



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer collecting Orchid flowers from his garden (left) and green plants are seen after plucking Garbara flowers for export a few days ago (right).

Fulpur flowers go abroad

Each farmer earns Tk 35,000 to 45,000 a season

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Fulpur

NETRAKONA: Fulpur is now justifying its name by exporting flowers to Britain, Italy and Thailand. The flowers will go to the Middle East soon.

In Bangla, ful means flower. Using simple indigenous method, each farmer earned Tk 35,000 to 45,000 in a season (three to seven months) by producing exportable flowers, thereby fetching valuable foreign exchange for the country also.

The tremendous success has been achieved in only one year.

But as in Western countries, they do not contribute to warming up the atmosphere by erecting 'green house' and using environment-damaging technology.

Guptarganj village is eight kilometres from Fulpur upazila headquarter in Mymensingh district.

It is a small village with about 70 farming families. Forty of them cultivate eight foreign varieties of flowers.

The village gives a different look. Big polythene sheds in the courtyards or on nearby high lands will draw anybody's attention. A shed is six to seven feet high, ten to twelve feet wide and 200 to 250 feet long. A farmer has eight to ten sheds.

Inside, there are numerous flower plants, grown in rows, some with flowers and some yet to bear flower.

They grow Rose, Orchid, Garbara, Gipsufila, Lily,

Limethium, Conetion and Filodrendron (leaf).

Flower cultivators Rafiqul Islam and Shahidullah Fraji said they earned Tk 42,000 and Tk 35,000 respectively in seven months.

Abul Hashem said he earns about Tk 6,000 per month by growing flower.

It takes three to seven months from plantation to harvest, depending on the variety.

They said they took to flower cultivation with the assistance of BRAC.

Lokman Hossen, Programme Officer for the flower project at the local BRAC office, told this correspondent that 40 farmers earned about Tk 17 lakh by selling flowers.

The project was launched in the village in November 2002. BRAC

selected 40 families and gave them Tk 40 lakh loans. The project involved Tk one crore.

Local and foreign specialists including Mr Lords and Mr Bangbar of Sweeden and Mr Mee Gai of Thailand are assisting the farmers, Lokman said.

When contacted over phone, BRAC agriculture expert Rafiqul Islam at its head office in Dhaka said Fulpur flowers are being exported to Britain, Italy and Thailand. The flowers will be exported to Middle East soon, he said.

Rakibul Bari Khan, Social Forestry Specialist (SFS) at BRAC head office in Dhaka, said they have decided to expand the project because of rising demand abroad.

Journalist's house torched in Noakhali

A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Criminals set on fire the house of a journalist, also a writer causing loss amounting to Tk 8 lakh on Wednesday.

The victim, Rafiq Khan alleged that the incident happened under patronisation of the administration.

However, family members were not present in the house as they fled elsewhere following life threat given by criminals.

Rafiq's relatives alleged that criminals gutted the house in a bid to kill the guard of the house.

Locals alleged that after the last parliamentary election, influential groups loyal to the ruling BNP tried to capture Rafiq's wealth.

However, police did not arrest anyone 'involved with the incident.'

'Do not lease Tanguar Haor'

JS body told, district admins' steps lauded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Speakers at a meeting on Tanguar Haor arranged by a parliamentary sub-committee opposed leasing of the vast water body to private individuals and suggested setting up of permanent law enforcers' camps on its banks to protect its bio-diversity.

Local public representatives and leaders of professional groups attended the meeting, held at Sunamganj Circuit House on Wednesday. A sub-committee on the Ministry of Forest and Environment led by Nazimuddin Alam organised the meeting after its day-long visit to the haor.

A documentary video on Tanguar Haor was screened at the meeting.

The speakers suggested formation of a special force comprising BDR, police and Ansar to guard the haor from being plundered.

The 3868 acre haor, a Ramsar site, with 60,000 birds, 140 species of sweet water fish and a variety of rare

watery plants is the largest fresh water body in the country. Over one lakh guest birds flock there during the winter.

