



PHOTO: STAR

A good number of enclosures, meant for shrimp cultivation in Gopalganj district, are now being used for vegetable cultivation. The photo was taken from Nalua village in Kotalipara upazila of Gopalganj district a few days ago.

14 missing during Sidr languish in Orissa jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fourteen of the Pathorghata fishermen, who went missing during cyclone Sidr in November 2007, are reportedly staying in Orissa central jail in India.

In this regard, a message from Indian High Commission reached Pathorghata police station on Monday through and the home ministry and office of Barguna superintendent of police.

"We got a list of 14 missing fishermen who are in the central jail in Orissa in India. The jail authority asked us to confirm identities of the people on the list," said Sub Inspector Md Shahidul Islam, second officer of Pathorghata police station.

"After confirming the list we will send our reply to the jail authority through our higher authorities concerned. Indian law enforcement agencies arrested them as they entered India during Sidr," he added.

Over three hundred fishermen from Barguna district have remained missing since

cyclone Sidr hit the coastal region on November 15 in 2007.

According to the list sent to Pathorghata police station, the 14 fishermen who are in Indian jail are -- Babul Khan, son of Karim Khan, Delwar and Abbas, sons of Motaieb Mia, Monotosh and Nirmol, sons of Nokul Chandra, Abdur Rahim, son of Sohrab Hossain, Shamsur Rahman, son of Bazlur Rahman, Awasl, son of Motaieb Mia, Badsha Mia, son of Shamsur Rahman, Bareq Majhi, son of Abdur Rahman, Alomgir Pada, son of Hashem Pada, Ful Mia, son of Syed Ali, all of Lathimara village, and Md Zakir, son of Montaz Uddin, and Aziz Fakir, son of Majid Fakir of Badurtali village under Pathorghata upazila.

"The 14 fishermen went missing with five trawlers after Sidr. Their family members had thought them to be killed during the super cyclone. Now the news from local police station has come as a happy surprise to them," said Sohrab Mia, a member of Pathorghata UP.

"I heard that my sons are alive and they are in Indian

jail. I am praying to Allah for their return," said Rahima Begum, mother of Abbas and Delwar.

"My wife is offering puja to local temple so that our sons return to us. We are very happy to hear from police that as our two sons are still alive," Nokul Chandra, father of Monotosh and Nirmal, said.

Families of the 14 fishermen have urged Bangladesh and Indian governments to take necessary steps for their early return.

"According to government record, 349 fishermen in Barguna went missing during Sidr but our record says the number would be over 400. Families of those missing fishermen are yet to get any help from the government. Only local NGO Sankalpa Trust distributed Tk 25,000 to each child of the families of all missing fishermen," said Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna district fishing trawler owners association.

He also urged the government to give financial help to the families of all missing fishermen.

Uttara Himghar yet to pay compensation

Potato growers in Dinajpur start fresh agitation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Potato growers of different upazila of Dinajpur district formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office here yesterday demanding compensation for their potatoes which got damaged due to alleged negligence of Uttara Himghar Ltd authorities in April this year.

The agitating farmers submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner and also threatened to go for tougher agitation if their demand was not met within the next 30 days.

Deputy Commissioner Md Jamal Uddin assured the potato growers of taking necessary steps to realise compensation from the cold storage authorities.

Later, the farmers held a press conference at Dinajpur Press Club where Md Nazrul Islam, president of Dinajpur Krishak Kalyan Samity, and Md Azizul Islam, secretary of the samity, alleged that though the cold storage authorities had earlier agreed to give compensation to the affected farmers within July 15, no compensation is yet to be paid.

