

## Eid brings no joy for them

Our Correspondent, Manikganj

Eid brings no joy to families of 40 teachers and employees at Oxford Academy in Shivalaya upazila as they have not been getting salary and allowances for the last four months.

The situation has been created as there is no school managing committee for a long time, said sources at the institution.

There are approximately 1300 students from play group to Class X.

On June 11, the teachers made a written application to the deputy commissioner but he is yet to take any initiative to resolve the problem.

Assistant teacher Saiful Islam said "I have not been getting salary and allowances since February. I thought I would get the salary before the Eid and buy new clothes for the family and make the necessary purchases but it is undone now."

Another teacher Lutfor Rahman said "We could not do the Eid shopping as we have not got our salaries. I have been passing days in utter uncertainty."

## One Year Of Sholakia Attack Shuvodev still cries for mother

Aminul Islam, Mymensingh

Nearly one year has gone by but Shuvodev Bhowmik still feels very lonely as he is deprived of motherly affection.

Shuvodev's mother Jharna Rani Bhowmik was one of the four people who died in militant attacks on the nation's largest Eid congregation at Sholakia in Kishoreganj last year.

"I do not have any want but I want to meet the prime minister as I see her talk with many children on different occasions," said the 12-year-old, Shuvodev.

Jharna was making a special meal for them on the Eid day. Suddenly, gunshots rang out outside and Jharna was found lying in a pool of blood. A bullet came through a window of her house and hit 40-year-old Jharna on the forehead. She died instantly.

Shuvodev's father Gourango Nath Bhowmik said when Shuvodev remains alone, he becomes speechless as they cannot be with him all the time.

"So we sent him to a Mymensingh school which has boarding facility," he said.

Sometimes it becomes very difficult to soothe the boy when he bursts into tears after seeing the photograph of his mother, he said.

Now I am jobless as I cannot do any work due to my physical condition and we have to depend on the income of my elder son Basudev Bhowmik, said Gourango, 62.

Basudev, a step son of Jharna, said, "We feel sad that we have lost our near and dear one and the loss is irreparable."

"My mother used to make the family environment a festive one on every religious occasions, but this year we are unhappy as she is no more," said Basudev, a part-time teacher of Tejgaon Women's College in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, honouring Jharna, the local municipality has named a road as Shaheed Jharna Rani Road in Kishoreganj town, said Mahmud Parvez, mayor of the municipality.



Passengers of a BRTC bus push it to help the driver start the old vehicle after it went dysfunctional on the road, and inset, a worker at a workshop works on an old bus to make it look good before readying it for carrying passengers on the highway. The photos were taken from Aricha ferry terminal area in Manikganj on Sunday. PHOTO: STAR

## Seasonal beggars!

Our Correspondent, Pirojpur

A section of veiled women with children in their arms are being a nuisance for the Eid shoppers in the district town as they seek alms posing as beggars.

Locals say the seasonal beggars come to the town from remote areas of the district when the Eid shopping gets momentum.

The number of such beggars rises as soon as Eid shopping begins. Most of them are physically fit women wearing veils.

"When beggars see us buying something from a shop, they stretch their hands and ask for money," said Ariful Islam, an Eid shopper.

As their faces remain covered by veils, they don't feel any shame in begging. They sometimes carry a little child to draw sympathy of the people.

"The seasonal beggars to draw sympathy seek alms saying they will buy clothes for their children on the

occasion of Eid," said Mujibar Rahman, another customer, adding that their claims are fake in many cases.

"It is very disgusting when a physically fit woman asks for alms," said Firoj Ahmed of the town.

Due to the seasonal beggars, people have lost sympathy for the genuine ones, several people said.

"As begging does not need labour or money, women from remote areas come to the town to get money through begging," said Hasan Mamun. It is a social problem and steps should be taken to stop the practice, he added.

Pirojpur Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Jamal Hossain said they are preparing a list of beggars in the town with a view to rehabilitating them under the 'one house one farm' project. He, however, said they have yet to think about seasonal beggars.

## Unfit, old buses on highway

The accident-prone vehicles also add to air pollution on Dhaka-Aricha road

Zahangir Shah, Manikganj

Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the number of old unfit buses see tremendous rise on Dhaka-Aricha Highway, posing risk of serious accidents amid the ongoing rush of homebound people.

Visiting a few workshops at Aricha old truck terminal, BRTC (Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation) bus stand in Shivalaya upazila and Bhatbaur and Uchutia in Manikganj Sadar upazila in last couple of days, this correspondent found workers repairing and colouring old buses.

Such work increases every year before the Eid, said Abdul Aziz, owner of a workshop at Aricha.

Several passengers, including Shahidul Islam of Aricha, Abdus Salam of Manikganj, Abdur Razzak

and Geeta Rani of Ghior and Kawsar Hossain and Salma Akter of Harirampur upazila of the district alleged that unfit buses ply the highway under the nose of police.

"The owners of the buses get the defective vehicles repaired and coloured and run those on the road. We have nothing to do in that case," said Abdul Malek, a bus driver.

Bus owner Golam Morshed Khan Rubel, also a member of Jatri Seba Bus Owners' Association, said, "The business does not bring much profit due to rising prices of fuel and equipment. During the two Eids and Puja, the pressure of passengers increases. To make a little extra income, the old buses are set right for plying."

Some bus owners alleged that they have to give money to police-

men for avoiding harassment while running old vehicles on the road.

Most of the buses of BRTC and several private ones moving from Aricha-Paturia-Manikganj to Gulistan give a shabby look with window glasses often broken. When it rains, the passengers get wet.

