



Students of Bhangura BL Bari School and College take oath against child marriage at a meeting organised by Betuan Polli Samaj to create awareness against the pactice. They vowed not to get married before they reach 18 years, and not to stop their schooling before passing Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). PHOTO: STAR

### SNIPPETS

#### Lightning kills newlywed youth

OUT CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari  
A newlywed youth was killed by lightning at Char Kharibari village in Dimla upazila yesterday. The deceased was day labourer Alim Hossain, 22, son of late Badsha Mia of the village. Locals said when Alim along with his two associates was catching fish in the River Teesta, a thunderbolt struck them. Alim died on the spot. He got married seven days ago.

#### Fugitive convict arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur  
Police arrested a fugitive convict from Kumerkhali village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila yesterday. The arrestee is Raihan Shikder alias Tia, 27, son of Mantu Shikder of the village. Police said he went into hiding since Pirojpur Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal sentenced him to 14 years' imprisonment in a case on August 7 in 2014.

#### Cow fattening pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur  
Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized at least 3.25 lakh cow fattening pills from Hakimpur upazila early yesterday. On secret information, the border guards raided Dalardarga village and seized the pills worth about Tk 65 lakh, said Lt Col Mostafizur Rahman, commander of BGB-3 Battalion. However, none was arrested in this connection, he said.

#### Two kids drown in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur  
Two children drowned in a river in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur on Tuesday afternoon. The deceased were Shahnaz Parveen, 9, daughter of Shamsul Islam, and Rezaul Karim, 6, son of Abdul Maleque of Shaheedbagh village. Family members said the two fell into the river and drowned when they were collecting lily from water.

#### Mother, girl crushed under train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur  
A woman and her 15-year-old daughter were crushed under the wheels of a train in Phulbari upazila of the district on Tuesday. They were Sarwati Rani Roy, 45, wife of Nibash Chandra Roy, and their daughter ninth grader Falguni Rani Roy, 15, of Razarampur Masuapara village. On information, law enforcers recovered the bodies from the rail track at Rambhadrapur village at night, said Anisur Rahman, sub-inspector of Phulbari Police Station.

#### Five arrested on border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole  
Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested five Bangladeshi nationals while they were illegally going to India through Putkhal border in Benapole Port Police Station yesterday. The arrestees are Masud Rana, 21, his wife Farjana Begum 19, Fatima Begum, 30, wife of Abdus Sobhan, Sonya Khatun, 18, wife of Kakon Mia, and Tania Khatun, 17, wife of Abul Hossain. They hail from different areas in Mymensingh. A case was filed in this connection, said Shamsur Rahman, in-charge of BGB-21 Battalion.

#### Two clinics fined

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi  
A mobile court fined two clinics for violating rules and dirtiness in Jhalakathi Sadar upazila on Tuesday. Of them, the Al-Shefa Poly Clinic and Diagnostic Centre was fined Tk 30,000 for violating rules and Squire Clinic and Diagnostic Centre Tk 20,000 for dirtiness, said police. Executive Magistrate Md Atahar Mia and Md Alamgir Hossain, NDC of Jhalakathi, led the court.

#### Missing boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha  
Police recovered the body of a missing minor boy from a ditch at Edilpur village in Sadullapur upazila yesterday. The victim was Jobeyer Mia, 6, son of Anwarul Mia of the village. He went missing on August 7.

### 300 Pabna girls say no to early marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna  
Around 300 girl students of Bhangura BL Bari School and College vowed to resist early marriage and dowry at a meeting at the school on Wednesday.  
Girls from Betuan, BL Bari and Koidanag villages attended the meeting arranged by Betuan Polli Samaj, a community organisation of BRAC, to generate awareness against early marriage.  
The meeting was chaired by Nilufar Yeasmin, president of Betuan Polli Samaj. "Most of the girl students do not complete their education due to early marriage, which takes place because of the parents' unawareness and poverty," said Md Saidul Islam, principal of BL Bari School and College.  
As the practice could not be stopped in the area, Betuan Polli Shomaj started campaign in the school against early marriage, said Goutam Chandra Shing, coordinator of the programme.  
Around 10 to 12 girl students drop out every year because of early marriage, but the continuous programme for creating awareness among the girl students reduced the number of early marriage.  
Ashok Kumar Ghosh, chairman of Dilpashra Union Parishad, and Saidul Islam, principal of the institution, conducted the oath-taking programme.  
"We will not get married before we are 18 years old, and we will not stop our academic life before completing Higher Secondary Certificate," the students vowed.