They said at least 40,000 sacks of potatoes got damaged at Uttara Himghar at Boroil village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila due to negligence of

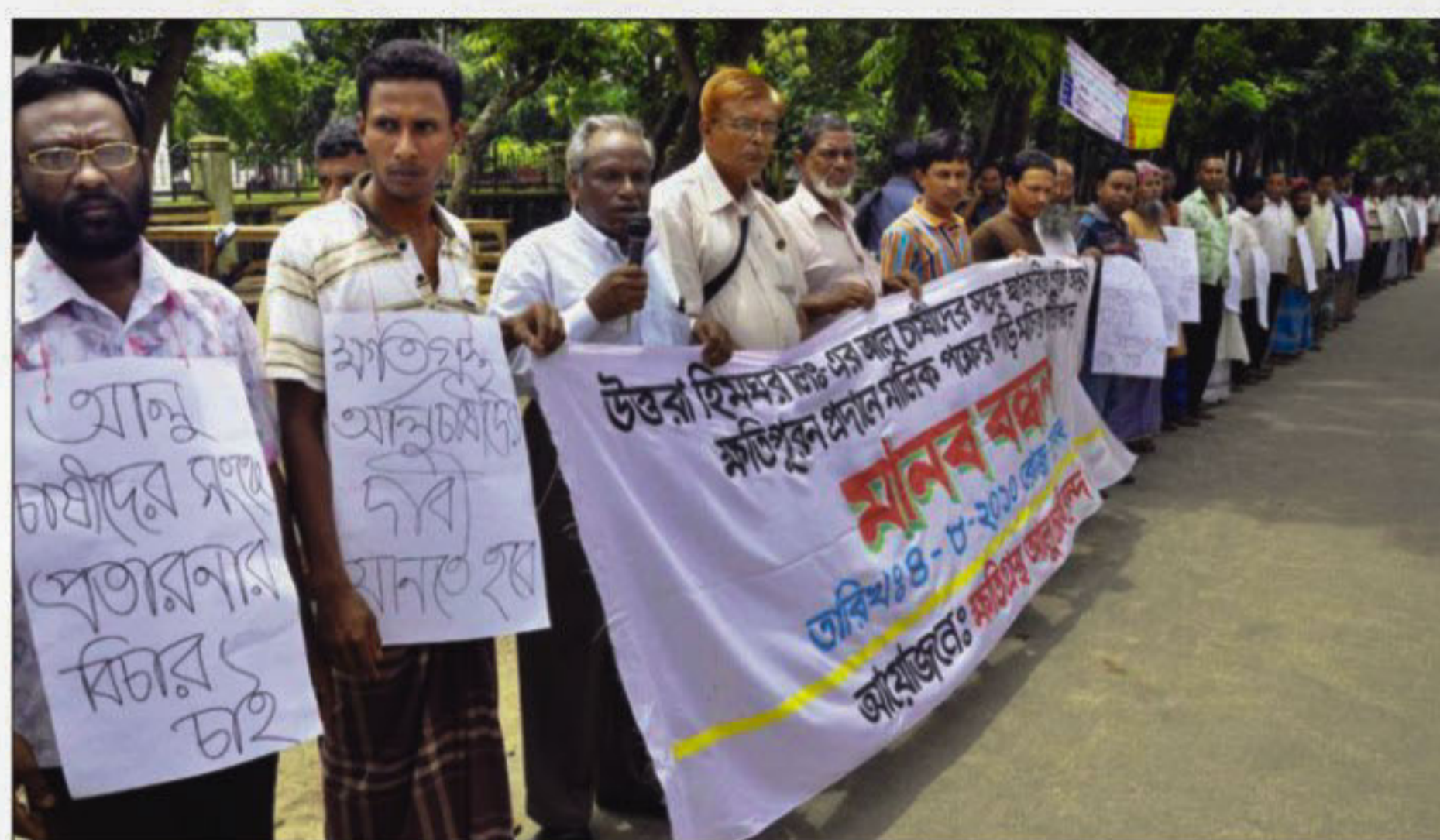


PHOTO: STAR

Potato growers form a human chain in front of Dinajpur deputy commissioner's office yesterday demanding compensation for their potatoes damaged at Uttara Himghar at Boroil under Sadar upazila due to alleged negligence of cold storage authorities.

the authorities. They further alleged that authorities stored at least 53,000 sacks of potatoes in the cold storage beyond its capacity.

