

# Idol makers busy as Durga Puja knocks on door

*Inherited profession of idol making looses apart due to lack of support*

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TOPIU, Pabna

"Pals" (idol makers from generation) - are getting busy as Durga Puja; the biggest festival of Hindu community knocks at the door. Pal's business is always at its peak during this time of the year. Despite the decreasing number in this profession there are still some hundred idol makers practicing the traditional profession.

"Over five to six hundred idol makers live in Pabna but most of them left their inherited profession due to lack of support. Leaving inherited profession most of the 'Pal's have chosen other profession." Dhananjoy Kumar Pal, one of the prominent idol makers of Pabna told the Daily Star.

Most of the idol makers remain jobless around the year and only during Durga Puza do we get sufficient work - Dhananjoy said adding that around one hundred idol makers are working in the district this year.

According to district Puja Udzapan Parishad 317 Puja Mondops have organized the Durga Puja festival this year while each idol maker takes contract of idol making for three to four temples.

"I have made statues for five temples in the district headquarters this year. I am charging Taka 20,000 to 50,000 for each idol." Bishnu Pada Pal, an idol maker of Faridpur upazila told the Daily Star. He is making idol in Joykali Temple, central temple of the district.

I do not have income rest of the year, this is the season for my annual income; he



PHOTO: STAR

Idol makers of Pabna are busy as Durga Puja knocks on door.

said adding that after constructing the shape of the idols we will start decoration from next week.

President of Ishwardi upazila Puja Udzapan Parishad, Ramendranath Chakrabarti said the decoration for temple and preparation of other festivities of Durga Puja being performed as the puja knocks at the door.

"Decoration of temples, lightings and stages have already began to achieve the festival look of Durga Puja. The Hindu community are getting busy to celebrate the biggest religious festival," Ramendranath said.

Gonesh Chandra Ghosh; president of Pabna district Puja Udzapan Parishad said Durga Puja would be held in 317 Puja temples this year.

District administration and district police administration has taken prepara-

tion for holding a peaceful festival Gonesh added. A meeting was held at the Pabna deputy commissioner office and Pabna police superintendent office recently to observe the Durga festival peacefully he said.

"After getting the shape of the idol we will give it a finishing touch from 5th October onwards. We are determined to put the best decoration to attract the viewers," veteran artisan Dhananjoy Kumar Pal said adding that this is not only a business but also an art of decoration.

We need support to keep our inherited profession and traditional art of idol making for the sake of heritage idol makers urged unless inherited artistic profession might be destroyed for time being.

# Bangladeshi farmers breed new life in Oman

SHYKH SERAJ

Nursery business is spreading all over the world. Oman is no exception where I have been to see their progress. I have been to Muscat, the capital city of Oman. At the heart of Muscat, Bangladeshi farmers are doing wonderfully well. There are around twenty nurseries here, among which, four are run by Bangladeshis. Previously, they used to grow 'Date-plum' and 'Baroil' tree, a thorny tree, which is a specialty food for camels. After the arrival of Bangladeshis in Oman, the country is experiencing roadside gardening and eating different vegetables. The Omanis are now more interested for ornamented planting for decorating their houses along with vegetable cultivation on their courtyard. That is why the business is gradually spreading out. This is how Bangladeshis have secured a significant place in nursery business and vegetable production.

There are many nurseries at SIP Walid area of Oman's capital city Muscat. The nurseries expanded here during the last twenty years or so. Sultanate of Oman is giving greater importance over the issues like making a greener country with calm shades of trees all around. The people of Oman experienced good results because of this green movement. The rate of rainfall was pretty low once but now because of more trees being planted all around Oman, rainfalls have increased significantly.

Umar Abdul Aziz Nursery in the Amina area of Muscat where two brothers from Bangladeshes' Laxmipur district, Jasim and Foyez, started off with their efforts.

They imported more than hundreds of plants, including fruit plants like lychee, papaya, jackfruit and others. I talked with Nurul Amin, working in the nursery.

Are the Omanis getting attracted to plantation? The interest is growing immensely. Do they buy Bangali fruits? They buy jackfruits.

These nurseries of Oman are similar to one-stop-service centres. The customers get all the necessary inputs for plantation from the nursery. Fertilizer, pesticide, cutting tools, tubs, stands-everything gets sold here. What I noticed most is the pottery inside the nursery. You can find different kinds of flower tubs here. All these came from Vietnam. We also have different kinds of potteries but still we couldn't put these into international business stream. I hope those who are involved with pottery industry, will take effective initiatives.

Vietnam is securing their place in the pottery business around the world. All the tubs come from Vietnam. There are many organizations in Bangladesh who are making even more beautiful tubs and they are selling those locally. However, we couldn't grab the international market. That is why we need entrepreneurs who would be able to export the Bangladeshi pottery all over the world. As I was saying about one-stop-service, it is important to ensure that a customer gets everything from one place. Dhaka's agriculturalist nursery is a good example.

If one wants to decorate the indoor and outdoor of his house, he can easily collect all the necessary plants and inputs from the nursery. Regarding these issues, I also talked with



Rafiqul Islam, a worker of the nursery.

"We have urea, flower tubs and also plastic pots. We have to keep all these items in the nursery because we don't want our customer to go elsewhere"

"I have noticed beautiful Vietnamese flower tubs in the nursery."

"In Bangladesh, there are more attractive flower tubs. Why don't you bring those?"

"It's not feasible; one has to bear so many unnecessary costs."

The entire Arab world is very much sentient to preserve the heritage. They abide by the traditional heritages everywhere, even while using daily usable commodities. Now they aim towards setting up greenery across the country because of the present context of the world. Their effort of cooling the harsh nature knows no bounds and that's why nurseries are expanding pretty fast all over Oman.

