



Officials hand over a solar panel to Monwara Begum at Prodhania Bari in Rajargaon union of Chandpur's Hajiganj upazila. Inset, Delwar Hossain of Mukundasar village in the upazila with his family members at the new house provided by the administration. PHOTO: STAR

Sweet abode for ultra-poor

154 families get new house as Hajiganj UNO takes initiative to make the upazila in Chandpur free from homeless people

ALAM PALASH, Chandpur

As many as 154 ultra-poor homeless families in Hajiganj upazila under the district have now new houses, thanks to the initiative of the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and cooperation from the rich people and people's representatives.

Chandpur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Abdus Sabur Mondal handed over the newly built houses and other necessary things to the homeless people during the last two weeks.

The beneficiaries have also been provided with different facilities including solar power, safe water, sanitary latrine, agricultural equipment and training on employment.

"As part of our initiative to provide dwellings for 217 ultra-poor families in 12 unions of Hajiganj, houses have been handed over to 154 families. Work for building houses for another 63 families is going on with the target to complete those within this month," said Hajiganj UNO Baishakhi Barua.

"For building the houses, each costing Tk 83 thousand, we took assistance from local rich people and people's representatives. Different amenities like solar power, safe drinking water, and sanitary latrines are also being given to the beneficiaries," the UNO said.

"Following an announcement that houses will

be given to ultra-poor homeless families, the UNO conducted a survey in this union and arranged houses for 29 families here," Abdul Hadi Miah, chairman of Rajargaon Uttar union parishad, told this correspondent during the latter's visit on last Saturday.

"I bore the expenses for making houses for six families. The rest have been built with the help of rich people and other people's representatives of the area," he said.

Wahida Begum, an ultra-poor widow of Shekher Bari at Mukundasar village in Rajargaon, said she can now live in peace and safety with her children as the UP chairman has built a new house for her.

"After knowing about our hardship, DC Sabur Mondal has taken up the responsibility of bearing the educational expenses of my son, a college student," she said.

Wahida's neighbour day labourer Delwar Hossain also expressed happiness after getting a new house for his seven-member family.

"Our goal is to turn the houses as ideal ones for the poor beneficiaries and help them become self reliant. Work is going on with government and non-government assistance to build a total of 550 houses to make Hajiganj upazila free from homeless people by March," said DC Abdus Sabur Mondal.

RAPE OF MARMA GIRL Protest continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Hill Women's Federation (HWF) observed a roads and waterways blockade in the district yesterday, demanding punishment of the culprits who raped a Marma girl and assaulted her sister at Orachhari village in Bilaichhari of the district in the early hours of January 22.

No untoward incident happened during the dawn to dusk blockade when roads and waterways communication with 10 upazilas of Rangamati as well as Chittagong remained suspended.

However, Rangamati town areas were kept outside the blockade programme due to the ongoing SSC examinations.

Activists of HWF and Pahari Chhatra Parishad were seen picketing on roads.

In the morning picketers burnt tyres on several spots, including Rangamati-Khagrachhari link road.

"We observed the programme peacefully," said HWF General Secretary Manti Chakma.

A large number of policemen were deployed at the entry points of Rangamati town and different other places of the district to ward off any trouble.

Jhenidah Boro farmers upbeat as weather favourable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A large number of farmers in the district are planting Boro paddy this season with the hope of getting bumper production and good profit as the weather is favourable.

District Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director GM Abdur Rauf said the target is for planting Boro paddy on 82,144 hectares of land in six upazilas of the district, while the achievement has been 74,830 hectares up to the first week of February. The target will be surpassed by the time planting is completed, he added.

Of the six upazilas, 15,150 hectares

of land have been cultivated in Sadar upazila, 14,345 hectares in Shailakupa, 5,350 hectares in Harinakundo, 19,660 hectares in Moheshpur, 5,065 hectares in Kotchandpur and 15,260 hectares in Kaliganj upazila.