After the incident in April, the potato growers of the district staged demonstrations and blocked Dinajpur-Dhaka highway several times demanding compensation for their damaged potatoes.

The district administration formed an investigation committee headed upazila agriculture officer. The committee in its report submitted to the deputy commissioner said the stored potatoes got rotten due to negligence of the Uttara Himghar Ltd authorities.

The committee also suggested that the cold storage authorities pay Tk 800 to 1100

per per bag of rotten potatoes to the affected farmers.

Later, Uttara Himghar authorities in a meeting with former Deputy Commissioner Md Shamsul Alam agreed that he would give compensation for the damaged potatoes by July 15.

Md Mir Ashfaq, managing director of Uttara Himghar Ltd, could not be contacted over cellphone for his comment.

Pickpockets steal CMP commissioner's cell phone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested three people, including two pickpockets, in the port city on Monday night for stealing the mobile phone of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner on Friday.

The arrested pickpockets, identified as Abdul Khalek, 33, and Selim Mia, 35, are members of an organised gang. They are active mainly at mosques and namaz-e-Janazas, police said.

The other arrestee is Mintu Dev, 31. Police recovered the stolen mobile set from his possession.

Pickpocket Khalek took away mobile phone of CMP Commissioner Abul Kashem from the pocket of his bodyguard while they were attending Juma prayers at Police Lines Mosque.

Kotwali police with the help of the detectives caught Mintu Dev who claimed to have bought the mobile phone from Karnaphuli Market on Monday night.

On his statement, police arrested Khalek and his accomplice Selim in the city's Ruby Gate and Pathantuli areas the same night.

Sub-Inspector Swadip Das of Kotwali Police Station, who took part in the drive led by Assistant Commissioner of the Detective Branch of CMP Hasan Chowdhury, said the gang members sell the stolen mobile phone to some mobile shop owners at Reazuddin Bazar.

"We are gathering information regarding the gang and hope to arrest them immediately," the SI said, adding that a case was filed in this connection with Halishahar Police Station.

Khalek told reporters at the police station on Tuesday morning that he and his gang members take away mobile phones from other people's pockets at crowded places, especially at mosques and janazas.

Robbers loot four houses in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Robbers looted cash and valuables worth Tk 13 Lakh from four houses in Golapganj upazila early Tuesday.

Police quoting local people said armed robbers swooped on the houses of Shivu Dev of Purkayosthapa village, Dr M Aftab Uddin of nearby Laxmonaband Islamabad village, Yasin Mia of Nilampara village and Siraj Uddin Chowdhury of Laxmipasha village late at night.

Sources said the gang took the house members hostage at gunpoint and looted 40 tolas of gold ornaments, Tk 50,000 in cash, mobile phone sets and other valuables from the four houses.

They also stabbed Mintu Dev, nephew of Shivu Dev, indiscriminately as he tried to resist the robbers.

Police arrested one Komol Das suspecting his involvement in the robbery.

Young Sumon maimed for life in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The 26-year-old youth cannot utter any word, receive any message, even recognise anybody. He only stares at something, lying in his reading room.

A terrible road accident left the ill-fated Sumon, Mojahidul Islam Sumon, a resident of Purbo Alipur and a student of City College in Faridpur, senseless since for the last nine months.

A vehicle hit the youth from behind when he was cycling at TTC area of Faridpur town on October 8 last year, family sources said.

Finding Sumon senseless on the road, locals admitted him to Faridpur Medical College Hospital (FMCH).

Informed by police, Sumon's father Abdul Hannan and mother Aleya Begum rushed to FMCH and later shifted him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Following a CT scan test that showed serious brain haemorrhage, Sumon underwent a neurosurgery as per suggestion by Dr Asif Barkatullah, said Abdul Hannan, who earns by private tuition.

