

Returnee expat, relative missing from Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

A Malaysia expatriate along with his relative went missing, one hour after his arrival at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on Sunday morning.

They are Motiur Rahman, a returnee from Malaysia, and Ayub Ali, who went to receive Motiur at the airport, said Motiur's father-in-law Bablu Hossain of Uttarpara in Gangni upazila town in Meherpur district yesterday.

"Motiur informed me a month ago over phone that he will come back to Bangladesh on August 7," said Bablu.

"I sent my younger brother Ayub Ali to receive Motiur. As per schedule Motiur arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at about 5:00am on Sunday.

"Ayub received him around 6:00am. Half an hour later, Ayub called me over mobile phone and said that he and Motiur had just started from the airport for Meherpur. It was last my conversation with Ayub. Afterwards, Ayub's phone was found switched off," Bablu said.

The family members tried to trace them out but failed.

Family sources said Motiur, son of Shamsul Haq of Arpara area of Gangni upazila town, went to Malaysia for job two years ago and did not come to Bangladesh in between.

Abu Bakar Siddiq, member of local Dhakhola union parishad, who visited Bablu's house yesterday noon, told this correspondent over phone that he found the missing incident true.

Akram Hoasin, officer-in-charge of Gangni Police Station, said he has heard about the incident but nobody came to the police station to lodge complaints.



Indigenous people bring out colourful processions in Thakurgaon and inset, in Bandarban town yesterday marking International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. PHOTO: STAR



'Recognise ethnic minorities as indigenous people'

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Ethnic minorities in Bangladesh observed the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples yesterday with a call for recognising them as indigenous people in the constitution.

Speakers at the programmes in different districts urged the government to ensure their education, health, land and social rights.

This year the theme of the Day is "Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education."

Our Rangamati correspondent reports that ethnic communities in the district observed the Day with a rally in the municipality area in Rangamati town.

Ranjan Chakma, president of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, GHT chapter, was in the chair. Ushatan Talukdar, member of parliament, Raja Debasish Roy, Chakma circle

chief, Rangamati, and Arun Chakma, chairman of Sadar upazila parishad, among others, addressed the rally.

The speakers said the ethnic groups in Bangladesh have their own culture, language and tradition to fulfill all the criteria, as per the ILO convention, to be regarded as indigenous people.

"Today, we are still being deprived of our fundamental rights regarding land, culture, education and language. In Rangamati Sadar upazila, there are many places where there are no educational institutions. So, many indigenous children are still deprived of the right to education," said Chairman of Sadar upazila Arun Chakma.

"The government did not consult with the people of the area before proposing to build a medical college and a university of technology, which is a violation of the human rights of the people," Raja Debasish Roy said.

Indigenous people in Bandarban observed the Day with the demand for ensuring their constitutional recognition as well as education, health, social and land rights, reports our Bandarban correspondent.

Colourful processions, cultural programmes and discussions were held on the occasion.

People of different communities including Marma, Chakma, Tripura, Tongchyang, Khyang, Bawm, Mro, Lusai, Khumi and Chak celebrated the Day with festivities and programmes.

Speakers at a rally in the town urged the government to protect the culture and heritage of the indigenous people.

Indigenous people observed the Day in Mymensingh with different programmes yesterday, our Mymensingh correspondent reports.

A colourful rally, participated by around 2,000 indigenous people of

different groups from Mymensingh region, was brought out in the town.

Wearing traditional dresses, they joined the rally carrying festoons, placards and banners.

The demand of indigenous people for a separate land commission and ministry for plain land indigenous people should be met to settle land related disputes, speakers at the rally said.

Later, they also submitted a memorandum containing 10-point demand to the deputy commissioner of Mymensingh.

The Day was also celebrated in Thakurgaon town yesterday with cultural programmes and discussions, reports our Thakurgaon correspondent.

Speakers at a discussion urged the government to save the indigenous people from land grabbers. They also demanded allocation of khas land among the landless indigenous people.

