



PHOTO: STAR
Poet and philanthropist Madhob Roy distributes clothes and study materials among poor children in front of the public library set up at his Chaparhat village home in Kaliganj upazila under Lalmonirhat district recently.

A different poem from a Lalmonirhat poet

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Although known as a poet, Madhob Roy is a little more than that. He is a great soul who brought scores of orphans into the world of education.

He has also been providing free medical services to those kids for over two years.

Hailing from Chaparhat village in Kaliganj upazila, Poet Madhob Roy, 60, a government employee, spends around half of his monthly salary to do the great job which he started in 2011 just to encourage education.

Over a hundred kids get educational accessories, including notebook and pen, in the first week of every month and clothes in the first month of every year and during the religious occasions.

Like the other years, Roy, who works at Kaliganj upazila health department, distributed warm clothes and educational accessories among 100 children of eight primary schools on January 1 this year.

On getting clothes and other things at his residence, the students with smiling faces flashed V-sign as they had brilliant results in their classes last year. They said they were committed to perform in the same way in the years to come.

Expressing joy, Mousumi Akter, a student of Class Three, said "If I didn't get help from him, my mother would not send me to school".

"My mother is too poor to bear my educational expenses. But I did not

'Missing' journo found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A 'missing' journalist was found murdered at Mominpur rail station at Mominpur village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Shadrul Alam Nipul, 35, a correspondent of local Bangla daily Mathabhanga and son of late Nur Muhammad of the upazila.

Police and family sources said Nipul went out of his house at 10:30 on Tuesday and since did not return home.

The following morning, locals found his body beside a rail line at the station and informed the police.

The body, which was sent to Chuadanga General Hospital morgue for autopsy, bore several stab injuries, said locals.

Whether Nipul committed suicide or was killed would be clear after getting the autopsy report, said officer in-charge of Chuadanga police station Asaduzzaman Minshi.

A case was filed in connection with the incident, said the OC.

Our Kushtia correspondent adds, family members claimed that it was a planned murder as Nipul received death threat from local drug peddlers and land grabbers earlier.

He had conflict with the gang after publishing a news on Mathabhanga, said Mohidul Alam Bokul, elder brother of the journalist.

Locals claimed that Nipul's body was cut into 11 pieces.

Gateman of railway station Rasel Ahmed said he saw Nipul walking by the rail line at about 11:30 pm. But he could not give any other information regarding the incident.

Bid to protect hilsa without 'protecting' the fishermen

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The government's food assistance programme under its hilsa protection scheme covers only 45 percent of the 83 thousand seasonally jobless fishermen of coastal districts Patuakhali and Barguna, that too for half of the yearly eight-month ban period on catching jatka (hilsa less than nine inches long).

To help smooth breeding and growth of popular fish hilsa, the fisheries department imposes ban on jatka (hilsa less than nine inches long) catching for eight months from November to June, said sources in Patuakhali district fisheries office.

To help the hilsa fishermen who become jobless during the ban period, authorities in 2009-2010 fiscal year introduced food support styled vulnerable group feeding programme for them.

Under the programme, each of the listed fishermen gets 40 kg of rice every month, said Md Iqbal Hossain, district fisheries officer of Patuakhali.

But it is provided only from March to June and covers only 38,928 of about 83,000 hilsa fishermen in Patuakhali and Barguna districts.

In Patuakhali, 25,173 out of 45,618 fishermen have been brought under the VGF programme while the number of such beneficiaries in Barguna is 13,750 out of

about 38,000 seasonally jobless fishermen, said sources at the district fisheries offices.

During a recent visit to Syedjafar, a fishermen's village in Dashmina upazila under Patuakhali district, this correspondent found fishermen's families, who are outside the food assistance programme, passing days amid untold sufferings.

"I along with my son catch fish in the river to run the family. Now we are jobless during the ongoing

ban on catching jatka. We went to the upazila town in search of other work but in vain," said Jabbar Howlader of the village.

"Many fishermen are getting help under jatka protection programme but I am deprived," he said.

Many other fishermen including Harun Duary, 45, Moslem Majhi, 50, Harun Majhi, 43, and Ishaq Ali, 30, have similar tales to tell.

Over 200 fishermen in the village are outside the VGF programme, said

Shikder Nazrul Islam, chairman of Dashmina upazila unit of Bangladesh Small Fishermen's Association.

"All the hilsa fishermen should be taken under the VGF programme to mitigate their sufferings during the ban period. Besides, they should be provided with alternative job to discourage them to catch jatka so that the country gets huge quantity of large sized hilsa," said Md Faruq Hossain, fisheries survey officer of Barguna district.



PHOTO: STAR
Fishermen, otherwise free due to the ongoing ban on catching jatka, pass their time weaving and mending their fishing nets. The photo was taken from Majhibari in Kuakata sea beach area of Patuakhali yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR
Huge quantities of green chilli arrive at Sonarhat market in Debiganj upazila under Panchagarh district as the area sees bumper yield of the popular vegetable used for adding to the taste of curries.

Panchagarh chilli growers upbeat at bumper yield, fair price

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Panchagarh farmers saw a bumper production of green chilli this season despite prolonged drought like situation during the item's growing period.

The farmers are also happy over its good price in the local markets.

Chilli cultivation is gradually gaining popularity in the district as the farmers get good return with low labour and production costs.

