



Jagannath Sheel, 69, is seen imparting education to primary school students before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. Inset, despite having no hands, he is taking tea in Tangail court area with a smiling face.

PHOTO: STAR/COLLECTED

## Embracing life as it is

*Born without two hands, Jagannath Sheel, a true education lover, is fighting a lifelong fight against disability*

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

After the birth of Jagannath Sheel, his parents Gopinath Sheel and Anna Rani shocked as the boy had no hands.

The ultra-poor couple therefore feared that begging would be the only way for living of their disabled son. But Jagannath proved their premonition wrong by making himself self-sufficient in his life instead of depending on others. Self-confident Jagannath Sheel is still singing the triumph of life at the age of 69.

Jagannath was born at Koyra village in Tangail's Bhuanpur upazila in 1952. His father was a barber by profession. On those days, the barbers used to go door to door for works in exchange of little amount of rice or nominal wages.

Child Jagannath, however, wanted to be educated even in the midst of extreme poverty of the family.

After passing class V from the local primary school, he took admission to the nearby Nikrail Polshia Rani Dino Moni High School. As disabled and poor, the school authorities provided Jagannath a full free studentship.

He, however, was to earn the expense of books, copybooks etc by providing tuition to a few primary students of the village.

During his study in the school, responding to the call of a neighbour, Jagannath went to Dhaka in 1968 taking his text books in a bag.

He acted in a Bangla movie titled 'Molua' starring Mannan and Kobita as hero and heroine respectively. Jagannath's role was of an associate of the heroine.

He later returned to village to take part in the entrance exams in 1969 and passed in the second division writing with feet. However, he could not take admission to a remote college due to the then turbulent political situation of the country.

Jagannath took part in the campaign of the

national elections on 1970 in favour of local Awami League candidate.

During Liberation War of 1971, he worked with local freedom fighters as a volunteer. He was also made a witness of the glorious 'Jahajmara Fight' on Jamuna river bank near his house where the brave FFs of Kaderia Bahini destroyed two war ships of Pakistanis laden with huge amount of arms and ammunitions.

After Independence, Jagannath took admission in ISC at Mawlana Mohammad Ali College in Kagmari to meet the dream to take higher education. However, his heart was broken when he failed to obtain the certificate despite

in 1983.

Milon Rani said, "As my father was very poor and could not feed me, so he married me off to disabled Jagannath. Despite having no hands, my husband can do almost all the works like reading, eating, bathing, brushing teeth, wearing clothes and many household works by using his feet."

Jagannath had to close his book stall in 1991 due to losses. He rented out the shop to other but continued private tuitions going to the houses of local students. However, he has always struggled hard to feed his wife and three children with the little income.

Local Hridoy Mondol said Jagannath is poor but a man of dignity. "I know him since my childhood but never seen him begging for his poverty."

Jagannath's wife Milon, however, said "Although my husband helped to make other's children educated, none of my three children could make it to the college level due to poverty."

She also said when they were struggling a lot due to acute poverty, the local authorities have issued her husband a card for the disabled from which he has been getting Tk 750 per month as allowance.

Moreover, the local administration provided them some corrugated iron sheets and Tk 18,000 cash for building a house.

"Everything was going well before the outbreak of the coronavirus. However, the schools were shut due the pandemic and the income of my husband dropped," she added.

Jagannath, however, does not want to think so much about the situation.

"Even, I never complained to God for my disability," he said. Asked what his last will is, a smiling Jagannath said, "It is actually two-one is hope and other is dream. The hope is to recover a piece of my ancestral land from the grabber and the dream is to see the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina up close before my death."

During his study in the school, responding to the call of a neighbour, Jagannath went to Dhaka in 1968 taking his text books in a bag.

taking part in the exams in 1973 as he failed to secure pass marks in English second paper. He could not continue his study further due to poverty.

"Later I moved from door to door for getting a job but none gave me a job due to my disability," Jagannath said.

In this situation, he decided to do something on his own for living. He bought some books from a bookstall in Tangail town and started selling these moving at local rural markets. In 1977, he set up a book stall at Nikrail Bazar, one kilometer away from his house. He was also teaching a few local primary students at the book stall.

Jagannath married Milon Rani, a girl from Jhaoail village in the adjacent Gopalpur upazila,

## Rakhine weavers in Kuakata passing hard days

*Female traders at Rakhine Women's Market face severe financial crisis*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

People involved in the weaving and tourism industries in Kuakata are hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

In line with the closure of tourism centres, the income sources of the ethnic minorities in the area remained cut off for the last one and a half years.

As a result, female traders at Rakhine Women's Market in Kuakata were facing a severe financial crisis. Several of them lost capital whereas the rest were spending days borrowing money.

The Local Government Engineering Department built the market with 14 stores around 200 years east to Kuakata Zero Point about a decade and a half ago.

The market was built to provide a source of income to the poor Rakhine

With the closure of tourism centres, the income sources of the ethnic minorities in the area remained cut off for the last one and a half years.

Meanwhile, in line with the stores, the looms of weavers remained closed, causing immense suffering to those related to this industry.



women in the area.

The shopkeepers in the market witnessed an overflow of tourists even before the tourist season in the past.

In recent times, however, they lost business due to coronavirus.

During the first wave of Covid-19, many of the shopkeepers lost their capital while the second wave was putting an end to their hopes, said locals.

