

# Saving fistful rice brings new hope to 1,332 ultra-poor women

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A total of 1332 women belonging to ultra-poor families at 37 unions of Lalmonirhat's four upazilas now eye changing their life through small savings, thanks to the initiative of Strengthening Women's Ability for the Productive New Opportunity (SWAPNO) project of UNDP.

Under the project, 1332 women formed a group titled 'Musti Chale Unnayan' for collecting fistful rice in September last year and continued saving, taking a fistful of rice from the daily meal of each family.

In this way, each of them collects at least three kg of rice in a depot every month.

The total deposited rice is sold every month and the amount is deposited to a bank account in consultation with SWAPNO officials.

"Collection of fistful rice does not affect our daily meal but it helps us a lot," said SWAPNO's member Shahuda Begum at Barabari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

"We have been depositing fistful rice, and hopefully it will come to help us when we have to face

difficulty to run the family," she said.

"It is easy to deposit fistful rice and it never affects our daily meal. Hope our deposited fistful rice will bring a brighter day for us one day," said Golapi Rani, a member of SWAPNO at Teesta River basin Rajour village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

Rezina Khatun, a SWAPNO member at Teesta River basin at Totmari village in Kaliganj upazila said, they will continue depositing fistful rice and once this deposit will bring solvency to the SWAPNO women.

"If any of our SWAPNO member faces trouble or crisis in her family she would get help from our 'Musti Chale Unnayan' platform," she said.

UNDP's SWAPNO project officials said, all 1332 women from the ultra-poor population segment have been given training on how they can run their families through doing small business. All these women are involved in small businesses including clothe trading, grocery shop, egg and milk selling, vegetable production, tailoring, muri-chira producing, jute products and the like.

They have been given financial

support to continue their small business in the villages and now they are in good position, the said.

"We motivate the ultra-poor people to fight against poverty. Our project also provides funds to help the ultra-poor people continue their family profession and do small businesses," said Mohammadul Hoque, district manager of UNDP-SWAPNO project in Lalmonirhat.

"After working with SWAPNO project, the ultra-poor women at 37 unions in four upazilas of Lalmonirhat are now much conscious about changing their life through collective efforts," he said adding that they are monitoring the women's initiative to deposit fistful rice.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) in Lalmonirhat Md Abui Jafor said depositing fistful rice is a life-changing idea for the ultra-poor women who are now involved with small business in the villages. Their small deposit will once bring a big benefit, the DC said.

SWAPNO women are now a lesson for other women especially from the ultra-poor families in the district, the DC also said.



Faridpur Roads and Highways Department (RHD) waiting for approval from the authorities concerned to replace this iron structured bailey bridge in Nagarkanda upazila with a concrete one. The 18-feet-long and only 10-feet-wide bridge over the Kumar river on Faridpur-Muksudpur road often sees huge traffic jam on the busy road as vehicles from either side cannot ply the bridge at a time due to its narrowness. Moreover, the dilapidated bridge, which awaits renovation for long, has already turn risky for its users.

PHOTO: STAR



A group of women from ultra-poor families having discussion before depositing their saved fistful rice in 'Musti Chale Unnayan' centre at Rajpur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

## Missing boy found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A madrasa boy was found dead in Sadar upazila yesterday, four days after he went missing on Tuesday.

The victim, Billal Hossain, 12, son of Afzal Meer, used to pull his father's van during leisure.

Earlier on Friday, police picked up Bokul Hossain of the village for interrogation, and according to his confessional statement police recovered Billal's body from Varara flood protection embankment area yesterday.

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