

A saviour for justice seekers

Chandpur SP Shamsunnahar set up Help Cell to settle family discords on January 1 last year and peacefully resolved 700 such cases so far

ALAM PALASH, Chandpur

Crises are common in life but most of them can be resolved if rightly addressed on time. Shamsunnahar, superintendent of police (SP) of Chandpur, has set a living example of it, settling around 700 incidents of family discords through counselling at the Help Cell that started functioning at her office on January 1 last year.

Initially meant for children and women, the Cell now serves people irrespective of age and gender.

Let's consider the case of a housewife of Razpur in the district's Shahrasti upazila. She became pregnant but her husband brought allegations of illicit relation against her and moved to divorce.

As the helpless woman approached SP Shamsunnahar, the latter called both the husband and wife to her office, discussed



Shamsunnahar, superintendent of police (SP) of Chandpur, listens to complaint from a woman at her office recently while others wait for their turn. PHOTO: STAR

and chucked out the misunderstandings and suspicion from their mind, helping the couple to reunite.

"I'm grateful to the SP madam. If she didn't intervene, I would've to bear the scandal throughout my life," said the housewife, requesting not to disclose her identity.

One of a few female SPs in the country, Shamsunnahar has not confined herself to just formal official works.

Out of her busy schedule, she makes time to give patient hearing and resolve problems of people coming from different areas of the district at the Help Cell.

Every day, around 50 people, mostly female, get help from the Cell, office sources said.

So far, around 700 family problems like

that of the housewife were settled by the SP, relieving them from going through pains or long legal procedure to settle them.

Nurjahan Begum Beauty, another housewife of Shahrasti upazila, filed a case against her husband with the court last year as she had been tortured by him for dowry.

Failing to bear the expenses of the case, she tried to settle the matter outside the court with the help of lawyers of both the parties and local union parishad chairman several times but no solution could be reached.

Finally, they went to the Help Cell that provided them counselling.

SP Shamsunnahar suggested the couple to live together once again for three months as a way to reach an understanding.

For over a month now, the couple are staying at their house without any discord. The issue of dowry did not come up either.

Azmeri Begum, a sub-inspector assigned at the Help Cell, said about 1000 allegations were filed last year of which 700 were settled by the SP.

Of the rest 300, investigations of 180 allegations are going on while 120 others were filed as regular case, she added.

Due to the initiative, the number of cases filed has drastically reduced.

"Earlier 70 to 100 cases were filed with different police stations of the district every day. Now, the number has come down to 20-25," said Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman, additional SP of Chandpur.

In a few cases, the SP also engaged officers in charge of police stations, circle officers, crime team and detective police to reach solution to problems.

Shamsunnahar said, "Since my joining here in the middle of 2015, I've seen people being harassed while seeking help regarding the incidents of women and children repression. There are many problems like extramarital relationships and marital crisis which people do not want to share because of shyness."

"Besides, justice seekers have to wait for long during the trial procedures at the court. It is expensive too. That is why I've opened the Cell to help people, with the approval from my superior."

"When I hear statements of all the parties concerned, the situation becomes clear and it is for me to give solution. For some incidents, I suggest filing cases," she said.

People suffer as bridge lies broken



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An iron bridge on Jessore-Dhaka highway at Shimakhali Bazar in Shalikhia upazila of Magura, which collapsed about three weeks ago, still lies without repair, causing immense sufferings to the commuters.

The 200-foot bridge, built on Chitra river in 1984, collapsed on February 13, snapping road link between the capital and Khulna, Satkhira and Jessore.

During a visit to the area on March 3, this correspondent saw school children, commuters and traders walking across a makeshift bamboo structure erected beside the bridge amid risk of accident as no transport can cross the area.

People of Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore and Benapole are facing difficulties to go to Dhaka and other destinations.

Shatkhali Union Parishad Chairman Anwar Hossain said Awami League lawmaker from Magura-2 constituency advocate Biren Shikdar and Prime Minister's Assistant Private Secretary Saifuzzaman Shekhor visited the spot on February 18 and 19 respectively. During the visit, both of them assured local people that the bridge would be repaired within a week but no step has been taken yet, he added. Sixty-two-year-old Shahinur Rahman of Arpara village said at this age it is very difficult to walk across the Chitra river on a bamboo bridge. Tripti Rani, a 35-year-old housewife, said it is very risky to cross a bamboo bridge with a baby in your arms. Nurunnabi Tarafdar, executive engineer of Magura Roads and Highways Department, said they have already invited a tender to construct a diversion road and later another tender will be called to build a concrete bridge there.



