

## Mother to die for killing daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dimajpur

A Rangpur court yesterday handed death sentence to a woman for killing her 1-year-old daughter in Gangachara upazila of the district in 2004.

The woman is Rahela Khatun, 32, wife of Lablu Mia of Mohipur-Purbapara in Rangpur.

District and Sessions Judge's Court-2 of Abu Zafar Md Quamruzzaman handed down the verdict in a crowded court room in presence of the convict.

According to the prosecution, the woman strangled her 1-year-old daughter Lucky to death on September 12, 2004, at her parental home in Joypurhat-Sarkerpara, and dumped the body in a nearby pond.

Next day, locals found the girl's body floating in the pond and informed the police, who recovered it.



CLCKWISE FROM LEFT: The mighty Padma erodes areas at Alatali Sarkarpara in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila on Monday, an affected family shift the disjoined parts of their house to a safer place the same day, and Char Kharibari Madhya Primary School in Dimla upazila under Nilphamari gets devoured by a channel of the Teesta yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

## Newlywed murdered after rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A newlywed college girl was murdered allegedly after rape at her husband's rented house in Manikganj municipality.

The deceased was Supria Saha Priya, 20, daughter of Sukumar Saha of Purbo Dashora in the municipality, and a second year honours student of Government Devendra College.

Priya lived at the house of in-laws while her husband Dipanjan Sarkar, 25, son of Dilip Sarkar, is studying at Northern University in Dhaka.

Priya married Dipanjan on August 7, said family members.

Masud Munshi, sub-inspector of Manikganj Police Station, said they recovered Priya's naked body from the house yesterday morning.

# Padma devours vast areas

40 Chapainawabganj families take shelter in no-man's land, Teesta in Nilphamari and Dharla in Lalmonirhat take serious turn

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Over 40 families in Sadar upazila of the district, who lost their homes due to erosion by the Padma river, are living in no man's land, Bangladesh's border with India, close to the river.

Their village, Paschim Kodalkati in Alatali union, is virtually isolated from the district headquarters by the Padma river in the absence of road links.

Abdur Razzak, 42, said the Padma has come dangerously close to his house in the last one month. The family shifted their belongings to a nearby house, but after a few days they realised that it wouldn't survive the angry waves. They decided to go to no-man's land.

Now he, his wife, three sons and two daughters are living there with other families. He has built a makeshift house there as the river has swept away their house and farmlands, he added.

Durul Hoda, 50, said he lost his house four times and shifted this year to no-man's land.

Like them, Abul Kashem, 60, Ujelefa Begum, 60, Nurjahan Begum, 55, are living in no-man's land due to river erosion.

Residents of Alatali village said 150 houses, farmlands, bamboo clusters, and mango orchards were devoured by the Padma in the last two months. People are shifting their houses from risky places to safer ones as the river is washing away fresh areas every day.

Kodalkati, Paschim Kodalkati, Sarkar Para, Amin Para, Adarsha Gram and Koia Para are facing the threat of erosion by the river.

"Severe erosion by the river has recently forced us to move from our house. As I do not have any land, I took shelter at no-man's land and made a tin-shed there," Nur Mohammad, 50, said.

Alatali Union Parishad Kamrul

Hasan Chairman said they have requested the upazila nirbahi officer to take steps immediately to protect thousands of people, huge properties, including vast tracts of croplands and a large number of establishments, from erosion.

Union parishad member Mohammad Alauddin said over 500 houses were washed away by the Padma during the last two years.

Executive Engineer of Chapainawabganj Water Development Board (WDB) Syed Shahidul Alam said he was not aware of erosion by the river.

Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj Jahidul Islam said he would take an initiative to make homes for the homeless people of Alatali under Asroy project.

Meanwhile, our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports that erosion by the river Dharla has turned serious at eight villages in the district as the river

has been devouring homesteads, croplands, orchards and infrastructures during the last few days.

The erosion-hit villages are Baparitari, Etapota, Kurul and Bowalmari in Mogholhat union, and Shiberkuti, Char Kulaghat, Dakkhin Shiberkuti and Wapdapar in Kulaghat union under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Sub-Divisional Engineer of WDB Al Mamun said it is not possible to do protection work now as the Dharla is devouring vast areas at the same time. The work would be done during the dry season, he added.

