



The premises of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd in Parbatipur upazila under Dinajpur district give a deserted look as the authorities stopped production yesterday, following exhaustion of stocks of existing five stoves there.

MADHYAPARA GRANITE MINE Production stops as stock of five stoves exhausted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur
Rock production of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd (MGMCL) in Parbatipur upazila under the district got suspended for an indefinite period yesterday as the minable rocks of existing five stoves (pockets of rocks) are exhausted. No new stove could be developed due to the shortage of equipment. Belarus-based company Germania Trest Consortium (GTC) took over the charge for maintenance and production of the mine early January last year.

They continued producing nearly 4500 tonnes of rock daily, operating three shifts. But on August 1 this year, GTC suspended operation of two shifts and subsequently informed the MGMCL authorities about their unwillingness to continue rock production from the underground as the rocks of five stoves, developed by North Korea-based company Namnam around 10 years ago, have already been extracted, said the GTC officials. "We finally suspended total rock production today [Wednesday] and it cannot be restarted until the

required machinery and equipment is imported," said Zabeed Siddiqui, general manager of Germania Trest Consortium. The suspension left jobless at least 560 Bangladeshi workers, who were appointed under 'no work no pay' condition. Meanwhile, foreign workers have been sent back to the respective countries. Despite repeated request from GTC, MGMCL authorities could not import the required machinery and equipment due to shortage of capital. After energy and power ministry agreed to pay Tk 100 crore as loan last month,

MGMCL opened letter of credit to import the required machinery and equipment early this month. Around 150 items under 36 categories will be required for restarting the production and it will take five to seven months to import and set up them underground, sources said. Md Aminuzzaman, managing director of MGMCL, said the production will start as early as possible after the ordered machinery and equipment arrive. Now there is reserve of six lakh tonnes of rocks at the mine yard.

PHOTO: STAR

GOVT HEALTH CENTRE INOPERATIVE Medical service eludes Manikganj char people

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj
Around 30 thousand people of Azimnagar, Satalori and Lechhrganj unions of Harirampur upazila under the district, especially those on the char (landmass emerging from riverbed) areas, are deprived of health and family planning services in absence of any government-run health centres.

School, have urged the government to take immediate steps to start medical services at Azimnagar health centre. Contacted, Dr Md Amin Uddin, deputy director of Health and Family Welfare Directorate, said all necessary medical equipment and

furniture have been set up at Azimnagar Union Health and Family Welfare Centre but services could not be started there due to shortage of manpower. Doctors and other staff, especially females, do not want to go there crossing the River Padma, he added.

Dr Md Emran Ali, civil surgeon of Manikganj, said his medical team regularly goes to Azimnagar union parishad building and provides health services to the local people there. Locals, however, said the arrangements are too scanty

One and a half years ago, the authorities built Azimnagar Union Health and Family Welfare Centre and set up required medical equipment and furniture there but the centre is yet to start providing services, locals said during this correspondent's visit to Ibrahimpur village under Azimnagar union. "Thousands of villagers, especially women, children and elderly people, are facing serious problems due to the situation. My neighbour Kashem's wife died during delivery without treatment a month before," said Abdus Salam of Shikarpur village. Several people including Md Farhad, an intermediate student of Justice Nurul Islam Degree College and Md Al-Amin, a Class IX student of Azimnagar High



With an impressive building and required medical instruments, Azimnagar union health and family planning centre in Harirampur upazila under Manikganj district remains a mockery for locals as it could not be opened for service in last one and a half years due to lack of doctors and other staff.

PHOTO: STAR

2 held with pistol, bullets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainauabganj
Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two youths with a pistol, seven bullets and one magazine at Borgachhi village in Bholahat upazila of the district yesterday. The arrestees are Mohammad Sajib, 18, son of Aatur Rahman of the village, and Mohammad Monju, 25, son of late Fuljan Ali of Andipur village in the upazila. On secret information, a team of Rab-5 raided the village at noon and arrested the two with the firearm and bullets. The arrestees were later handed over to Bholahat Police Station, said Rab sources.

Housewife gang-raped in Patuakhali, 4 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
A housewife was gang-raped allegedly by a group of local youths at Hetalia village in Sadar upazila of the district on Tuesday night. Quoting the victim, police said the 26-year-old housewife of Chhotobighai village in the upazila, along with her two younger brothers was returning home from the district town around 8:00pm. When they reached near Hetalia Ashrayan Project area, a gang of 6/7 criminals waylaid them. They held knives to the throats of the brothers, took their sister to a nearby bush and raped her.

Hearing screams of the victims, locals rushed to the spot. Sensing the presence of the villagers, the gang fled the scene. Following a complaint filed by the woman with Sadar Police Station the same night, police raided different areas in the upazila and detained four youths, said officer-in-charge SM Tariqul Islam. The arrestees are Emon, 20, Jewel, 22, and Hasan, 21, of the village, and Sajib Sikdar, 22, of Kalatala area of the district town. Police produced them before a court yesterday afternoon that sent them to

the jail. Away in Thakurgaon, villagers rescued a schoolgirl, foiling an alleged rape bid by a local youth at Basanti village in Pirganj upazila on Monday. Quoting locals, police said Jewel, 24, of Vepra village, took the girl, a Class III student at a local primary school, to a secluded place while she was returning home from her tutor's house on Monday evening and tried to rape her. Hearing screams, locals went to the spot and rescued the girl, said Shawkat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pirganj Police Station.

