



Jute is piled up at the ground of Alauddin Ahmed Degree College in Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila for sale, hampering academic activities. PHOTO: STAR

Extra holiday!

Rambling Kushtia market causes school and college closure every Thursday

AMANUR AMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

The Alauddin Ahmed Degree College and United High School in Banshgram village of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila could be said to be ideal educational institutions, for students who like to put their feet up. While across the rest of the country Thursday is a normal working day, here it's an extra holiday. Every Thursday, due to the disruption of the adjacent morning-to-evening Banshgram bazar, which regularly spills over onto the grounds of these two institutions, classes are not often held.

Both institutions were established in the 1990s. The market is one of the oldest in Kushtia, having been active for around a century. According to locals, the problem for the school and college occurs each Thursday when the market by tradition expands to sell wholesale commodities in addition to daily essentials.

On a Thursday the loudspeakers, the commotion of crowds and the shouting of hawkers, in addition to the physical occupation of school and college grounds to sell wholesale jute, onion, paddy and other crops, is incompatible with a congenial learning environment.

The school has around 700 students while another 400 study at the college; but

on Thursdays, along with many of the teachers, most simply don't turn up. Everybody knows classes will likely be cancelled.

"It makes no difference if we go to school on a Thursday or not, to be frank," says one of the college teachers. "There will be hardly any students to teach. It's a long-term reality that we have to cope with; the impact across all educational activities is dire."

"I've seen it like this for the last four years, ever since I started to study here," says a class ten student of the high school.

"We can hardly even enter the school due to the noisy market crowd," says second year intermediate student Taher Afroz.

"I have asked several times for the market not to be run like that," says the high school's headmaster Faruk Hossain. "But they don't care. It's very difficult to run any class on a Thursday." The college principal, Habibur Rahman, agrees.

"It's not easy to tell a farmer to go elsewhere when he finds no other place to sell his crop at the market than the school and college grounds," says the market's lessee Azizur Rahman. "We do try to keep the market within its boundary."

Kumarkhali's Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahinuzzaman told The Daily Star that the market has a lease over a specific area only and that he will look into the matter.

6km gridlock on Comilla-Sylhet road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Thousands of passengers were stuck in a six-kilometre tailback on the Comilla-Sylhet highway yesterday. The tailback ensued yesterday morning when a stone-laden truck got stuck in large potholes of the vital highway followed by a pipeline of Bakhrabad Gas Distribution Company Limited.

Traffic Inspector (TI) Mujibur Rahman of Brahmanbaria Traffic Police said the tailback stretched from Ramrail in Sadar upazila to Puniout bypass area.

Due to the situation, hundreds of vehicles remained stuck on the highway for several hours, causing immense sufferings to passengers, the TI said.

TEESTA PROJECT IRREGULARITIES ACC investigation begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A two-member team of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday started probe into different irregularities in implementation of various development programmes of the country's largest Teesta Irrigation Project under Water Development Board (WDB) in Dalia division of the district.

The team comprises of Assistant Director of ACC in Dinajpur region Birkanto Roy and Deputy Assistant Director Md Kamruzzaman.

According to the letter of ACC given to WDB in Dalia, it is learnt that the ACC team was likely to investigate irregularities of development works under 'request for quotation' (RFQ) and emergency works in 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Those works include repairing of right and left embankments of the Teesta river and the main canal and purchase of different machinery and spare parts in the form of 64 projects.

Regarding the irregularities, reports were published in different newspapers on August 4 and 5 in 2015 titled 'misappropriation of money of 64 projects in Dalia division of WDB.'

Responding to the report, Azizul Huque, deputy assistant director of ACC head office in Dhaka, sent a letter to WDB office in Dalia division on October 6 last year asking officials concerned and contractors to appear before the ACC head office in person and give clarification before October 16 the same year.

But the officials concerned, instead of following the directives, sent a letter with clarification to ACC with signatures of contractors and WDB officials, which were not accepted.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Birkanto Roy sent a letter to the WDB in Dalia October 2 this year asking officials concerned and contractor to be present in executive engineer's office on October 18 and face probe.

