



PHOTO: STAR

Once struggling to manage two square meals a day, these women at Telikhali village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila now earn a modest amount by making and selling paper bags.

Turning beggars into dignified earners

MD SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Majeda Begum, wife of a day labourer at Telikhali village under Sadar upazila, now earns enough to send her two daughters to school, thanks to the government's Recall Project to arrange income generating activities for ultra poor rural women. "I earn Tk 3000 to 4000 a month by selling paper bags prepared by myself. It has brought solvency to our family. Moreover, I can now send my daughters Hawa, 10, and Habiba, 5, to school," said Majeda, 40, who could not continue her study after primary education. Mizanur Rahman, an official of NGO Wave

Foundation, implementing Recall Project funded by Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry, inspired her to engage in profitable job. "As per his suggestion, I started making paper bags with non-refundable Tk 3,000 received from the organisation. I can make at least 10 kg of paper bags a day and sell it for Tk 40 per kg to local shops. Often hawkers come to buy paper bags from my house," she said during this correspondent's recent visit to the village. Several other women at the village including Piyara Begum, 42, Aleya Begum, 36, Salma Begum, 30, Jesmin Begum, 35, also changed their life by

involving in the business. Now they can also send their wards to school. A total of 4,000 ultra poor women, most of whom earlier engaged in begging, from 101 villages under Patuakhali Sadar upazila have been brought under the project to turn them into dignified earners. They were given Tk 3,000 to 10,000 each to engage in different types of business like making baskets from bamboo, vegetables farming, fish farming, arranging rickshaw and rickshaw vans for their husbands, under the project that started in September 2011 and to continue till August 2015, said Mizanur Rahman, coordinator of the project.

Docs asked to show cause

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Show cause notices have been served on 12 teachers of Dinaipur Medical College for remaining absent at their workplace for long. The college authorities issued the notices on January 30 and sent copies to the health ministry and the directorate of health. College sources said show cause notices were issued to Prof Jamir Uddin of biochemistry, Dr AKM Mridha of micro-biology, Prof Abdul Hassnat Ferdous of pharmacology, Dr Robeya Khatun and Dr Nasrin Zaman of gynaecology, Dr Atikur Rahman of respiratory, Dr Raziul Alam, Dr Abdul Latif, and Dr Md. Amiruzzaman of medicine, Dr Zabid Hasan of urology, Dr AKM Shamsuddin of hematology and Dr. Md Safiullah of ENT departments.

Robbers kill house owner

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Armed robbers looted valuables worth Tk 1 lakh from a house after killing its owner at Dakkhin Snaighat village in Bahubol upazila of Habiganj district early yesterday. The dead is Farid Ullah, 40, son of Altaf Ullah of the village. Office in-charge Wahidur Rahman of Bahubol police station said a gang of 15/20 swooped on the house of Farid and looted valuables worth Tk one lakh. The robbers stabbed Farid, leaving him dead on the spot as he tried to resist them.

POLITICAL UNREST DURING PEAK SEASON Huge quantity of coal unsold at Barapukuria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A huge quantity of coal has remained stacked up in the coal stockyard of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd [BCMCL] as the authorities concerned could not sell them during the peak season (September to December) due to political unrest. Mine officials said the stockyard has a capacity of 1.5 lakh tonnes of coal, but they have kept around 4 lakh tonnes there. Besides, 250MW power plant of Bangladesh Power Development Board in Barakuria, which is the largest coal consumer of the mine, has temporarily stopped taking delivery of coal. The plant needs 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of coal every day, but it has now more than one lakh tonnes in its yard. Mine sources said if coal stock in the

yard crosses 5 lakh tonnes, the company will have no other option but to suspend production. The mine produces around 5,000 tonnes of coal per day. Brick kiln owners across the country purchase coal from the mine between September and December every year. But they could not collect coal during the period due to countrywide hartals and blockades enforced by the BNP-led alliance. In September last year, the mine's coal stock was 1.25 lakh tonnes. As coal remained unsold for four months from September to December, stock reached 4 lakh tonnes in January this year, officials said. Harun-ur- Rashid, a brick kiln owner of Joypurhat, told this correspondent that he needed at least 1400 tonnes of coal during the peak season, but he

