

Museum opens at Suchitra Sen's ancestral home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

A museum at the ancestral house of Suchitra Sen at Gopalpur Hemsagar Lane of the district town saw inauguration yesterday, fulfilling the long time demand of socio-cultural enthusiasts.

The inauguration marked the 86th birth anniversary of the acting legend.

After a long legal battle, the district administration on July 16 in 2014 took over the charge of Suchitra Sen's ancestral house, freeing it from the occupation of Imam Gazzali Trust, a Jamaat-e-Islami backed organisation, which had been running a section of Imam Gazzali Institute there since 1987.

Earlier, on May 4 in 2014, the Appellate Division upheld the High Court verdict for freeing the house from the illegal occupiers and set up a museum there. The full judgment was released on July 10.

The Daily Star published a report titled 'Suchitra Sen's house in a shambles' on January 17 this year, marking the third death anniversary of the legendary film actress.

Marking inauguration of the long cherished museum at the historic house yesterday morning, the district administration organised a discussion and a cake festival there.



Suchitra Sen

"We have officially opened the museum at the house of Suchitra Sen. Various portraits of Suchitra Sen and her family members as well as many photographs about her films have been kept here. The museum will be opened for the people from April 10," said Additional Deputy Commissioner Ruhul Amin who chaired the programme.

"This museum has started small. However, we have a plan to decorate it with precious works and memorabilia of Suchitra Sen, he said.

Prominent educationalist Professor Md Kamruzzaman, secretary of Suchitra Sen Smriti Sangrakkhan Parishad Proloy Chaki and journalist Abdul Matin Khan spoke on the occasion, among others.

Suchitra Sen was born on April 6 in 1931 at Bhangbari village of Belkuchi upazila in Sirajganj. She passed her early life at Gopalpur Hemsagar Lane in Pabna town. She died on January 17 in 2014 in Kolkata due to old age complications.



Villagers try to save a breached embankment hit by flashflood in Khaliyajury upazila of Netrakona yesterday.

Santals for return of lands

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gaibandha*

Hundreds of people of the Santal community at Joypurpara village in Gobindaganj upazila held a protest meeting yesterday, demanding return of their ancestral lands and punishment of those who killed three Santal men during the eviction drive on November 6 in 2016.

Speakers at the meeting organised by Bagda Farm Bhumi Uddhar Sangran Committee demanded return of their lands at Shahebganj cane farm belonging to Rangpur Sugar Mills. They also urged the authorities to ensure punishment of those who killed three Santal men and set fire to their sheds during the eviction drive.

Many of the homeless Santal families are still living in makeshift sheds, but no initiative for their rehabilitation is visible, the speakers said.

They said they are still under threat by the vested quarters, as some unknown persons tried to torch their sheds at Joypurpara a few days ago.

They later brought out a procession that paraded the roads.

Rezaul Karim Master presided over the meeting, while Bhumi Uddhar Committee Secretary Shajahan Ali, Organising Secretary Subol Hembrom, Communist Party Gaibandha unit Secretary Mostafizur Rahman Mukul and Murad Zaman Rabbani spoke on the occasion.

Flood situation worsens

Some Sunamganj traders use flood as an excuse for rice price hike

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The flood situation worsened further in Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Moulvibazar yesterday with inundation of more areas of farmland, causing immense sufferings to farmers.

On the other hand, a section of traders are doing brisk business by selling rice at high rates in the local markets of the submerged areas in Sunamganj.

Boro crops on 10,000 hectares of land in eight upazilas went under water, said Bilash Chandra Pal, deputy director (DD) of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Netrakona.

Earlier on Wednesday, heavy rainfall triggered flashflood in the

areas, damaging 16,880 hectares out of 184,320 targeted for boro cultivation, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

The situation deteriorated further as parts of Kirtankhola embankment in Khaliyajury and Dingapota Haizda embankment in Mohanganj upazila were washed away, said the DD.

As there was no rain yesterday, the flood situation might have improved, he said.

Abu Taher, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Netrakona, said it is impossible to repair the embankments in such a situation.

In Kishoreganj, about 23,270 hectares of land in seven upazilas were flooded in the last two days.

On Wednesday, 19,730 hectares

of land out of targeted 1,65,515 hectares for boro farming had gone under water, said Deputy Director of Kishoreganj DAE Shafiqul Islam.

The flashflood was triggered due to overflow in the Kushiara, Kalani and Khowai rivers, he said.

According to our Moulvibazar correspondent, fresh boro crop on 17,432 hectares of land in Kulaura, Baralekha and Juri upazilas of the district were inundated due to rise of water level in the river Kushiara and Hakaluki haor (a large water body).

The water level marked a sharp rise due to onrush of water from hills across the border, sources at local DAE said.

Azizur Rahman Monir, chairman of Bhukshimul Union

Parishad in Kulaura, said about 70 percent of boro cropland in the area was flooded.

