



The water reservoir under the Buri Teesta Irrigation Project in Jaldhaka, Nilphamari (left) and a dried up branch canal.

PHOTO: STAR

BURI TEESTA IRRIGATION PROJECT

# Water reservoir leased for fish cultivation

E A M ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

The Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has leased for fish cultivation the vast water reservoir of the Buri Teesta Irrigation Project in Jaldhaka upazila, depriving thousands of farmers of promised facilities.

The project is the second largest in the district after the Teesta Irrigation Project at Dalia in Dimla upazila.

Initially, the project was drawn for providing irrigation facilities on 29,000 acres of land in Domar, Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas.

The Chairman of the then East Pakistan WAPDA, G A Madani inaugurated the project in 1963. It included a major barrage on the Buri Teesta and a 36,696 feet long main canal. The main canal consisted of four branch canals. Branch Canal-1 was 23,200 feet long while Canal-2 was 64,300

feet long and Canal-3 was 64,300 feet long and Branch Canal-4 was 322,000 feet long.

A vast water reservoir was constructed on 1,270 acres of land.

Since its commissioning, 18,000 acres of land were brought under irrigation from water of the reservoir till 1990, according to sources in the BWDB.

While visiting the project area on Friday, this correspondent found the dried up canals although sufficient water existed in the reservoir. Farmers under this project were seen irrigating IRR-boro fields in a traditional way.

The farmers informed that Nilphamari BWDB authorities had leased out the water reservoir to an influential person allegedly backed by the ruling party.

The vast reservoir on 1,217 acres of land was leased at only 84,000 taka per year whereas a

pond or a marshy land on 3 to 4 acres of land is usually given lease at more than one lakh taka, locals alleged.

The lessee paid only 4,20,000 taka for the reservoir on a five-year term, they said.

However, the lessee was not available there on the day for his comments.

When contacted, Nilphamari BWDB Executive Engineer Yasin Ali told this correspondent that because of 'misplanning', the BWDB authorities declared in 1991 that the project would not yield desired result.

Referring to the BWDB decision, he said that the width of the main irrigation canal was abnormally large. There is also 'misplanning' in making the reservoir as water of the reservoir does not flow towards the farmers' lands, rather it comes to the reservoir from their lands.

The Executive Engineer further

informed that in the ongoing IRR-boro season, this project provides irrigation facilities to 247 acres of land. In the last aman paddy season, the project provided irrigation to 2,717 acres of land, he added.

Refuting the WDB official's claim, Sujat Ali, a farmer at village Golna told this correspondent they are not receiving 'a single drop' of water from the project.

President of the Movement for Implementation of Buri Teesta Irrigation Project Golam Mostafa who is also president of Jaldhaka Press Club, pointed out that as per claim of the BWDB official, 18,000 acres of land were brought under irrigation system each year till 1990.

"Then how could they declare the project ineffective showing planning errors," he posed a question.

He demanded quick measures to make the project effective.

## Hasina, Joy arrive Rangpur today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina along with her son Sajib Wazed Joy will arrive in Rangpur today on a two-day programme.

On her way to Rangpur, the AL leader will address public meetings at Gobindaganj and Polashbari in Gibandha district today.

Later she will go to Rangpur Circuit House.

Tomorrow in the morning, she along with her son and some party leaders will go to her father-in-laws' house at Pirganj.

This will be the first visit of Joy to his parental house in Pirganj, Awami League and its front organisations have made preparations to welcome Joy at his ancestral home.

Family sources said, Joy would also spend time with leaders of Awami League and its front organisations in Pirganj and Rangpur.

Sheikh Hasina will address a public meeting at Rangpur Zila School ground tomorrow afternoon.

At night, she will hold a meeting with party leaders at Rangpur before she leaves for Dhaka Tuesday morning.

# Withdraw partisan CMP commissioner: Mayor

## Chittagong tense: Another labourer injured in Thursday's clash dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Another labourer, critically injured during Thursday night's clash with police, died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) Friday morning, raising the toll to two.

Victim Md Shahabuddin, 35, was a ghat worker at Mahsheerghat in Doublemooring thana.

Earlier on Thursday night, labourer Md Shahjahan, 55, was shot dead and at least 25 others including three policemen were injured in the clash between labourers and law enforcers at Mahsheerghat in the city.

The clash had erupted following the arrest of Mahbulul Haq, president of Ghat Sramik League. Agitated workers set fire to a police van during the clash.

The killing of two workers created widespread anger among workers in Mahsheerghat area.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) authority's alleged obstruction in holding of their namaj-e-janaza at Laldighi Maidan Friday afternoon fuelled the tense situation in Chittagong yesterday.

Awami League leader and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club yesterday alleged that the CMP Commissioner has created an "unwanted situation by siding with four-party alliance candidate and state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin".

Mohiuddin, a Nagoric Committee candidate in the upcoming CCC polls, is trying to retain his mayoral post. Nasiruddin is vying for the post as a four-party alliance candidate.

Police on Friday filed three separate cases with Doublemooring thana in connection with the clash. In one of the cases, specific charges were brought against 28 labourers. Thirty 'unidentified' people were accused in another case.

Awami League sources alleged Shahabuddin died at CMCH following excessive bleeding.