Disgusting smoke emitted from such vehicles also adds to environmental pollution and poses health hazards, said several passengers.

Manikganj Superintendent of Police Mahfuzur Rahman said following directives to prevent the movement of unfit old buses, a number of cases have been lodged and the people responsible have been fined.

"However, it is not possible to seize all unfit buses due to lack of adequate places to keep those. Besides,

intensive checking of the buses on the highway and seizing the unfit ones add to the already existing traffic congestion and it increases the sufferings of the passengers," he said.

Dhaka-Aricha Highway is the main road connecting the capital Dhaka with 21 south-west districts of the country.

Currently, 10 to 12 thousand vehicles of different types are plying Dhaka-Aricha highway. Most of the vehicles are registered in Dhaka and move in several districts, said engineer Mobarak Hossain, assistant director of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority's (BRTA) Manikganj office.

Around 400 buses ply the highway from Gulistan and Gabtoli of Dhaka to Aricha and Paturia ferry terminals in Manikganj and on the regional roads of the district, BRTA



Permanent structures built by alleged grabbers on Ghatlar Khal in Kuakata municipality of Patuakhali.

## Grabbers eye Kuakata canal

At least 10 structures built on Ghatlar Khal

Sohrab Hossain, Patuakhali

Some influential people using the name of ruling Awami League are building structures by allegedly grabbing a portion of Ghatlar Khal, an important canal in Kuakata municipality.

This correspondent paid a visit to the area recently and saw some local influential people carrying out construction work on both sides of the canal, especially adjacent to the fish market beside Kuakata-Patuakhali highway.

The grabbers Sayeed Musullee, Ismail Mia, Abdul Mannan Akon, Sentu Mia, Haji Ismail and Abul Khayer Bachchu Mia claim that they are supporters of Awami League. Locals said the grabbers started the construction work after influencing the local ruling party leaders.

When asked how he could make a building by occupying a portion of the canal, Khayer said, "I did not occupy the canal. I bought 14 decimals of land a year ago and I am constructing the structure on 10 decimals of that land."

Khayer identified himself as a leader of

local Swechhasebak League, a wing of ruling Awami League, but district unit General Secretary advocate Ujjal Basu said there is no one named Abul Khayer Bachchu in their committee.

Ujjal said steps would be taken against anyone who are involved in illegal activities, including land grabbing, using the name of the party.

Abul Hasan, a local, said the canal plays a vital role in draining water in the rainy season. Farmers depend on its water to irrigate their land, but natural flow of water has been greatly hampered due to the encroachment, he added.

This correspondent tried to contact the alleged grabbers, but they declined to make any comment to the media over the matter.

Kuakata Municipality Mayor Abul Bareq Mollah said he will take legal steps against the grabbers.

Assistant Commissioner (AC-Land) in Kalapara upazila Bipul Chandra Das said they are preparing a list of grabbers. All structures will be removed to free the canal very soon, he added.

## 'Arrest killers of ex-army man'

Our Correspondent, Thakurgaon

Local people formed a human chain in Panchagarh town yesterday demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits for killing retired army soldier Aminur Rahman, 55.

Several hundred people under the banner of 'Sachetan Janagan' joined the programme on Dhaka-Panchagarh highway.

The speakers said Aminur of Nayadighi village was killed in a clash over formation of a mosque committee in Boda upazila on June 16, but police are yet to arrest the prime accused in the case even after a week of the murder.

Following a case filed by victim's son Shahinul Islam police arrested Amaz, Nazira and Shirin.

## Clothes for poor elderly people

Our Correspondent, Brahmanbaria

Bounbair Kotha, a Facebook-based organisation, distributed new clothes among at least 250 helpless elderly people of different areas under Brahmanbaria municipality on Friday.

Besides, the organisation members under the banner of 'Project Swabolombi' also handed over five sewing machines, a rickshaw-van and a rickshaw to seven other people.

Deputy Commissioner Rezwanaur Rahman was present as the chief guest at the programme.

Presided over by Syed Rajib, director of the organisation, Saddam Hossain Khan Mishuk delivered the welcome speech.

## Who cares?

People suffer as a bridge in Tangail remains unrepaired for seven years

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A broken bridge over the Jhinai river in Basail upazila of the district has been lying unrepaired for the last seven years, causing sufferings to local people.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) constructed the foot-bridge near KBN High School in Kashil in the 1994-95 fiscal year at a cost of Tk 28 lakh, villagers said.

The 132-metre-long and 8-foot-wide bridge was constructed for connecting the people of the southern region, including Kashi and Habla unions, with the upazila headquarters, they added.

However, the bridge was built in such an unplanned way that a rickshaw van and a pedestrian could not comfortably pass over it simultaneously, they added.

A part of the bridge collapsed due to erosion by the river in 2010, Ruhul Amin of Kashi area said, adding that

locals then constructed a bamboo bridge and connected it with the remaining part of the bridge to restore communication.

However, the current of the river during the monsoon washed away the bamboo bridge also the same year, he added.

Since then, several thousand people of the southern region, including Kashi and Habla, have been crossing the river by boat. People carrying goods have to walk several kilometres to reach their destinations, Ruhul said.

Local people have been demanding construction of a new bridge in the area for years, but nothing has been done as yet, he added.

Upazila Engineer of LGED in Basail Abdus Sattar said tender for construction of a 295-metre-long 2-lane new bridge in the area is under process. "We hope the local people will get the bridge soon," he added.



A broken bridge over the Jhinai river in Basail upazila of Tangail has been lying unrepaired for the last seven years. PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL