

Physically challenged woman raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A physically challenged rape victim from Adampur union under Kamalganj upazila of the district is undergoing treatment at Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.

The 27-year-old woman, daughter of a local poor farmer, was raped on Monday evening, said her family members.

“Nawab Ali, 50, brother of a former member of Adampur Union Parishad (UP), raped my sister in our house when we were outside. He has some cultivable land beside our house,” the victim’s brother said.

The victim was admitted to Kamalganj Upazila Health Complex and later taken to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

“Nawab also committed such crimes earlier but none dared to complain against him as he is an influential person in the area,” he said.

Sudhin Chandra Das, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Kamalganj Police Station, said, “The victim’s brother filed a case against Nawab Ali. Investigation has started and we are trying to arrest the accused who has gone into hiding.”

Contacted over phone, Nawab Ali claimed that he is innocent and some people are trying to destroy his good-will following a dispute over purchasing a land at the village.

Adampur UP Abdal Hossain said, “We demand exemplary punishment of the criminal who committed the heinous crime. The victim, a physically challenged woman, have been getting government allowance for people with disability for long.”



Fishing boats lie idle on the dried bed of a branch of the Teesta river at Dowani village in Hatibandha upazila of Lalmonirhat.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Rivers in Lalmonirhat drying up

Fishermen start changing their profession for earning livelihood

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Many fishermen in the district are changing their ancestral profession because they are not able to continue doing it as all the small rivers and beels in the district have dried up, and the major rivers Teesta and Dharla are following.

They are taking up jobs of rickshaw pulling, farm labourers or day labourers and other menial work for earning their livelihood.

Ranjit Chandra Das, 52, a fisherman of Dowani village in Hatibandha upazila, said they became jobless from the second week of October this year as all the 16 small rivers, 45 beels and other water bodies dried up early, but they had caught

fish from these water bodies till December last year. “We are also not getting fish in two major rivers as they are also nearly dried up,” he said, adding that their boats are lying idle.

“It is a bad time for us as we are without income and we have no alternative to earn a livelihood except catching fish,” said fisherman Nur Islam, 58, of the same village. “There was low rainfall this year so local water bodies did not get enough water and dried up early,” he added.

Ruhidas Chandra Das, 45, a fisherman of Kulaghat village in Sadar upazila, said the small river Ratnai is their source of earning, but it dried up early this year, as a result they are facing job crisis. “Some of us are now buying fish from fish farmers

and selling them in the local market, but the earning is insufficient to maintain my family,” he said.

Fisherman Nabin Chandra Das, 50, of the same village, said he has started driving rental battery-run rickshaw in the town. “I invested Tk one lakh for buying nets this year, but I did not earn even 50 percent of the investment,” he added.

Delowar Rahman, 45, a fisherman of Sarpukur village in Aditmari upazila, said he is going to change his profession from fishing because it is a bad time for fishermen as the small rivers, beels and other water bodies are dried up. “It is now rare to get river fish in the local markets,” he added.

“Now we have no chance to continue

our ancestral job of fishing as rivers and all other water bodies are without water,” said Narayan Chandra Das, 67, a fisherman at Majhipara of Kaliganj upazila. “I have already changed my profession, and am working as farm labourer,” he said.

District Fisheries Officer Rezaul Karim said there are 5,350 fishermen families in the district, adding that most of them are dependent on fishing from boats in the water bodies, while the others are engaged in farming fish in the ponds.

“Fishermen get lease of government water bodies, but almost all of those are dried up,” he said. “Some listed fishermen are under the government’s safety net programme, and they are given support,” he added.

12 BNP-Jamaat men arrested

STAR COUNTRY DESK

At least 12 BNP and Jamaat leaders and activists were arrested in four districts over the last two days.

In Rangpur, police arrested six Jamaat leaders and activists yesterday for allegedly planning to carry out sabotage in Mithapukur upazila.

The arrestees are Anisul Haque, Abdul Hamid, Rawshan Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Abdul Matin, and Mottaleb Hossain, of Mohishmuri village in Mithapukur upazila.

Mithapukur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ashiqur Rahman said police arrested them while planning for sabotage at Joyrampur village early yesterday. Police sent them to Rangpur jail through a local court, Ashiqur said.

In Habiganj, police arrested Lakhai upazila unit BNP member Shahnur Rahman Talukder on Monday night.

Police said Shahnur was detained in a sabotage case.

In Tangail, Detective Branch of (DB) of police arrested district BNP Organising Secretary Shafiqur Rahman Shafiq on Monday night.

Shafiq was arrested in a case for subversive activities near Tangail Court area on September 5, said police.

Meanwhile in Satkhira, four Chhatra Shibir activists, including district unit President Ruhul Amin Mamun and Secretary Nurul Amin, were arrested on Monday.

They were holding a meeting for planning sabotage, said Inspector Shahrier Hasan of Satkhira DB police.

Our correspondents in Dinajpur, Moulvibazar, Tangail and Satkhira contributed to the story.



Yusuf Azad Munna tends dragon fruit trees at his orchard at Adarsha Gram village in Naikhongchhari upazila of Bandarban.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT

Munna shines through dragon fruit farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Adharsha Gram, a remote village in Bandarban’s Naikhongchhari upazila is gradually becoming a centre of attraction for people of surrounding areas after a youth has successfully cultivated dragon fruit for the first time in the hill upazila.

Seeing the success of Yusuf Azad Munna, who started the exotic fruit cultivation at his own initiative, gradually many people in the area have been showing interest in dragon fruit farming.

Naikhongchhari Upazila Agriculture Department and Naikhongchhari Horticulture Centre have jointly provided assistance to Munna whose success has encouraged many.

