

Learning only on sunny days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Students of Monohorpur High School in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila are attending classes under the open sky as the tin-built roof of the school building was blown away by a storm on April 22.

"We held classes on the sunny days, but it is not possible when it starts raining. The upazila administration should take immediate measures to repair the school building as the rainy season has already begun," said Abul Hossain, headmaster of the high school, constructed in 2003.

While visiting the school recently, this correspondent found broken benches, chairs and tables there.

Sathi Akhter, a student of Class-VII, said, "We have to attend classes under the open sky. Classes stop and our books and khata get wet when it rains."

The reasons for students' poor attendance are mainly rain and the fear of storms, she added.

"We held classes only four days a week as it rains most of the days. The authorities concerned have not taken any step although we sent letters, demanding immediate repair of the school building," said Suhag Miah, president of Monohorpur High School managing committee.

Mohammad Anwar, Kulaura education officer, said they already sent a list of the affected educational institutions to the upazila nirbahi officer, but they are yet to get any response.



Class-VI students sit in their room that has no roof. A nor'wester blew away the roof of Monohorpur High School in Kulaura of Moulvibazar on April 22. The school has been running only on sunny days since then.

PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan broke 1974 deal

Says law minister; calls on Islamabad not to interfere in Dhaka's internal affairs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan has violated the 1974 Tripartite Agreement by not taking back the stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh, and so the agreement is no longer valid, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

Under the agreement, Pakistan was supposed to take them home, but it did not comply with the condition, said Anisul. "The law says that a deal becomes invalid if anyone violates any of its condition. So, this agreement is no longer acceptable."

Tureen Afroz, a prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal which is trying the perpetrators of the 1971 crimes, said the tripartite agreement was invalid both under national and international laws.

Their comments come in the wake of Pakistan's allegations that Bangladesh is executing the war criminals in violation of the said agreement between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

They were talking to reporters after a programme at BILLA auditorium in the capital.

A day after the execution of Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami for war crimes, including mass killing, Pakistan national parliament on May 11 passed a resolution to express serious concerns over the execution.

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Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi along Jibonnagar border in Chudanga yesterday.

The dead, Shihab Uddin Sajal, 18, was the son of Mahub Alam of Goalpara of the upazila.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) sources said Shihab along with three others leased a mango orchard, which is along the Jibonnagar border, from an Indian national of Banpur in West Bengal's Nadia.

They added that a BSF member of Tungi camp in Nadia opened fire when Shihab and the three were plucking mangoes from the trees at the orchard around 10:30am. Shihab suffered bullet injuries.

Three of his associates were also hurt when they tried to climb down the trees hurriedly.

Shihab was rushed to Jibonnagar Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

The injured were admitted to the same health complex.

After visiting the spot, Lt Col Amir Mazid, director of BGB Battalion-6 under Kushtia sector, said the BGB sent a letter to the BSF camp, protesting the incident.

3 held

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during his interrogation, he gave contradictory information that raised suspicion.

In a visit to the hospital yesterday noon, Amin, of Jadimura village of the union, was seen handcuffed. Two armed policemen stood guard to keep an eye on him.

Police sources quoted Amin as saying to the police that a Rohingya named Mohammad Rafique, registered with the camp, had been involved in the looting of 11 arms from the camp's armoury on Friday. He said he had seen Rafique at the spot.

Two of the three wives of Rafique -- Humaira Begum and Minara Begum -- are the other detainees.

A team of police yesterday took them to Teknaf Police Station for interrogation.

Mohammad Ishaque, chairman of D block of Nayapara refugee camp, told The Daily Star that he himself handed them over to police.

Sub-inspector Subir Paul of the police station confirmed the detention of the three for interrogation.

The police, meanwhile, have set up a temporary check post at Jadimura on the highway. Law enforcers have been searching all passenger vehicles going to Teknaf and Cox's Bazar.

Ansar member and Alamgir Hossain, a witness to the looting incident, filed a case with Teknaf police, accusing 30 to 335 unidentified people of the killing of an Ansar commander and looting arms, said Abdul Majid, officer-in-charge of Teknaf police.

Inspector Kabir Hossain was given the charge of investigating the case, the OC said.

Director General of Ansar and Village Defence Party Mizanur Rahman Khan visited the crime scene at the refugee camp yesterday evening.

Another feather in the cap

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outdoor education and adventure.

Wasfia will receive a prize money of \$10,000 that can be used for research or exploration of her choice, says a press release.

She is the first female to "hold both the National Geographic Adventurer and Emerging Explorer designations".

The National Geographic Society has recently announced its 2016 class of emerging explorers -- a group of 13 explorers including the Bangladeshi mountaineer, according to its website.

The other 12 explorers include Asha de Vos, a marine biologist and ocean educator, Naftali Honig, a wildlife crime investigator, Jeffrey Marlow, geobiologist, writer, and educator, and Thandiwe Mweetwa,

lion biologist.

Wasfia will be honoured at the 10th Annual Explorers Symposium which will be held during the "Explorers Week" at the National Geographic headquarters in June, says the press release.

Talking to The Daily Star, Wasfia said, "At the award ceremony, I will give a presentation on the progress of women empowerment in Bangladesh. It will portray a positive scenario of the advancement of Bangladeshi women before the world."

She said such recognition would inspire her to concentrate more on the empowerment of women and girls in the country.

The press release says Wasfia will invest her entire prize money in sponsoring the first batch of stu-

dents in her upcoming foundation, Osel Foundation, set to be launched later this year.