Shamsunnahar at her office

JMB leader Jahangir admits killing journo Dipankar

Dipankar's son Partho termed the confessional statement of Jahangir as baseless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Jahangir Alam alias Rajib Gandhi, a key planner of Gulshan café attack and banned JMB's military commander for northern region, has confessed to killing Bogra journalist Dipankar Chakrabarty in 2004, district Superintendent of Police Md Asaduzzaman said at a briefing yesterday.

Planned by Abdul Awal, executed military commander for northern region of JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh), Jahangir along with Sarwar Jahan Manik, Nurullah and Sanaullah hacked the noted journalist on October 3 in 2004.

Sarwar allegedly jumped to his death from a building in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital during a raid by the Rab on October 8 last year. Later, Rab claimed that Sarwar was the chief of "Neo JMB" known in the organisation as Abu Ibrahim al Hanif.

Sarwar, Nurullah and Sanaullah were the in-charges of Sirajganj, Bogra and Rangpur district units of JMB when the killing took place.

Jahangir made the confession on Monday, the last day of his seven-day remand in a bomb blast case at Juanpur on April 3 last year, said Bogra SP Md Asaduzzaman.

The court of Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court (Sherpur) of Bogra Ahsan Habib recorded the confessional statement.

"The then operations commander of JMB Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai ordered killing of journalist Dipankar as he was writing against the militant outfit," goes the confessional statement.

"To execute the order, Abdul Awal, son-in-law of executed JMB chief Abdur Rahman, the killers met at Bhai Bon mess at

Jahurul Nagar in Bogra town.

"Later, Jahangir, Sarwar Jahan Manik, Nurullah and Sanaullah hacked Dipankar to death in Sherpur Bus Stand area around 12:30am of October 3, 2004 when Dipankar reached the area from his office on his way to home," the SP said, quoting from the statement.

The deceased newsman's son Partho Sarothi Chakrabarty filed a murder case with Sherpur Police Station in Bogra accusing unidentified assailants.

Nine investigation officers (IO) tasked with the probe failed to unearth the matter and finally Sub-Inspector of Bogra Detective

Branch Mojibur Rahman, who was assigned as the tenth IO of the case on December 2014, made the progress, said police.

Jahangir, 32, also know in the organisation as Nasir, Rajib Gandhi, Suvash, Shanto, Jahid, Zakir, Adil, Tiger and Abu Omar Al Bangal, hails from Bhutmara under Saghata upazila in Gaibandha. Counterterrorism officials arrested him in Tangail on January 13.

Dipankar, executive editor of Durjoy Bangla published from Bogra,

was also former vice president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists.

Meanwhile, Dipankar's son Partho Sarothi Chakrabarty termed the police claim regarding the confessional statement of Jahangir as baseless.

"Previously, executed JMB chief Abdur Rahman and his second in command Bangla Bhai confessed to their links in many murder incidents before courts but they did not mention the killing of my father. After discussing with lawyer, I will place statement before the court regarding the matter," he said.



Mango flowers bloom in abundance in the orchards in five northern districts under Rangpur agriculture region as well as in south-western Jessore, heralding a bumper yield of mangoes. The photos were taken from Nilphamari municipality, left, and Sharsha upazila of Jessore. PHOTO: STAR



Mango farmers eye bumper yield

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

With the onset of the Bangla month of Falgun, the sweet smell of mango flowers is floating in the air as they have bloomed in bunches in most mango orchards of five northern districts in Rangpur agriculture region as well as in south-western Jessore.

Mango growers are expecting bumper yield this year due to the favourable weather prevailing in the area, encouraging them to cultivate mangoes on more land.

Horticulture specialist in Rangpur region of the Department of Agriculture (DAE) Md Foyejuddin said they set a target to cultivate mangoes on commercial basis on 6,717 hectares of land this year, which is 456 hectares higher than last year.

Of them, 3,005 hectares are in Rangpur district, 1,400 hectares in Gaibandha, 525 hectares in Kurigram, 1,210 hectares in Nilphamari and 577 hectares in Lalmonirhat.

