

## Four fined as fake question leaked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A mobile court in Joypurhat on Tuesday fined four youths Tk 25,000 each for leaking fake question papers of ongoing SSC examinations.

The convicts are Dhruba Das, son of Bilas Das, Arman Ovi, son of Saiful Islam, Arnab Khandakar, son of Ratan Khandadar, and Dwip Das, son of Bikash Das of Khanjanpur area in Joypurhat town.

Tipped off, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) raided Boiragi More in Sadar upazila on Tuesday night and arrested the four on charge of leaking fake SSC question papers through different online messengers.

The youths carried out the illegal act in exchange of money, said Joypurhat Rab Camp Commander Azmal Hossain.

Later, the arrestees were produced before the court, led by Executive Magistrate Shahriar Haque, which fined them, said the Rab official.

## College boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kurigram*

Police recovered the body of a college student from a cropland in Kamarpara area under Kurigram municipality yesterday.

The deceased, Habibur Rahman, an HSC first-year student at Kurigram Collectorate School and College, was son of Abul Hossain of Goalerchar village in Chilmari upazila of the district.

Habibur, who used to live at the house of one Suruzzaman in Kamarpara area, was a deed writer at Kurigram Court.

Police said criminals might have suffocated Habibur to death early yesterday.

Besides, marks of injuries were found on the victim's belly and his legs were tied with a rope.

Being informed by the villagers, police went to the spot around 8:00am, recovered the body and sent it to Kurigram Sadar Hospital for autopsy, Sadar Police Station Officer in Charge Mahfuzar Rahman said, adding that the motive behind the killing is not clear yet.



Shykh Seraj and Harun-or-Rashid with freshly harvested Baukul from the latter's orchard at Rakhalgachhi village in Jhenidah.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

# Baukul boon for young farmer

*Innovative farmer Harun of remote village in Jhenidah applies poly-bagging to boost yield*

SHYKH SERAJ

In this country of six seasons, in the span of a couple years, autumn and winter are on the verge of extinction. Everyone of us are aware of it. From the early 80's onwards, I go to fields regularly. I can understand how these changes are taking place across the country. The average temperature in winter is increasing in the country. Especially the temperature of the capital and city areas is rising abruptly. Few days back, I went to Rakhalgachhi village located in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenidah. It was just in the middle of the Bengali month of Magh.

I heard about a successful young farmer from this village. In this region, there is a great combination of crop variations. Once, fields after fields were covered with rice. Now the crop fields have changed. Farmers are no longer dependent on a single crop. Farmers have found alternatives and diversified crops. Now these fields are filled with seasonal fruits, even flowers too. Once, these fruits and flowers were just fancy. Farmers brought them to the farmlands and established those as cash crops.

While I was discussing the change with the local farmers, a young man hugged me from behind. Farmers often do this. So, I was not surprised. I was surprised because the young farmer was trying to lift me up. He is not more than 30 in age. He was so excited seeing me.

He said, "Seraj Bhai, I have been looking forward to meeting you for the past 13 years now. Today, as you are in front of me, I couldn't hold myself."

The young man's name is Harun-or-Rashid. In fact, this was the man I was looking for. Rakhalgachi is not the village of Harun-or-Rashid. His house is in the nearby village Shanbandha. This year, he has cultivated baukul (Bau-plum) on a leased 4.5 bigha (1.80 acres) land in this village. Thirteen years ago, after seeing an episode on plum cultivation on Hridoye Mati O Manush, he decided to do it for a living. Since then, he is pursuing it. You will be surprised to know that in Shanbandha village, he is the first to commercially cultivate plums. The whole village has started plum cultivation following his footsteps. People know Shanbandha village as a plum village now. However, Harun achieved remarkable success this year in plum cultivation.

Dear readers, I have always said that Bangladeshi farmers have great innovative and indigenous skills. If you can give him a little guideline, he can develop the indigenous technology on his own. The same has happened with Harun too. And that has brought Harun a bumper harvest of plums. I would really love to share Harun's successful story with you.

Before that, let me give you statistics regarding plum cultivation in Bangladesh. According to the information provided by the Department of Agricultural Extension, the total produc-

tion was 1,75,461 tonnes from a total of 17,586 hectares of land during 2017-2018 fiscal year. Every year the cultivation of plum is increasing throughout the country. During the winter season, plum has secured a significant place in the list of farmer's cash crops. From smallholder farmers to new entrepre-

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neurs, many are going for plum cultivation. Plum farming is now one of the main sources of added yearly income for many farmers. People are choosing this nutrient-rich fruit to become commercially successful in a short time with a small investment. In many regions across the country, plum orchards are

being grown on vast fields.

I was talking about Harun's innovative strategy. Using this technique, along with a bumper harvest, he has got big profits this year. Harun noticed that the guavas which are 'poly-bagged' grow bigger in size, sweeter in taste. From his very own idea, he applied this method on his plums. He found out this strategy is working. Truly the plums which have been poly-bagged grew bigger in size and sweeter in taste than the rest. Seeing his experiments working well, he spread the poly-bagging massively across the plum orchard.

Harun bought 100 kg of poly-bags and bagged nearly 100 thousand plums. Only six plums weighs 1 kg. Meaning, each plum is about 200 gram. He is selling each kilo for 110 taka (1.3 USD). The preparation of sales happens in the field, packaging activities beside the orchard. He packaged nine cartons of plums in one day. Each carton contains 55 kg of plums. Meaning, he is getting nearly 500 kg of fruits every day on average. Due to the poly-bagging method, plums remain protected from insects. There is no need of applying pesticide. So, plums don't get any stain. Thus, his plums have great demand in the market and Harun's getting a good price as I have already mentioned.