DD of Moulvibazar DAE Md Shahjahan said 17,432 hectares of cultivated land out of 53,426 hectares went under water.

Meanwhile, people of the submerged areas of Sunamganj are facing acute food scarcity as a section of rice traders are using the flood as an excuse to charge higher prices, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

For example, 50-kg sack of rice was sold at Tk 1800 to 1900 before the flood but it is now being sold at Tk 2400 to 2500 in the markets of Dharmapasha upazila, said Md Nazmul Haider, a local school-teacher.



Defying physical barrier for pursuing dream

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, *Pabna*

Seven blind students are appearing in the ongoing Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations, serving as living examples of how one can overcome physical barrier through will power and determination.

The seven students -- Md Jamil Hossain of Santhia, Md Monsur Ali of Sujanagar and Mahabubul Alam of Chatmohar upazila in Pabna, Rabiul Islam of Chittagong, Abdul Hai of Narsingdi, Md Rabiul Islam of Savar, Dhaka, and Sumon Ahmed of Madaripur are attending the HSC examinations at Shahid M Monsur Ali College centre in Pabna.

They write answer scripts with the help of dictation writers under a special arrangement, said Prof Abul Hossain, chairman of the humanitarian organisation Manob Kalyan Trust that arranged schooling of the challenged people.

"Earlier they had left study due to

visual impairment and poverty. Our organisation helped them to resume schooling. The challenged youths learn their lessons using Braille method. We arranged their attending the HSC examinations that began on April 2, through private registration," he said.

"I am fortunate enough to appear in the HSC examinations. It has become possible due to help of Manob Kalyan Trust," said Jamil Hossain.

"We never imagined of going forward with education. But now we feel inspired due to the special arrangements provided by the organisation," said Monsur Ali, another examinee.

As many as 52 blind students are continuing their study under the arrangement of Manob Kalyan Trust in Pabna. Established in 1994, the organisation helps physically challenged students from across the country to continue study, providing them schooling facilities along with lodging and meal.

Mystery shrouds death of Natore FF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

Mystery shrouds the death of a freedom fighter in Bagatipara Upazila Muktijuddha Command Council Complex yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Bagatipara Upazila Command Muktijuddha Council Commander Rashedun Nabi Befin, 65, with a suicide note from the complex about 10:00am.

Bagatipara Police Station Officer-in-Charge Manirul Islam said office staff Sabera Begum found the body inside the complex and informed it to the deputy commander of the upazila command. Later, the deputy commander informed it to the police, Manirul said. Police sent the body to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

The OC said it would be clear whether it was a murder or suicide after receiving autopsy report, he said.

Victim's son-in-law Ruhul Amin Biplob, however, claimed that it is a murder as his body was found hanging from the window's grill and his feet touching the floor. Biplob said poison was also found in his mouth.

Profit in garlic, loss in onion

Farmers have differing experiences in cultivation of 2 spices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

The inclination of farmers in the district to cultivate spices has brought mixed blessing to them as garlic farmers are getting handsome profit while onion farmers are incurring loss this season.

Deputy Director (DD) of the district Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) GM Idris said garlic was cultivated on 1,780 hectares of land this year, while it was 1,710 hectares last year.

Onion was cultivated on 1,365 hectares this year, while it was 1,290 hectares last year, Additional Deputy Director of DAE Keramot Ali said.

"Farmers are changing the cropping pattern and cultivating spices, especially garlic and onion, as production cost of traditional crops like paddy, jute, wheat, maize is too high, but their prices are too low at harvesting time, forcing them to incur loss," he added.

On a visit to markets like Bhobaniganj, Dhelapeer, Mirganj, Boragari, this correspondent saw huge amounts of garlic and onion as it is harvesting season.

Garlic farmers are jubilant as they are getting high price of their produce, but onion farmers are gloomy as their produce is being sold at throwaway prices.

Farmer Saddam Ali, 65, of Grogram village said he cultivated garlic on one bigha of land spending Tk 25,000 as production cost and got 50-maund yield.

"Traders are offering me Tk 1,600 to Tk 1,800 per maund. I expect to get Tk 80,000 to Tk 90,000 for my produce, earning a good profit," he added happily.

However, the situation is gloomy in the onion market.

