

Sundari's livelihood on grass sale

KONGKON KARMAKER, back from Dinajpur

Fifty-year-old Sundari Bala, displaced by the erosion of the mighty Teesta river years ago, has chosen something different to earn her livelihood, which others do not try often or even think about.

The woman, widow of late Boisharu Chandra of Gangachara upazila in Rangpur, has been feeding a three-member family with her daily income of Tk 120 to Tk 130 by selling grass for the last 15 years.

Sundari, who had been living with her two children in a tiny thatched house on the river embankment at Paikan village in upazila for the last 15 years, lost her husband about five years back.

Sundari, also mother of eight, said "I feed my two minor children by selling grass. As for me, it is better to

stay starving than begging."

She said six of her children are married and living separately.

Sundari said after having some soaked rice (Panta Bhat) with onion and salt, she goes out of her house around 7:00am everyday and roams from one char to another for collecting grass.

After collecting sufficient grass, she returns home, sorts them out and later takes the cattle fodder to adjacent Boraibari Bazar for sale, she said.

"I feel a bit worried in winter season as the whole nature suffers from scarcity of grass during that time", she said.

"She did not get any support under the government's different social schemes" said

Chairman Aftabuzzaman of Alambiditar Union Parishad (UP), said he will bring her under such a programme if she contacts him.



Sundari Bala sorts out quality grass at Paikan village of Gangachara upazila in Rangpur to earn her livelihood.

PHOTO: STAR



The District Forest Office cuts down more than half of the 5,315 trees marked for felling along the Dhaka-Barisal Highway to expand the road in Barisal.

PHOTO: STAR

Most of marked trees cut

DFO plans to fell 5315 trees for expansion of Dhaka-Barisal highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The local forest office has cut down more than half of the 5,315 trees marked for felling along the Dhaka-Barisal Highway.

The District Forest Office (DFO) decided to cut the trees in October last year after the Roads and Highways Department requested it for extension of the road.

DFO called a tender on January 11 for sale of 29,040 square feet (sft) of the wood of valuable trees and 11,018 sft of firewood.

A four-member committee, headed by Divisional Forest Officer Golam Quddus Bhuiyan, was

formed for evaluation of the trees on February 15, said DFO Deputy Director Md Abdul Qayum.

Cutting of the trees started in March.

The committee estimated the price of the wood from 5,315 trees to be Tk 47,08,908 only while local wood traders said its market price is over Tk 1.5 crore.

"We received Tk 47,08,908 from sale of trees, including mahogany, chambol, karai, shishu, babla and rain trees," Qayum said.

Local wood trader Uttam Kumar Das said rain tree costs Tk 400 per sft, mahogany Tk 800 to Tk 1,500 per sft, karai Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 sft now, but the value will rise after aging of the wood.

Manik Talukder, a trader in Kashipur area, said he purchased 30 trees for Tk 2 lakh.

"The prices of live trees and wood are not the same as cutting a tree takes huge expenditure," said DFO Range Officer Tapos Kumar Sarker.

"We will send a letter to the Ministry of Forests and Environment, seeking permission to fell 74 more trees that are not included in the 5,315 marked trees as the price per tree is around Tk 2 lakh," he added.

Barisal unit Consumer Association of Bangladesh Secretary Ranajit Dutta said the prices of the trees are less than in the local market.

Abducted indigenous girl traceless for 30 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An indigenous girl of Dharampasha upazila in Sunamganj still remains traceless 30 days into her abduction.

The 14-year-old girl of Laxmipur village and a student of Class X of a local high school.

Her family members said Moin Uddin, 25, son of Nur Nabi of nearby village Rupnagar, along with his friends used to stalk the girl on her way to school. On June 7, the victim protested it which angered Moin.

On June 8, a gang of 8 to 10 allegedly led by Moin swooped on the house of the girl and abducted her. The following day, police rescued the victim from Moin's house and handed her over to the family.

On June 10, the victim's father filed a case with Dharampasha Police Station, accusing 11 people including Moin.

On June 13, the victim was again abducted by the same gang. Later, her father filed a general diary in this connection.

The girl's father questioned the role of the law enforcers as they are yet to rescue her.

Officer-in-Charge Mizanur Rahman of the police station said they are trying their best to rescue the girl.

Allocate shops for genuine traders

Demand Chatmohar traders, also want action against AC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Aggrieved traders of Mathurapur Bazar of Chatmohar upazila under the district formed a human chain in front of the upazila nirbahi officer's office yesterday, demanding cancellation of the new lease of the shops made through alleged nepotism by the assistant commissioner (AC-Land).