Our Nilphamari correspondent reports that erosion by Teesta river has taken a serious turn at Char Kharibari village in Dimla upazila as the violent onrush of water through a new channel of the river has devoured a 60-foot long and 19-foot wide portion of Char Kharibari Madhya Government

## Introduce mother tongue-based edn

Indigenous leaders urge govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Indigenous leaders and civil society members at a meeting in Kulaura upazila town of the district yesterday urged the government to introduce mother tongue-based primary education for all indigenous children.

Imparting lessons in mother tongue will make schooling more enjoyable and help to lessen dropout rates of indigenous students, speakers said at the meeting titled "Orientation on Mother Language-based Education".

Sylhet regional office of Caritas organised the meeting. "Mother tongue-based primary education should be introduced for indigenous children to encourage them to go to school and learn well," Pius Nanuar, regional manager of Aloghar project, said as main speaker at the programme.

"We are working to ensure quality education, increasing children's ability to learn, making them well aware about their own culture, ending child repression, child marriage as well as child labour," said Bably Talang, general secretary of KUBORAZ Inter Punjee Development Association of Khasi people, attending as special guest.

Sharif ul Islam, primary education officer of Kulaura upazila, attended the programme as chief guest while Azizul Islam, president of Kulaura Press Club, Kolyan Prosun Chompu, Juri correspondent of the daily Prothom Alo, Orijen Khonglah, officer in charge of Indigenous People's Development Services, spoke.



PICTURE TELLS THE TALE: The main road at Balijuri Bazar in Madarganj upazila headquarters under Jamalpur hardly gives the impression of a thoroughfare as a seasonal jute market virtually occupies the place. The photo was taken a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

# Jute market on road

The makeshift market causes immense suffering to Jamalpur students, office goers and farmers

ABM AMINUL ISLAM, Jamalpur

A makeshift jute market occupies Jamalpur-Madarganj road at Balijuri Bazar in Madarganj upazila two days a week, causing nuisance for a large number of people including students, office goers and farmers.

During weekly market days on Saturday and Wednesday, the market sees serious rush, leaving very little space for commuters and pedestrians due to presence of a large number of buyers and sellers and jute-laden four wheelers and horse carriages used by them.

The market continues from 7:00am to noon.

The situation prevails for about four months from Shrawan to Kartik (mid-August to mid-November) every year, often causing a half kilometre-long traffic congestion on the road for long, said traders at Balijuri Bazar.

There are several educational institutions, banks, government and non-government offices and a good number of permanent business set-ups in Balijuri Bazar and adjoining areas and the people concerned suffer much due to the situation, said locals.

Students, taking longer time to cross the jam-packed road, sometimes fail to attend their classes on time, said Md Rafiqul Islam, assistant professor of Nurunnahar Mirza Kasem Girls' College in the area.

The buyers often stack their purchased jute on the roadside while farmers, who take their produce by carriages to the road for sale, have to stay in the crowded market for long. Tired of waiting for long, they have to sell the item at lower than usual prices, said several local jute growers who came to the market to sell the produce.

During a visit to the market on Saturday morning, this correspondent saw huge rush and traffic jam on the road amid presence of jute-laden

carriages brought by sellers and buyers.

"Often we sell jute at lower prices as there is not smooth environment and enough time to bargain with the buyers," said farmer Shahjahan Mandol, 60.

Several others including Alam Sardar, 55, and Ziaul Haque, 45, echoed the same.

Many traders, who have regular shops on both sides of the road, alleged that they cannot run their business well as customers hardly visit their shops during the rush hours.

The local administration should take immediate steps to shift the jute market to any suitable place to ensure smooth movement for the commuters through the road and create a congenial atmosphere for the sale of the agro-product for fair prices, said stakeholders.

Mohammad Kamruzzaman, upazila nirbahi officer of Madarganj, said he would discuss the issue with local stakeholders and shift the jute market to a suitable place as soon as possible.

## Idol vandalised at temple in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Criminals vandalised an idol of Durga in a temple near Futermati village under Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj yesterday.