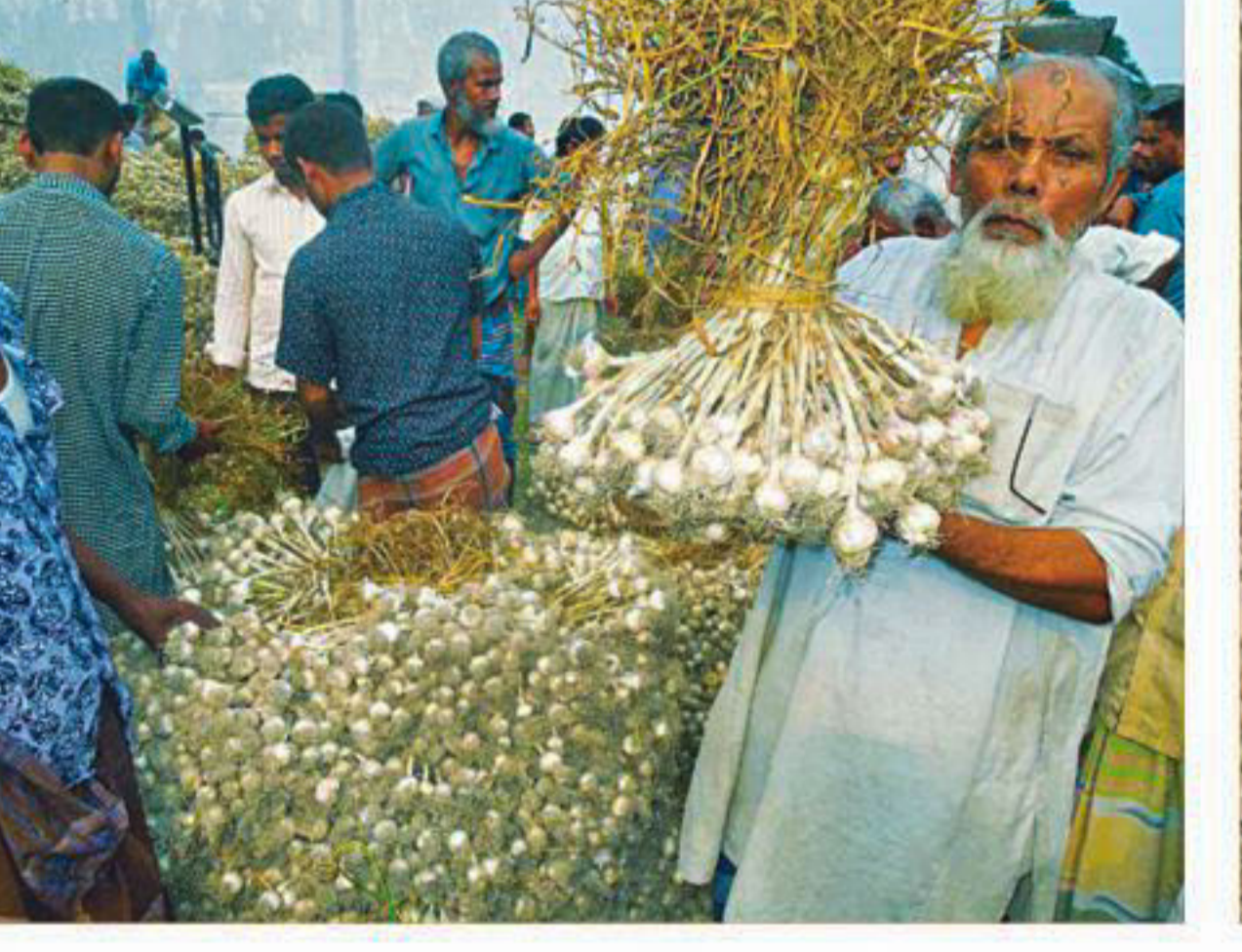
Farmers Hamidul, Nitai Roy, Idris and others said 30 to 40 maunds of onion can be grown on

one bigha of land. The present market price is Tk 12,000 to Tk 16,000, while average production cost is Tk 20,000, which causes loss for the growers.

They said untimely rain during harvesting time is responsible for the setback as a good amount of onion rotted in the fields, adding that the situation is the opposite in the case of garlic as that crop can cope with additional rain.

Sub-assistant Agriculture Officer Sanwar Hossain said rainfall in March was abnormally high compared to last year.

DD of DAE GM Idris said, "Immature onions which farmers harvested just after the rain might have been damaged partially and we are waiting for information to ascertain the situation." Unplanned import of onion from abroad also worsened the situation, he added.



A farmer in Jaldhaka upazila of Nilphamari showing his garlic crop, which was not affected by untimely rain. Right, a farmer in Sadar upazila of the district dries his onion crop that was ruined by the rain.