The target was 82,020 hectares in six upazilas in the 2016-17 fiscal year, while the achievement was 83,450 hectares.

Farmers said they got good price last year, so they are planting Boro paddy in the hope of getting high yield. They expect that they will get bumper production this year and good price.

Ansar Ali of Ganna village in Sadar upazila said he has cultivated

Boro on five bighas of land this year, expecting that he will get bumper production, adding that he sold his produce for Tk 950 to Tk 1,000 per maund last year.

Abdul Kader of Jorapukuria in Harinakundo upazila said he has cultivated Boro on four bighas at a cost of Tk 30,000. He expects that he will get around 80 maunds of paddy that he can sell for Tk 80,000 at least, he added.

DD GM Abdur Rauf said the farmers are very happy and relaxed as they got bumper yield last year. They will get high yield and good price this year as the weather is very favourable, he added.

TWO-DAY CONFERENCE BEGINS Maternal health emphasised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The government is giving special attention to maternal health and fistula, Saimum Sarwar Kamol, lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-3, said at the inaugural function of the second international conference on the issue in the district town yesterday.

Such conferences, organised by Hope Foundation for Women and Children of Bangladesh, will help in eliminating the disease and improvement in maternal health in the country, Kamol said in his speech as the chief guest there.

Briefing about the symptoms of fistula and its treatment, Dr Iftekhar Mahmud, president of Hope Foundation, said the organisation arranges treatment of fistula affected patients free of cost.

About 500 delegates from 70 countries are taking part in the two-day conference.

Former AL MP's men fell trees Nilphamari Zila Parishad files case against her 10 people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Men of former Awami League lawmaker felled seven roadside trees in Domar upazila of the district for constructing a market next to the Domar-Dimla road.

Zila Parishad Surveyor Abdus Salam filed a case with Dumar Police Station On February 9 against 10 close aides of former MP Hamida Banu Shova, including Delwar Hossain, 30, and site caretaker Abdul Kader, 30.

Visiting the site on Friday, this correspondent found that construction work of the market is going on in full swing.

Besides, logs of the seven felled trees, including mahogany and jackfruit, were kept scattered on the lawmaker's land in Soto Rauta mouza in Domar town.

Aminur Rahman, 30, who used to run a small grocery shop beside the road in front of the MP's land, said prior to starting the construction work lawmaker Shova along with 10 to 15 men forcibly evicted 24 small traders from there.

Bicycle mechanic Andaru Karmakar, nut and betel leaf trader Nur Badsha and tea-stall owner Sanjit Kumar said the lawmaker's men felled the trees on January 24 in broad daylight.

"Shova madam told us to engage labourers and fell the seven trees," site caretaker Abdul Kader said, adding, "We just followed her orders."

"People who were engaged in the job prevented me saying none can stop them from cutting the trees," Surveyor Abdus Salam said.

Zila Parishad Chairman Joinal

Abedin said Shova's men misbehaved with the official surveyor when he went to stop the tree cutting on January 24.

Ex-Awami League MP from Nilphamari-1 constituency Hamida Banu Shova said all the felled trees were on her land and she is the owner of those trees.

Zila Parishad brought the false allegation only to embarrass her, said Shova, also member of the party's district executive committee.

Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) of Dumar Police Station Khalilur Rahman said he has started investigation after receiving a written complaint filed on behalf of Zila Parishad.



Men of a former Awami League lawmaker in Nilphamari's Domar upazila felled these roadside trees beside the Domar-Dimla road for clearing way for constructing a market there. PHOTO: STAR

Duck farming brings new hope

KONGKON KARMAKER with ANDREW EAGLE

Success doesn't always keep good time; sometimes it arrives late. Such is the experience of 52-year-old Shahidul Islam from Rasulpur village in Naogaon's Atrai upazila, who after many years of struggle has finally landed on his feet. For him, the key to solvency turned out to be rather simple: a matter of ducks.

