

## Youth hacked to death by drug peddlers in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh  
Alleged drug traders hacked a youth to death at Usthi Board Bazar area in Gafargaon upazila on Monday evening.

The victim was Emdadul Haque, 29, son of Lal Mia of Sanjeeb village in the upazila.

Quoting locals and the victim's family members, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Pagla Police Station Chand Mia said Emdadul, a Qatar expatriate, left his job there five months ago and returned home.

Local drug traders, allegedly led by Masud, had been running their business in the area for long and none could stop them.

Emdadul organised local youths against the drug traders and asked them not to run their business in the area, which might have angered the gang, the OC said.

The drug traders allegedly locked in an altercation with Emdadul at Usthi Board Bazar area on Monday evening. At one stage, they hacked Emdadul with sharp weapons, leaving him critically injured.

Emdadul was rushed to Gafargaon Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Soon after the incident, local people caught Masud, 38, and gave him a good beating and handed him over to police.

Masud was admitted to MMCH in critical state.

Emdadul's brother Kamal Hossain lodged a case with Pagla Police Station, accusing three people, including Masud, the same night.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Ancient statues and fragments of different valuable artefacts, an old-styled cannon, and collection of Liberation War memorabilia at Dinajpur Museum.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

# Collection rich, maintenance poor

## Dinajpur Museum struggles to manage valuable artefacts

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Dinajpur Museum, which has rare and rich collections of different eras and cultures, has been struggling to protect the artefacts from ruin due to lack of maintenance amid shortage of skilled manpower.

This museum turned 48 last year, but very few people know about it. "We get only one or two visitors a day," said Showkat Ali, curator and guide of the museum.

AKM Zakaria, a former deputy commissioner (DC) of Dinajpur, founded the museum with some rare artefacts in April 1968 in a tin shed at Munshipara area in the municipality on his own initiative.

A seven-member committee was also formed for taking care of the museum, with the DC of the district as the head.

Within a year, the number of items in the museum reached 800.

During the Liberation War in

1971, Pakistani troops and their Bangladeshi collaborators destroyed most of the touchstone statues, while statues made of bronze, brass, and wood were looted.

"AKM Zakaria and Mehrab Ali, a historian of the district, were the pioneers of the museum," said Swadhin Sen, a teacher at the Department of Archaeology in Jahangirnagar University.

The museum was shifted to a new two-storey building in 1985. It was set up on the ground floor while the first floor was used as a library.

Norwegian Organisation for Relief and Development financed the construction of the building.

Showkat said the museum has over 1,300 archaeological objects, most of them deities of Hindus. Of them, 110 sculptures are of different Hindu deities, three of Buddhists and two of Jains. There are also 9,674 coins of colonial eras and different countries, including India and Pakistan, 14 inscriptions on

stone, pottery and decorated bricks, 83 Liberation War relics, two wooden objects, two potsherds, six medals, four bamboo objects, three photographs and 45 other items.

The museum also has old weapons of ethnic people; inscriptions engraved in Bengali, Arabic and Persian; documents and credentials in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Bengali and English; manuscripts in Bengali and Sanskrit; handwritten copy of the Holy Quran; old pictures; old furniture and metallic utensils; artefacts recovered from the Sitakot excavations and other archaeological sites and some unidentified stone relics. A carpet from the Dinajpur Rajbari is gathering dust.

"In terms of collection, Dinajpur Museum is in third position after the National Museum in the capital and Borendra Museum in Rajshahi," claimed Shafiqul Haque, secretary of the museum committee. Most of the collection is now on the verge of ruination for lack of

maintenance as they do not have funds to employ skilled manpower to maintain the collections, he added.

During a visit to the museum, this correspondent found all the items gathered in one room. Most of the items on display were on the floor or waist-high concrete racks, not in showcases. Some pieces were put in glass showcases, but they developed fungal problems.

Experts say a skilled person must look after the museum, which also needs more rooms for displaying the collections. "Visitors will not be satisfied if the artefacts of different eras are arranged in one room," said Swadhin, adding that the museum did not get any new collection after the Liberation War.

"Proper care and maintenance by skilled manpower are a must for protecting such artefacts, Swadhin said.

Shafiqul said they have no funds to hire an expert. Jamal

Uddin Ahmed and Ahmed Shamim Al Razi, two former DCs of the district, renovated the museum at their own initiative.

The secretary also said that they wrote several letters to the Department of Archaeology and Ministry of Cultural Affairs, urging them to take over the museum. High officials of the archaeology department visited the museum several times, but no action has been taken yet, he added.

The museum needs CCTV cameras, dust management system and skilled manpower to protect the collections.

It remains open for visitors from 3:00pm to 7:00pm every day.

"It has many rare items, but many people know nothing about it," said visitor A Sattar of Ghoraghat upazila.

Showkat said he has been working at the museum since 2005 for only Tk 2,000 per month as salary.

## Schoolboy found killed in Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Police recovered the body of a schoolboy from Bujtala Model High School area under Benapole Port Police station yesterday.

The victim was Pervez Hossain, 12, son of Taijel Hossain of Kagojpukur village. He was a talented student of Class VII in Bujtala Model High School.

Police and victim's mother Parvin Begum said Pervez returned from school and went out of the house on a bicycle to play in a nearby playground in Kagojpukur area on Monday afternoon.

Locals informed police the next day that they found Parvez's body near his school.

Police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Jessore Medical Hospital for autopsy, said Apurbo Hasan, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port Police Station.