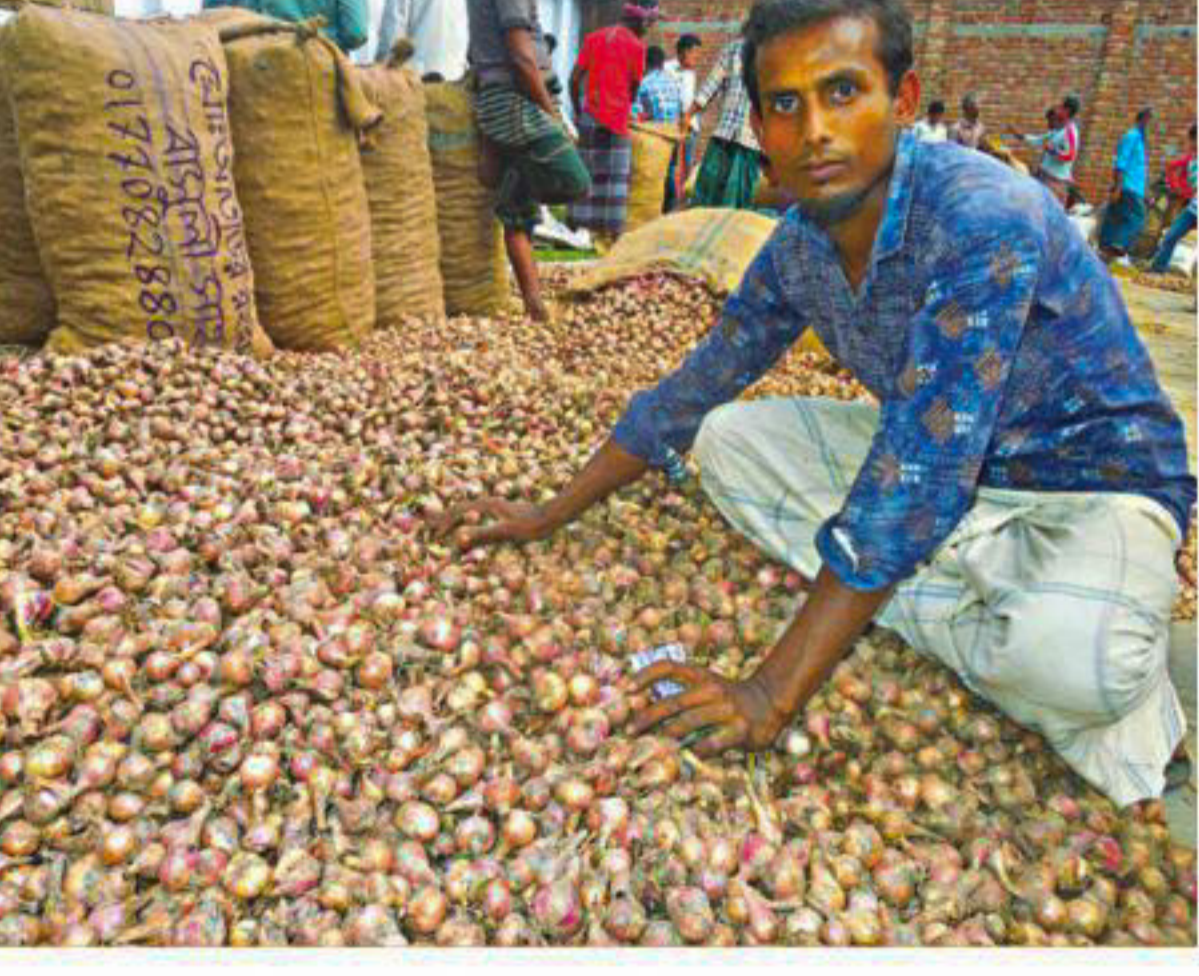


PHOTO: STAR



The community clinic was renovated after a demand at an interface meeting at Dalbuganj of Kalapara upazila.

Open UP budget sessions result in good services

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, *Patuakhali*

People of nine unions in Kalapara upazila of the district are getting services from the union parishads (UP) by raising their voices at open budget sessions and interface meetings.

They participated in the meetings as part of a project for practising good governance at every level of the UP under Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability (SEBA) project.

Nazrul Smriti Sangsad (NSS) in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is implementing the project.

The project has been taken to make UPs more responsive, people-oriented, transparent and accountable.

The UPs decide on the development schemes for the next fiscal year in presence of the people.

Community clinic worker Sohag Russel said at an interface meeting on March 15 last year that the community clinic in Dalbuganj union could not provide services to the people as it was at risk of collapsing due to lack of renovation.

UP Chairman Md Abdus Salam Sikder promised at the meeting to repair the clinic as soon as possible. It was repaired within three months and people are getting services regularly.

Farzana Akter, a student of Purbo Patua Government Primary School in Champapur union, said at an open

budget meeting that academic activities were greatly hampered due to lack of furniture and equipment.

UP Chairman Rintu Talukder allocated Tk 80,000 within three months for buying furniture and the necessary equipment.

In this way local people contribute to the UP's development and the chairman and members also become more responsive to people, said Shahabuddin Panna, NSS executive director.

Tiakhali UP Chairman Syed Mashur Rahman said SEBA project assists them to realise that formulation of local level budget, especially for UPs, was a participatory process and ensuring participation of marginalised people will make them feel the ownership of their own budget.

PHOTO: STAR