Plundered for years, the vast water body was declared an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) in 2000 and taken up as a Ramsar site. But the Ramsar project is yet to be implemented due to the policymakers' indecision and failure in selecting financial investors.

The meeting suggested that new 'water lords' should not be created in the name of leasing it.

Nazimuddin Alam told the meeting that Tanguar Haor is a national asset and it should be preserved as per the plan.

The land ministry placed the haor under the disposal of the environment ministry for three years for implementation of the Ramsar programme. The three-year period ends on February 10.

They also suggested increasing the number of water transports and

other logistics to guard it.

They lauded deployment of BDR, Ansar and Police in the haor months back by the district administration, which stopped over four years' plundering by organised gangs backed by influential quarters.

The district administration also deputed magistrates. The measures earned peoples' support, the speakers said.

Sunamganj Deputy Commissioner Jafar Siddique conducted the meeting, also addressed by, among others, Sunamganj Pourashava BNP President advocate Humayun Kabir Jahannur, writer Hossain Toufique Chowdhury, Advocate Ali Yunus, Advocate Bazul Majid Chowdhury, Khoshru, Sunamganj Police Superintendent Mir Shahidul Islam, BDR Officer Major Saber, Sunamganj Bar General Secretary Advocate Matir Rahman Pir, Advocate Jahir Ahmed, Union Parishad chairmen Ashrafuzzaman and Abdul Khaleque.

Magura AL council postponed amid in-fighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The long overdue council of Magura district Awami League (AL), scheduled to held yesterday (January 23), was postponed without announcement of any new date.

Party sources claimed that the council was postponed due to internal feud, which will fuel the in-fighting.

Party leaders and activists are split into two groups over formation of new committees at different levels, they said.

On January 19, two rival factions clashed during the council of Kadirpara union AL on Radhanagar High School premises in Sreepur Upazila, leaving at least eight people injured.

The party sources said rival leaders at different levels are backed by lawmaker MS Akbar and district AL convener Md Altaf Hossain. The two want their men on new committees at different levels, they said.

"In the district and four thana units, top posts are being held by the same persons for years because councils were not held. This must end. Young and dynamic leadership should come forward to strengthen the party", a district level leader said seeking anonymity.

When asked, district unit convener Md Altaf Hossain denied intra-party conflict and said a new council will be announced soon.

The last council of district AL was held in 1992.

Flag meeting held BSF stops barbed wire fencing along Akhaura border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) has stopped raising barbed wire fencing along the border in Akhaura following a Flag Meeting with BDR on Thursday, BDR Commander Lt. Abu Musa Sharafuddin said yesterday.

The battalion commander-level meeting was held at Akawra check post.

Lt. Abu Musa Sarafuddin led the BDR team. The BSF team was led by Battalion Commander M Kumar.

Col. Abu Musa said BDR intervened when BSF started raising barbed wire fencing inside the 150 metre no man's land along the border, which is illegal.

At the meeting, BSF agreed to stop the work and remove the pillars erected for raising the fencing. Col. Musa said when contacted over phone.

The meeting also discussed steps to stop cross-border smuggling.

3 BNP men held for 'abduction' in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Joint forces on Thursday arrested three Union Parishad (UP) members including a Gram Sarkar chief and four others in Daulatpur upazila on charge of involvement in abduction for ransom and other criminal activities.

Several lethal weapons and some parts of firearms were also recovered from their possession.

All the arrested persons belong to ruling BNP, police said.

Joint forces from Khalisakundi camp raided Daulatkhali village and arrested Abul Kalam Azad, member of Daulatpur UP and Gram Sarkar chief. He was allegedly involved in the abduction of young man Mujibur Rahman, 23, son of Azer Ali of the area.

The youth was abducted last week for Tk 2 lakh ransom. Azad is a local leader of ruling BNP.

Later the forces raided Boalia area and arrested Jubo Dal leader Nazrul Islam Taltu 32, a member of Boalia UP. Taltu was involved in the abduction of businessman Arzan Sheikh for Tk 3 lakh ransom, police said.