Following Munna’s footsteps, acting Chairman of Naikhongchhari Upazila Parishad Kamal Uddin, Palak Barua and many others have come forward and started dragon fruit farming.

The pink colour fruit hangs from

a cactus like plant and contains many vitamins and mineral salt, people concerned said.

During a recent visit to Adarsha Gram this correspondent saw dragon fruit plants on Munna’s 40-decimal orchard creeping over a five-foot pole and many ripe and unripe fruit hanging from the trees.

Munna said he planted 160 saplings of the fruit which he collected from Naikhongchhari Horticulture Centre free of cost in 2016, and later added 30 more saplings.

All the 190 plants bore fruits for the first time this year and each plant has five to six fruits, Munna said, adding that he has earned Tk 50,000 by selling some of the fruits and hope to sell the remaining fruits in the next two weeks.

Munna said he made the orchard by spending Tk 80,000.

The dragon fruit plants bear fruit in three to four years and a mature tree bears 25 to 30 fruits, Munna said, adding that one kilogram of

dragon fruit is selling for Tk 600 in the local markets.

After seeing success on experimental basis, Munna now plans to expand his farm.

Upazila Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer Mohammad Muhibul Islam Rajib said dragon is an exotic fruit and the plant is ever-green cactus.

The flower of the fruit is white and almost looks like night-queen, and it contains good amounts of vitamins and has good taste, he said.

Dr Ranjan Chowdhury, a physician at Naikhongchhari Upazila Health Complex, said dragon fruit builds resistance against diseases and the fruit is beneficial for diabetes patients.

The fruit also reduces cholesterol level and keeps the blood pressure under control, the doctor said.

Naikhongchhari Press Club President Shamim Iqbal Chowdhury said many people in the upazila are now showing interest to follow Munna’s example.

'Give capital punishment to Sanwar's killers'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Villagers and family members of Md Sanwar Hossain, who was killed by criminals at Nagar Jalpai village in Sadar upazila on October 31, yesterday demanded capital punishment for the killers.

Several hundred people, including women and children as well as family members of Sanwar, came to the town in processions from Karatia, Jalpai, Nagar Jalpai and Jagannath Jalpai villages in the morning.

They formed a human chain in front of Tangail Press Club and later held a press conference at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the club.

Speakers at the press conference said local criminals hacked Sanwar, a trader in the town, with sharp weapons at Nagar Jalpai village when he was coming to the town on October 31, leaving him seriously injured.

The criminals killed Sanwar in a preplanned way as he protested their criminal activities in the village, they said.

Village elder Hasmat Ali of Nagar Jalpai, Sanwar’s father, his brothers Sarwar Hossain and Anwar Hossain, and wife Moli Khan, mother of two sons, spoke at the press conference.

Sanwar was first admitted to Tangail General Hospital and later referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital on November 1, where he succumbed to his injuries around 10:30pm, they said.

Sanwar’s father Nurul Islam filed a murder case with Tangail Model Police Station the same day, accusing six people. The accused are Sabuj Miah, 23, Md Ratan, 27, Md Rashed, 36, Md Sijan, 20, Akter Hossain, 22, and Atoar Hossain, 52, of Nagar Jalpai village.

Tangail Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saidur Rahman said police have already arrested three of the accused. Drive to arrest the other three was going on, he added.

Arum farming on rise in Tangail

Low cultivation cost, good profit makes it popular among farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Farmers in the district are getting interested in commercial cultivation of arum (kochu in Bangla) as the vegetable requiring low production cost brings good profit.

It is cultivated mostly in Madhupur, Ghatail, Delduar, Nagarpur, Sakhipur and Sadar upazilas.

Different varieties of kochu including mukhi kochu, pani kochu, BARI pani kochu-1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and panchmukhi kochu, were cultivated on 757 hectares of land in the district this year and the yield is 16,690 tonnes, said Shariful Islam, sub-assistant agriculture officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Tangail.

Of it, 13,222 tonnes of panchmukhi kochu was produced on 505 hectares of land, 2,245 tonnes of pani kochu on 193 hectares, and 1,223 tonnes of mukhi kochu on 59 hectares, he said.

The production rate of pani kochu was 11.63 tonnes per hectare of land, panchmukhi kochu 26.18 tonnes and mukhi kochu 20.82 tonnes, he added.

There is a variety of BARI pani kochu-1, which is popularly known as lotiraj, said Mahmudul Hasan, upazila agriculture officer in Madhupur.

A few ordinary varieties of kochu including maan kochu and faan kochu are also grown in small amount of lands, said agriculture officials.

Several kochu growers said they got interested in the cultivation as it is more profitable than paddy and other crops.

A kg of pani kochu is sold at Tk 20 to Tk 25, panchmukhi kochu at Tk 30 to Tk 35 and mukhi kochu at Tk 25 to Tk 30, they said.

“I cultivate kochu as its production cost is lower than other crops and profit is high. Besides, the crop sees fewer diseases and there no need to use pesticides,” said Abdul Mannan of Chowbaria in Sadar upazila.

Another advantage of kochu cultivation is that it can be grown as an associate crop with others like banana and pineapple, said kochu cultivator Ramendra Barmon of Bekerkona in Madhupur.

Kochu production in the district sees a gradual rise every year as farmers are getting interested in its commercial cultivation, said Abdur Razzak, deputy director of DAE in Tangail.

The vegetable is rich in vitamins and calcium which can prevent different diseases in human body, he added.



Arum on sale at Park Market in Tangail town. Inset, full grown arum plants in a large field at Sagardighee in Ghatail upazila of Tangail.

PHOTO: STRA