

## 200kg cannabis destroyed in Tangail

Our Correspondent, Tangail

Around 200kg of cannabis seized on January 22 from a truck at the eastern end of Bangabandhu Bridge in the district were destroyed on Wednesday.

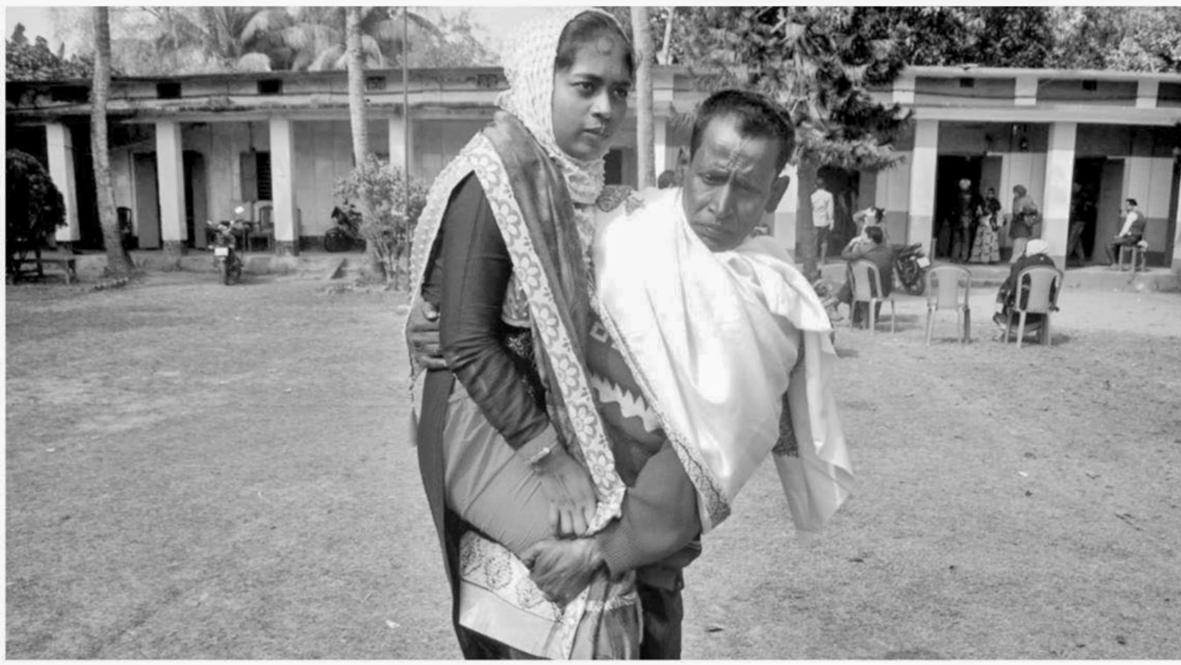
The illegal narcotics worth around Tk 20 lakh was burnt in front of the Judicial Magistrate's Court, Tangail, in the presence of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Hamidul Islam, said Court Inspector Anwarul Islam.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of police from Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station, led by Officer-in-Charge Asabur Rahman, seized the cannabis packed in 12 sacks from the truck bound for Bogra from Brahmanbaria.

The law enforcers arrested truck driver Milon Hossain Montu, 24, helper Rabiul Awal, 25, and the cannabis carrier Dolon Miah, 40.

The Tangail Judicial Magistrate's Court sent the three arrestees to jail on January 23 after the police produced them before the court, police said.

Earlier, police filed a case against the accused under the Narcotics Control Act.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SSC examinee physically challenged Naic Khatun is being carried by her father to Dhunat Pilot NU High School centre in Bogra; visually impaired Sumorani Toppo and Sufala Minzi answering with the help of dictation writers at Ramdeo Bajla High School centre in Joypurhat town; and Antara Galiba Sneha doing the same at Rangpur Zila School centre during the examinations yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## Poppy fields destroyed

Our Correspondent, Bandarban

Bangladesh Army in a drive destroyed two poppy fields in Ruma upazila of the district on Wednesday.

They also arrested two men -- Sing Prue Marma, 56, and U Thui Ching Marma, 25 -- of remote Basaddhopara in Ruma area.

They cut down the poppy plants and later burnt those, said Lieutenant KH Ashiqur Rahman of Bangladesh Army who led the drive.

