

ALLOWANCE SCAM IN PIROJPUR

DC 'unaware' of 'misdeeds' by one of his staff

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Most of the beneficiaries of the government's allowance meant for insolvent cultural activists in the district have hardly any relation with cultural affairs, thanks to the alleged corruption of a staff of Pirojpur deputy commissioner's (DC) office.

As per the list sent from Pirojpur district, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in fiscal year 2013-2014 gave each of the 41 insolvent cultural activists Tk 9,600 to Tk 14,400, according to category.

Interestingly, 31 of the 41 beneficiaries are from Nazirpur upazila alone.

Of the 31 people, only

five were on the list prepared by the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Nazirpur, while 26 others got listed as insolvent cultural activists by giving Tk 2,000 to 2,500 each to Gobindo Lal Saha, office assistant cum computer operator at Pirojpur DC office, alleged sources.

The list includes one Jalal Sheikh (Muslim) although his father's name is mentioned as late Gurudas Mondal (Hindu).

Gurudas Mondal's another son is also getting the similar benefit.

Ashit Gharami, who got the benefit the previous year, died before release of the fund this year but his wife was given the money,

violating rules.

"We informed Nazirpur UNO office of Ashit's death and they conveyed the message to the DC office before release of the ration money," said Gouri Rani, a clerk of social welfare office in Nazirpur, who compiled the list of insolvent cultural activists in the upazila.

The beneficiaries include some tea stall owners and farmers who have no relation with any cultural activities and a few solvent people including a high school teacher, sources said.

Contacted, Gobindo said, "We gave letter to UNOs for sending list of insolvent cultural activists to us and we sent it to the

Ministry of Culture. I have no power to influence the matter."

He, however, failed to give any satisfactory answer when asked why the list of beneficiaries in Nazirpur upazila included 31 names although the UNO office sent five names.

"According to the list given from the Ministry of Culture, ration-money was distributed among the insolvent cultural activists. I am not aware of any incident of bribery regarding the matter. I will investigate the matter if there was any irregularity," said AKM Shamimul Huq Siddique, DC of Pirojpur.



PHOTO: STAR

Police halt the procession of pro-Islamist Osamajik Karjokolap Protirodh Committee while going to besiege the Kandapara brothel in Tangail town yesterday. The processionists later held a sit-in blocking the busy road for hours.

Fresh bid to besiege Tangail brothel, oust sex workers

Admin halts protesters, assures of resolving issue by Sunday

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The pro-Islamist Osamajik Karjokolap Protirodh Committee (body to resist anti-social activities) here yesterday tried to oust the sex workers and house owners who returned to the 200-year-old Kandapara brothel in the town but the district administrations resisted the bid.

The supporters of the committee agitated at Central Jame Mosque in the morning and held a rally there. The protest programme was declared on Tuesday immediately after the sex workers' return.

Terming the brothel a den of drugs and criminals, the speakers at the rally said they will resist the bid to restart the brothel at any cost.

Saying that the brothel was close to the central graveyard, a mosque and

two madrasas, they vowed to continue their agitation and go for an indefinite shutdown in the district, if needed, to realise the demand.

Giving the sex workers a 24-hour deadline to leave the brothel, the speakers also declared that if required, hundreds of devout Muslims would sacrifice their lives to perform their religious duty.

Maulana Shamsuzzaman, Imam of the Central Jame Mosque, in his speech said, "Although the sex workers are also human beings, but being Muslims, we hate prostitution and so we will fight against it until *kiyamat* (the judgement day)".

"The people of Tangail do not want to see the brothel anymore and the authorities should create alternative employment opportunities for them", he added.

After the rally, they brought out a procession in the town at 11:00am and tried to besiege the brothel.

Police, however, resisted the procession. The processionists then staged a sit-in on the busy road blocking it for several hours.

The agitators also said their zohr prayers on the street and declared that they would not move from the spot until the sex workers quit the brothel.

Later at 4:00pm, an administrative team, led by additional district magistrate (ADM) in Tangail Sarwar Alam, went to the spot and talked to the protesters.

The agitators suspended their programmes till Sunday following assurances of steps by the district administration to resolve the problem within the given time.

On the other hand, over 100 sex workers and house owners were rebuilding their shelters while the agitation was going on in the town.

During a visit to the spot yesterday, sex workers' leader Lily, who had 14 rooms, said, she returned to the brothel knowing well that an agitation might take place. "I now fear none as I have no other option, she said.

"I want back my right to stay on my own land and the authorities should ensure my security. If they do not do so, we will die here but won't leave this place," said Marzina, another sex workers' leader, who owns 20 rooms at the brothel.