SNIPPETS

Train kills woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An unidentified woman, aged about 60, was crushed under the wheels of a train in Birampur upazila of the district on Sunday night. Parbatipur-bound Uttara Express hit the victim at Birampur railway platform. The body was sent to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Emdadul Haque, stationmaster of Birampur railway station.

Two held with Yaba

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Law enforcers in separate drives arrested three people with 1175 Yaba tablets and 400 grams of marijuana in different areas of the district on Monday. The arrestees are Dilip Dey, 40, of Alokdia village in Baliakandi upazila of Rajbari, Akidul Islam, 32, of Jagonathi village under Madukhali upazila, and Jahangir Mattbar, 48, of Boro Muskunni village in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur. Of them, Dilip and Jahangir were held with the Yaba while Akidul was arrested with the marijuana, said police.

Outlaw arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police arrested an alleged outlaw with a revolver and two bullets in Tangail Sadar upazila yesterday. The arrestee is Golam Rabbi, 20, a member of outlawed Sarbohara Party, and son of late Nayan Miah of Chowdhurypara village. On Monday, trader Shakil Ahmed of Lawjana village filed an extortion case with Tangail Model Police Station, accusing 10 people including Rabbi. Following filing of the case, Rabbi and his accomplices attacked the plaintiff's house the following day. Hearing screams, locals caught Rabbi with the firearm and bullets and handed him over to police. However, his cohorts managed to flee the scene.

One electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An alleged cattle lifter here died from electrocution. The deceased was Rezaul Islam Khokon, 40, son of Monser Ali of Labutala village under Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah. Police said Rezaul was electrocuted when he along with his some associates was crossing the barbed wire at Kashipur border around 3:00am.

UP chairman lands in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A court here on Monday sent the chairman of Pigna Union Parishad (UP) in Sarishabari upazila to jail, rejecting his bail prayer in a case for illegal tree felling. Accused Khandakar Motahar Hossain Joy along with his younger brother Lutfur Rahman felled nine mahogany trees illegally from both sides of Baroipatol-Phuldaherpara road in the union on July 13. On August 2, a case was filed, accusing the chairman and his brother in this connection. The court passed the order when he appeared before it. However, his brother got the bail in the case.

Fish farming brings smile to Halim

He received national award for fish cultivation

MD AMINUL ISLAM with ANDREW EAGLE

Sometimes a youth's education doesn't run smoothly. Sometimes there are unavoidable obstacles which cause delay, such that it can take a little initiative to continue on the road to high school graduation.

When, in 2004, Md Abdul Halim from Banshati area of Mymensingh's Muktagacha upazila was forced to discontinue his study as a Secondary School Certificate examinee at a local high school due to financial hardship his future looked bleak. But rather than giving in to hopelessness, he instead started a fish farm.

"About two years after leaving school I started the Shah Sultan-Shahjalal Rupali Matshya Hatchery in Muktagachha," says Halim, now 28-years-old. His father Ahmed Ali inspired him to

try, says the father of two.

"With a little investment I started cultivating fish in 8 ponds on 2 acres. I chose tilapia, padma, gulsa, shingi, carp and eels as fish stocks," he says.

What began as a modest attempt has led to unimagined success. Having kept an eye on the quality of the fish fry produced at his hatchery, the demand for his fry increased rapidly and soon he was taking orders from beyond the district.

Nowadays he processes orders from traders from many parts of the country including Sylhet, Chittagong, Bogra, Khulna, Narsingdi and Rajshahi. His business, which now includes 35 ponds on 12 acres, is worth more than Tk 70 lakh per annum excluding costs, he says.

"The scientists of the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute in Mymensingh have always been very helpful," says Halim when asked

the secret of his success. "They gave me training in different aspects of fish cultivation and for the various species."

In 2014 he also participated in a 10-day training session on aquaculture from a university in the Philippines.

Moreover, Halim has won a prestigious national award for his fish farming efforts. On 20 July this year he was honoured with a gold medal, crest and certificate at the inaugural Fisheries Week session addressed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Khamarbari Krishibid Institution.