could not collect the said amount due to hartals and blockades during the period. "I took delivery of 350 tonnes of coal for my brick kiln recently," he added. On the other hand, the BCMCL authorities have reduced coal price to 10,200 from 12,600 per tonne to boost sale. Buyers urged the mine authorities to keep the price at around Tk 9,000. They said a tonne of the imported Indian coal is being sold for Tk7, 200. Mine sources said the Indian coal contains high sulphur, which causes air pollution while coal of BCMCL contains only 0.1 per cent sulphur. Contacted, Md. Aminuzzaman, managing director of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd [BCMCL], said as stock has gone up to 4 lakh tonnes, they have reduced coal price to attract buyers. He urged consumers to use



PHOTO: STAR

Huge quantity of coal lies stockpiled on the premises of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd in Dinaipur as sale and transport of the item was badly hampered due to political agitation like countrywide hartals and blockades by BNP-led opposition alliance during the peak selling period from September to December last year.

Criminals vandalise idols of Swaraswati in 3 dists

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Criminals vandalised idols of Hindu deity Swaraswati in Gazipur, Netrakona and Nilphamari districts on Tuesday night and yesterday. A masked gang damaged the idols at Barami bazaar in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur district at around 3:30am yesterday, reports our correspondent. Sushanta Shaha, president of a puja mandop committee at Barami Bazar, said the devotees left the place at around 11:00pm on Tuesday night. Early yesterday, a gang, numbering seven to eight, swooped on the mandop and damaged the idols. They also attacked and injured two at the temple, he said. Officer in-charge (OC) Ameer Hossain of Sreepur police station said, Sushanta Shaha filed a case, accusing 7/8 unidentified people in connection with the incident. In Netrokona district, a Swaraswati idol was damaged at Bhorthoshi village in Atpara upazila of the district on Tuesday night, reports our correspondent. Police and president of puja udjapon committee Rabindra Sarker said, two local goons, Sharif and Pappu came to the mandop at about 11:30pm and asked the worshippers to stop the musical soiree.

As the worshippers refused to do so, Sharif and Pappu damaged the Swaraswati idol. A case was filed with Atpara police station in this connection, accusing the two. However, police failed to arrest them as they went into hiding. In Nilphamari, police arrested three people, including two women, from Dakurdanga village, had an altercation with Jagadish Chandra of the same village over cutting bamboo from a cluster on Tuesday morning. Later, a group of people led allegedly by Rehena and her son Raihan attacked the Saraswati puja mandop at the village in the evening and vandalised a few idols.

her son Raihan, 18, and Nazneen, 25, wife of Hamidul of Dakurdanga village. Police said a team of police raided the village around 6:30pm and arrested the trio. Locals said one Rehena, wife of Aminur Rahman of Dakurdanga village, had an altercation with Jagadish Chandra of the same village over cutting bamboo from a cluster on Tuesday morning. Later, a group of people led allegedly by Rehena and her son Raihan attacked the Saraswati puja mandop at the village in the evening and vandalised a few idols.



PHOTO: STAR

A Swaraswati idol damaged allegedly by two local goons at Bhorthoshi village in Atpara upazila of Netrakona district on Tuesday night.



PHOTO: STAR

A section of local influential people continue to occupy land and erect permanent structures around a sluice gate at Bablatola Bazar in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali, much to the worry of the farmers there.