Later Sumon remained under the treatment of Dr Deen Mohammad of DMCH



PHOTO: STAR

Virtually maimed by a road accident nine months ago, Sumon can only give a pointless look lying on his bed.

for four months and was released from the hospital on February 10 this year. But he is yet to regain his sense.

"I have spent all my savings and sold belongings for treatment of my dearest son. It needs Tk 400 daily to buy medicine which I can no longer manage," said a tearful Hannan.

"Baba Sumon, please talk to me, look at me, here I am, your mother," Sumon's mother frequently utters before him but the only response she receives is blank look.

Sumon might regain his

sense if he gets proper treatment that costs a huge amount of money, Sumon's father quoted doctors as saying.

He has asked for financial help to the solvent people.

If anybody wants to help Sumon, he can contribute to Mudaraba savings account No 10806, Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd Faridpur Branch, or S/A No 5054, Janata Bank Ltd, Station Road, Faridpur branch. Sumon's father can be contacted on cell phone No 01718985670.

BHASANI UNIVERSITY IN TANGAIL

Agitation to rename degree on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Students of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (BGE) Department at Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology (MBUST) yesterday continued agitation demanding BSc (Engineering) degree in place of BSc (Honours) degree.

To press the demand, the 250 students of the department formed a human chain in front of the Tangail Press Club in the town yesterday.

As the university authorities banned all kinds of agitation programme including procession, rally or human chain on the campus, the students formed the human chain in the town taking verbal permission from the police administration.

To realise their demand the students have been boycotting their classes and examinations since July 20. They placed their demand before the university authorities including vice-chancellor, registrar, and teachers of the department.

Earlier, they held token hunger strikes, human chains on the campus, gave memorandum to the university authorities including the department teachers to realise their demand.

Agitating BGE students told this correspondent that they want BSc (Engineering) degree as it is needed to participate in the BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examination under the PSC's (Public Service Commission) engineering quota in place of general quota in keeping themselves in the job race.

Malaysia, America, Switzerland and many other countries confer engineering degree on the BGE/GEB students, they said.

The students said although the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already decided to give the BGE/GE students BSc (Engineering) degree in place of BSc (Honours) degree, the decision could not be implemented due to shortage of teachers and indifference of the department teachers.

They also alleged that several teachers of the department, who have come from other disciplines (departments), are against the move to turn it into engineering department.

Teachers of the BGE department, however, told this correspondent that they always want welfare of the students.

They said the department teachers, following discussion among themselves and with teachers of other universities, have realised that renaming of degree will not bring good to the BGE students.

They also said as the students continued agitation, the academic committee of the BGE department held an urgent meeting and decided to take opinion of the chairmen of the BGE/GEB departments of the all public universities in the country.

It was decided at the meeting that on getting the opinions, the committee of the department would send its opinions to the Academic Council as quickly as possible, said Imam Hasan, head of the BGE department.

The teachers said as the matter is under process they

urged the students to patient and return to their classes.

The students, however, alleged that the teachers of the department are intentionally delaying the matter. The 250 students of the department will not return to classes till a positive announcement in this regard, they said.

Contacted, Prof Mohammad Moniruzzaman, pro vice-chancellor of the university, told The Daily Star that the matter is still under process and the university Regent Board will take the final decision. Before that the matter will go to the Academic Council and deans of the faculties, he said.

"The agitating students should return to their classes for the greater interest and proper academic atmosphere of the university," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (BGE) Department at Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology in Tangail forming a human chain in front of Tangail press club in the town yesterday demanding BSc (Engineering) degree in place of BSc (Honours) degree.



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of trees beside Bogra-Joypurhat road are dying for unknown reasons while a section of unscrupulous people are looting the dead trees. The photo was taken from Komogram village on Battali-Joypurhat road.