Contacted, Mahbub Hossain, deputy commissioner in Tangail, said they will try to resolve the matter after discussing the issues with both sides.

SNIPPETS

Hartal observed in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A half-day hartal, called by the district unit BNP, protesting attack on party chairperson Khaleda Zia's motorcade in Dhaka, Bogra BNP offices and arrest of 12 activists on Wednesday, passed off almost peacefully yesterday. Vehicular movement on the town roads was almost normal in the morning. However, no long-route buses left the district town. No pickets were seen in the town during the shutdown. A huge number of law enforcers were deployed at different points in the town to avert any unwanted situation, said ASP Nazir Ahmed Khan.

Garment trader attacked for toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A garment trader was injured when extortionists hurled crude bombs at his Kanaidanga residence in Damuhuda upazila of Chuadanga on Thursday as he refused to pay heed to their demand. Sources said, a gang of demanded Tk 5 lakh from Robi Hawladar, owner of a readymade garment shop at Karpusdanga Bazar in the upazila on August 20. Sub-inspector Tapan Kumar, in-charge of Karpusdanga Police Camp, quoted Robi as saying that the victim had already paid the gang Tk 1.6 lakh a few days ago, but they were demanding more. The miscreants hurled three bombs, targeting Robi's house around 11:30pm and left the scene. Two of the bombs were exploded inside the house that left Robi injured, said the SI. Being informed, police rushed to the spot and recovered the unexploded bomb. Robi is undergoing treatment at a private clinic in the upazila headquarters.

Five 'robbers' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police in a drive arrested five alleged robbers from Jaganathpur area in Sadar upazila early yesterday. The arrestees are Nazmul Hosain, 25, Jahangir Mia, 28, Mahfuz Khan, 26, Shipon Mia, 22, and Manik Mia, 28, hailed from different areas in the upazila. SM Sirajul Huda, assistant superintendent of police in Moulvibazar, said being tipped-off, a police team raided the area around 5:00am, and arrested five member of notorious 'Nazmul Bahini' while they were taking preparation to commit robbery.

Man killed in land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A man was killed by his rivals allegedly over a disputed land at Birmuhuri village in Kendua upazila yesterday. The deceased is Alim Uddin, 45, of the village. Ovi Ranjan, officer in-charge of Kendua Police Station, said there had been a long standing conflict between Elahi Nawaz and Alim Uddin of the village over the ownership of the land. Elahi's men swooped on Alim with sharp weapons and stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him dead on the spot around 12:00noon, when Alim went to the disputed land in a bid to cultivate that. None was, however, arrested in this connection.

Youth gets life for killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A court on Wednesday sentenced a youth to life term imprisonment for killing a woman in July 1, 2010. The convict is Mosharraf Hossain Musa, 25, son of Tajuddin of Brojonathpur village in Gomostapur upazila. District and Session Judge Kabita Khanam, also fined the convict Tk 20 thousand, in default, to suffer six months more in jail. According to the case statement, Musa had an illicit relation with Saira Begum, 35, wife of late Sajjad Mondal. As she became pregnant and was putting pressure on Musa to marry her, the latter called Saira out of her house on July 1, 2010 and took her near the bank of Mohananda River. Later, Musa killed her and dumped her body in the water. Anwarul Islam, one of the relatives of the deceased, filed a murder case with Gomostapur police station on July 28, 2010.

Trial of 'rapist' demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Students and teachers of different educational institutions in Kaharol upazila yesterday formed a human chain demanding capital punishment of the culprit, who allegedly violated a school girl and uploaded the videos on the internet. Earlier, Rapid Action Battalion members arrested Anwarul Islam, a teacher of 'Easy Coaching Centre' in the upazila headquarters on charge of violating a girl student on August 30. People from all walks of life joined the hour-long programme in front of Kaharol Upazila Parishad Complex. Speakers at the human chain programme urged the local administrations to keep an eye on the coaching centre to avert such incidents in future.

Criminals gouge out eye of college boy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Criminals gouged out an eye of a college boy and damaged another one in Babuganj upazila of the district yesterday.

The victim is Rakib Hossain, 18, a first year student of Babuganj Degree College and son of Md Selim alias Langra Selim of the village. He was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Yesterday evening, he was sent to Dhaka for better treatment, said family sources.

One of Rakib's eyes was gouged out while the other was seriously injured, said Dr Amitav Biswas of the hospital.

On information, police recovered Rakib with legs and hands tied up from near Khoyratir Khal in the area in an unconscious state on Wednesday night.