Apart from flooding the local markets, the essential item of preparing curry is being supplied to other parts of the country including capital Dhaka, Narayanganj as harvesting

of the crop is going on in full swing in the district.

Due to the bumper harvest of the crop, makeshift chilli markets have been set up at different villages in Atwary, Boda and Debiganj upazilas of the district.

Each maund of chilli is now being sold at Tk.700-800 at the wholesale markets where traders from different parts of the country come to buy it.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said farmers have cultivated chilli on about 9,000 hectares of land in five upazilas of the district.

Major portion of land in Atwary, Boda and Debiganj

upazilas was brought under chilli cultivation.

Sandy-loamy soil, favourable weather, easy availability of labourers and irrigation facilities in the district were considered as the reasons for the production of best quality chilli in the country.

Boda, Debiganj and Atwari upazilas are more suitable out of five upazilas for chilli cultivation, DAE sources said.

Though the farmers faced an adverse weather this season due to shortage of water they managed it efficiently by arranging timely irrigation and taking necessary steps to save the plants,

Deputy Director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Panchagarh said.

This year's chilli production would surpass all the records of the last years in this district, the DD said.

He also said cultivation of chilli is quite easy and usually less expensive than the other crops. He pointed out that a farmer could easily earn Tk.15,000 to Tk.20,000 by growing chilli in a bigha of land.

Replying to a query he said it is possible to produce up to 30-32 maunds of chilli per bigha of land if the climate favours and farmers take care properly to the field.

Failed in road job

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lead partner in the project since the initiation of the scheme in 2011.

"Many letters were issued to Project Builders Limited. Even we had a number of meetings with the representatives of the local contractor, but nothing has worked," said former PD Feroj Iqbal, additional chief engineer of RHD.

Hafizur Rahman, incumbent PD and superintendent engineer of RHD, echoed the views of Feroj saying that only two personnel of the Chinese company joined the PBL in February this year.

Project Manager of PBL Shawkat Hossain could not explain the reasons behind not engaging Chinese engineers and logistics in the project for such a long period. He, however, attributed the delay in the expansion work to the shifting of utility installations and the political anarchy in the country.

"We will need at least one more year to complete the work," he told The Daily Star.

Officials involved in the project said the criterion of forming a joint venture with experienced foreign firms was incorporated in the tender as the local companies lack experience and equipment in implementing such a huge expansion work.

Local firms became eligible for bidding by showing Chinese firms' qualification, but their involvement remained only on paper, mentioned the officials, adding that this malpractice has been going on in different projects as foreign companies get commission from local firms for being their partners.

But in the Padma bridge project, the Chinese company enjoyed the full advantage of being the lone bidder and is set to be awarded the contract for \$1.55 billion, a price 45 percent higher than the cost estimated in 2009. The estimate has been revised due to delay in the project by three years.

Officials said had there been competition in the bidding, the government would have received a better offer for the work.

Madrasa boy abducted for ransom in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A madrasa boy has been abducted and the abductors in Dhunat upazila demanded Tk 50,000 ransom for his release.

An abduction case was filed with Dhunat police station yesterday, said officer in-charge Mozaffar Hossain of the PS.

The victim is Nayeem Babu, 10, son of Abu Hanif of Notabari village and student of Borobila Hafezia Madrasa.

On Monday, criminals abducted Babu on his way to madrasa and demanded the ransom from his family over mobile phone the following day.

Police were raiding different areas to rescue the boy and arrest the kidnappers, said the OC.

In the last few weeks, several incidents of abduction took place in the district.

On Tuesday, the body of

an abducted boy, a class II student at Power Development Board (PDB Government Primary School) was recovered in the district town, much to the worry of the guardians.

Contacted, Superintendent of Police Mozammel Haque said a seven-member "Anti-Kidnapping Squad", led by ASP Nazir Ahmed Khan, was formed recently to prevent abduction.

Teacher 'killed by husband'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A female schoolteacher was killed allegedly by her husband and in-laws over a family feud at Mulkandi village in Chauhali upazila of Sirajganj district on Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Hafiza Akhter Hashi, assistant teacher of Malotidangi Primary School and wife of Amir Hossain of the village.

Locals said Hafiza was strangled by her husband over a trifling matter on Monday midnight.

Later, Amir and his family members fled the scene leaving the body 'hanging' at home.

On information, police recovered the body on Tuesday noon and sent it to the hospital for an autopsy.

Waheduzzaman, officer in-charge of Enayetpur Police Station, said the body bore several marks of injuries. Probably she was strangled and then her body was hung in a bid to show it a case of suicide, he said.

A case was filed in this connection.

In Satkhira, police recovered the body of a young man with the throat slashed from a water-body in

Gorkumalpur in Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Hossain, 22, son of Rafikul Islam Gazi, a resident of Ghosalkhali village of the same upazila.

Sagor Mia, officer in-charge of Shyamnagar PS said miscreants killed the young man, tied up the body and dumped it into the water body in Padyapukur union.

Being informed, police recovered the body and sent it to Satkhira Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.



PHOTO: STAR
Razed to the ground by a nor'wester on May 2, Kalaraja Haat Hossainia Senior Madrasa in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district remains in the same condition, disturbing classes of 496 students ahead of their first terminal examinations.