The yield target is 73,887 lakh tonnes, which is 5,016 tonnes higher than last year's.

Farmers and the horticulture specialist said about 20 varieties of mangoes are being cultivated in the region, of which the most prominent varieties are Haribhanga, Amropali, Kapil Bangri, Rajbhog, Sada Aam, Surjapuri, Chhatapara, Fazli, Aswina, Khirshapati, Gutti and Mistimodhu.

The farmers are busy taking care of trees as fruit setting stage is starting.

Md Foyejuddin said the temperature in the region is rising smoothly, making the weather favourable for getting bumper mango yield.

Anjufer Proshan of Chilahati village in Nilphamari said he cultivated mangoes on five acres of land this year, and was expecting to get bumper yield if the weather remained favourable throughout the season.

Ayub Hossain of Kursha village in Taraganj upazila said they were afraid of natural calamities like cyclones accompanied by hail.

Golam Mostofa of Sadar upazila said he is worried about attack of insects and diseases at the fruit setting stage, adding that if the attacks are not controlled in time then the yield will be much less than expected.

Many big mango traders from the capital and other big cities are giving payment in advance to the farmers so that they can get ripe mangoes immediately after harvesting.

"In case of attack by mango hopper insect or by any disease, we advise the farmers to spray medicines like Mencozeb group and Cyper Methrin group," he added.

Additional Director of regional DAE Md Shah Alam said the sub-assistant agriculture officers of the department were providing farmers necessary support to cultivate mango scientifically.

Blooming of mango flowers across Jessore

predicts a good yield of the tasty fruit this season.

District Agriculture Officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Kazi Habibur Rahman said farmers have planted over 4.5 lakh mango trees in the district, and are now passing busy time taking care of the flowering trees to get bumper production.

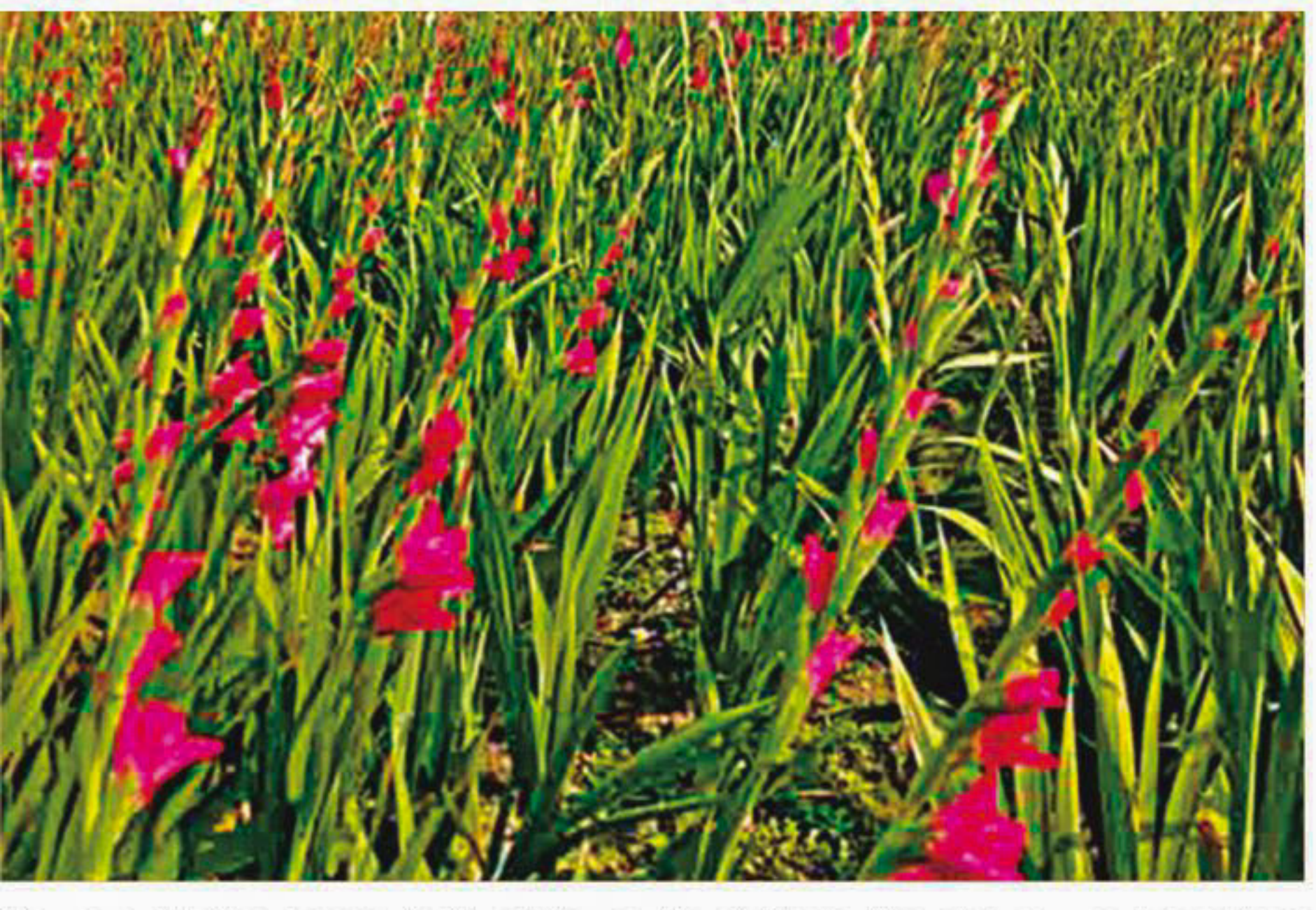
"The cultivators expect to make a profit of over Tk 6 lakh per hectare if the climatic condition remains favourable," said Hirok Kumar Sarkar, assistant agriculture officer of Sharsha upazila.