Police have arrested two people in this connection, said Officer-in-Charge Abdul Baten of Nabiganj Police Station.

Locals said devotees saw that the idol was damaged when they went to the temple for worship in the morning.

Local union parishad Chairman Ali Ahmed visited the spot immediately after the incident. He demanded arrest of the culprits.

## 20 injured as Kushtia AL, JSD men clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between the activists of ruling Awami League (AL) and its ally Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) in Mirpur upazila of the district on Tuesday.

Police and locals said supporters of local AL activist Shahidul Islam Jhantu and JSD activist Millat Hossain Raja engaged in an altercation over their alliance at Miton village around 7:30pm.

At one stage, the men of both parties equipped with firearms clashed, leaving at least 20 people from both sides injured. AL men also ransacked the house of JSD activist Raja during the incident.

The injured were rushed to different hospitals and clinics.

# Night schools joy for elderly farmers

One man's mission to battle illiteracy in Jhenidah

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Kazi Imdadul Haque, 43, a graduate from Daulatpur village in Kola union of Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila has set himself a sizeable challenge. He plans, single-handedly, to eradicate illiteracy among the elderly men of the 22 villages of Kola union within seven years. Having completed twelve impromptu night school programmes in various villages, the journey to reach his goal has already begun.

"After a day's work we go to the centre with our books and equipment," says Daulatpur farmer Fazlur Rahman, 50. "It is so pleasurable to be able to rid ourselves of illiteracy at an elderly age. Imdad is doing great work for us. We are proud of him."

"We are lucky to be gaining literacy," agrees Nagen Chandra Das, 65, of Kamalhat village. "Finally we can read and write. We won't need to use our thumbprint on any document in future. It's no problem to sign it!"

Farmer Nausher Ali, 45, also a student of Imdad's from Daulatpur, told The Daily Star

newfound literacy can only lead to success. "It's a matter of joy," he says, "We are so happy to have such an opportunity."

According to the headmaster of Kola secondary school Bijoy Kumar Biswas, Imdad's work has made him a friend of all the union's farmers. "He is doing his best to remove illiteracy from the union," Biswas says. "His efforts are so innovative."

The idea of battling illiteracy among the elderly men of Kola union first occurred to Imdad after his return to Daulatpur in 1999. He had been working for three years at Modern Pharmaceuticals, but due to family issues he was forced to resign.

Blessed with 8 bighas of land to rent out to local farmers, and finding an income in breeding earthworms to produce vermicompost fertiliser, upon his return to the village Imdad was able to maintain the daily expenses of his family relatively easily.

Currently, he produces 15 maunds of compost per month, which he sells for Tk 10 per kilogram.

This relative financial independence left him with lots of time on his hands. He wondered how to fill so many free hours. It was then that he decided to strike a blow against illiteracy.

In 2008 Imdad made his first effort. He established a night school in Daulatpur attended by 52 small-scale farmers. The goal of teaching them basic literacy and numeracy was soon reached, but again for family reasons Imdad found he could not continue.

But in 2014, when Imdad was once more able to pursue his personal mission, efforts recommenced in earnest. On the first day of one of his three-month night schools, he helps the students acquire books, chalk and slate. He also provides earthworms free of cost, Imdad told The Daily Star, so that his learners can have a basic income while concentrating on their studies. "About 60% of the men in Kola are illiterate," he says. "Making them self-reliant with vermiculture is a part of achieving full literacy among them by 2021."

After each day's tiring manual labour, the farmers arrive for class after Magrib prayer. They study while sitting on a mat. For them the experience is also a social one, with chatting to neighbours a part of the enjoyment of class. Besides, Imdad takes the opportunity to impart knowledge of sanitation and basic hygiene; and to promote an ethos of honesty.

"Imdad is a role model in our area," says Kola union's chairman Ayub Hossain. "He gives elementary knowledge to local farmers and hopes to alleviate their illiteracy within seven years."

"His is undoubtedly a noble task," agrees secondary education officer Md Arif Hossain from Kaliganj. "Such sincere social work is a must for our society and we should



Kazi Imdadul Haque takes class at a night school in Kaliganj upazila under Jhenidah

PHOTO: STAR