

Reopen all OMS outlets for ultra-poor people

Demand hard-pressed locals in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

All the twelve Open Market Sale (OMS) outlets in the town have remained closed since the beginning of January this year as they are yet to get fresh allocation of ata (coarse flour), depriving the beneficiaries, mostly low-income group people, from purchasing the item at fair price.

As a result, the ultra-poor people in the area are compelled to buy ata from the local markets at a high price.

Nearly 2,000 to 2,500 low-income group people from the slums, char and remote areas buy ata from 12 OMS outlets in the town everyday.

Although each beneficiary can buy 1 to 5 kg of ata at Tk 18 per kg from the OMS outlets, they are now buying each kg of the item at Tk 30 from the local markets.

Rickshaw puller Asgor Ali, 42, of Shaheed Shahjahan Colony in the town, said he used to purchase ata from the OMS outlet to maintain his family properly earlier, but now he is deprived of the facility as all the OMS outlets are closed.

Demanding reopening of the OMS outlets, day labourer Majid Mia, 48, of Khatamari village in Sadar upazila, said "OMS ata helps us to save Tk 10 to Tk 12 in each kg of the item, but it is stopped now."

Grocer Anwar Hossain of Uttara Road in the town said he used to sell each kg of ata at Tk 26 to Tk 27 only a month ago when the OMS outlets were open, but now he is selling the item at a high rate as he purchases it from the flour mill at a high price.

An OMS dealer in Banbhasa area of the town Abdur Rahim said all the enlisted 12 OMS dealers get a total allotment of 5,000 kg of ata everyday, adding that, "We are keeping our outlets closed for not getting our required allotments."

Talking to The Daily Star, Nilphamari District Food Controller Kazi Saifuddin, who is also performing additional duty as Lalmonirhat District Food Controller, said the OMS facility is suspended for a few days due to a delay in processing of papers.

"I have already sent all the necessary documents to the ministry concerned and hope that the OMS facility will reopen next week," he added.



Residents of Baludiar village in Chatmohar upazila of Pabna guarding their village from thieves and robbers. Such community groups have been formed in all 11 unions under the upazila to prevent robbery.

PHOTO: STAR

Villagers guard at night to ward off thieves and robbers

Community drive begins as the area in Pabna's Chatmohar sees rise in crimes

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

People of Chatmohar upazila have been spending sleepless nights patrolling different villages in the upazila with law enforcers for the last one week due to a rise in theft and robberies from the beginning of this month.

Around 250 villagers of 11 unions in the upazila are guarding 50 important places. A group of four to five villagers, accompanied by police and chowkidars (village police), patrol one spot in the upazila, police said.

"Looting of cattle from different houses in the upazila increased from early this month. Over 15 cows and three buffaloes were reportedly looted from different areas in the upazila till January 15. The thieves loot domestic ani-

mals and take them away in covered vans," said Sheikh Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chatmohar Police Station.

Villager Md Robban Ali, 60, of Ramnagar village chased a covered van carrying looted animals at about 4:30am on January 16, but he was crushed by the van and died on the spot. The death of Robban angered the people, villagers said.

In the first two weeks of January, three cows were stolen from Mohoramkhali village and three from Vadra, while two buffaloes were stolen from Megharpara village, according to the villagers. In most cases, the victims complained to the police but the stolen animals could not be recovered or the thieves held, they said.

"In last few weeks, the thieves stole many

domestic animals from different villages. Villagers are worried about protecting their domestic animals, so we started guarding the village so that nobody dares to steal from here," said Babul Akter of Baludiar village.

Thirty-two people, divided into four groups, are spending sleepless nights to guard four important places in the village, he added.

The OC said robbery and stealing increase every year during the winter.

"After holding meeting with the union parishad chairmen of all 11 unions, we engaged the villagers and chowkidars to assist the law enforcers," the OC said.

"Robbery increases in the winter, so the community drive is likely to continue for another month," the OC added.

Stolen newborn rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A newborn was stolen from her mother's lap from a private clinic in Sharsa upazila of Jashore on Wednesday.

Police rescued the infant from Doshtina village in Jhikorgacca upazila the same night.

Shariful Islam, father of the baby, said his wife Nasrin Begum was admitted to Polli Clinic and Diagnostic Centre in Navaron Bazar on Wednesday at 9:00am and she gave birth to a girl there.

The infant was stolen from the clinic at noon the next day in absence of the attendant of the clinic, said Sub-inspector Abul Hossain of Sharsa Police Station.

Informed, police conducted a drive at Doshtina village in Jhikorgacca upazila the same night and arrested a woman named Salma Khatun.

After interrogation, police recovered the infant from Salma's possession.

4 shutter guns seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in a drive recovered four shutter guns and two bullets from a bus at Kailabari area in Shibganj upazila yesterday.

On information, a special team of BGB went to Kailabari around 10:00am, intercepted a Rajshahi-bound passenger bus at Sonamasjid land port and seized four shutter guns and two bullets from the vehicle, said Commanding Officer of BGB 59 Battalion Lt Col SM Salahuddin.

Woman stabbed dead by husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her husband over a family feud at Gourangerchak village in Habiganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

Police detained the victim's sister-in-law Salma Akhter for interrogation.

The deceased was Rozina Akther, 26, wife of Shamim Mia of the village.

Police and family members said Shamim married his maternal cousin Rozina five years ago.

Early yesterday, Shamim stabbed Rozina dead over a family feud and fled the scene.

Police sent the body to a hospital for autopsy, said Md Shahid Mia, sub-inspector of Sadar Police Station.



A large number of people join a human chain in front of Pabna Press Club yesterday demanding arrest and punishment of those who killed Arin Pramanik, 'chain master' of Poilanpur auto-rickshaw stand in the town on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bring Arin's killers to book

AL men demand at Pabna rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Villagers and local Awami League activists at Poilanpur at a human chain in front of Pabna Press Club yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of the killers of Jubo League supporter Arin Pramanik.

Protesting the killing, people of Poilanpur village along with the local AL men formed a human chain in front of the press club at noon.

Arin, 25, son of Bhuto Pramanik, and also the chain master of Poilanpur auto-rickshaw stand in the town, was hacked to death in a clash between two rival groups over taking control of the area on Tuesday.

Assistant Publicity Secretary of the district unit of AL Shariful Islam Sharif, former BCL leader Sohail Hossain, businessman Masudur Rahman Mintu and younger brother of the victim Shamim Hossain Sona, spoke among others.

The speakers also alleged that local drug peddlers and extortionists killed Arin.

There was a longstanding conflict between the men of AL leaders Shariful Islam and Mamun over establishing supremacy in the area, said locals.

The city's 'first'

FROM PAGE 20

unlivable city of ours.

The Purple Heron was a pleasant surprise to birdwatchers because even Pond Herons, commonly found elsewhere in Bangladesh, were a rare sight in the capital. The city is encircled by rivers like the Turag, Balu and Buriganga, and sprinkled with lakes of Dhanmandi, Gulshan and Mirpur etc. But much of these water bodies are not welcome places for waterfowl or wading birds. Although people continue to live by the noxious water of Dhaka, our prudent avian friends seem to want nothing of it.

With this level of pollution, it is fascinating to find a bird such as the Purple Heron try to make our city its home. The bird has chosen to inhabit the large lake between Mirpur Cantonment and the Birulia embankment. With nearly 640 acres of water and easily the largest lake in the city, it is called Goranchatbari ponding area.

The lonely Purple Heron was seen sitting on a pile of sticks between two islands at the north of lake. The only other large wader keeping its company there was a Grey Heron.

Although a second Purple Heron was nowhere near, it could well be there somewhere in the lake. A pair of Purple Herons usually split at dawn to forage at different sites and get together only at nightfall to sleep. The two islands, completely covered with trees and undergrowth, were likely to be the herons' place of rest.

Although opaque and rancid, the lake-water seemed to have enough fish, frogs,

insects, snakes and mollusks to feed hundreds of cormorants, herons and egrets. Birdwatchers were elated to see half a dozen Little Grebes racing over the water and a thousand Lesser Whistling Ducks resting in the floating forest of water-hyacinths.

Although the global population of Purple Herons is over three lakhs, its number in Bangladesh is low and declining. Moreover, it is rarely seen outside the remote reed-beds of the Haor Basin.

Understandably, a single Purple Heron in the city is big news for bird enthusiasts. The prospect of a resident pair is much more stirring. It will be sensational if a pair is seen nesting on one of the trees of the island in the lake during their June-October breeding season. That will not only be the first for the city but the first known Purple Heron nest in Bangladesh.

A plan is reportedly afoot to develop the lake as a tourist attraction. We hope the plan will consider the lake's important inhabitants like the Purple Heron and other rare birds.

Medical board

FROM PAGE 20

According to the victim, seven men broke into her village home around 1:30am on Saturday while she and her three children were asleep.

Holding the children hostage at knifepoint, the men tied her hands and legs and three of them raped her. They also took away valuables from her house, she alleged.

PATUAKHALI MUNICIPALITY POLLS Election to be held after eight long years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

After eight long years, election to Patuakhali Municipality is going to be held on February 28.

The Election Commission (EC) declared the election schedule for the municipality polls on January 22.

The municipality polls was last held on January 11, 2011 and after the end of the tenure in 2016 EC couldn't hold a fresh election due to a disagreement over demarcation of the municipality area.

According to a gazette notification signed by EC Deputy Secretary Atiar Rahman on Tuesday, January 30 is the last date of nomination papers submission, scrutiny will be held on February 3 and last date of withdrawal of nomination is February 10.

Following the declaration of the polls schedule, ruling party wings Jubo League and Chhatra League bought out a joyful rally in the town on Wednesday night.

In 2011 election, Awami League candidate Dr Shafiqul Islam won the mayoral race by defeating BNP-backed candidate Maksud Ahmed Bayazid Panna.

Although the mayor's tenure was ended in 2016, the EC couldn't arrange the next polls as a case was filed over demarcation of Patuakhali municipality and its adjacent three unions Jainkathi, Kalikapur and Itbaria under Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

A total of 45,179 voters, including 23,301 female, will cast their votes in the upcoming election.



Khademul Islam



Younus Ali Sarker



Dilara Khandaker Shilpi

GAIBANDHA-3 BY-ELECTION Candidates of 3 parties belonging to grand alliance to contest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Candidates of three parties belonging to the grand alliance will compete for the lawmaker post in the Gaibandha-3 (Sadullapur-Palashbari) constituency by-election scheduled for January 27.

Election of Gaibandha-3 constituency was scheduled for December 30 national elections last year, but after the sudden death of Jatiya Oikyafront candidate TIM Fazley Rabbi Chowdhury the election commission (EC) suspended the polls.

The EC on December 23, 2018 rescheduled the polls date for January 27 this year.

The three heavyweight candidates, who are campaigning to draw voters' attention, are Awami League (AL) nominated Younus Ali Sarker, JP (Ershad) nominee Dilara Khandaker Shilpi, also political adviser of party Chariman HM Ershad, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) candidate Khademul Islam, also former chairman of Sadullapur Upazila Parishad.

Alongside them, two other candidates Mizanur Rahman Titu of National Peoples' Party (NPP) and Independent candidate Abu Zafar

Mohammad Zahid are vying for the MP post.

Meanwhile, as per instruction of the party high ups, BNP candidate Moinul Hasan Sadik withdrew his candidacy from the by-polls suspecting widespread vote rigging and harassment of his party leaders and workers.

Since the country's liberation in 1971, AL has grabbed the seat for three times, while BNP twice and JP (Ershad) on six occasions.

AL candidate Younus Ali Sarker, who was elected lawmaker in the last election, is again fighting for the post.

Sadullapur upazila AL General Secretary Shahrier Khan Biplob said leaders and activists of the party are united and supporting their party candidate to win the upcoming polls.

JP nominee Dilara Khandaker said she expects an easy win as the constituency is considered a JP stronghold.

According to the district returning officer's office, a total of 4,11,854 voters will cast their votes in 132 polling centres of the constituency, where 132 presiding officers, 786 assistant presiding officers and 1,572 polling officers will perform their duties.