

Job scheme for the *monga* hit yet to begin

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A large number of ultra poor people in rural areas of five upazilas under the district are passing a hard time as they have become jobless due to absence of farming activities during the Bangla months of Ashwin and Kartik (October-November), like other years. Under a government-run 40-day job scheme a good number of them get job during this time but the programme is yet to start in the district this year. Every year *monga*, a famine-like situation prevails in

a few northern districts including Lalmonirhat during this time and the poor people suffer till the start of harvesting of transplanted aman paddy in mid-November, locals said. Now many poor people are going to the capital and other places in search of job. "I and twenty other people of my village are prepared to go to Bogra district to find job," said Mofiar Rahman, 45, a resident of Balapara village in Aditmari upazila. The government has already sanctioned Tk 4 crore 75 lakh and 68 thou-

sand to arrange a 40-day job opportunity for 5,946 ultra poor people in the district in October and November, said sources of Lalmonirhat District Relief and Rehabilitation Office. The beneficiaries will work for five days a week for Tk 200 as daily wage. "The programme was scheduled to start on October 1 but it is yet to start as list of beneficiaries has not been completed. The programme will start soon after completion of the list," said Anwarul Islam, Lalmonirhat district relief and rehabilitation officer.



PHOTO: STAR

Jobless farm labourers from different villages gather at Lalmonirhat station to go to capital city and other places of the country in quest of jobs as the district suffers from *monga*, a famine-like situation, at this time every year.

Transport workers protest extortion on highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Transport workers yesterday blocked Lalmonirhat-Burimari Highway at college intersection in Patgram upazila of the district for two hours from 1:00pm, protesting illegal toll collection from vehicles at different points on the highway. They, however, withdrew the barricade at around 3:00pm after law enforcers assured them of taking necessary steps to stop illegal toll collection.

Transport workers alleged that a group of ruling party men with the help of a section of Motor Sramik Union leaders have been collecting toll from vehicles for long in the name sramik kalyan fund. "We pay illegal toll at different points on the highway, fearing harassment," they said.

Transport worker Idris Ali said an identified gang collects Tk 250 to 500 from each truck, tank lorry and covered van in Burimari area and Tk 50 to 100 from each of the vehicles at other points on the highway everyday.

"We repeatedly urged the police and local administration to stop illegal toll collection on the highway, but to no effect," he alleged.

Rabiul Islam, general secretary of Burimari Land Port Truck, Tank Lorry and

Covered Van Sramik Kalyan Samity, transport workers barricaded the highway as their repeated call to stop toll collection went unheeded.

Nur Islam, president of the kalyan samity, said, they will launch a tougher agitation programme if illegal toll collection on the highway is not stopped immediately.

Illegal toll collection from vehicles in the name of the so called sramik kalyan fund goes on unabated on other roads in five upazilas of the district.

Alal Hossain, a transport worker of Barokhata area in Hatibandha upazila, said the ruling party men in association with some Motor Sramik Union leaders collect toll from vehicles at 27 points in the name of sramik kalyan fund and then share the money among themselves.

Trucker Julhas Pramanik said he has to pay Tk 2400 to 3000 at 27 points from Burimari land port to Teesta Road Bridge. Drivers and helpers face harassment if they refuse to pay the toll, he added.

Contacted, Pulin Chandra Roy and Abul Kalam, president and secretary of Lalmonirhat Truck and Tang Lorry Sramik Union, declined to say anything regarding illegal toll collection and sramik kalyan fund.

Couple found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A couple was found dead at their residence in Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Shahidul Islam Dhalu, 35, of Dhalla-Kafatia village in the upazila and his second wife Hena Akter, 30.

On information, police broke open the door of the house around 10:00am and recovered the slain body of Dhalu lying on the bed, said Shafikul Islam, a sub-inspector of Manikganj Sadar Police Station.

They also recovered the body of Hena which was hanging from the ceiling of the tin-shed house, the SI said, adding that the woman was pregnant.

Assistant police superintendent of Manikganj Sadar Circle Md. Kamrul Islam said, Hena might have committed suicide after killing her husband.

Dhalu's father Majed Ali filed a murder case and an unnatural death case with the Manikganj Sadar Police Station, said Sub-Inspector of the police station Shafikul Islam.