But none of the abducted persons could be rescued.

The joint forces arrested Kamal Parvez, member of Daulatpur UP along with four others on charge of criminal activities at the area. Kamal is a local BNP leader, police said.

The other arrested persons are Jhmur Ali, Hannan Sheikh, Rafiqul Islam and Chanchal.

Separate cases have been filed against them.

Forge greater unity against govt: Razzak

A CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Awami League (AL) Presidium member Abdur Razzak called upon the people to forge a greater unity against the BNP-Jamaat Alliance on Wednesday.

He was addressing a public meeting organised by the party's Manikganj Sadar unit as chief guest at Kripnapur Union Parishad.

"Our stand against the inefficient BNP-Jamaat Alliance Government is clear after the announcement of the party's 15-point programme at a grand rally at Paltan maidan in the capital recently," he said.

The party's Manikganj Sadar thana President Jalal Uddin Ahmed presided over the meeting while it was addressed by Central Youth and Sports Affairs Secretary Shaiful Arefin Tutul, Assistant Secretary of the Sub-committee Akham Ullah, party leader Meher Afroz Chumki, district President Golam Mohiuddin, Secretary Gazl Kamrul Huda Selim, besides the Manikganj Sadar unit Secretary of the party Hasib Uddin Ahmed Selim.

'It is murder, not suicide'

Medical report says

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Housewife Shapna was murdered. She did not commit 'suicide', as claimed by her husband's family earlier.

This was revealed in the medical report, Mirpur police in Kushtia said on Thursday.

The report said she died from fatal injury she suffered after being kicked in the belly.

Police arrested Shapna's mother-in-law Maleka Khatun, 48, Thursday night. Her husband Shohag is absconding.

The body of Shapna 18, was recovered from a pond at Atigram village in Mirpur upazila on December 30 last year. Her husband's family claimed that she committed suicide.

Sapna's father Rahamat Ali claimed that she was killed for dowry.

Mirpur police had recorded an unnatural death (UD) case.

Police said, the UD case will be turned into a murder case.

Bogra Municipal Chairman claims Govt has stopped development funds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The authorities have stopped funds for 84 road construction projects in Bogra municipality, its chairman claimed.

The municipal authorities did not get Tk nine lakh, allocated in September last year, Municipal Chairman advocate Razaul Karim Montu, an Awami League leader, told a recent press conference.

He also alleged that the BNP government 'illegally' transferred some development projects from the municipal authority to the Local Government and Engineering

Department (LGED).

He claimed that Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) and Test Relief (TR) operation in the town are being hampered due to pressure from local BNP leaders and activists to supply VGF cards and TR relief to BNP supporters.

Most of the word commissioners were present at the press conference.

Montu said the municipal authorities have completed some projects with its own funds. These include supply of drinking water to 24 slums, construction of a bus terminal, drains and footpaths.

UPDF activist 'missing' in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An activist of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), believed to have been abducted from Uluchhari village has been missing for the last several days.

Peace activists might have abducted the victim, Doyamoy Chakma, 35, a wood trader by profession, according to fellow traders.

An association of tribal timber traders told this correspondent that they did not see Doyamoy for the last few days but denied it as an incident of kidnap.

Police expressed their ignorance saying none has recorded any complaint regarding the matter.

Meanwhile, fate of Mary Chakma, 22, a college student and an UPDF activist, abducted from Kathaloi area in the town on January 8, is still unknown.

The activists of Pahari Chhatra Parisahd (PCP), student wing of Parbattya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity, picked him up from near his house, witnesses said.

Family sources declined to talk to newsmen as abductors threatened death threat to Mary's elder brother Arun, another son of Meghnath Chakma.

On contact, Duty Officer in Kotwali thana said he is not aware about the matter.

'Meet JSD's 10-point demand'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Jatyia Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Noor Alam Ziku urged the government to fulfil its 10-point demand or to face a people's movement.

The country was liberated at the cost of blood for economic emancipation of the masses and to establish justice. But subsequent governments betrayed with the people, he alleged.