## Cuchia, rise of a new hope

SHYKH SERAJ  
Even though, this fish looks like a snake, in reality it's not a snake. Neither has it had any feature of a snake. In many countries, cuchia (eel) has great demand as a tasty fish. But, I must remind my readers, it's not an electric eel as well.  
The scientific name of this fish is Monopterus cuchia. The government has already undertaken a project, under which experimental farming of cuchia and crab is going on in 29 districts. The cost of the project is estimated to be Tk 36.24 crore.  
Generally people residing in coastal areas and the indigenous people, farm cuchia and crab locally at a small level. The Department of Fisheries is training these interested farmers. The project started during February, 2015, which is supposed to end in 2018. Small ethnic groups are getting priority in this project of cuchia and crab cultivation.  
Dr Durin Akhtar Jahan, director of the project's research team, is specially working with the nature, characteristics and food habit of the local cuchia.  
"What stage is your research in right now?" I asked Dr Durin.  
"We have been successful in small production," she replied.

"We provided them fish pest as feed and different types of feed and we're glad they've accepted it," added Dr Durin.  
At least 20% of fish pest has to be used in the main feed, or else cuchias won't take it. And, Dr Durin and other researchers are trying to make this fish more domestic.  
Cuchia always loves to be deep inside mud. It is in no way dangerous. It doesn't have any spike on it and there is no chance of it biting anyone as well.  
It is difficult to harvest them. The indigenous people have adopted

special skills though. However, it's really difficult to do it commercially following the traditional methods.  
"We covered the whole pond with rexin. Over that we have poured soil up to two feet. We also used compost. Then we were able to breed cuchia," said Dr Durin. She believes this method is great for commercial breeding.  
They are also preserving fingerlings in the hatchery. In one and a half year time of the project, already seven thousand fingerlings have been produced.  
Since it's an omnivorous fish,

they eat their fresh eggs too. That's why their breeding and reproduction is a little tough. That's why you won't be able to tell exactly how many young eels will you get. This can only be possible via artificial insemination.  
In the primary stage there will be less fertilization. Then, the hatching rate will also decrease. Then, there is also the question of the survival rate.  
"Apparently, from fifteen female eels, we got 800," said Dr Durin.  
"It's not much right," I asked.  
"No. They can lay 300 to 1200 eggs. But, we're looking forward to a



Shykh Seraj is a Media and Agriculture Development Activist. He is an Ashoka Fellow and recipient of Ekushey Padak, FAO A.H. Boerma Award and many other prestigious accolades. At Channel i, he is Director and Head of News. He is also Director and Host of the popular agro-documentary, "Hridoye Mati O Manush".

### Missing expat, relative found in hospitals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia  
Relatives have at last found the Malaysia expatriate and his relative who went missing after starting from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka for their home in Meherpur district on Sunday morning.  
Motiur Rahman, a returnee from Malaysia, was found at Al Markajul Al Islam Hospital at Kalyanpur in Dhaka and his companion Ayub Ali at Ashu Clinic at Nabinagar in Savar on Tuesday night and yesterday morning.  
"Motiur landed in Dhaka airport from Malaysia at about 5:00am on Sunday. I sent my younger brother Ayub Ali to receive him and bring to Meherpur," said Motiur's father-in-law Babul Hossain.  
"At about 6:30am, Ayub told me over mobile that they had started on a hired microbus for Meherpur. Afterwards, Ayub's mobile was found switched off.  
"The micro driver with the help of his cohorts doped Motiur and Ayub, making them unconscious. They looted everything from them and left them in separate places," Babul, now in Dhaka, said yesterday.