Family sources told UNB that Dhalu, already married to Monwara Bagum, tied the knot with Hena, who had three children with her former husband, barely one and a half years ago.

However, their marriage was not a happy one as the couple had frequent brawls.

Family members and locals said, they found Dhalu lying dead with stab marks on the body while Hena hanging in their room in the morning and informed police.

50 hurt in Sirajganj clash

UNB, Sirajganj

At least 50 people, including three cops, were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers at Bhangabari village in Belkuchi upazila yesterday morning.

Witnesses said one Pavel of Adachaki village locked in an altercation with Risan of Bhangabari village over a trifling matter.

As a sequel to the alterca-

tion, the people of Bhangabari and Adachaki villages attacked each other with lethal weapons on Friday night.

Yesterday morning, a group of people of Adachaki village attacked the people of Bhangabari village, triggering a fierce clash that left 50 people injured from both sides.

Among the victims, 20 people were admitted to

Sirajganj General Hospital and Belkuchi upazila health complex.

Police constables Shahidul Islam and Mahidul Islam were among the injured.

On information, police rushed in and brought the situation under control. Additional police have been deployed in the area to avert further trouble.



PHOTO: STAR

Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali till yesterday was full of tourists. Thousands from different places of the country have flocked to the spot to spend holidays on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha and Durga Puja. According to hotel owners and law enforcers, the number of tourists as well as hotel and motel charges marked a rise this year.

SARAIL UPAZILA OF B'BARIA

50 hospitalised after another bloody clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Fifty people were hospitalised due to injuries in a clash at Akhitora village in Sarail upazila under the district yesterday, the day after bloody clashes left two men killed and over 80 people injured in three areas of the same district on Friday.

Following an altercation over a *waz mahfil* (arrangement of Islamic lecture), the residents of Uttarpara and Dakkhinpara areas of Akhitora village got locked in a clash at around 9:30am yesterday.

During the clash lasting three hours, they used stone chips, brickbats, spears, cleavers and machetes, leaving over 50 people injured.

Twenty-five of the

injured were admitted to Sarail upazila health complex, 15 to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital and 10 to local private clinics.

At least 10 houses of the village were damaged during the clash.

Later a police team from Sarail rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control by firing 40 rubber bullets and 10 tear gas shells.

Earlier on Friday, Juyllabari group and Mullabari group at Sadeipur village under Sadar upazila locked in a serious clash to establish dominion in the area.

Tajul Islam, 42, and Ismail Mia, 40, were killed and 40 others injured in the incident.

Autopsies of the two bodies were done at

Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital yesterday.

Another clash took place at Bihair village under Sadar upazila centring entrance of a cricket ball into a house on Friday. The clash triggered by past enmity between Nagarbari and Gazirbari in the area left 30 people injured.

The same day, some people of Kalikachchha village under Sarail upazila locked in a clash centring an altercation regarding political issues.

Police forces have been deployed in all the four spots and overall situation is under control, said Md Shah Alam Bakaul, ASP of Sadar Circle.

To evade arrest, many of the male residents of the villages have fled the areas, said locals.

Thousands suffer for want of a bridge

ABM AMINUL ISLAM, Jamalpur

Thousands of people of eight villages under two unions in Madarganj upazila in the district are suffering for long just for want of a permanent bridge over river Kharka.

Commuters are now using a 120ft long bamboo-made temporary bridge which is built by locals every year since the opening of Gabergram market on the west bank of the river in 2000.

The villages are Sukhnagari, Purbo Tartapara and Paschim Tartapara under Balijuri union, Khilkati, Phuljuri, Paschim Gulabari, Atamari and Haatmagura under Jurkhali union on the south-east side of the river.

As a result, people including farmers, students and patients of the villages are facing a troublesome communication as they have to cross the bamboo-

made bridge to reach the market, the upazila headquarters, health complex and a number of educational institutions including the lone girls college located on the other side of the river.

High school and college-going students and patients, especially elderly ones and expecting mothers, are the worst sufferers, locals said.

Moreover, as Balijuri union parishad (UP) was set up at Sukhnagari village, the beneficiaries of five villages located on south-west and north-west of the river, are suffering much for want of a bridge, said Manzurul Islam Musa, chairman of the union.