"I rode rickshaws. I worked as a salesman to maintain my family. Times were always difficult. Plagued by financial constraints I never knew mental satisfaction," he recalls. "Duck farming changed that. The best thing has been the chance

to live with dignity." The transformation in his financial circumstances began humbly on a day in mid-May, 2015. As Shahidul wandered through a village he noticed a large water body. "I don't know why, but I started to wonder how such a water body could be used for income," he says. "Later the idea of duck farming dawned on me, although I had no experience farming ducks."

He had no money to get started so, on the following day, he went to a local non-government organisation to arrange a loan. When the money met his hand he did not delay: Shahidul went straight to

the market in Ahsanganj and purchased fifty ducks.

Thus began a new struggle. To look after the ducks was laborious. He built them a home alongside the water body. He woke early every morning to release the ducks, only to gather them again in an evening. Such has been his daily routine for the last three years.

"I found that raising ducks in this way offered a reasonable profit but after about a year I wanted to take the business further," Shahidul says. By this time the ducks were regularly laying eggs. Shahidul built a hatchery at his home and grew his flock to 600 birds.

"I now sell eggs, adult ducks and also baby ducks born at my hatchery," says Shahidul. "Duck farming on a public water body is a cheaper option than having a private duck farm. The ducks feed themselves on natural food like snails. There's no need to give them extra food."

Over the last eighteen months Shahidul's enterprise has earned him around Tk 3 lakh. It's the sort of success that has attracted the interest of many.

"Shahidul's business was really eye-catching," says Faruk Hossain from nearby Ghoshpara village. "After seeing his success I also started rearing ducks, and I'm not the only one."

"Around fifteen people from this village, including previously unemployed young people are now involved in duck farming," estimates Ghoshpara resident Shahad Ali.

Shahidul acknowledges the support of local livestock officials in helping him to realise his dream of solvency. "I couldn't have done it without them," he says. "They helped me with the ducks, and the ducks have given me hope."



Shahidul Islam looks after his ducks on the bank of a beel at Rasulpur village in Naogaon's Atrai upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

Fire Safety Workshop for Graduate Engineers

Background:
In recent times, Bangladesh has experienced repeated fire incidents in industrial installations particularly in garment sector. These incidents can be attributed to the systematic lack of established fire safety protocols and lack of awareness in the fire safety standards. The Engineers who are involved in the design and maintenance/compliance in the RMG and other industrial sectors can play an important role in installing, maintaining the fire protection system and improve safe practices to minimize fire hazards so that a fire safe workplace is ensured.

Objectives:
Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is offering a four-day long certification workshop on fire safety for the Engineers dealing with compliance of the building codes and other regulatory safety requirements in industrial and commercial establishments. This workshop is designed to provide the participants an essential depth of knowledge to enable them to better understand the fire safety strategy of the building, to install and maintain fire protection devices and to act properly to improve the fire safety measures in the workplace.

Who are the Prospective Participants:
Engineering degree holders or university graduates working in the industrial and commercial sectors in Bangladesh. Fresh graduates can also apply who have interest to develop career in this multi-disciplinary field.

Schedule and Venue:
Date: 29, 30 & 31 March, 2018
Time: 3:00pm to 7:00pm, Thursday
Time: 9:00am to 12:45pm, Friday
Time: 9:00am to 7:00pm, Saturday
Venue: ITN Seminar Room (4th Floor of ARI-ITN Building, BUET)
No. of Participants: 35 (approx.)

Resource Persons:
Faculty members from different departments of BUET with training and professional experience in fire safety related projects of both national and international exposure.

Application Details:
Deadline: 25th March, 2018
Course Fee: Tk 10,000 per person
Application form: Available at Room No. CE 404 on 3rd Floor of Civil Engineering Building, BUET
Contact: Md. Fakhru Islam, Accounts Assistant, Phone: 01711673982, E-mail: fsp.buet@gmail.com
Office: Room No. 404

Head
Department of Civil Engineering, BUET,
Civil Engineering Building, BUET, Dhaka