

# 'Negligence' costs patient's life

Relatives vandalise Panchagarh hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A doctor's alleged negligence has resulted in the death of a 58-year-old patient.

Following his death, angry relatives of the victim went on a rampage at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Abdus Sattar of Islambag in Panchagarh municipality.

Sattar was brought to the hospital in the evening after he complained of severe chest pain, said his son Anwar Hossain.

Considering his worsening condition, staff of emergency department made a phone call to only cardiologist of the hospital Dr Mosharraf Hossain.

But the doctor asked the staff to bring him to Northern Diagnostic Centre in the town where he saw patients but the patient's attendants did not agree to take him there.

After half an hour, the doctor came to the hospital as a local public representative called him.

The patient died before the doctor reached the hospital, which angered his relatives. Later, local people including relatives of the deceased vandalised doors and window-panes of the hospital.

Contacted, Dr Mosharraf admitted that he had asked the relatives of the patients to take him to a nearby diagnostic center.

As they refused to come to the diagnostic centre, the patient died, he said.

Civil Surgeon Dr Pitambar Roy said a hospital's doctor can be called to visit patient in an emergency.

"We are looking into the matter," he said.



A man assisting his children in planting a tree sapling as part of Green Trishal initiative at Kalir Bazar village recently. The file photo, inset, shows people gathered on Trishal's Nazrul Academy premises during the inauguration of the programme that began in April last year. PHOTO: STAR

# BSF picks up boy from C'nawabganj border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up a teenage boy from Azmatpur frontier in Shibganj upazila of the district early yesterday.

The detainee is Mohammad Tutul, 15, son of Sadekul Islam of Bagichapara village in the upazila, said sources at Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

BSF men detained Tutul around 12:30am when he was entering the border area illegally, it said.

SM Abul Ehsan, commanding officer of BCB 9 Battalion, said Tutul was going to India for collecting smuggled goods.

# NATORE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE Corruption found in distribution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Irregularities in distribution of old age allowance and widow allowance were found by a probe committee formed by the Natore Sadar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

The three-member committee, headed by upazila Social Welfare Officer Afaz Uddin, found that some UP members and village policemen had withdrawn the money of deceased old age allowance holders with the help of some social welfare officials.

"UP member Piyara Begum had withdrawn the money of deceased old age allowance holder Nekjan Begum and village policeman Harun-ur-Rashid took Tk 500 to Tk 1,500 from some people for giving them old age and widow allowance," Afaz Uddin said.

"Alal Sheikh, son of Haidar Ali, Moyna Begum, wife of late Amir Khan of Baliadanga, Ahad Ali, son of Faye Uddin of Chandrakola, and Babar Ali of Rayerbag got old age allowance cards before reaching 65 years," he added.

"We submitted the probe report to the upazila administration last month that was forwarded to the district administration," Afaz said.

Deputy Commissioner Shahina Khatun said she had received the report, adding that another committee headed by an additional director of the social welfare department has been formed.

"Action will be taken after getting their probe report," she added.

Durniti Protirodh Committee Natore district unit president Principal Abdur Razzaque said stern action must be taken immediately as the corruption has already been proved.

# Trishal getting greener

MD AMINUL ISLAM with ANDREW EAGLE

In Mymensingh's Trishal upazila it seems everybody's favourite colour is green. A tree-planting initiative has garnered broad local support and with its success arise hopes it can serve as a model for other parts of the country.

Under the Green Trishal initiative led by Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abu Jafar Ripon, which began last year, three lakh saplings have been distributed to the 290 primary to college level educational institutions in the upazila's twelve unions. The approximately 11,000 students involved were asked to plant and nurture the trees: a task they have embraced as readily as a duck takes to water.

"I was given four saplings," says Farhana Yeasmin, a class-ten student of Islami Academy in Trishal. "I'm nursing them with care. I'm really happy to be taking part."

"We are impressed with the children's excitement in tending their plants," says Abul Hossain, father of class-seven student Aqib Faysal from the same academy. "We are doing what we can to support them in ensuring the trees prosper."

After consultation with school and college administrators and relying on finances from the local government support fund, the environment programme was inaugurated last April, with 20,000 students initially involved. The initiative was expanded, with trees, including of timber, fruit and medicinal species, provided to all schools and colleges.

Uniquely, self-styled "What about your tree?" health cards have also been distributed, requiring students to report back on the latest condition of their saplings.

"The use of health cards is a first for the country," says Ripon, understandably proud of the programme. "We are getting monthly reports to indicate around ninety percent of the trees are growing well." An upazila administration team has been assigned to monitor progress.

The upazila administration also plans to award students for the best tree-nurturing results.

It is not the first time that Trishal's innovative upazila nirbahi officer has engaged in promoting the environment. "When I was posted in Netrakona's Barhatta I also ran tree plantation and cleanliness drives," he says, "to make the upazila a better place to live."

In recognition of the accompanying use of social media to foster support for the programme Ripon has been named best upazila nirbahi officer nationally by the Prime Minister's Office in the social media category. He was also awarded for innovation by the divisional innovation circle on 19 November last year and similarly the following month by the Department of Agriculture Extension.

"We have received a lot of inquiries about the programme from interested organisations, both government and non-government," says Ripon. "Many are thinking to implement similar schemes in their areas."