Mostafizur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB's Dalia division, admitted of arrival of ACC team which started investigation on irregularities if any.

Dedicated Gaibandha teacher runs free remedial classes

K M REZAUL HOQUE with ANDREW EAGLE

It's Friday. Gideri Bilateral High School in Gaibandha Sadar upazila should be quiet, but far from empty, around 160 students from various schools, have gathered to study English and mathematics. Teacher Rakibul Islam Rana from Dakkhin Gideri village is busy leading classes with his laptop. Rana's classes are for remedial students from poor families. His classes are free.

"I was very weak in both English and maths," says class-four student Mizanur Rahman who attends Purbo Dhutichora Primary School. "Rana sir has really helped me grasp both of these subjects. He teaches so well."

"My father can't afford all school expenses for me and my two siblings," says class-five student Rupali Akhter, enrolled at Gideri Primary School. "Rana sir gives lessons for free and

helps with school supplies too."

"As I am a labourer I just can't cover the full cost of schooling for my two children, who study in classes five and eight," says parent Sohrab Ali from Dhutichora village. "Rana extends all possible support, especially in helping them with the difficult subjects."

During the week, Rana works as an assistant teacher at a girls' high school in Dharmapur of Sundarganj upazila. It's mostly a weekend that his remedial classes run, with students from classes four, five and eight in attendance. He has a final-year honours student, Salim Mia, to help teach the maths.

"It's a critical learning period, classes five to eight," Rana explains. "Many children drop out of school in these years, often due to poor marks in English and maths. They can't always master the subjects at school and those from poor backgrounds commonly can't study well at home

either. They become gripped with fear when the exams arrive, and their guardians, disappointed by weak results, sometimes send them to do farm or other work after that. I want to support the children through these critical years. That's why I teach voluntarily."

"Rana is a greatly appreciated teacher," says local social worker Golam Asik Jadu. "He does an excellent job for poor students. I think all teachers should follow his example."

"We encourage his classes," says Gideri Bilateral High School's headmaster, Abu Bakker Siddique. "We give him use of two rooms at our school for these extra classes so he can help our poor students achieve better results."

"I do feel proud to be doing something for disadvantaged remedial students," Rana says.

"I'd very much like to involve more teachers in voluntary work."

Malta brings smile to Rangamati growers

ANVIL CHAKMA, Rangamati

Malta cultivation is becoming very popular with farmers in Baghaichhari upazila of the district as it is a profitable crop.

"I cultivated 65 trees on one acre of land in 2013. Some of the trees bore fruit from 2014, and almost half the trees had maltas growing in 2016. This year, almost all the trees are giving fruit and the sale is good," said Sumitra, 35, a Malta orchard owner in Tulaban village.

On a recent visit to the village, this correspondent saw ripe malta hanging from the branches, which were bowed down by the weight of the fruit. The weight of each malta is 250 gram to 300 gram.

"Last year, I sold more than Tk 80,000 worth of malta. I hope to get Tk 1.5 lakh this season, spending only Tk 25,000," he said.

One kg of large and sweet malta is selling at Tk 100 in the local market, so people are happy to buy the fruit, Sumitra added.

After seeing the success of Sumitra, others have also become inspired and interested in cultivating malta.

Real Chakma, 32, said he was inspired by Sumitra to cultivate malta and got good production this year from his orchard.

Moha Ranjan Chakma, 35, a fruit trader, said he collected malta from the orchards this year. He sold them at high price because the quality of the fruit is good.

Deputy Director of the district Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Krishno Prashad Mallik said malta was grown on 54 hectares of land and the production was 635 tonnes in the district this year. The yield has been good due to favourable weather, he added.

He said a pilot project was taken up for the first time in CHT with malta called Barri-1, adding that around 18,000 malta plant were distributed by DAE among the farmers in the district this year.

Headmaster suspended for selling school items

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A primary school headmaster was suspended on charge of selling furniture and books of the institution in the black market in Mirzaganj yesterday.

The accused is Md Farid Ahmed Khan, headmaster of Andua KN Government Primary School.