The incident might be a sequel to previous rivalry, said the victim's father.

AL man stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Unidentified miscreants stabbed a local leader of Awami League to death in Jeodhara village under Morelganj upazila of the district on Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Mozammel Hossain alias Mozam Shikder, 50, general secretary of Nishanbari union ward no 7 unit of AL.

Nishanbari union unit general secretary of AL Abdur Rahim Bachchu said, a gang swooped on Mozam

he was returning home after saying prayers at a local mosque around 8:30pm.

They hacked him indiscriminately before leaving the spot.

Hearing his cry for help, locals rushed to the spot and took him to Morelganj Upazila Health Complex, where he succumbed to the injuries on admission.

OC of Morelganj PS, Md Aslam Khan, said a rival group hacked Mozam to death with sharp weapons over previous enmity.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Palashbari Bangabandhu Girls High School in Palashbari upazila of Gaibandha form a human on Bogra-Rangpur highway in the upazila yesterday, demanding immediate steps to rescue fellow student Sadia Afrin Shimul and arrest her abductors. Sadia was picked up by a gang from the upazila headquarters on July 10.

Aman saplings sell at high rate in flood-hit areas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Affected farmers are buying aman paddy saplings at high rate from the local markets as the recent flooding damaged their seedbeds.

Taking the advantage of crisis, traders have been doing a brisk business and earning additional profit. Farmers were bound to buy saplings at high rate as they had no stock to re-plant paddy in damaged fields.

The flood affected farmers at different villages said, their aman plants and saplings were destroyed as the flood was longer (17 days) this year.

We now have no time to prepare seedbeds anew while the time is running out, said a farmer.

Flood affected farmer Habibur Rahman, 58, at Mogholhat village in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said they fell in trouble for want of aman saplings.

Poor and marginal farmers are in real problem as they cannot buy sapling at high rate from the local markets, he said.

A bundle of 200 to 220 aman saplings is being sold at Tk 10 against the last year's rate

of Tk 5 in the local market while the production cost of two bundles of saplings was not over Tk 2, said farmer Azizur Rahman, 62, of Marichbari village in Aditmari upazila.

"Aman plants on my eight bighas of land have been fully damaged by flood. I could not collect a single sapling to re-plant in the damaged fields till now," said farmer Karim Pramanik, 50, of Jamirbari village in Kaliganj upazila.

Sapling trader Shamsul Islam, 52, of Durakuti Haat in Sadar, said they were selling aman saplings at high rate as they had to collect those at high prices from different villages in Lalmonirhat, even from other districts.

Sources at Agriculture Extension Department in Lalmonirhat Sadar said, aman plants on 10,000 bighas of land were damaged fully and 8,500 bighas partially by the recent flood in the district.

DAE Deputy Director Safayet Hossain admitted that there was hardly any time now to prepare seedbeds for aman saplings to re-plant paddy in the damaged fields. So the farmers should prepare their lands for early winter vegetables, he added.

Crisis of teachers hampers studies of 1200 students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Academic activities at Naldanga Bhusan Pilot High School in the district are being seriously hampered due to shortage of teachers.

School sources said 13 posts of assistant teachers have been lying vacant for long, much to the sufferings of around 1200 students of the 132-year-old institution.

The school was established in 1882 on 5.17 decimals land donated by Bahadur Raja Promoth Bhusan Debroy. Besides technical section, each class consists of two sections.

Some teachers of the school alleged that this famous educational institu-

tion was suffering from acute crisis of teachers due to political interference. In absence of subject teachers, classes of english, mathematics, computer and technical education are not held regularly, they added.

Ex-lawmaker Abdul Mannan was chairman of the school managing committee for four years from February 2009 to February 2013. Senior teacher Ishaq Ali of the school alleged that three teachers were appointed with social science background, after they bribed Tk 11.50 lakh.

"They are not subject teachers and unfit for this reputed institution," Ishaq said, adding that former commissioner of Nandanga

municipality Masudur Rahman Monto and a guardian named Liakot Ali Khan Liton sued the chairman in 2012 for this.

Tonmoy Biswas, a class nine student of the school, said their english and math classes are not held regularly for shortage of teachers. "We need math and english teachers immediately", he said.

Headmaster Rezaul Haque, said they urgently need 12 subject teachers and a librarian to run the school smoothly.

Contacted, lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar, chairman of the newly formed ad-hoc committee, said they will recruit subject teachers as soon as possible.



PHOTO: STAR

Naldanga Bhusan Pilot School, once noted for its quality education in Jhenidah, is now facing a serious crisis of teachers and staff.