"Police kept bullet-hit Shahabuddin handcuffed while he was being taken to hospital. This caused problem for doctors to provide him blood and saline," alleged an AL leader at the press conference.

They alleged police had also



PHOTO: STAR

Police snatching the wire from mike arranged for the janaza of the two labourers at Laldighi Maidan on Friday. The janaza was held without mike.

played a "mysterious role on Friday during autopsy of the bodies and namaj-e-janaza.

"The two bodies were brought to Chittagong General Hospital morgue in the morning for autopsy but it was done in the afternoon due to police obstruction.

Huge contingents of police and BDR had encircled the Laldighi Maidan where namaj-e-janaza for the two labourers were scheduled to take place in the afternoon, AL leaders alleged.

Police in the evening refused to hand over the two bodies. "Police even obstructed Mohiuddin Chowdhury at the morgue when he went there in the evening to receive the two bodies for janaza. After more than two hours' heated exchange of words, police handed over the two bodies to him (Mohiuddin) at 8.15pm on Friday and the janaza was held then, they told the press conference.

Janaza was held at around 9 pm Friday at the Laldighi Maidan without mike as police took away the mikes.

The bodies were sent to their village homes in Bhola, where they were laid to rest yesterday.

At the press conference, Mohiuddin Chowdhury condemned the police role on Thursday and Friday and said these were done either to spoil the CCC polls or reap benefit for Mir Nasir.

"Police, resorted to repression and arrest of the opposition leaders and activists at the instigation of Mir

Nasir," he alleged. He condemned the killing of two labourers and demanded judicial inquiry and exemplary punishment to the persons involved.

AL presidium member Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser, former minister Mosharrif Hossain, Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, Gono Forum leader M Kafliuddin, CPB leader Shah Alam and JSD leader Indu Nandan Datta were also present, among others, at the conference.

Mohiuddin also demanded withdrawal of CMP Commissioner Amjad Hossain before the May 9 Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls.

"Through arrest, intimidation and repression on opposition leaders and activists, the Commissioner has created a panicky situation in the port city ahead of the CCC polls. We think the main motive is to pave the way for the four-party alliance candidate," he alleged.

He said, "The CMP Commissioner has already made his intention clear to all of us and we believe the CCC polls will not be free and fair as long as this man remains there as Commissioner of CMP".

"We earlier complained to the Chief Election Commissioner about the CMP Commissioner and if necessary we will submit another complaint soon," Mohiuddin Chowdhury said.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Naohata Women's College in Rajshahi after locking office and class rooms (left) demonstrate on the campus yesterday demanding reinstatement of Principal Kaosar Ali. They alleged that the principal was removed for his link with opposition Awami League.

## 9-year girl accused of possessing heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A nine year-old girl has allegedly been implicated in a case under Narcotics Control Act in Khulna.

The case was filed by Inspector Shajahan Talukdar of Khulna office of Narcotics Control Department.

Farzana was picked up by Inspector Shajahan Talukdar on April 19 from West Senpara under Daulatpur thana.

She was allegedly beaten by the Inspector at his office and later sent to court, showing her arrested for possessing twelve packets containing heroin. Sub-Inspector Amirul Islam of Daulatpur thana said yesterday that a case was recorded against the girl before sending her to court. She was sent to Khulna district jail on the same day (April 19).

But Farzana's father Liaquat Ali alleged that Inspector Shajahan Talukdar implicated his daughter her in a false case.

Liaquat Ali said that he had filed a petition on March 20 with the

Metropolitan Magistrate's court accusing Inspector Shajahan Talukdar of looting Tk 26,200 by breaking the lock of his house on March 12 on the plea of search. During search Inspector Shajahan also ransacked all rooms, damaging valuables.

Liaquat Ali said that he named four persons including Shajahan Talukdar as accused. Three other accused are Deputy Inspector Shahriyar Sharmin, Constable Jalil and 'informers' Shushil.

"My innocent minor daughter has been victimised in a false case for filing a case against Inspector Shajahan Talukdar and three others of the Narcotics Control Department for raiding on my house without any specific charge and looting Tk 26,200", Liaquat Ali alleged.

Farzana is a student of class three at Phulbari B K Government Primary School at Daulatpur.

Inspector Shajahan could not be contacted for comment as he was out of his office when the report was filed yesterday.

8x2

9x4

## GANGRAPE, MURDER OF GARO WOMAN Killers yet to be nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Police failed to arrest any of the culprits involved in the gangrape and murder of Garo women Anjali Rama one and a half months after the incident.

Anjali Rama, 30, wife of Palinus Rangdi of Guchchagram village under Durgapur upazila in the district, was gangraped and killed on the night of March 9.

Police recovered her body from near Bijoypur white clay mine. Anjali was a day labour working in a ceramic company there.

Her husband filed a murder case with Durgapur thana.

Netrakona Police Superintendent Abu Nasar Mohammad Khalid while talking to this correspondent said police are trying to arrest the killers.

When contacted, Officer-In-Charge (OC) of Durgapur thana Abdur Razzak said they have identified three suspects involved in the gangrape and murder. They are Sukol Rangdi of Guchchagram village and Nuru Mia and Abdus Sattar of Shasarpur village.

Sukol has crossed the border and Nuru and Sattar are absconding, he said. Police raided the houses of Nuru and Sattar three times but failed to arrest them, he claimed.