They face troubles while carrying their VGF and VGD food or while coming to visit the parishad to have different local government services, the chairman said. The UP

itself also faces problems when food items for the vulnerable group and other materials brought to the parishad by horse carriages through alternative Khilkati-Junail road as it is 7-8km more than the actual distance, he said.

During a recent visit to the villages, a number of locals including farmers and students told this correspondent that they were in dire need of a bridge over the river for carrying goods to the market on *haat* days and going to school.

Contacted, Jugal Krishna Mandol, local LGED engineer, said his office had sent a Tk. 3.25 crore proposal to the higher authorities concerned for a bridge in 2011, but to no effect yet.

"We will again write with a revised estimate of over Tk. 4 crore to build a 75-metre bridge over the river soon", the engineer added.



PHOTO: STAR

The bamboo-made bridge over River Kharka in Jamalpur. People, including students and farmers, suffer much for want of a permanent bridge over the river at Gabergram under Madarganj upazila of the district.

SNIPPETS

BSF picks up schoolboy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) is yet to return Bangladeshi student Habibur Rahman who was picked up by them at Keder border in Bhurangamari upazila on Eid day. Habibur is a son of Babu Mia of Kedar frontier village and a class-seven student at Subalpar High School at Kedar union under the upazila. Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and local sources said, a BSF patrol team of Addarpar BOP camp in Dhubri district of Assam state arrested Habibur near the border on October 16 when he went there to offer an Eid gift to his distant grandfather who lives in India.

Discussion on college founder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A discussion on the life and contributions of Idrish Ahmad, founder of Adina Fazul Haque Government College, was held on the college premises at Dadanchak village in Shibganj upazila on Friday. Idrish Ahmed Memorial Institute arranged the discussion, marking his 47th death anniversary. Mahmudul Haque, deputy editor of The Daily Star city page, presented a keynote paper at the discussion. Zillur Rahman, additional secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, was the chief guest. In the keynote paper, Mahmud, also a former student of Adina Fazul Haque Government College, demanded that the authorities concerned upgrade the college to a university, establish a shilpakala academy and a museum after the name of Idrish Ahmed at Dadanchak village.

Bank looting: Five sued in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Five people have been sued on charges of killing a security guard of the Kaliganj branch of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL) and looting Tk 72 lakh from the bank branch on Thursday night.

Branch Manager Mahmud Hasan filed the case with Kaliganj Police Station yesterday, accusing Mizanur Rahman, director of a multi-level marketing company named Bismillah Group, and four other staff of the company.

In the case statement, the bank manager stated that the accused were running

MLM business on the third floor of the building had developed friendship with security guard Ayub Hossain.

Taking advantage of friendship, Mizanur and his accomplices killed Ayub and took away the money from the bank on the second floor of the building, he alleged.

A gang looted Tk 72 lakh from IBBL Kiliganj branch, killing security guard Ayub Hossain on Thursday night.

The gang strangled Ayub, 50, son of Babu Sheikh of Rajarhat Kachua in Jessore, and looted the money, breaking open the vault.

Man shot dead, 3 bullet hit in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A man was shot dead while three others including a minor girl were bullet injured during a clash over a trifling matter at Muzahidpur village in Begumganj upazila on Friday midnight.

The dead was identified as Monir Hossain, 40.

Police quoting the family members of the deceased said, an altercation took place between the families of two local youths -- Babu and Hiru -- on Friday afternoon when Babu suspected that the mobile phone he lost was actually stolen by Hiru.

Centring the issue, a gang led by Hiru's maternal uncle and local criminal

Saiful went to Babu's house around 12:00 midnight and locked in a quarrel with Babu.

Hearing heated debate, neighbour Monir Hossain rushed to the spot and tried to pacify both the parties.

At one stage, Saiful's men fired gunshots and a stray bullet pierced through Monir's body, leaving him dead on the spot.

During the incident, Ria, 8, Monu Mia, 26, and Farhad, 22, were also hit by bullets. They are now undergoing treatment at Noakhali Medical College Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

Later, police arrested one Ismail Hossain Opu in connection with the incident.