Two killed in Mymensingh wall collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh
An elderly couple was killed in wall collapse at Purbo Gubrakura in Haluaghat upazila of the district early yesterday. The deceased are Monindra Mankin, 90, and his wife Romila Ritchil, 80, of Kalakuma village in Nalitabari of Sherpur district. Police said, Monindra and Romila came to visit their daughter Dilapi Ritchil's house at Purbo Gubrakura on September 17. When they were asleep, the old earthen wall of the house collapsed around 3:30am, leaving the duo dead on the spot, said Sub-Inspector Khokon Chandra Sarker of Haluaghat Police Station. The wall collapsed due to heavy rainfall in the area for last couple of days, said the SI. On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and handed them over to the family members at noon.

PIROJPUR SADAR HOSPITAL Outdoor patients suffer due to lack of toilet facility

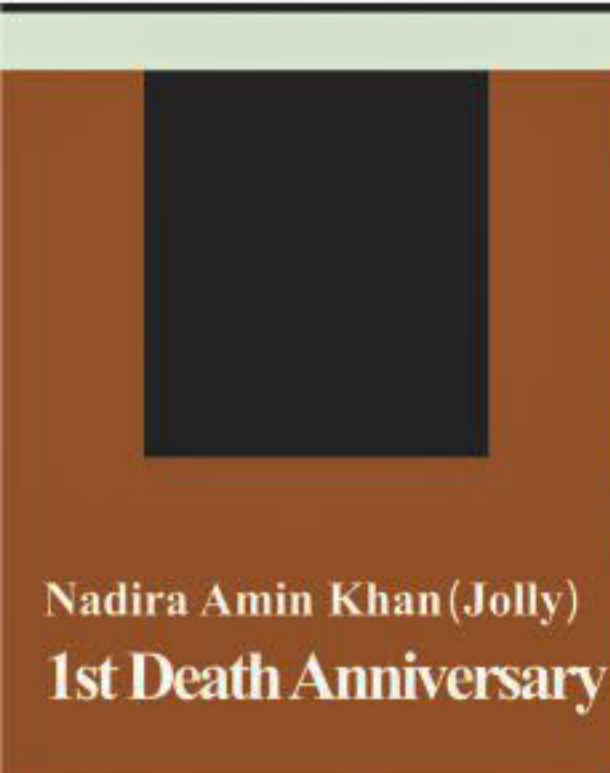
HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur
Patients coming to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital for outdoor service have to face untold sufferings in absence of toilet facilities there. The only toilet for the outdoor patients of the hospital is always kept locked, said several patients and their relatives. Generally it takes 2-3 hours to manage tickets and get the serial for meeting a doctor at the hospital and so, patients, especially those coming from distant areas, need to respond to the call of nature, they said. Women, elderly people and children are worst sufferers as they cannot go elsewhere easily for responding to the call of nature, said Salma, a patient of the hospital. "There is none to see our suffering as we are poor," said Hazera Begum, an elderly treatment seeker. "Usually insolvent people come to the government hospital as treatment is cheap. But poor services



The lone toilet meant for outdoor patients of Pirojpur Sadar Hospital remains locked all the time, much to the sufferings of the treatment seekers and their attendants, especially those coming from distant areas.

PHOTO: STAR

coupled with lack of toilet facility makes the environment repulsive," said a patient. Male people and children often urinate at different spots of the hospital premises, polluting the environment of the hospital compound. A good number of people from different areas of the district come to the hospital to receive treatment, said hospital sources. Contacted, Pirojpur Civil Surgeon Dr M Fakhru Alam, also superintendent of the hospital said the toilet for outdoor patients remains in an awful condition as users spoil it. "We are trying to set up another toilet on the hospital premises," he said.



Nadira Amin Khan (Jolly) 1st Death Anniversary

One year on, light years ahead

Wherever you have gone, wherever we might go It doesn't seem fair, as days just disappear Your light is still reflected, it is reflected from afar When we were but stones, your light made us stars Today it's been a year, a year just disappeared As every inch between us, turns to light years now Every inch, feels like light years now We were but stones, your light made us stars

Everyone you touched with the unique glow of your love. We are so much poorer without you.

After orange farming success, all eyes now on malta

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur
Following the success of orange orchards in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila, the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) is hoping the same can be achieved with maltas. To initiate an expansion of malta cultivation the DAE has selected three 10-decimal plots and planted 30 Bari Malta-1 trees, says Soumen Saha, the DAE additional director for Dinajpur region. The chosen malta strain was developed by the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute. "The trees were planted nearly 20 days ago," says Hemchandra Das, a successful orange orchardist participating in the trial, "and so far they are growing well. I hope all the malta trees mature and that fruit yield can exceed oranges." "If all goes well harvest should start within two

years," explains Arun Chandra Roy, the upazila agriculture officer in Birganj. "Trial malta groves are also being planted in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh," he adds. His colleague Dr. Abul Kalam Azad agrees that with the good results achieved from orange orchards over the past few years, the prospects for malta crops is promising. Due to its proximity to the Himalayas, the land in the greater Dinajpur region has long been considered ideal for citrus crops. Local interest in the trial is already piqued by the previous success of oranges, given the similarity of the fruits. "If the trial proves successful," says Das, "More and more people will be interested in farming malta in this and surrounding localities." The next step in farming's citrus revolution in farming, maltas have significant potential to further improve the regional economy.



Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension plant malta at Komorpur village in Birganj upazila under Dinajpur district during inauguration of a citrus fruit cultivation centre a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR