



With hardly any warm clothes, members of a tea worker's family at Sonarupa tea garden colony in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila sit around their burning cooker to get warmth in the chilly weather. The photo was taken on Saturday night.

PHOTO: STAR

## Chilling winter, no warm hearts for tea workers

The impoverished people in dire need of warm clothes

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Ultra-poor tea workers in the district are shivering in the chilly winter as they are passing days in extreme misery without warm clothes. People living in the tea gardens are more vulnerable.

The minimum temperature recorded in Sreemangal was 8.8 degrees Celsius yesterday, said Anisur Rahman, observer of Sreemangal upazila met office.

Farmer Boloram Naidu, 63, of Fulcherra tea garden village in the upazila, said the cold wave has put many people in trouble this year.

Surjo Nayek, 76, said he is shivering in the cold at his tiny hut in Sonarupa Tea garden colony of Juri upazila as he has no warm clothes.

Surjo has been passing a miserable life as he is yet to get old age allowance or vulnerable group feeding (VGF) card or any other facilities from the government authorities.

"My wife is now 65. I am alone and helpless. Earlier I worked as a tea worker but now I am too weak. I get something to eat when people give or starve otherwise. I need a blan-

ket in this winter. I also want a VGF card or old age allowance," said Surjo.

Gonesh Nayek, a tea worker of Sonarupa tea garden in Juri, said he lives in a tiny room with his five family members. He is yet to get any warm clothes since he got a blanket in 2017.

Like Surjo and Gonesh, many people are crying for warm clothes.

Sajal Kanti Baori, member of Pahchim Juri Union Parishad, said "I got 20 blankets last year but got only 10 this year."

Pranesh Goalal, Kalighat UP chairman in Sreemangal upazila, said poor people do not have the ability to purchase warm clothes. As they cannot go out for work due to the fog and biting cold, they have to pass days half-starved.

Bijoy Banerjee, Rajghat UP chairman in Sreemangal, said he received only 900 pieces of warm clothes and distributed those among the cold-hit people in his union.

"I need around 15,000 pieces of warm clothes for the affected people of my union as there are 20,000 voters. Of them, 95% are tea workers," he said.

Makhon Lal Karmaker, central president of

Cha Sramik Union, said around four lakh tea workers live in the 92 tea gardens in Moulvibazar. Most of them, who live under poverty lines, are the worst victims. They have been passing their nights in the bitter cold wave.

Contacted, Ashraf Ali, relief and rehabilitation officer of Relief and Rehabilitation Department in Moulvibazar, said they received only 37,000 pieces of warm clothes from the ministry concerned.

They have already distributed the warm clothes among the chairmen of 67 union parishes and five municipalities and sought 50,000 more blankets for the cold-hit poor people of the district, he said.

Ashraf has also requested solvent people to help the poor.

The district administration has distributed several hundred blankets, said Deputy Commissioner Tofail Islam.

A number of patients, especially children and elderly people, are coming to hospitals with cold-related diseases, said Dr Polash Kumar Roy, resident medical officer of Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.

## Youth 'murdered'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A young man was found hanging mysteriously at his house in Uttar Mourail area of the town yesterday.

The deceased, Rakib Mia, 24, son of Lebanon expatriate Abdul Aziz of the area, was owner of a tailoring shop near Brahmanbaria Government College in Collegepara area.

Police suspect that he might have been killed in a planned way as his hands were tied with a towel and the door of his room was locked from outside, said Premdhan Majumder, Sub Inspector (SI) of Sadar Model Police Station.

Informed, police recovered the body around 2:00pm and sent it to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital for autopsy, he said.

Locals said Rakib's father and two elder brothers live in Lebanon, and he used to live in the district town along with his step-mother Jannat Akter.

SI Premdhan quoted Jannat as saying that she went to Rakib's room and found the door locked from outside.

She later broke open the door with the help of neighbours and found Rakib hanging from the ceiling, the SI added.

## SSC candidate killed by friend

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A teenage boy was hacked to death allegedly by one of his friends at Rudra Boyra village in Sarishabari upazila on Sunday night.

The deceased, Polash Miah, 17, son of Saiful Islam of Kandarpura village, was suppose to sit for the upcoming Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination scheduled for February 2 from Pogaldighi High School.

Quoting the deceased's family members, In-Charge of Tarakandi Police Investigation Centre Inspector Mohabbat Kabir said Sagar Miah, 19, son of Abdur Rashid of Rudra Boyra village, borrowed Tk 2,000 from his friend Polash.

Around 8:30pm, an altercation took place between the two when Polash went to Sagar's house and asked him to return the money, but Sagar refused to do so.

At one stage, Sagar hacked Polash with an axe, leaving him critically injured, said the inspector.

Local people rescued Polash and took him to Sarishabari Upazila Health Complex, but following deterioration of his condition he was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) a few hours after his admission.

But injured Palash succumbed to his injuries on his way to MMCH, he said, adding that they recovered the body and sent it to the hospital for autopsy.

Police were conducting drives to arrest the culprit involved in the killing, he further added.



This Bailey bridge on Sakhipur-Batajore road at Kirtonkhola Dhumkhali in Sakhipur upazila of Tangail has remained in an awful condition after it got badly damaged under the pressure of a loaded truck on December 29.

PHOTO: STAR

## Over 50 injured in clashes in 2 dists

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Around 12 people were injured in a clash on Monday between two rival groups over sand trading in Mohipur bazar area under Kalapara upazila of Patukhali, while 40 were injured in a clash between two groups over previous conflict in Baniachong upazila of Habiganj on Saturday.

In Patukhali, the injured are Abdur Rouf, 66, a member of Latachaplee Union Parishad (UP), Md Sultan Khan, 66, former member of the same UP, Serajul Islam, 50, Halim Sikder, 55, Md Harun, 45, Salam Sikder, 45, Manaj Uddin, 23, Reaz, 24, Readul, 18, Jahid, 18, Babu, 19, all of Mohipur union.

Md Harun was sent to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital as his condition was serious, while the rest were admitted to Kalapara Upazila Health Complex, our Patukhali correspondent reports.

Locals said there was an altercation between Rouf and Sultan over sand trading. At one stage, their supporters engaged in a clash.

"I am trading sand by keeping it on khas land. Sultan and his men attacked me, demanding money," Rouf said.

"I tried to talk with Rouf about keeping

sand on khas land but he and his men attacked me," Sultan said.

Mohipur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) (Inquiry) Mahbubur Rahman said he sent police to the spot after hearing about the matter.

"Nobody has filed any case over the matter. If anybody files a case, we will take steps," he added.

Meanwhile in Habiganj, about 40 people were injured in a clash between two groups of rival villagers over previous conflict at Baniachong upazila of Habiganj on Saturday night.

Witnesses said Kuddus Mia, 45, and his neighbour Ekash Mia of Alampur village in the same upazila locked in an argument over occupying a pond in the village, our Moulvibazar correspondent reports.

Later, the groups locked in a fierce clash with local weapons, leaving around 40 people injured.

On information, police went to the spot and opened fire to bring the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to different hospitals and local clinics.

Baniachong Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rashed Mubarak told this correspondent that additional law enforcers were deployed in the area to avert further chaos.

## Abandoned newborn rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An abandoned newborn, rescued near a canal at Borokapon in Rajnagar upazila of the district on Sunday afternoon, is undergoing treatment at Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.

Bullet-hit Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Sakhawat Hossain is now undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). The two night guards -- Babul Hossain and Belal Hossain -- were given first aid.

Quoting the victims and local people, Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Abul Monsur Ahmed said a gang of around 20 robbers entered the premises of the firm Noor and Sons, beat up the two night guards and tied their hands and legs and gagged them at around 2:30am.

The robbers also broke the CCTV cameras of the firm and tried to enter the vault, the OC said. Suspecting that something wrong was happening, local people informed police immediately.

On information, a patrol police team led by the ASI rushed to the spot but the robbers started firing at them and managed to flee the scene.

Sakhawat sustained bullet wound on his right hand and was rushed to MMCH.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Mymensingh Range) Nibash Chandra Mazi and Mymensingh Superintendent of Police Shah Md Abid Hossain visited the injured police officer at the hospital yesterday morning.

No case has been lodged yet.



Underprivileged children enjoy themselves at a function at Bandutia Baganbari in Manikganj town on Sunday. Inset, lunch being served to the kids at the programme.

PHOTO: STAR

## A joyous day for deprived kids

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A group of underprivileged children in the district town enjoyed a different day yesterday as a voluntary organisation held special programmes for them to mark the second founding anniversary of the organisation.

The children of Bewtha slum and their parents were present at the event organised by students' organisation Dishari at Bandutia Baganbari in the town.

Presence of Manikganj Deputy Commissioner (DC) SM Ferdous, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC-General) Md Babul Miah and Assistant Director of Consumer Rights Protection Directorate Manjur Mohammad Shahriar made the function more lively.

The then ADC (General) Manzur Mohammad Shahriar established the

organisation with some school and college students on January 13 in 2017.

The organisation has won the hearts of the children by organising pre-primary school and distributing books, pens, copybooks, new dresses for Eid, winter clothes and blankets, and arranging sports and entertainment programmes, the ADC said.

Sham-Meem-Jopa Bristi, finance secretary of the organisation and a first year student at Manikganj Government Women's College, said all the members are students. They give regular lessons to the children of pre-primary schools. "We give books and pens to each of the 30 students every month," she said.

All members of the organisation pay Tk 50 per month, which is spent on the children's welfare, she said.

One Alladi Akter said the teachers love them and give them new dresses and chocolates.

"I and my wife are day labourers so we cannot take care of our son. Dishari's members are teaching him," said Jahangir Alam, father of an underprivileged child.

Organising Secretary of the United States unit of Awami Svechchhasebok League Lutfar Rahman Jubayer, adviser of Dishari and President of Peoples Welfare Fund Reajul Islam, Porra Government Primary School Headmaster Parvin Akhter, administrator of Teachers' Dream, an online organisation for development of education, Rozina Mahmud, adviser of Dishari and former general secretary of Manikganj Press Club Zahangir Alam Biswas, were also present.