A joint team of army, Border Guard Bangladesh and police in a drive destroyed 24 poppy fields in Panjhiri Bulupara, and Laikrejhiri areas under Sangu Reserve Forest adjacent to Myanmar border last year.

"Every year joint forces launch operations in remote Thanchi area to destroy poppy fields while it was the first time we found poppy fields in remote Ruma upazilla of the district," said Brigadier General Zubayer Salehin, commander of army in Bandarban.

People living in the border areas of Bangladesh, Myanmar and India have been cultivating poppy with the support of cross-border syndicates, as it brings higher profits than other crops grown on their hard-to-reach land, locals said.

## Police submit probe report to court

A Correspondent, Khagrachhari

Police submitted an inquiry report to the Khagrachhari Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday, accusing nine people who are involved in threatening journalists.

Thirty-six journalists of the district filed a general diary with Khagrachhari Police Station on December 20 last year.

The newsmen alleged that a gang led by Khagrachhari municipality Mayor Rafiqul Alam threatened them.

After investigation, Sub-Inspector Momen Uddin Chowdhury found involvement of nine people including Didarul Alam alias Kosai Didar, a man of the mayor, and his son.

## Schoolgirl raped in Pirojpur

Our Correspondent, Pirojpur

A seven-year-old schoolgirl was raped allegedly by a college boy at Goshkhathi village in Nazirpur upazila of the district on Tuesday.

The victim is a Class II student of a local primary school in the village.

The girl's father alleged that Amitab Sarkar, 19, an HSC first year student of Goshkhathi College, picked up his daughter when she was returning home from watching TV at a nearby house at night. He took her to a nearby bush and raped her.

After returning home, the girl fell sick and began to bleed. She was then admitted to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital.

The victim's father filed a case with Nazirpur Police Station yesterday, accusing Amitab.

Amitab went into hiding soon after the incident, Officer-in-Charge Md Habibur Rahman of the PS said, adding that they are raiding different areas to arrest the accused.

## Overcoming challenge thru' will power

They attend SSC exams, defying serious congenital problems

Star Country Desk

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations that started across the country yesterday witnessed quite a few examples of how one can defy physical challenges through will power, determination and hard work.

It was a touching sight as a physically challenged girl reached her examination centre at Dhunat NU Pilot High School in Bogra, being carried by her father, reports our Bogra correspondent.

The girl, Naic Khatun, 16, daughter of Nazrul Islam of Boyalgaca village under Choukibari union of Dhunat upazila, is an examinee from Boyalgachha High

School.

"Born with physical handicap, my daughter cannot stand well, let alone walk. And she writes with her left hand as her right hand is inactive. Usually we carry her to school. She achieved GPA-3.67 in JSC in 2014," said Nazrul, a poor farmer.

"Due to poverty, I could not arrange her treatment. Now I am struggling to educate her and her elder brother, an honours student in Government Azizul Haque College," he said.

He expressed hope that the government and NGOs would extend help for her treatment so that she can proceed towards fulfilling her dream with ease.

"I believe that where there is a will, there is way. And so, I am continuing my study, fighting with odds. I wrote well in the Bangla exam today," Naic said, adding that she wants to be a teacher in future.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Three girls with congenital visual impairment, one from Rangpur and two others from Joypurhat, are attending the ongoing SSC examinations with the help of dictation writers.

They are Antara Galiba Sneha, daughter of Sarker Rabul Hasan of Khalipapara village under Rangpur City Corporation area, and student of Radhaballab Girls' High School in Rangpur, and Sumorani Toppo and Sufala Minzi

of Khanzanpur area of Joypurhat town, and students of Khanzanpur Mission School in the area.

Sneha, 17, a student of humanities group, is attending her SSC examinations at Rangpur Zila School centre.

Her parents said their only child was born blind but she showed eagerness to study since her childhood. She secured GPA-3 in the JSC examinations, they said.

"My preparation for the examination is good. My parents helped me a lot to carry on my study up this stage. Besides, the help and inspiration of my schoolteachers is unforgettable," the girl said after yesterday's examination, adding that she wants to get higher educa-

tion. "My daughter wants to prove that visual impairment is not an obstacle to stand on her own feet," said the girl's mother Renuka Hasan.

Away in Joypurhat, visually impaired Sumorani Toppo and Sufala Minzi, both belonging to an ethnic community of Khanzanpur village in the district, are taking part in the SSC examinations at Ramdeo Bajla Government High School centre.

Both the girls said they did well in yesterday's examination.

"Despite visual impairment from birth, the two girls continued their study well. Sumorani Toppo secured GPA-5 and Sufala Minzi got GPA-4 in their JSC examina-

## Shortage of physicians in Kurigram Sadar Hospital

## Patients suffer for years

Our Correspondent, Kurigram

Shortage of physicians at the 250-bed Kurigram Sadar Hospital has been hampering proper treatment of patients for years.

In 2010, the then 100-bed hospital was upgraded to a 250-bed one but the number of physicians, nurses and employees has not increased accordingly.

Superintendent Dr ATM Anwarul Haque Pramanik said, "We have informed the higher authorities and the ministry about shortage of physicians and staff. There is shortage of manpower for even a 100-bed hospital, though it was declared as 250-bed hospital."

As per manpower structure of a 100-bed hospital, there are posts for 42 physicians including the superin-

tendent, 21 consultants, 20 medical officers, 90 second class employees including senior nurse, and 28 third class employees, hospital sources said.

There are only 20 physicians, 11 consultants, six medical officers, 76 second class employees, and 12 third class employees in the hospital now, they added.

There is no consultant or medical officer for radiology, ophthalmology, skin and ENT departments. There is one medical officer against six posts in the outdoor department, two against six posts in the indoor department, and three against four posts in the emergency department.

The medical officers have to give treatment to 150 to 200 outdoor patients every day, while 200 to 250

patients are admitted to the indoor department, the sources said.

Patient Farijan Bewa, 70, of Muktarum village in Belgachha union under the upazila, said, "I came here in the morning to see a doctor, but I could not due to the crowd of patients caused by shortage of doctors."

Acting Medical Officer Dr Shahinur Rahman said, "Medical officers are facing extra pressure in giving service to patients. Consultants normally do not prescribe to patients, but they are doing so at our request due to shortage of physicians. Besides, I have been seeing around 70 patients every day apart from doing my administrative duty."



A farmer shows cauliflower when foreign delegates visit the cropland in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur recently. Inset, the delegates also visit a growing vegetable market there. PHOTO: STAR

## Training brings better yields

Rangpur farmers get access to modern banking, quality seeds

Kongkon Kamaker with Andrew Eagle

Small-scale Rangpur farmers are increasing their incomes through better yields, greater knowledge and improved access to finance, thanks to the Growing Together Programme organised cooperatively between an agro-chemical company and two development organisations.

"I earned Tk.20,000 growing string beans on my fifteen decimal plot last year," says Salena Begum, 35, from Kafrikhal village in Mithapukur upazila. "But this year I earned Tk. 30,000."

Salena has benefitted from participating in the two strands of training under the programme, the Good Growth Plan and Good Agricultural Practice, which combined aim to improve the economic understanding of small-scale farmers whilst introducing improved agronomic techniques and technologies to improve crop yields.

"I'm really grateful to have had these training opportunities," she says. "This year I purchased quality seeds and

saved money on agro inputs, achieving a high yield, while also reducing transport and labour costs."

She is one of several in her village to benefit from the programme, organised by Syngenta agro-chemical firm collaboratively with local development organisation RDRS and the Bangladesh branch of the international development company Voluntary Service Overseas.

"We received training in seed quality, techniques on getting fairer prices for our produce as well as other tips that can help to improve our incomes," says Sirajul Islam, another farmer-participant from the same village.

As part of the programme a "farming centre" has also been established in the village, which includes a modern bank, growers' market, including for quality seeds at fair prices, and storage facilities; all of which enable small-scale farmers to access more easily the relevant goods and services they need, including fertilisers, pesti-

cides and machinery for rent.

During a recent site visit to Kafrikhal village, also taking part in the programme, the deputy general manager of Bank Asia, Zahurul Alam signed an agreement with country director of Volunteer Service Overseas, Simon Brown, to open a Bank Asia agency in the village to assist local farmers. "With the commencement of agency banking in this remote village farmers will now have direct access to crop finance," the country director said on that day.

Around 450 farmers, representing nearly all the farmers in the village pledged to open bank accounts while the Bank Asia representative promised that loan disbursement could be completed upon application within twenty-four hours.

"Our company is working with farmers to ensure food security in the country," says Syngenta official Sazzadur Hossain of the programme that thus far involved 230 farmers



A crowd of outdoor patients waiting for their turn to see a doctor in Kurigram Sadar Hospital as there is a severe shortage of physicians at the hospital. PHOTO: STAR