

## Elderly man murdered

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur**

An elderly man was found murdered with his throat slit at Nayapara village in Bakshiganj upazila of the district yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Rahim Uddin, 60, son of Abdur Rahman of the village. He might have been killed as a sequel to long-standing feud with his neighbour Sada Miah, 65, over 10 decimals of disputed land in the area, said Mohabbat Kabir, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Bakshiganj Police Station. A case filed over the land is still pending with a court in Jamalpur, said the OC. Locals found the throat-slitted body of Rahim inside a makeshift house on a piece of land owned by Sada Miah around 9:00am, he said. Being informed, the law enforcers rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Jamalpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the police official.



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Atul Chandra Roy holding up bottle gourds that he cultivated without using chemicals at Dakkhin Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila; *pui shak* fills a field in Satnala village under Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur; workers in Kamlabari village under Aditmari upazila packing radish to send to different places of the country.



PHOTO: STAR

## Liakat's hobby

*He collected coins, paper notes of 170 states*

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj**



Liakat Ali, 60, of Porra village in Manikganj Municipality has collected more than three thousand historical metal coins and paper currency of 170 countries. He has also collected tickets of lotteries approved by the government of Bangladesh during the last 44 years. Liakat said he was owner of a grocery and his three sons looked after the business. The collection was his life, he said, adding that he never leaves the house for fear that the coins would get stolen. Liakat told this correspondent that he had a dream of traveling around the world, but he could not due to financial problem, adding that he learns about the world by collecting the coins and notes of different countries. Collection of the metal coins and paper notes has become an addiction for him, and family members made fun of him for that. He travelled to different areas of the country to collect the coins and notes, spending a lot of money, Liakat said, adding that he bought a copper coin of one paisa for Tk 1,000. "I had kept my hobby of collecting coins and notes secret for a long time, but my relatives, friends and well-wishers found out about it. I got many coins and notes from them. They collected these for me from home and abroad," he said. He has a dream of collecting coins and notes of all the countries of the world and showing them in an exhibition to the new generation, he said, adding that he hoped his dream will be fulfilled within one or two years.

## SALAM KHAN MURDER Four accused sent to jail

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi**

A Jhalakathi court yesterday sent four accused in freedom fighter Abdus Salam Khan murder case to jail, rejecting their bail prayer. The accused include Shah Alam, president of Ward-6 of Awami Jubo League in Saturaia union of Rajapur upazila, and Mostafizur Rahman Bachchu, a member of the union parishad. Rubya Amin, senior judicial magistrate of the district court, passed the order when they appeared before the court, said Public Prosecutor Abdul Mannan Rasul. On November 14, the 65-year-old FF was allegedly beaten up by Shah Alam and then again by Bachchu. Later, he died at his house due to the torture.

# High demand for chemical-free bottle gourd in Lalmonirhat

*Youth sets example in Sadar UZ, winter vegetables are boon for Dinajpur growers*

**STAR COUNTRY DESK**

Chemical-free farming of vegetables is gaining popularity and radish is bringing high profit to the growers in Lalmonirhat while cultivating winter vegetables has become a boon for the growers in Dinajpur. Farmer Atul Chandra Roy, 32, of Dakkhin Durakuti village in Mogholhat union under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila has set an example by farming chemical-free bottle gourd for the last few years. Atul said he uses organic fertiliser and vermicompost instead of chemical fertiliser, and neem leaf instead of pesticide, adding that they get 20 percent less production but earn 40 to 50 percent more profit from selling chemical-free vegetables. Last year, Atul earned Tk 1.42 lakh from selling chemical-free bottle gourd from three bighas of land, spending Tk 70,000. He has cultivated the vegetable on five bighas spending Tk 1.2 lakh this year, and earned Tk 78,000 till Sunday. "Many local farmers are learning how to grow chemical-free bottle gourd from me," he added. Hashem Ali, 55, a schoolteacher, said he buys chemical-free vegetables at high price from the field instead of purchasing vegetables at low price

from the market. Nazrul Islam, 45, a vegetable trader at Durakuti Bazar, said bottle gourd costs Tk 12 to Tk 15 per piece while chemical-free bottle gourd costs Tk 20 to Tk 25 per piece. District Marketing Officer Abdur Rahim said chemical-free bottle gourd and other vegetables are sold at high rates due to high demand. Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila Agriculture Officer Enamul Haque said the number of farmers growing chemical-free bottle gourd is low, but will increase as they start earning high profit. Farmers in the district are very happy at getting good profit this year as middlemen are purchasing the produce at high rate. Middlemen are also earning good profit from selling radish in the wholesale markets in different districts. Around 45 to 50 trucks with 10 to 12 tonnes of radish on each truck go to different parts of the country every day, middlemen said. Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials said radish was cultivated on 3,500 acres of land in different villages this year, while it was 5,000 acres last year. Deputy Director of DAE in Lalmonirhat Bidubhuson Roy said farmers can save produc-

tion cost by not using chemical fertilisers and pesticides in their vegetable fields. In Dinajpur, winter vegetable farming is a boon for the farmers in Chirirbandar upazila as they are getting good profit for their produce compared to other seasonal crops, reports our correspondent. Rafiqul Islam of Ishabpur village said he cultivated coriander leaf on one decimal of land and red spinach on one and a half decimals, and sold the coriander leaf for Tk 200 per kg. Firoz Shah of Ranirbandar area said he is growing bottle gourd on his one bigha of land this year instead of paddy, and has already sold nearly 200 of them. Md Mukul Mia of Satnala village said he incurred losses from paddy farming for the last two seasons, so he cultivated various vegetables on his one acre of land this year. "I have got back what I spent for preparing the land by selling half of my produce," he added. Wholesaler Zakir Hossain of Ranirbandar village said 15 to 20 trucks with different vegetables leave for other districts every day. Chirirbandar Upazila Agriculture Officer Mahmudul Hasan said the land in the upazila is favourable for farming winter vegetables.



**More than three thousand historical metal coins and paper currency of 170 countries collected by Liakat Ali of Porra village in Manikganj municipality.**

PHOTO: STAR

# Santals demand return of land, not rehabilitation

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha**

A team from Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul committee led by its adviser Justice Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik yesterday visited Santal villages Madarpur and Joypurpara and talked to the families affected due to their eviction from Shahebganj sugarcane farm area in the district. A report will be prepared on the basis of the affected people's statement for submitting to the Prime Minister's Office and other offices concerned, Justice Shamsuddin said. At a public hearing in front of Madarpur church on the issue, the committee members recorded statements of five affected Santal people as witnesses. In 1962 government acquired 1842 acres of lands for cultivation of sugarcane to run Rangpur Sugar Mills but the mill authority later

stopped sugarcane cultivation there and illegally leased it to some influential local people, the witnesses said. The lease holders started cultivation of different crops and dug 12 ponds on the land for fish cultivation. Backed by the local lawmaker, Shakil Ahmed Bulbul, chairman of Sapmara union parishad (UP), Rezaul Karim Rafique, chairman of Katabari UP, and a few local leaders organised the Santal community on the issue of returning their forefather's landed property, the witnesses said. The local leaders also helped the Santals to erect sheds on July 1 and realised several lakh taka as donation from the ethnic community for helping to get back their land. But betraying the Santal community, they later started cooperating with the police and local administration to evict the Santal families, said the witnesses.

On November 6, police launched an eviction drive that led to killing of two Santal men and serious injuries to several others. The witnesses alleged that their houses were looted and burnt during the eviction. They demanded return of their forefathers' land as per land record of 1940. After the public hearing, local Santals brought out a demonstration demanding rehabilitation of evicted Santal families on the farm's land, compensation for arson and looting during the eviction, and justice of killing Santal men. Visiting the croplands of Shahebganj sugarcane farm, where the Santal community earlier planted aman seedlings, the deputy commissioner of Gaibandha and mill officials yesterday decided to start harvesting the paddy today to distribute it among the Santals, as per a directive from the High Court.

## Ashuganj factory resumes production

**A CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria**

Ashuganj Fertiliser Factory at Brahmanbaria resumed production of urea fertilizer yesterday after being closed for seven months due to stoppage of gas supply. Authorities said the factory incurred a loss of around Tk 2.5 crore every day as 1,400 tonnes of fertilizer could not be produced. The government stopped gas supply to all fertilizer factories simultaneously on April 4 this year, and used the power plants to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply in the irrigation season. Forty-eight to 52 mmcf of gas is required every day to run the factory. Supply of gas to Ashuganj Fertiliser Factory resumed on October 6 after a six-month stoppage. As production had remained stopped for a long time parts of different units became faulty. The factory started production yesterday after repair of those parts, General Manager (Production) Omar Khayyam said. As the factory has adequate stock of fertilizer, there was no crisis and supply of fertilizer was normal, he added.

## Six teachers expelled

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail**

Six assistant teachers were expelled for their alleged negligence in duties at the examination hall during Primary Terminal Examinations in Gopalpur upazila of the district yesterday. UNO Masumur Rahman and Upazila Education Officer Anjuman Ara Bithi took the action against the teachers who were performing their duties at Suti VM Government Primary School centre during the exam. The expelled teachers include Solaiman Miah of Chatila Government Primary School, Proddip Kumar Ghosh of Ramnagar Government Primary School and Abu Hanif of Sujanbari Government Primary School.

## Top soil cutting rampant

**A CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari**

The top soil of cultivable land is being dug up illegally and sent to brick fields by a syndicate in the district, resulting in reduction of fertile land. Farmlands are dug up in broad daylight at Banpara of Tegorchora area in Sadar upazila, and the earth is sent to the brick fields on trucks and tractors. This correspondent went to the area on Sunday and saw excavators digging up paddy land near Banpara. They dig three to five feet deep in some places and 15 feet to 20 feet deep in others. Villagers said they tried to stop the digging, but the people of the syndicate did not listen to them. Brick field owner Md Mostafa said they dig the land after taking permission of the land owner. Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Wahiduzzaman said top soil cutting is illegal, and he has ordered upazila nirbahi officers and magistrates to play an active role in stopping it.



**The men of brick field owners use excavators in digging soil from paddy field in Thakurchhara area under Khagrachhari Sadar upazila on Sunday.**

PHOTO: STAR