chandra Roy said, "We, the poor villagers get free treatment and medicine for free of cost from poet Madhob Roy on every Friday of the week. Our children also get educational support". Poet Madhob Roy, 59, son of late Dino Nath Roy and late Ganoda Rani Roy, is an employee of health department, working at Kaliganj Upazila.

Madhob Roy writes poems, story and little magazine from his student life. His has eight books that has been published in the last six years, and he is regular artiste of Bangladesh Radio. Madhob Roy said, "I spend money for students, public library and medicine which comes from selling his published books. I have been doing these from my own pocket, but I never ask for charity", he said, adding that he hopes to extend these great initiative after his retirement.



PHOTO: STAR

Madhob Roy distributing educational accessories among poor students at Chaparhat village in Lalmonirhat.

## Orchards of sweet success

Shykh Seraj

A place called Saleheen in Saudia Arabia is located at 10 KM south of Madinah Munawarah. Saudi Arabia's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest revenue comes from date production – the first being oil. It's hard to find an area in Saudi Arabia where they don't grow dates that are of several varieties, tastes and colours. The origin of date plant is yet to be known. Iraq, Iran and Egypt are assumed as its place of origin. Date orchards took root in Saudi Arabia during 6000 BC. Since ancient times, date plant has been an evident aspect in providing food, shelter and wood to the Arabian community.

Dates contain 20-70 calories each, depending on size. It also contains 80% of sugar including protein and fiber components such as Boron, Cobalt, Copper, Fluorine, Magnesium, Manganese, Selenium and Zinc.

According to the researchers, there are more than 2.5 crore (25 million) date plants in Saudi Arabia. These plants produce a yearly 1.2 million metric ton (MT) dates, covering 20% of the total date production worldwide and comprising about 13% of Saudi Arabia's farming sector. The regions, Al Qassim and Al Hasa in Saudi Arabia are famous for date farming. Madinah is also well known for producing dates. Madinah is internationally known as the City of Palm.

Rahmat Amin, a Bangladeshi expatriate in Saleheen area in Madinah leased land from Saudi Arabian locals and built a date orchard here. Building and nurturing such orchards require hard work and he's doing it with insufficient manpower.

"What's your yearly expense per plant", I asked. "1000 riyal" "And how much for the whole orchard?" "1 million riyal"



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladeshis growing dates in Saudi orchards.

"So, it's profitable, isn't it?"

"In Saudi Arabia, date is no less than gold."

I wanted to know what other varieties he's growing and which varieties are expensive.

"What varieties do you grow in this farm?"

"Ajwah" "Which is the most expensive?"

"Ajwah. There are other varieties in his orchard like Loanda, Safami, Rabia, Madinah etc."

There are numerous stores in Madinah that only sell date and date-made products. These stores contain a variety of dates, but Ajwah is the finest in taste and value. I went to one and found some other varieties. Maghroum- it grows in Madinah and costs 600 taka per Kg in Bangladesh. Safabi that costs 20 riyal; Rabiya...a bit cheap...per Kg price is 8 riyal; Soufri, Sougai and many more.

In Saudi Arabia's Buraidah, every year, world's

biggest date festival is held. Not only that, it's really surprising to look at USA's largest date producing area. 'Palm Desert' in Los Angeles is growing abundant date. The question is how this vast land started growing dates? It was Bangladeshi expatriate in LA, Mr. Md. Islam. This is how the unique fruit from the holy land has reached different countries of the world.

Bangladeshi expatriates have been successful in date farming in recent times and creating interest among. Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia are taking new initiatives in date farming. But there's shortage in labour. Governments of both countries can ensure more supply of labours from Bangladesh through negotiation. Saudi Arabia will have more success in date production in future and the Bangladeshi expatriate farmers too will be credited alongside.

Advance greetings on the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr!



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## FIVE UPAZILAS OF LALMONIRHAT

# Mushroom growth of illegal bakeries poses health hazards

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Dozens of bakeries having no formal approval from Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) or licence have been manufacturing substandard and adulterated food products and selling those throughout the district for years.

These bakeries are posing serious health hazards to the consumers as the authorities take no visible action against them.

At least 84 biscuit and bread factories have been set up in five upazilas of the district in recent years. Of them, only 5 bakeries have BSTI approval, while the others have been running illegally.