### Settlers observe hartal in CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati  
A day-long hartal in three hill districts called by the Bangalee settlers demanding cancellation of Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (amended) Act-2016 was observed peacefully yesterday in Rangamati.  
Five separate organisations, Parbatya Nagorik Parishad, Somo Odhikar Andolan, Parbatya Gono Parishad, Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad and Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Oikya Parishad, jointly observed the hartal in Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban districts.  
Leaders of the organisations said Bangalee settlers living in different areas of the three hill districts will be deprived of their land rights and will become refugees once again if the government forms the land commission in such a way.  
The 12-hour hartal started at 6:00am and was observed without any untoward incident.  
Roads and waterways communication between Chittagong and 10 upazilas of Rangamati remains suspended during the hartal hours.  
Besides, shops and other businesses in Banarupa, College Gate, Vedvedi and Tabalchhari areas in Rangamati town also remained closed.  
Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Rashid of Rangamati Sadar Police Station said additional police have been deployed in the area to avert any untoward incident during the hartal hours.  
Mohammad Ibrahim, president of Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad's Rangamati unit, said they will go for a tougher movement if the government failed to take any immediate steps in this regards.  
Meanwhile, Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad through a press release yesterday extended the hartal till 6:00pm today.  
The approval of the draft Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (amendment) Act, 2016 came at the weekly cabinet meeting at the Secretariat on August 1.  
The move came as part of the government's efforts to resolve the longstanding land dispute problems at Chittagong Hill Tracts. It will be brought into effect through an ordinance.

### 'Peace' school shut in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar  
Police have shut down a school that bears the name 'Peace' in Moulvibazar's Borolekha upazila.  
Running for nearly one-and-a-half years, Borolekha International Peace School is not a branch of the Peace schools ordered shut by the government, authorities claim.  
During a visit to the area yesterday, this correspondent found the school shut in Ghulsha village shut.  
The school has four teachers and over 40 students in different classes from playgroup to Class V.  
Borolekha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Moniruzzaman visited the school and closed it down in line with the existing embargo on Peace schools.  
The school does not have any affiliation with Peace school, claimed Ahmed Mortuza, principal of the school. "We chose the name because it sounds good."  
Upazila education officer Arabinda Karmokar said the school does not have registration.  
The school was shut down in line with the closure order on Peace schools, said the OC.

## Country's largest seed firm to be powered by straw-based electricity

Sohrab Hossain, Patuakhali

Work for a straw-based bio-gas cum power plant, first of its kind in the country, is going on in full swing to produce 500 cubic metres of bio-gas and 80 KW (kilowatt) of electricity for the country's biggest seed firm at Bashbaria in Dashmina upazila under the district.  
Good quantities of organic fertiliser will also be produced under the project.  
Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) set up the country's largest seed firm on 1044 acres of land at Bashbaria in



A view of straw-based bio-gas cum power plant, the first of its kind in the country, at Bashbaria in Dashmina upazila under Patuakhali district. PHOTO: STAR

The plant will produce 500 cubic metres of bio-gas and 80 KW of electricity for the Dashmina seed firm

Dashmina upazila at a cost of Tk 245 crore to produce hybrid seeds of different crops.  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the firm on March 19 in 2013.  
To meet power demand of the project, a bio-gas plant was set up in

the project site and Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory, a subsidiary business concern of the Bangladesh Army, engaged in the Tk 8.49 crore project to implement the bio-gas cum power plant on December 27 in 2014.  
With the help of China company Bosima, the factory has already set up different establishments and plant machines on 40,804 square feet area to generate 80 KW of electricity from bio-gas, said Md Tasir Hishmee, an official of the project.  
At first straw is put into the processing unit to produce gas that would be stored into two separate gas-chambers, said Bishwajit Sikder, deputy assistant engineer of the project.  
"With this bio-gas two electric generators will be run to produce 80 KW of electricity that would meet power demands of the firm. One and a half tonnes of straw will be needed daily in the plant.  
"Organic fertiliser will be produced from used straw in the project and this fertiliser will be used in the firm's land to produce crop," he said.  
Md Alamgir Mia, project director of the seed firm, said it is the first straw-based bio-gas cum power plant in the country.  
A technical team from China will visit the firm soon and then the project will be opened, he said.