



Henna leaves and its powder.

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Henna shows the colour of life

SHYKH SERAJ

During the end of the holy month of Ramadan, I went to Savar's Shamlashi Bhakurda Union to see mehendi (henna) cultivation. Henna is a traditional plant and is very popular for ages, especially in the sub-continent. Women like to wear it like anything. Let's talk about the cultivation spot now. Farmers in Savar, where I've been to see the henna cultivation, are really smart. Savar, as you know, is very close to Dhaka and the henna farmers are here are giving quick and huge supply to Dhaka. So, these farmers are always updated about the demand. Henna is heavily used in bridal makeover, many Muslims also wear it on beards and ladies also wear henna on their hair and make beautiful designs on their hands. Moreover, henna is a great

medicinal plant which can cure cancer, jaundice, arthritis, stomach troubles, skin diseases etc. In Savar, farmers used to do sugarcane before, but as henna has great demand and gives farmers good profit, they are keener towards it. For this, in recent times, henna cultivation is extending fast in Savar. "How much for one bundle?" I asked a farmer. "I sell each for 5 taka". Naturally, the wholesalers make it a bit more. "What crops you prefer to cultivate?" I asked another farmer. "Vegetables... mehendi", he replied. "Which is more profitable to you, vegetables or mehendi?" I asked again. "Certainly, mehendi," he boldly said. The season of cultivating henna is during March to April. Still, it has more or less demand throughout

the entire year. Henna is best to be cultivated in sandy-loam soil. Henna plants grow fast if urea, compost fertiliser and sufficient water are used. In the first year of sowing, henna grows to 2-3 feet, second year they grow to 4-5 feet and during the third year they grow to 6-7 feet. Once the plants grow to a sufficient state, in every 2-3 months henna can be cut. "What did you cultivate on these lands earlier?" I asked another farmer. "Sugarcane but now we don't do it anymore. Sugarcane takes a lot of time to grow," he replied. "Is henna profitable for you?" I asked again. "Of course, money is good, less trouble. That's why I shifted," the farmer replied. Henna is sold in every small vegetable market in the capital. It is also sold in the big markets like Krishi

Market, Rayerbazar and others. Henna leaves are coming to the city mainly from a few villages in Savar and Keraniganj upazila's Purbo Akchail, Salmachi, Kolatiya, and Maniknagar. In these villages, like the cultivation of other crops, henna is cultivated in many areas and expanding every day. The extension of natural henna cultivation is very positive and hopeful. Gradually, many farmers are getting involved in henna cultivation. Commercially, they have made its production profitable as well. Due to the marketing of artificial and imported henna, we're spoiling our own opportunities. We need to move onward with it and explore many other new promises and prospects in henna and how better we can support the farmers for this. Dear readers, belated Eid greetings to you all.

Risky journey on weak Bailey bridge

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The Bailey bridge over the river Swarnamoti on Lalmonirhat-Burimari Highway is on the verge of collapsing at Sarpukur area under Aditmari upazila of the district due to heavy pressure of traffic. The bridge is the only connection between four upazilas and Burimari land port with the district headquarters, so it is busy round the clock. Locals say the Roads and Highway Department (RHD) spent a lot of money to build the Bailey bridge, but it was done without proper planning. RHD official said Tk 67 lakh was spent to build the bridge and Tk 6 lakh was spent to maintain it. They

are still maintaining the bridge every day as it may collapse at any time, they added. Atiar Rahman, a school-teacher at Sarpukur village, said, "If the Bailey bridge had been built with proper planning, it would not have been in such a bad condition." Azibar Rahman said they are happy as a new bridge over the river Swarnamoti is being constructed, but unhappy as the temporary bridge causes so much suffering to them. "Traffic jam is a common phenomenon on both sides of the bridge as it is the only connection between four upazilas and Burimari land port," he added. Bus driver Ziaur

Rahman, 42, said he drives over the vulnerable bridge at the risk of his and the passengers' lives as it maybe collapse anytime. It is a death trap, and he would not use the route if there was an alternative, he added. Truck driver Aftab Uddin, 48, said he is afraid of losing his life when he drives his loaded truck on the bridge. Sahidul Islam, estimator of RHD in Lalmonirhat said the bailey bridge is a temporary measure as the main bridge is under construction. "The temporary bailey bridge has a capacity to bear a 10-tonne vehicle, but trucks carrying 45 to 50 tonnes from Burimari land port also use the bridge," he added.



Plying of heavy vehicles over this weak Bailey bridge across the Swarnamati River on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway poses the risk of serious accident anytime.