Buds started appearing in the trees in the middle of winter, said Momtaj Mojid, a mango grower in Kaiba village under Sharsha upazila, adding that flowering generally begins in mid-January and continues till mid-March.

"I have planted 150 Gopalbhog mango trees on one hectare of land spending Tk 1.5 lakh," said Kamal Hossain.

Deloar Hossain of Kundipur village in Jhikorgachha upazila said he has already spent Tk 9,000 for purchasing insecticides this season. He expects to make Tk 5 lakh from one hectare of land by June.

Habibur said, "The DAE took measures to make mango farming successful here this season. The region has long been producing more than ten varieties of mango, including Gopalbhog, Langra, Fazli, Khirsapat and Mohanbhog. Many growers are showing their interest to cultivate the profitable item on their own lands."



Flower cultivation booms in Sonatola upazila of Bogra. The picture was taken from Chomorgaca village in the upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Flowers brighten the lives of Bogra growers

MAMUN-UR-RASHID with ANDREW EAGLE

Across Bogra's Sonatola upazila flower farms are bringing prosperity and self-reliance to growers and their families. Flower markets are crowded with school and college students, office-goers and others keen to buy gladioli, tuberose, red roses, marigolds, gerberas and other floral varieties. Such enthusiastic public demand can only leave commercial flower growers pleased. "I have grown flowers on 50 decimals," says Montezar Rahman from Sonatola's Chomorgaca. "I hope to

earn more than Tk 2.5 lakh from the crop."

"I have cultivated flowers for a few years now," says Shalikuazzaman from Shujaitpur. "In nearby areas like Bamunia and Nagrapara flower farming has helped many unemployed people to achieve self-reliance."

"Since the sudden death of my father," says flower merchant Tuhin Mia, "I have responsibility for the family. We have no land but I have been able to cover family expenses satisfactorily thanks to profits from trading flowers."

least 22 farmers from five villages have dedicated around 20 bighas of land to flower cultivation this season. Flowers have proved to be more profitable than other crops and the industry also offers new employment opportunity in the community.

"There's a lot of interest in flower cultivation in this area recently," says Sonatola's upazila agriculture officer Salah Uddin Sardar. "It's a profitable thing to do." Indeed, in addition to good demand and favourable prices, farmers also benefit from the low production cost of flowers and a short harvest time, with blooms ready within three months.

The Department of Agricultural Extension in Sonatola reports that at

Woman killed by brother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A young woman was stabbed to death on Sunday, allegedly by her mentally troubled brother, in Jhairapara under Sadar upazila of the district.

The victim was identified as Dulali Khatun, 20, daughter of Zillur Rahman of the village.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Mazharul Islam said Saheb Ali, 28, a mentally troubled person, stabbed his sister Dulali indiscriminately in their house, leaving her dead on the spot. Saheb Ali was arrested in this connection.