Perhaps most importantly, the Green Trishal programme has worked to engender in the students a sense of responsibility for the environment. "By planting trees right from childhood," opines Ripon, "our children can develop an awareness of the need to care for the environment in order to enrich it with greenery and ultimately provide protection from natural disasters as well."



Villagers captured this binturong, also known as bearcat, in Brahmanagaon village in Tahirpur upazila of Sunamganj on Monday. Officials of Dalaichhari Forest Range later rescued the rare species of mammal which is closely related to the palm civets of Asia. Divisional forest officer in Sylhet said after examining and treating the five-foot long mammal, weighing 20 kilogram, at Sreemangal Wildlife Management and Protection Centre, it will be freed in Kamalganj's Adampur forest.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

# SCHOOLS IN NATORE SADAR Fees still condition for free textbooks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Authorities of different schools have continued taking money as fees including that for admission from the students during distribution of government-sponsored free textbooks.

Visiting Dighapatia PN High School yesterday morning, this correspondent found teachers taking Tk 520 to Tk 610 under different heads including session charge, sports fee and milad mahfil fee from students during the distribution of new textbooks.

Some other high schools also taking Tk 200 to Tk 300 as session charge from students during textbook distribution.

"I came to the school on Sunday and Monday for admission and also for the new textbooks. But, the teachers asked me to go back home and bring Tk 520," said Sabbir Kazi, a newly admitted Class IX student of Dighapatia PN School.

Kadeza Begum, mother of Sabbir Kazi, said, "My husband is a poor rickshaw-van puller and he failed to manage Tk 520. But my son was crying to get new books. So I took a loan from a neighbour and arranged his admission today [Tuesday]."

While visiting different schools like Sher-e-Bangla High School of Natore Sadar upazila and Saikona High School of Bagatipara upazila yesterday morning, this correspondent found the teachers taking Tk 200 to Tk 300 under different heads including session charge, sports fee and milad mahfil fee from students during the distribution of new textbooks.

Ali Akram, headmaster of Saikona High School, said, "We are taking Tk 300 as session fees."

Quazi Atiur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner (Education) of Natore, said, "We are investigating the matter. Action will be taken if anyone is found guilty of anomalies regarding distribution of free textbooks."

Sheikh Shah Alam, Natore Sadar upazila secondary education officer, said he asked a headmaster over mobile phone about the matter and the latter denied taking any money from the students during the book distribution.

# Nine-yr-old falls from tree, dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A nine-year-old boy, who sustained injuries after falling from a tree on Sunday, died at Medical College Hospital on Monday night.

The deceased, Rubayet Hossain, was son of Sohel Sheikh of Bhaberber village under Benapole Port Police Station.

Deceased's family members said Rubayet received critical injuries after slipped from a tree at their courtyard and fell to the ground around 12:30pm on Sunday.

He was rushed to Jessore Medical College Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment around 9:30pm.

# 3-day ijtema begins in Faridpur tomorrow

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

For the first time, a three-day ijtema is going to take place in Adampur area under Faridpur Sadar upazila from tomorrow.

About 70 acres of land have been prepared for the congregation of Muslims beside the Kumar river.

There is arrangement for around two lakh people at the ijtema ground, said organisers.

Four watchtowers, 40 CC cameras and a police control room have been installed to monitor the area.

Md Shani Chowdhury, an organiser, hoped that Faridpur deputy commissioner's office, police and Rab will assist them to hold the ijtema peacefully.

# Rakhine weavers busy Warm clothes on high demand in Kuakata

SOHRAB HOSSAIN with ANDREW EAGLE

When Kuakata's coast dons its foggy, winter cloak, tourists visiting from at home and abroad likewise search for extra clothing layers. They want to keep warm. Winter is a season that has Rakhine weavers and traders across Patuakhali and Barguna districts busy, trying to make the most of the increased, tourist-driven demand.

"Many tourists are buying warm clothes this season," says Mong Khey, a Rakhine weaver from Kuakata's Misrepara. "The winter demand is above and beyond normal sales; and it helps a lot since for some Rakhine families, handloom weaving is their sole income source."

Orders from local shopkeepers are increasing year after year, according to Khey. "Last year I produced about 300 clothing items for the winter season," she says. "This year I have already supplied around 500 different items."

"Wholesalers are our main buyers," explains another local weaver Mong Mong. "They buy woven goods direct from our houses. Tourists also favour our products and there are around one hundred different shops in the Kuakata area that sell them."

Shawls, mufflers, scarves and sweaters are particularly popular in winter, while saris, shirt cloth, Punjabis, lungis, sheets, gumchhas, towels, bags and neckties hold enduring appeal. Along with Kuakata, Rakhine textiles are also readily available in Taltali and Amtali areas of neighbouring Barguna district.

"Customers like the bright colours and stylish designs and patterns," says Usit Mong, a Rakhine resident of Agathaorepara in Barguna's Taltali upazila. "We use Myanmar cotton which is attractive and comfortable."

"I came to Kuakata with my family of four," says Jhenidah resident Md Rezaul Karim, "and we bought some warm clothes; and also saris, lungis and bed sheets because of their unique designs and patterns. Rakhine woven clothes are really comfortable to wear."

While traditional looms were once the standard, nowadays semi-automatic looms have radically changed the business, thanks to the local NGO Resource Development Foundation.



Two Rakhine women weaving a handloom shawl in Amkholapara of Kuakata area in Patuakhali. The picture was taken recently. PHOTO: STAR