Chameen Rakhine, a shopkeeper in the market, said, "Before coronavirus, I used to sell over a million taka on the weekends."

"I am sitting and spending the savings now. The capital is already gone."

Another shopkeeper Machan Rakhine said, "My whole family depends on the earnings of the shop. The store is completely closed. I am having a hard time with my family members."

Both the shopkeepers demanded assistance from the government for their survival.

Luma Rakhine, secretary of Kuakata Rakhine Women's Market, said poor Rakhine women entrepreneurs are currently in dire straits. There is no government support.

Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abu Hasanat Mohammad Shahidul Haque said initiatives would be taken to help the shopkeepers of the market.

At least 20 Rakhine families in Misripara, about 5km northeast of Kuakata beach, make various garments including shawls, sheets, towels, Punjabis, three-piece and others.

Over 50 shops are set up in the area to sell these products. Most of these shops are also run by Rakhine families.

Tourists flock here to see the Misripara Buddhist temple, a 200-year-old temple that hosts the largest Buddhist statue in South Asia.

As no tourists visited the place during the pandemic, the Rakhine families were in dire straits.

One such weaver Bakhen Rakhine said he could not work as his already prepared goods remained unsold for a long time.

"What do I do? There is no sale, no work. I am in a lot of trouble. No one is looking for us," she said.

Mongla Ching, president of the Misripara Buddhist Temple Committee, said the only source of income for the Rakhine families here was weaving products.

But these families are in financial crisis as the tourist centre is closed due to lockdown.

Despite such stagnation for a year and a half, they are not getting any help or cooperation, he added.

## HILSA FISHING Unlucky in rivers, fishers counting days to go to sea

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Frustration is growing among the fishers of coastal region due to lack of hilsa fish in rivers.

Even though the ban on fishing at sea expired on Friday, their luck is yet to change as they couldn't go to sea for the first two days after the ban due to the cautionary signal-3 at sea by the Met office.

Catching hilsa requires much expenditure, the anglers said, as they need to go deep into the river on heavy trawlers, with fishing nets and a skilled crew. In most cases, the anglers take out loans to fund their expeditions.

Though the costs remain the same, the lack of hilsa in rivers means the anglers of Barishal region are returning almost empty handed. Meanwhile, their loan interest amounts are going higher by the day.

"A single trip requires at least Tk 2,000, but we cannot earn half of this money back as we cannot get sufficient catches," said Jasim Majhi of Tulatuli Bazar area of Bhola Sadar upazila. "I am now bearing a loan of over Tk 10,000," he said.

Over 200 others in the area are facing a similar situation, added Jashim.

"Our team of six went deep in the river (Meghna) two weeks ago for hilsa fishing. But we only caught

such a small amount of fish, we can barely sell it for Tk 600," said Alauddin Majhi, Jasim's neighbour. "We don't want to go to the larger rivers anymore. Rather, we now go to small rivers (Bishkhali, Khakbon) to catch other types of fish," said Harun Mia of Barguna's Patharghata upazila.

Even though the ban on fishing at sea expired on Friday, their luck is yet to change as they couldn't go to sea for the first two days after the ban due to the cautionary signal-3 at sea by the Met office.

Along with them, this correspondent spoke to over a dozen of anglers at Lohalia village and Rajguru village of Barishal's Babuganj upazila and heard almost similar responses.

According to researchers and fisheries officials, high temperature and lack of rain are the major reasons behind such disappearance of the fish. However, they said they expect the situation to improve

soon, especially due to the rainfall of the last few days.

But some anglers put the blame on the government's second ban on hilsa fishing in deep sea for the crisis. Beginning in March 20, the ban expired on Friday.

Anglers said due to the ban at sea, they are forced to try out their luck in the rivers despite its dwindling fish population.

But the government officials and researchers denied the blame and said hilsa will get a chance to breed and grow up well due to the ban. Of note, the first ban of the year was imposed on hilsa sanctuaries in rivers from March 1 to April 30.

Contacted, Anisur Rahman, chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, said the situation will improve as soon as it rains and temperatures drop.

Meanwhile, Anisur Rahman Talukder, deputy director of Barishal Divisional Fisheries Office, said hilsa will be available from August to October as the fish will have matured by that time.

Though some anglers believed their luck would change as the ban on fishing at sea expired on Friday, the first two days after the ban yielded nothing as they couldn't even go to the sea due to the cautionary signal-3, said Masum Bepari of Moipur Matsya Kalyan Samiti in Kuakata.

## Housewife found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A housewife was found dead in Rangpur's Badarganj upazila yesterday.

Deceased Aymon Begum, 30, was wife of Abed Ali of Dangapara village.

Her family members, however, claimed that Aymon was killed after rape.

Police said villagers found her body at a bamboo cluster in the morning and informed them.

# SummerClouds

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Date: 22/07/2021

#### Corrigendum Notice

This to notify for all concerned that the amendment of Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) notice vide Reference No. 35.01.0000.152.14.058.2021-226 Date: 16 June 2021 is as follows:

Subject	Previous timeline	Revised timeline	Remarks
EOI closing date and time	26 July 2021, 02:00pm BST	12 August 2021, 02:00pm BST	All other terms and conditions remain unchanged

Further information and guidelines are available in the website of Roads and Highways Department & CPTU.

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