The foundation is an alternate education centre with the mission to empower adolescent girls through outdoor education and adventure.

During the "Explorers Week", geographic scientists, conservationists, photographers and storytellers come together to share their latest discoveries and adventures, participate virtually in presentations and join conversation about ways Nat Geo family members are all making a difference.

During the many activities of the week, one of the explorers chosen by public demand will participate in a live Twitter chat with people and discuss about adventures and discoveries with them.

Geographic online page is taking votes from now till June 6 to help pick the explorer, says the press release.

Wasfia has requested all to vote for her visiting this website: natgeo.org/emerging

Born in Dhaka in 1982, Wasfia conquered the Mount Everest on May 26 2012 as the second Bangladeshi woman after Nishat Majumder.

In 2015, Wasfia became the first Bangladeshi and the only Bengali to have scaled the highest mountains of each of the seven continents, also known as the Seven Summits.

Earlier in 2014, she was selected as a National Geographic Adventurer in honour of her activism and commitment to empowering women through her work in the field of adventure.

Taller, stronger rice plant

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Nationwide modern varieties coverage in rice cultivation has increased from 25 percent in 1972 to over 80 percent now, but their penetration in the tidal regions of Barisal, Patuakhali, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Bhola, Bagerhat and Gopalganj has remained at 15 percent for all these years.

Helal, who has been leading the breeding project since 2003 for developing rice varieties suitable for the tidal wetland condition, expressed the hope that the new MVs would be a breakthrough.

These will offer the southern farmers a good choice to shift from low-yield homegrown varieties like

Sadamota, Lalmota, Moulata, and Dudhkalom.

The new MVs have been developed by crossing homegrown varieties like Sadamota, Dudhkalom with high-yield modern varieties, said BRRi DG Jibon Krishna Biswas. That means BRRi dhan77 and BRRi dhan78 are customised in a way that southern farmers will find the "good-height seedling" characteristic of local varieties and "high-yield" characteristic of modern varieties in them, he explained.

Thanks to the rapid replacements of low-yield traditional varieties with high-yield modern varieties, Bangladesh's production of the staple has tripled since independ-

ence.

But the production has not gone up on tidal floodplains that constitute an important agro-ecological zone covering an extensive area in the south central coastal region of Bangladesh.

Once approved by the National Seed Board and popularised among farmers, cultivation of BRRi dhan77 and BRRi dhan78 would lead to the production of an additional one million tonnes of rice per year, scientists expect.

BRRi Director (Research) Ansar Ali told The Daily Star that apart from these varieties, two other new rice breeding lines -- BRRi dhan75 and BRRi dhan76 -- meant for high

yields in the Aus and Aman seasons are in the pipeline for regulatory approval.

RP Shaha

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public welfare. Kumudini Welfare Trust of Bengal thus came into existence for poor and distressed people, according to the website of the trust.

RP Shaha used his wealth to establish a hospital in remote Mirzapur to provide free medical care.

The philanthropist founded several educational institutions to promote education in the country, including renowned Bharateswari Homes for women.



Hawkers occupy the pavement and a portion of the thoroughfare at Bahadderhat intersection of Chittagong city. Rickshaws and other three-wheelers park there and buses stop in the middle of the street, making it significantly narrow for motorists and risky for pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Friendship with Israel is 'political suicide'

Says Palestinian charge d'Affairs in Dhaka

BSS, Dhaka

Friendship with Israel, which is perpetrating atrocities against Palestinian people, would be an act of "political suicide" for any political party in Bangladesh, Palestinian Charge d'Affairs in Dhaka Yousef S Y Ramadan said yesterday.

"It would be their political suicide if any political party and its leaders try to build relations with any political party, its leaders and even the intelligence agency of Israel.... This act would do more harm for the party than for the Palestine people," he told journalists after a press conference at the Palestine embassy.

The envoy said this when his comment was sought on the recent meeting between BNP Joint Secretary General Aslam Chowdhury and Israeli Likud Party leader Mendi N Safadi in Agra, India.

He asserted that Bangladesh's relations with Palestine are solid as all Bangladeshis irrespective of political and religious beliefs are very supportive of the legitimate cause of the oppressed Palestinians.

The press conference marked the 68th anniversary of the "Nakba Day". Al Nakba means "The Catastrophe" that refers to the destruction of hundreds of cities and villages in historical Palestine and the expulsion of hundred and thousands of Palestinians from their ancestral homes to make way for new state of Israel in 1948.

Replying to a question, Ramadan said the BNP chief should take

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Bangladeshi

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"Junead Khan was not far from the commission of the murder to be committed by horrifying method in the street in order to create terror and terrorist propaganda in this country," judge Andrew Edis said as he sentenced him.

"His offence was so serious that a life sentence must be imposed."

Khan, from Luton, north of London, had exchanged online messages with an IS fighter in Syria called Abu Hussain, who prosecutors said was a British man, Junaid Hussain.

Hussain was later killed in a US drone strike.

The trial heard how one message described an attack on military personnel, which Khan and Hussain compared to the deadly knife attack by two Islamists on British soldier Lee Rigby in London in 2013.

Khan, who stared straight ahead as he was sentenced, had also been found guilty of preparing to join the IS group in Syria with his uncle, 23-year-old Shazib Khan.

Shazib Khan was given a 13-year sentence, of which he will have to spend at least eight years in jail.

The judge said the two men, who are of Bangladeshi background, were "committed supporters of ISIS (IS), an organisation which wishes to control the world and which will stop short of no barbarity in order to do so".