Bangladeshis have converted hundreds of hectares of desert land into productive farmlands and ensured



PHOTO: STAR

Nurseries set up by Bangladeshi farmers in Oman

greenery in Oman like they have done in almost everywhere around the world which has been featured on Hridoye Mati O Manush. Bangladeshis have helped establishing agro-market infrastructure in Oman and worked as the agent of change. The success and effective working spirit of Bangladeshis in Oman is certainly to be followed by Bangladeshis living around

the world. We believe Bangladesh Government will also value these successes, which will also help the government in taking effective measures for more working opportunities in the Middle East countries for the Bangladeshis. Success will be accomplished in the development of true bilateral relationship with foreign countries, as well.



PHOTO: STAR

Dishonest power office staff in Domar upazila of Nilphamari gave illegal connections to hundreds of people in distant villages from PDB poles. The callous act poses serious risks of accidents anytime.

# Hundreds of illegal power lines from PDB poles

TEAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A section of dishonest power office staff have given hundreds of illegal power connections in remote villages of Domar upazila under the local office of Power Development Board (PDB), posing the risk of accidents.

Due to the situation, pressure on the main power supply lines often causes frequent power cuts while Domar PDB sees systems loss of 30% - 35%, which is highest in the region.

As per government rule, power connection can be given up to 33 meters from poles erected by PDB but illegal connections stretching much longer areas are given, PDB sources said.

During a recent visit to command area under Domar PDB, this correspondent found kilometres-long illegal power lines spreading to different directions from the PDB pole at Andarur More in Domar municipality. Locals alleged that this malpractice

is random at Chilahati feeder (branch) of Domar PDB.

They said 350-400 households, shops and pumps are given connections from those lines for Tk 5000-Tk 20,000 against each connection with fake commitment to give relevant documents soon.

Electric meters of many illegal clients hang on poles or house walls but their names are not posted in the office register as dishonest PDB employees misappropriate the 'bill' for illegally consumed power.

Dishonest PDB employees snap the rubber insulation of PDB authorised thick metallic wires consisting of seven thin solid copper wires to turn 1500-metre-long heavy copper wire into 10,000-metre-long thin wire and use them for illegal connections with the help of bamboo poles, PDB sources said.

Such illegal power lines pose risk of accidents.

Such an accident on Station Road in

Domar town killed one and injured four on September 25.

Frequent load shedding causes damage to TVs, fridges, bulbs, fans, power pumps, and even PDB transformers.

System loss under Domar PDB is 30% - 35%, the highest in the region, while PDB recommended system loss is only 14%.

Asked about the matter, Monoranjan Roy, resident engineer of Domar PDB, admitted existence of many illegal power lines and said, "I informed the higher authorities of the matter and asked repeatedly to transfer lineman concerned of Chilahati feeder Abu Taher to bring back discipline here and reduce systems loss."

Contacted, lineman Abu Taher said, "Those who served at this feeder before me were responsible for giving the illegal connections."

He also claimed that process is on to post clients' names and account numbers in office register.

## Robberies in church, houses

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Robbers looted valuables from a church and seven houses in Meherpur and Kushtia districts on Monday and the day before.

Burglars swooped on a church and six houses in Gangni and Mujibnagar upazilas of Meherpur on Sunday night and took away valuables at gunpoint, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

Police said, a gang of 12/14 stormed into Jopmala Rani Church in Chougacha area of Gangni upazila at 11:30pm when a *kirton* (religious song) programme was going on.

The robbers took the devotees hostage at gunpoint, took away the necklace of mother Mary and damaged several religious books.

The robbers also beat up two devotees -- Sufal Mandol, 35, and Joyonto Mandol, 25, and hurriedly fled the scene, said Samir Kumar Biswas, caretaker of the church.

In Mujibnagar, a gang of armed robbers looted valuables from the houses of Abdur Razzak, Mojibul Islam, Ajit Mia, Mokhles, Kawsar and Gayes Uddin at Gopalpur village around 11:00pm.

Hearing the hue and cry, villagers chased the robbers who opened fire, leaving a man injured. However, the gang managed to decamp safely.

In Chuadanga, robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth Tk 5 lakh from a house at Kedernogar village in Alamdanga upazila early Monday, reports a correspondent.

Police and locals said, a gang of 12/13 stormed into the house of one Alfaz Ali, a Malaysia expatriate, at 1:30am and took away Tk 35,000, five tolas of gold ornaments and several mobile sets at gunpoint.

# UP bldg complete but chairman keeps out

For it is a little far from his house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

To the relief of villagers, the union parishad building of Dholigour Nagar of Bauria of Lalmoan upazila was completed in 2011 at a cost of more than Tk 84 lakh.

With separate provisions for ICT office, tax collection, issuance of birth and nationality certificates, agricultural wings and the family planning office, the purpose-built new building had all the provisions that an union parishad office would require.

But the new building

remains totally unused till today. The chairman of the union parishad, Hedayetul Islam Mintu, refuses to move to the new building as it is a little far from his residence and business.

Now, all work of this local government is run from a small shop called Niloy Digital Studio, next to the business house of Islam at Mangalsikder Bazar.

"Since the present office is on one side of the union boundary, we need to travel a long distance to avail the services," Said Md Yusuf of Chatla village.

"It would be easier for everyone to go to the new building in the middle of the union boundary," he added.

Jahar Lal Das, secretary of the UP, said that it has become tough for him to run official job from a tiny room.

Chairman Hedayetul Islam Mintu said that local M P Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon (Bhola-3) will inaugurate the UP building on October 18 and after that the office would be shifted to the new building.



PHOTO: STAR

Although the union parishad office building was completed about two years ago, the chairman of Dholigour Nagar union in Bhola prefers to work at a studio, inset, in his area as the UP office is a little far from his residence.