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PLAYGROUND LOST TO GREED: A large portion of this playground in Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat district gets covered with banana trees planted by an alleged land grabber.

200-year-old playground grabbed in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Frustration grips the people of Roar village in Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat as the 200-year-old playground in the locality has been grabbed allegedly by a ruling party man. Locals said Atiquzzaman Moon, convener of Krishak League's Akkelpur upazila unit, planted some banana trees on June 29, grabbing a portion of the playground. Nearly 200-years ago,

local Muslims donated 12 bighas of land to build a shrine (mazar) in the name of Shah Sufi Sikandar Ali. The shrine was built in two bighas of the land and the rest 10 bighas were open to general public for years. Local children used the field as their playground. Besides, local Muslims had been holding their annual religious congregation in the field since its establishment. Villagers said Moon along with his hired goons

went to the field on June 29 and planted banana plants there in a bid to grab the land. Shahidul Islam of Pashchimpara village said many local educational institutions used to hold their annual sports function at the playground for years. If the grabbing continues the institutions will face serious trouble in holding such programmes, Shahidul added. Recently, people of the adjacent areas submitted a memorandum to

Joypurhat deputy commissioner and superintendent of police to free the land from the grabber and bring its previous environment back. Local journalists could not talk to Moon for his comment over the issue as he kept rejecting their phone calls. When asked, Officer-in-Charge Sajjad Hossain of Akkelpur Police Station said they have already visited the spot and are trying to solve the matter in a friendly manner.

Robber beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An alleged robber was beaten to death while another was injured in Chiricandar upazila of Dinajpur yesterday, police said. The deceased was identified as Azizul Islam Kala, 45, son of Fazlu Mia of Alokdihi village under the upazila. Md Mahub, 40, son of Abdul Jabbar of Jahanabad village under Parbatipur upazila was injured and is being treated at Saidpur Upazila Health Complex, police said. A gang of 10 robbers gathered at Kamarpara village under Yusubpur union in the upazila at around 2:00am. Suspecting that they were robbers, the villagers encircled the gang to catch them. The villagers caught two of them while the others managed to flee, police said.

Later, a mob beat them up, leaving Azizul dead on the spot, said Abu Haidar Liton, chairman of Yusubpur union. Anisur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Chirirbandar Upazila Police Station, said police rescued Mahub from the mob and sent him to Saidpur Upazila Health Complex.

Fire guts shop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A fire gutted a hardware shop at Marwaripatti in Joypurhat town early yesterday. The fire originated from an electric short circuit at a hardware shop owned by one Mahfuzar Rahman. A fire fighting unit from Joypurhat Fire Station rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control. The owner said the loss could go up to Tk 50 lakh.

Wrong blood grouping risks woman's life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Wrong blood grouping by a private pathology laboratory put the life of an expectant mother at risk during a Cesarean operation conducted at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital on Tuesday. Hospital sources said Jyotsna Begum, 26, wife of restaurant worker Hafizul Islam of Molanipara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila, was admitted to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital about fifteen days ago for birth of her child. Doctors asked her to take a blood group test as she needed a Cesarean operation. As per the instruction of the doctor, Jyotsna went to a local pathology laboratory for blood grouping on June 28. The laboratory report said her blood group was 'O positive.' Accordingly,

her family members collected a bag of 'O positive' blood. But a complication arose just before the operation. When the doctor asked for blood, the hospital laboratory found after cross matching that the patient's blood group was 'B positive.' Finding no other way, the hospital staff managed a bag of blood from one of their colleagues who had 'B positive blood.' Anesthetist Dr Monsur Alam said the patient could have lost her life due to wrong blood grouping. The technician of the private pathology laboratory that did blood grouping did not make any comment about the matter. Civil Surgeon of Panchagarh, Dr Pitambar Roy, told this correspondent over cellphone, "I am not aware of the matter. I will look into it."

Matricide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly woman was killed allegedly by her son at Raipur Dangapara village in Atrai upazila of Naogaon on Tuesday. The deceased, Diljan Begum, 90, was a resident of the village. Quoting locals, police said Tabibar Hossain, 28, locked in an altercation with his mother over a trifling matter on Tuesday afternoon. At one stage, Tabibar kicked Diljan in her lower abdomen, leaving her unconscious. Diljan died on way to Atrai Upazila Health Complex. Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Badruddoza of Atrai Police Station said locals caught Tabibar and handed him over to the police. Police produced Tabibar before a court on Wednesday that sent him to the jail, the OC added.



Teachers and students of Chatmohar Degree College in Pabna bring out a procession in the town yesterday with a call to resist militancy and subversive activities.

PHOTO: STAR