

National



The Sundarbans near Harintana Kalagacha river: A fallen tree bears the testimony of illegal logging in the largest mangrove forest in the world. An armed guard of the Forest Department is on the lookout for poachers.

Faridpur Sugar Mills incurred Tk 6cr loss in 5 years

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Dec 12: Faridpur Sugar Mills have been incurring loss for the last five years mainly due to continuous decline in sugarcane supply.

Sugarcane supply target has not been achieved in the mill zone area over the years. Unabated crushing of sugarcane in illegal power crushers has been attributed to the continuous decline in sugarcane supply in the mills.

According to official sources, the mills incurred a loss of Taka six crore during the last five years.

Locals said owners of illegal power crushers are producing molasses defying the government ban on sugarcane crushing in the mill area.

However, growers always prefer to sell sugarcanes to owners of power crushers, as the price is comparatively high.

Local farmers said various irregularity and procedural delay in getting the price of sugarcane from the sugar mills discourage them to sell their produce to the mill.

Acute fish scarcity in Panchagarh

PANCHGARH, Dec 12: Despite a bright prospect of pisciculture the district is facing acute shortage of fish due to indifference of the concerned officials, reports UNB.

According to official sources there are some 5,472 private and 143 government (khas) ponds in five upazilas. But the they said fishes are not cultivated in 1,652 ponds, including 22 government ones due to various reasons.

But the locals claimed that the number of uncultivated ponds is much higher than the government estimate.

The fish farmers alleged that concerned officials are depriving them of getting loans sanctioned by the government for bribe and as such they failed to undertake fish culture.

The officials concerned are harassing them by creating various complexities, they said adding the bank officials are also demanding bribe at the rate of Tk 50-100 for every 1,000 Taka.

Besides, wheat and money allocated for excavation of six ponds and other related works in the current financial year had been misappropriated, said a source preferring anonymity.

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Besides, sugarcane cultivation has been declining. The sugar mills, situated at Madhukhali, went into production in 1976 on an experimental basis. According to official sources, some 15 thousand acres of land were brought under sugarcane cultivation in the mill zone area in 1994-95 crushing season. But in 1999-2000 season, some 13 thousand acres of land were brought under the cultivation in the mill area.

Soil fertility has also been declining. Once 14 metric tons of sugarcane were supplied to the mills from each acre of land under the mill zone. But this year only 10 metric tons of sugarcane were supplied to the mills from one acre of land.

For the last five years, the mills have been stopping crushing ahead of stipulated time due to lack of adequate sugarcane.

When contacted, a senior official of the mills told this correspondent that it is possible to grow enough quantity of sugarcane in the mill zone area if the growers are given incentives.

fish programme had sanctioned about Tk 10 lakh for the poor people in order to develop their socio-economic condition.

It allocated interest free loans among the poor to cultivate fish in seven ponds asking them to repay loans from their sale proceeds.

However, the efforts made by the government in this regard failed totally as the officials in connivance with the association leaders distributed a small amount of the loan money among a few members and misappropriated the rest amount.

Not only that, a hatchery, set up for fries production on one hectare of land at Boda upazila at a cost of Tk 18 lakh in 1991, remained out of production since 1995 although the government continued sanctioning of Tk 70/80 thousands per year, locals alleged.

The hatchery was set up with a minimum capacity of producing 60 kg of fry per year, which could be supplied to adjacent districts after meeting the local demands.

But the district acting fisheries officer said that fisheries activities are being hampered due to lack of proper policy and necessary fund.

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