All the 79 illegal bakeries make food items claiming those as Special Food

Out of 84 biscuit and bread factories in the district, only five have BSTI approval

Products. They mix toxic chemicals to enhance colour of the products and then wrap them in foil papers with fake BSTI seals.

People including women and children take these food in good faith and often fall sick. Dysentery, diarrhoea and liver complications are common among the consumers, said Lalmonirhat Civil Surgeon Dr. Jahangir Alam Sarker.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the owner of an illegal biscuit and bread

factory at Durakuti Haat in Sadar upazila, said, "We purchase packets bearing BSTI seal and name tag Special Food Products, Lalmonirhat, Bangladesh, from two shops in the district town."

"We put our products in them and sell those freely," he said, adding that bakery owners sometimes use toxic chemicals to enhance food colour to attract customers.

Mobarak Hossain Khandaker, a schoolteacher at Durakuti village, said the

bakery owners were able to manufacture and supply adulterated products because there was no authority to hold them accountable.

Contacted, Mantos Kumar, a field officer of BSTI said, they had served notices on several illegal bakery owners in Lalmonirhat asking them to obtain licence but there was no response.

"Without help of local administration, BSTI officials can't conduct any drive against these illegal bakeries," he said.

Lalmonirhat District Commissioner Habibur Rahman said, he will propose mobile courts to take steps against the illegal bakery owners and stop their illegal business.

This male elephant was found dead at Mirjhiri in Baishari union of Ramu upazila under Cox's Bazar district early yesterday. Locals said they heard the trumpeting by a herd of wild elephants at night but they were not aware of the reason behind the death.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH



# Dowry victim fighting for life

UNB, Sylhet

A teenage housewife who suffered serious burn injuries allegedly as her husband and in-laws set her on fire four days ago, is fighting for life at hospital.

The victim was identified as Alee Begum, 19, wife of Nasir Uddin of Roykhail village in Dakkhin Surma upazila and daughter of Abdul Haque of Alinagar in Beanibazar upazila.

With 80 percent burn injuries, Alee is now under-

going treatment at Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Police and family sources said Nasir, with the help of his family members, abducted Alee and married her six months ago. Nasir had earlier married another girl and divorced her, they said.

A drug addict and gambler, Nasir had been demanding Tk 2 lakh from Alee's parents as dowry since their marriage. As her family could not meet the

dowry demand, Nasir and his family members started torturing Alee, locals said.

Over the issue, Alee had an altercation with her husband and in-laws on the night of August 2. At one stage, Nasir and his family members assaulted her, poured kerosene over her body and set her afire in an attempt to kill her.

Hearing her screams, locals rushed in and rescued her in a critical condition. They took her to the hospi-

tal where she is now fighting for life.

Meanwhile, victim's mother Hosna Begum filed an attempt-to-murder case with Mogla Bazar police station accusing six people, including Nasir, in this connection.

The other accused are Nasir's brother Jewel, 25, their mother Phul Bibi, 65, sister Gharuj Begum, 36, and uncles Jamal, 32, and Kamal, 28.

Police are yet to arrest any of the accused.



PHOTO: STAR

Low quality and adulterated food items, prepared in unhygienic atmosphere and treated with harmful chemicals, are often marketed under brand names and with seals of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (inset). The photo shows an illegal bakery at Durakuti Hat in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

# Man tortured to death by 'in-law'

UNB, Satkhira

A man was tortured to death allegedly by his brother-in-law (wife's brother) at Bularati village in the district Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Hayat Ali, 40, son of Shahadat Sardar of Nowapara village in Debhata upazila.

He along with his wife had been living in the house of his father-in-law Ajihar Sardar in Bularati village for long.

Locals said Hayat often locked in quarrel with his wife Monu Khatun over different issues since their marriage.

Police quoting locals said, Hayat beat up his wife Monu following a family feud on Monday night.

Hayat's father Shahadat Sardar alleged that the next day Monu's brother Shahidul Islam and local union parishad member Abdul Hamid picked up Hayat and tortured him after tying to a chair.

At one stage, Hayat died on the spot.

Inspector (Investigation) Nasir Hossain of Satkhira Sadar Police Station said, on information, police yesterday morning recovered the shackled body that bore several injury marks.

The reason behind the death would be confirmed after receiving the postmortem report, said Nasir Hossain.

Contacted, union member Abdul Hamid said he was called by Monu's family after Hayat beat up his wife Monu. However he denied his involvement in torture or killing.