Illegal structures threaten collapse of sluice gate

Farmers in Patuakhali worried

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Encroachers have continued building structures around a sluice gate in Bablatola Bazar area under Kalapara upazila, much to the worry of a large number of farmers. A group of local influential people, led allegedly by Md Rafique Haji, started the construction work about two weeks ago occupying the wing wall of a gate of the sluice that plays a vital role in controlling water, said farmers. Enraged by the matter, farmer Abul Kashem of the area submitted a complaint to the executive engineer of local Water Development Board

(WDB) last week. According to the complaint, a group of workers, led by Rafique, recently started constructing a permanent structure by grabbing the wing wall of the sluice gate of the flood control dam in the area. In 1980, WDB built the sluice gate for saving agricultural land from saline and tidal water. Due to the gate, saline water cannot enter into more than 1000 acres of cultivable land in several villages including Baliaatali, Borobaliaatali and Betkata in the upazila. Besides, the gate helps locals remove on increase water levels for farming.

At least 12 permanent and semi-permanent structures were already built by the grabbers here, alleged Kashem. If the authorities did not take immediate steps to stop construction of structures, the sluice gate would face a serious threat of collapse, he said. Contacted, executive engineer of WDB Md Shafi Uddin said that a move was underway to save the sluice gate and its adjacent lands in the greater interest of local farmers. Despite repeated calls, this correspondent could not reach accused Rafique for his comment as his mobile phone remained switched off.

Jubo League leader killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A 'missing' local Jubo League leader was murdered at Churamonkathi in Sadar upazila yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Zakir Hossain, 30, general secretary of Churamonkathi ward unit of the youth front of the ruling party. Police said, Zakir went out of his house on Tuesday night and since then he had remained missing. SI Shaheenur Rahman, in-charge of a local police camp saw his body at a mango orchard in the area and informed the family members. Shaheenur said the slit-throat body was dumped at the orchard at Khudarpura at the village. Jessore Kotwali police station officer in-charge Emdadul Haque Sheikh said Zakir might have been killed following a dispute over drug business.

Fakhrul slams

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government would open a fresh inquiry into the 10-truck arms haul cases, as the names of the Hawa Baban and Khaleda Zia emerged during the trial. "This means that Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman and some BNP leaders were involved in it," she told parliament after Awami League lawmakers demanded Khaleda's trial for the arms smuggling. "The trial has been completed but an inquiry is required to identify those

involved in the arms smuggling conspiracy and we'll do it," Hasina added. On January 30, a Chittagong court gave death sentences to 14 people, including former ministers Motiur Rahman Nizami and Lutfozzaman Babar, in one of the two cases. In the verdict, the court said that the then PM Khaleda Zia remained silent even after she was informed of the arms haul on April 2 in 2004. Asked about the govern-

ment's changing the judge of the Manzoor murder case and a minister's phone call to a High Court judge dealing another case, Fakhrul said, "The government has snatched the freedom of the judiciary by doing all these." Referring to Hasina's speech in parliament over Chhatra League's violence in Rajshahi University, the BNP leader claimed the PM supported their activities, which proved that she herself was patronising

C'NAWABGANJ Jamaat calls off hartal for Hindu festival

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A countrywide daylong hartal called by Jamaat for today was withdrawn in the district due to Ganga Snan (holy dip) of Hindu devotees in the area. Rafiqul Islam, former ameer of the district unit and member of central working committee of Jamaat-e-Islami, said local leaders of Hindu community urged them to withdraw the shutdown due to Ganga Snan to be held in Pagla River at Tartipur of Shibganj upazila today.

Int'l community

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anti-terrorist state in the days to come.

The premier also claimed that the confidence of the international community in the current government bore testimony to the diplomatic successes of the immediate past government. ONE HOUSE ONE FARM In response to a query of Haji Md Selim, MP of Dhaka-7 constituency, Hasina said her government planned to expand the 'One House One Farm' project to more upazilas as the project succeeded in alleviating poverty in the rural areas.

"In a bid to give the project a permanent shape, the government has already taken steps to establish the Palli Sanchoy Bank. The bank will collect the savings of the poor rural people," she said in a written reply. To encourage rural people to save, the bank will offer stimulus on the savings. For saving Tk 100, an account holder of the bank will get another Tk 100 from the government, she added. According to her written response, around 10.38 lakh poor families now have created a fund of Taka 1,344 crore under the One House One Farm project. One third of the fund came from the beneficiaries while the government provided the two-thirds.