"It's a rare honour indeed to receive a prize from the prime minister," Halim says. "The prize has inspired me to be even more dedicated to my work."

"Halim's award is not only an honour for him," says another of Muktagachha's fish farmers Shahidul Islam, "It brings recogni-

tion to all the district's fish farmers, and can help us attract even better support from the concerned ministries to boost the sector further."

Fish farming has a long history in Muktagachha, where it began to take root as an industry in the 1980s. Mymensingh and Muktagachha, Bhaluka, Trishal, Phulbaria and Gouripur upazilas have been fish cultivation leaders nationally for the past 30 years, locals observed.

Senior fishery officer in Muktagachha Md Habibur Rahman Talukder says, "I am proud of Halim who won the gold medal from my nomination. His success will surely inspire others."

More recently however, Halim's thoughts have returned to that unfinished education.

"Through the Open University I am preparing for my Secondary School Certificate examination again," he says.



The hatchery set up and successfully run by Abdul Halim (inset) in Muktagachha upazila under Mymensingh district. PHOTO: STAR



A man on a boat collects water hyacinth from Hakaluki Haor area in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar for cattle food recently as haor livestock farmers face serious fodder crisis due to flood. PHOTO: STAR

Fodder crisis in haor areas

MINTU DESHWARA with ANDREW EAGLE

Due to flooding in the Hakaluki Haor region covering five Sylhet upazilas, livestock rearers are facing a crisis in finding feed for their stock.

"For lack of available grass and the high price of substitutes like hay, oilcake and wheat bran I had to sell some of my cows," says Mafur Ali from Chandpur village in Sylhet's Fenchuganj upazila.

"Due to their poor diet at present many cows have fallen ill."

"Cow milk is my only income source," says Monohor Ali from Pushainagor village in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila. "These days I am facing a serious crisis in finding pasture. I have been trying to manage my cattle by collecting water hyacinth, but I think in the coming week I'll have to sell some since so much pasture has been damaged and submerged by the floods."

Ramjan Ali from nearby Bhuksimul village is in a similar situation. "My two acres are underwater," he says, "Most of the grass available for livestock is damaged. In the last two days of April from three cows I could produce twelve litres of milk; but from May my cattle only produce about three litres every few days." Milk is Ramjan's

main income source; and several other local dairy producers spoke of similar difficulties.

Yet water flow from the hills and continuing rainfall is further raising the level of the haor and submerging greater portions of pasture across the affected Juri, Kulaura and Barlekha upazilas in Moulvibazar and Fenchuganj and Osmaninagar upazilas in Sylhet.

"I took a loan during Ramadan month to buy two cows," says Bodrul Hosain from Bhuaimil village in Juri upazila. "Now I am in financial crisis since the cows' milk production is decreased from a lack of available pasture for them; and I can't make the loan repayments as they become due."

Hay seller Moin Uddin Chowdhury, from Kathaltoli Bazar in Fenchuganj meanwhile, finds his hay in great demand. The selling rate for hay has increased substantial since last month.

Divisional deputy director of the livestock department Dr. Achintya Kumar Saha says many in the haor area rely on small-scale cattle rearing, for either milk or meat, for their livelihoods. He says he has informed higher authorities concerning the problems they are experiencing due to the floods.

In addition to the needs of livestock, residents too are suffering from a crisis of both clean drinking water and food.

Homeopath arrested for selling toxic liquor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Dinajpur Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) yesterday seized about 28 litres (27,600 ml) of toxic liquor in Nawabganj upazila of the district and arrested a local homeopath in this connection.

The arrestee is Akbar Ali, 55, of Daudpur Chowdhurypara village in the upazila.

DNC Assistant Director Shahidul Mannaf said a team of the DNC arrested Akbar along with 160 bottles of liquor from his house.

On Monday, two people died after taking toxic liquor bought from Akbar's shop at Daudpur Bazar on Sunday night.