Morium Pervin, upazila assistant education officer, said Farid sold some old benches, tables and books without approval from the authority concerned.

Informed that some buyers were taking those items to a boat in presence of the headmaster, the UNO rushed to the spot and caught him red handed.



Rakibul Islam Rana conducts remedial classes for free, helping primary and secondary students to overcome their weakness in English and mathematics, on weekly holidays. The photo was taken from Gideri Bilateral High School in Gaibandha Sadar upazila. PHOTO: STAR



A farmer in Tulaban village under Baghaichhari upazila of Rangamati in front of a tree bearing maltas, which are very popular as they bring good profit. PHOTO: STAR

College girl hacked, attacker arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested a youth from Mohonganj Railway Station area on Tuesday night on charge of hacking a college girl in Kendua upazila earlier on the day.

The arrestee, Emon, 22, was produced before a Netrakona court with a seven-day remand prayer yesterday, said Swapon Chandra Sarker, OC of Kendua Police Station.

Teachers and students joined by public representatives and civil society members formed a human chain in Kendua Upazila Complex area yesterday demanding punishment of the criminal.

Jannatul Akhter, 17, daughter of freedom fighter Abdul Latif of Pathairkandi village in Itna upazila of adjacent Kishoreganj district, lived in a rented house at Shantinagar of the upazila headquarters for her study at Parvin Siraj Mohila College in Kendua.

Emon, son of Mohor Ali of Gagra village in Kendua, used to tease the girl, an HSC second year student, and offered her 'love proposal', which the girl declined, said police.

On Tuesday afternoon, Emon called out the girl from her house and hacked her indiscriminately.

Hearing her scream, locals rushed to the spot and took her to Kendua Upazila Health Complex. Later she was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Saiful Islam, principal of Parvin Siraj Mohila College, Saidur Rahman, principal of Kendua Degree College, Kendua Upazila Parishad vice chairmen Mofazzol Hossain Bhuiyan and Jahanara Rozy and Asadul Haque Bhuiyan, mayor of Kendua municipality, addressed the human chain.

STEP Skills Competition 2017

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
স্কিলস এ্যান্ড ট্রেনিং এনহ্যান্সমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট (STEP)
কারিগরি শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর
কারিগরি ও মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, এফ-৪/বি, আগারগাঁও, শেরে বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭

স্কিলস কম্পিটিশন-২০১৭

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার, বিশ্ব ব্যাংক এবং কানাডার আর্থিক সহায়তায় বাস্তবায়নাবীন "স্কিলস এ্যান্ড ট্রেনিং এনহ্যান্সমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট" ৪র্থ বারের মতো কারিগরি শিক্ষাদানের সর্ববৃহৎ প্রতিযোগিতা "স্কিলস কম্পিটিশন" আয়োজন করতে যাচ্ছে। ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এর শিক্ষার্থীদের মেধা ও উদ্ভাবনী শক্তির বিকাশে সহায়ক সৃজনশীল এই প্রতিযোগিতার প্রাথমিক পর্ব আগামী ২৬ অক্টোবর ২০১৭ তারিখ বৃহস্পতিবার সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকায় দেশব্যাপী ১৬২টির অধিক পলিটেকনিক ইনস্টিটিউটে একযোগে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণে আগ্রহী শিক্ষার্থীদের অনলাইনে রেজিস্ট্রেশন চলছে। স্কিলস কম্পিটিশনের ওয়েব সাইট (www.skillscompetition.com.bd) এ রেজিস্ট্রেশনের শেষ তারিখ ২২ অক্টোবর ২০১৭।

বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য STEP প্রকল্পের ওয়েব সাইট: www.step-dte.gov.bd ভিজিট করুন। অথবা ফোন করুন ৮১৮১৪৫৭ ও ০১৭১১৫৭৬৯৫০ নম্বরে।

এ বি এম আজাদ
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (যুগ্ম সচিব), STEP

THE WORLD BANK
GD - 2206

Canada

CHANNEL 9

Chakri.com

MiCroSD