Noakhali char farmers cultivate vegetables besides fish on the same land through sorjan cropping system.

PHOTO: MD NURUL AMIN

## Lalmonirhat mass killing day today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Valiant freedom fighters and different organisations will observe the mass killing day in Lalmonirhat today and offer prayer at the mass graveyard beside the Railway Station.

Freedom Fighters said on April 5 in 1971, about 600 Bengali speaking people were killed by the Pakistani occupation forces with the help of Razakars and Urdu-speaking people at the rickshaw stand near Lalmonirhat Railway Station.

Pakistani army picked up railway officers and employees, including doctors, railway engineers, teachers, and businessmen from their residences and offices on April 3 and 4 and took them to the railway officers club. After torturing them, the Pakistani forces took them to the rickshaw stand on April 5 and killed them.

## Sorjan system blessing for Noakhali char people

MD NURUL AMIN, Noakhali

Char farmers have gained success in vegetable and fish farming through sorjan cropping system on the fallow lands of Noakhali throughout the year.

By applying the system, they are getting high profit with low investment in several thousand acres of land which remained fallow for years in Hatiya and Subarnachar char areas due to stagnation of water during monsoon, salinity and desertification in the summer.

Sorjan is a cropping system which helps the growers to cultivate fish and vegetables simultaneously on the same land in dry and wet seasons, said local farmers.

For the last few years, this cropping system has become very popular among the growers as they are now being more benefited from vegetable and fish farming using the system than rice cultivation.

Farmers Abdur Rashid and Amanullah of Subarnachar said high aisles and low drains are made on both sides of the land by cutting earth. Then organic manure is spread on the aisle and vegetables like bitter melon, cucumber, bean etc are produced.

At the same time tilapia, climbing fish (koi) carp, silver carp and other species of fishes are cultivated in the drain. When the surrounding

areas are inundated by water in monsoon, the vegetable farms remain unaffected.

When there is no water during summer, the vegetable farms can be irrigated using the water from the drains.

At present, some 5,000 farmers have been applying sorjan system in their farms in the char areas. Besides meeting local demand, the vegetables and fish produced by farmers are being sent to markets in different areas of the country including Dhaka, Chittagong and Comilla.

Pranab Bhtacharya, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Noakhali, said about 1,500 hectares of land in salinity-prone areas of Hatiya and Subarnachar upazilas have been brought under cultivation using sorjan cropping system.

The farmers have been adopting the system, which has improved their socio-economic condition, he said.

Experts from the Philippine Rice Research Institute evaluated use of the system as a response to climate change, maximise farm productivity, and ensure food security and regular income of farming families.

Sorjan, developed by Indonesian farmers, is a system that serves as an alternate of deep drains and raised beds. It can be used in both dry and wet seasons.

## Six Jhenidah people picked up

One freed, another shown arrested, four others traceless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Plainclothes men picked up six people from different villages in Sadar and Kotchandpur upazilas of the district during the last two weeks.

The victims are Rezaul Islam and Ibrahim Gazi of Kashimnagar village in Jhenidah Sadar, Humayan Kabir, principal of Kotchandpur Poura College, Anarul Islam of Chandpara village, Imrul Islam of Jalalpur village, and Alam Khan of Balabaria village in Kotchandpur upazila.

Humayan Kabir was later freed, Anarul Islam was shown arrested after a week, while four others have remained traceless.

"At 11:00am on March 29, some plainclothes men reached Kotchandpur Poura College and called Principal Humayan Kabir out. Then they took him into a microbus and left the scene," said Md Tazul Islam, a teacher of the college.

The principal was left blindfolded in Pagla Kanai area of Sadar upazila on Saturday midnight, he said.

Anarul Islam alias Mukul was abducted on March 24 night from his house at Chandpara village and he was shown arrested in a drug related case

with Kotchandpur Police Station on March 30, family members said.

"After the abduction, a caller from an unknown mobile number claimed Tk 1.50 lakh. As we failed, they claimed Tk 1 lakh and later brought down the demand to Tk 50 thousand. But we

*An unknown caller demanded Tk 50,000. We could not give the money and lastly my nephew was shown arrested in a drug related case.*

could not pay the amount and lastly he was shown arrested," said Anarul's uncle Sirazul Islam Qari.

Ripon Hossain, son of Rezaul Islam, said some 15/20 men in two microbuses reached his house on March 22 midnight and called him out.

"As my father wanted to know who they are, they claimed to have come

from the police station and asked him to show them the location of an accused. Then they took my father away and he did not return.

"On information from a local, we went to Barobazar police camp on March 26 and saw my father confined there. But when we went there the next day, he was not found there and he has remained traceless since then," he said.

Champa Khatun, wife of abducted Imrul Hossain, said, "On March 22 midnight, 7/8 plainclothes men called my husband. Saying that he was being taken for knowing the location of an accused, they took him in a microbus. Since then he is traceless."

"We went to file a GD with Kotchandpur Police Station but police did not accept it," she said.

Ibrahim Gazi and Alam Khan were abducted from their areas on March 22 and March 28 respectively and they too remained traceless, said family sources.

Ajbar Ali Sheikh, additional superintendent of police in Jhenidah, said, "The police are not involved with the alleged abductions. They are trying to find out the missing ones."



KIDS AGAINST MILITANCY: Students of Hasina Momen School in Bhangura upazila of Pabna form a human chain on the school ground yesterday protesting militant activities by a section of derailed people at different places of the country.

PHOTO: STAR