He was addressing a public

meeting on Kushtia Public Library premises on Thursday.

Ziku said Jashod Gono Bahini was disbanded long ago and JSD has no underground outfit now.

With JSD Kushtia district unit president Mizanur Rahman Mirza in the chair, the meeting was addressed by, among others, JSD central general secretary Abdul Malek Raton, former lawmaker Dabir Uddin Joardar, central joint secretary Ataul Karim Faruk, Mazful Islam, Abdul Hannan and Mahmud Swapan.

Journalist Manik Saha killing: More condemnations in dists



From Left: A Human Chain in Rajshahi And Two Mourning Processions At Nilphamari And In Khulna City Protesting The Murder Of Journalist Manik Chandra Saha.

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Journalists and people of all walks of life across the country continued to condemn the killing of journalist Manik Chandra Saha in Khulna city on January 15.

Our Moulvibazar Correspondent reports: The Moulvibazar Press Club and local unit of the Bangladesh Journalists' Association jointly brought out a silent procession and held a protest meeting in the town on January 17.

Working journalists of different national dailies and news agencies took part in the silent procession and paraded the main streets of the town. Later, they held a protest meeting in front of the club with club convenor Bakshi Iqbal Ahmed

in the chair.

Journalist Rajat Kanti Goswami, journalist MA Salam, Sarwar Ahmed, Professor Ashok Kumar Das, Aminur Rashid Babar and Abdul Hamid Mahub spoke in the meeting.

Our Sathkira Correspondent reports: The Sathkira Reporters' Club chalked out a six-day programme following Manik's murder.

The programme included wearing of black badges, procession fastening mouths with black clothes, formation of human chain and meeting.

The human chain was formed in front of the Deputy commissioner's (DC) office on Wednesday.

Lawyers, politicians, educationists, human rights activists and common people joined there.

After the human chain a meeting was held where speakers demanded immediate arrest and punishment to Manik's killers. They urged the authorities concerned to provide safety and security to working journalists everywhere, especially in the southwestern region of the country.

Prominent among the speakers were Prof Abu Ahmed, Advocate Abdur Rahim, Advocate Mustofa Lutfulah, Farida Akhtar Banu, Subhas Chowdhury, Kalyan Banerjee, Mizanur Rahman, Mostafa Nurul Amin and Azad Hossain Belal.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reports: Journalists of various national dailies including regional newspapers took to the streets of the district town on January 19.

People of all walks of life joined the mourning procession.

They organised a condolence meeting where journalists of all national and regional newspapers and journals condemned the violent killing. They also demanded arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits without any delay.

Our Bogra Correspondent reports: The Bogra Union of Journalists (BUJ) took out a procession protesting the brutal killing of Manik Saha on Friday. The procession paraded the main streets of

the town.

Later, a meeting was held in front of the Bogra Press Club. Senior journalist Zahedur Rahman Zadu presided over the meeting while it was addressed, among others, by journalist Hasibur Rahman Bilu, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Vice-President Prodip Bhattachaya Sankor, its executive member Mahamudul Alam Nayan, BUJ Secretary Mahamudur Rahman Mona, Zohur Mollik, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Mottaleb Manik, Nurat Mahmud Sabuz and Touhidur Rahman Manik.

Speakers condemned the killing and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the killers.

Similar protests processions and meetings were organised in all the districts of the country.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent reports: The Mymensingh Press Club, the Mymensingh Union of Journalists, the Reporters' Unity and journalist associations chalked out a joint programme here on January 19.

The programmes included wearing black badges, hoisting black flag atop the press club building, protest meeting and submission of memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner.



PHOTOS: STAR

'Rapist' held in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Kotwali police arrested an alleged rapist from the Alam Dockyard area on Tuesday night.

The 'rapist' was identified as Md Kamal, 20, an employee of a furniture factory.

A five-year-old girl went to the factory with her mother working as a cook there for a long time. Factory owner Ohid Miah asked the woman to bring food for him.

Finding the girl child alone Kamal raped her inside the furniture factory.