They also demanded action against the official for 'depriving' genuine traders.

Recently, the AC (Land) has given lease of 140 shops among the local businessmen in Mathurapur Haat. In last year, the upazila administration removed 60 shops there for establishing a new market there.

Over 50 businessmen of the Mothurapur haat who joined the human chain alleged that the AC (Land) has given lease of the new shops according to his own choice, depriving the traders who are conducting business at Mathurapur Bazar for 30 years.

The AC allocated seven shops located in the front side of the market to local influential businessman Md Rejaul Karim, his relatives and an employee, the aggrieved traders alleged.

They demanded investigation of the allegation and action against the official for what they said distributing the shops according to his own choice and depriving the genuine traders.

Ziarul Haque Shintu, Mokhesur Rahman Bidyut, Abdur Razzak and Monirul Islam spoke there.

Chatmohar AC (Land) Mizanur Rahman refuted the allegation, saying, "Rejaul and his relatives who got the lease are real businessmen of the market while one of his employees got lease of a shop following rules."

"We removed 60 shops but allotted 140 shops. And so, the real traders were not deprived although many new traders joined the list of allottees."

"A few influential traders demanded front site shops at the market but we could not satisfy all. And so, they became angry," he said.

Madrasa vice principal murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A madrasa teacher was hacked to death in Koyra upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased was Mawlana Abdul Hi, 58, son of Sheikh Shahor Ali, and vice principal of Siddikia Fazil Madrasa. He had two wives.

Police and locals said criminals killed Abdul Hye and dumped the body into a nearby pond.

Informed by locals, police recovered the body from the pond and sent it to Khulna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

They also seized a sharp weapon from the spot.

Family members said Abdul Hye had been suffering from a mental disorder for long. Sometimes he left the house and lived at the madrasa.

Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station, said the victim might have been killed over family feud.

No case was lodged as of filing of this report around 8:00pm yesterday.

Man gets life for raping minor girl

Another jailed for 3 yrs for torturing wife

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A man was yesterday given life imprisonment for raping a minor girl in Jessore while another was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for torturing his wife in Manikganj.

A Jessore court sentenced a man to life imprisonment for raping a minor girl in Jessore town in March 2006.

Convict Mohsin Ali is son of Abdur Rahman of Jhumjhumur area in the town.

Judge Amit Kumar Dey of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal also fined him Tk 1 lakh, in default, to suffer three years more in jail.

According to the case statement, Mohsin picked up a 10-year-old girl and raped her on March 7 in 2006.

Victim's father lodged a case with Sadar Police Station accusing Mohsin on April 30.

Meanwhile, a court in Manikganj sentenced a man to three years' imprisonment for torturing his wife.

The court also fined him Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer one more month in prison.

The convict is Abed Khan, 35, son of Hayat Khan of Kholeshwar village in Singair upazila. Abed has been absconding since the complaint was filed on September 3 in 2012.

Judge of Manikganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Hasina Raushan Jahan announced the verdict. The court, however, acquitted Abed's parents.

Tania Akter, 28, daughter of Sohrab Hossain of Purba-Vakum village in Singair upazila, was married to Abed on February 10 in 2012.

After just one month of marriage, Abed demanded Tk 3 lakh as dowry. When Tania refused to pay, Abed tortured her.

Sohrab called an arbitration meeting at his house on April 10. Abed attended the meeting and again demanded dowry. He beat her up as she refused.

Our correspondents in Manikganj and Benapole contributed to this story.



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GD-1422

3 Neo JMB men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chawabganj

Detective Branch of police arrested three suspected militants of Neo JMB from two areas in the district early Wednesday.

The arrestees are Abdul Malek alias Alam, 46, of Bagdanga village under Sadar upazila, Al Amin alias Lutu, 25, and Ismail Hossain, 20, of Shibnagar-Trimohoni village under Shibganj upazila.

Plain-clothes police arrested Malek from his Bagdanga house, and Al Amin and Ismail from Kansat Bazar area of Shibganj upazila around 3:30am, said Mahbub Alam, inspector of DB police.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Mohammad Mithun, 25, son of Shariful Islam of Suryanarayanpur village under Sadar upazila, with 19 kg of explosive materials from Shibirer More of the upazila around 8:30pm on Wednesday, said ASP Enamul Karim of Chapainawabganj Rab.

Later, they handed him over to Sadar Police Station and filed a case.

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