Dear readers, diversified farming has changed Harun's fortune. Harun says, "Thirteen years ago, on your show I found my dream. I didn't stop there. I chased it. Choose plum culti-

vation as profession. I have made my dream come true step by step with my effort. Now, I know what the soil can give me in return."

Harun is getting an average of 35,000 taka (418 USD) worth of plums every day from 765 one-year-old-plum trees from a land of nearly 1.80 acres. He harvests fruits from one-year plum trees. Every year, he plants new trees. Harun is doing it beside his rice field, which means he's also producing the staple simultaneously.

Not only plum cultivation, Harun has guava and sharifa (custard-apple) orchards too. In a word, Harun's main goal is to cultivate high value crops. From which, Harun has managed to settle down today. His family depends on him. He made all the arrangements for sending his younger brother to Singapore. Seven day-labourers work with Harun and they are quite happy to be here.

Dear readers, farmers play the key role in agricultural extension. Harun's tale of plum cultivation is the same. Thanks to him that new plum orchards are being established in the area and more farmers are getting interested to take up plum cultivation besides doing other crops. Plum is not only changing the life of Harun and farmers alike, but also has become a bright example in the agricultural diversity of the entire area. It is an inspiration for many other in the country.



A good number of bulkheads carrying sand extracted from the Meghna river in Munshiganj often ply at night, adding to the risk of accidents on the busy waterway. Defying the ban on plying of such vessels at night, the unscrupulous act continues even after the tragic death of 20 people following sinking of a trawler due to collision with an oil tanker on the night of January 14.

PHOTO: STAR

## 3-yr-old rescued two days after abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A three-year-old girl was rescued from Jashore Sadar upazila yesterday, two days after her abduction from Gazipur.

Police arrested Arman Ali, 30, son of Anser Ali of Bagerhat in connection with the incident, said Sub-Inspector (SI) Mokhlesur Rahman of Jashore Kotwali Police Station.

On February 4, Maliha Khatun, daughter of Sahidul Islam of Gazipur town, was abducted from Barbori area in the town.

The kidnappers then demanded Tk 6 lakh ransom from the victim's family over mobile phone.

Later, the mother of the girl filed a general diary with Gazipur Police Station in this connection.

On secret information, police raided Satmile Barinagar village in Jashore Sadar upazila around 1:00am and rescued the girl.

They also arrested Arman from the spot, said the SI, adding that the girl was later handed over to her mother.

## SIM cards seized, 5 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Tuesday night seized 160 SIM (Subscriber Identification Module) cards of different operators and detained five people from Bottola Bazar in Kalapara upazila.

The arrestees are Mohammad Illias, 28, Jahangir Majhi, 40, Mostafizur Rahman, 19, Al-Mamun, 27, and Al-Amin, 28.

A team of Rab-8, acting on a tip-off, raided different computer shops, seized the SIM cards and arrested the five.

## Tea worker beaten dead by drug addict

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

An elderly tea worker was killed allegedly by a drug addict youth in Varaora Tea Garden area in Sreemangal upazila of the district on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Sudhir Hazra, 55, son of late Sorju Hazra, was a worker at Varaora Tea Garden.

Quoting the local residents, police said Sanju Ghor, 25, son of Sugrib Ghor, locked in an altercation with Sudhir over a trifling matter while Sanju was passing by the latter's house in a drunken state around 11:00pm.

At one stage, Sanju started beating Sudhir mercilessly with a stick, OC of Sreemangal Police Station Nazrul Islam said, adding that Sanju fled the scene when neighbours came to rescue the victim.

Locals later took injured Sudhir to the tea garden hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Moulvibazar Additional Superintendent of Police Anwarul Haque said police detained a man from the spot for interrogation.

## For not wearing school dress

### Beaten by headmaster, boy lands in hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

A Class IX student landed in hospital after being badly beaten by his school headmaster for attending school without uniform yesterday.

The victim, Mehedi Hasan, 15, son of Mahinur Rahman of Kagojpukur village in Benapole, is a Class IX student at Sharsha Pilot High School in Sharsha upazila of Jashore.

Mehedi goes to school wearing ordinary clothes as his father, a brick kiln worker, could not afford to buy school dress for him.

One week ago, the school authority asked Mehedi to make his school dress within seven days, said the boy.

"My poor father, the only earning member of the family, managed to buy a shirt for me and told me that he will buy pants in next month," said Mehedi Hasan, undergoing treatment at Sharsha Upazila Health Complex.

"When I went to school without the full uniform today [Wednesday], 'Head Sir Shahidul Islam called me to his office and beat me mercilessly in the lab room,' he said.

Later, the badly injured boy was admitted to Sharsha Upazila Health Complex.

The boy's father said, "I am a poor brick field worker. I could not afford to buy school dress for my son and the teacher tortured him. Will we not get justice?"

Asked about the incident, headmaster Shahidul Islam said, "I have beaten the boy for his good. He came to school without uniform although he had been given seven days' time to make dress."

Sharsha Upazila Nirbahi Officer Pulok Kumar Mandal said a three-member committee headed by Upazila Secondary Education Officer Hasan Hafizur Rahman has been formed to investigate the incident.

Necessary action will be taken after getting the inquiry report, he said.

