



PHOTO: STAR

A local influential group has continued illegal sand lifting from near Kuakata flood control embankment, threatening the protection dyke as well as the scenic tourist spot. The photo was taken a few days ago.

# Indiscriminate sand lifting threatens Kuakata dyke

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Kuakata flood control embankment and adjoining sea beach area are under threat as a local influential group has continued illegal sand extraction from a ditch outside the embankment for the last six months.

As the ditch is becoming deeper due to continued sand lifting, its bank may collapse any time and the threat will be more serious during the rainy season, said several locals.

The influential group, involved in selling the sand through pipes from a ditch about 70 to 80 metres to the north of the central points of the beach and adjacent of the embankment, has already sold sand worth over Tk 10 lakh from the ditch, locals said.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw that the group is lifting up sand from the ditch of the flood control embankment with the help of a locally made dredger and they are filling up a piece of land with the sand about 300 metres away, inside the embankment. A signboard hanging with the wall of the land said its owner is some Khadija Rahman of Kalikapur

in Patuakhali town.

The 'landowner' or any of her representatives was not found there when this correspondent tried to get their comments.

Talking to this correspondent, Nasir Uddin, leader of the group and owner the dredger, introduced himself as former president of Motor Sramik League of Latachaplee union unit.

Tofazzel Hossain Tofael, secretary of Patuakhali district unit of Sramik League, said, "We do not have any unit in such name. Some local men may falsely introduce themselves as men belonging to the ruling party or its wing to do illegal business. Local administration should take step against those who are involved in such work and earn money in illegal ways."

Asked whether there is any central committee of their unit, Nasir Uddin evaded the question, saying, "Now I am not active in politics."

"The local administration should take immediate step to stop sand lifting to prevent collapse of the flood control embankment and serious damage to Kuakata sea beach, a famous tourist spot," said Prof AKM Mostafa Zaman,

chairman of Environment and Disaster Management Department of Patuakhali Science and Technology University.

Asked about the illegal sand lifting, local UP Chairman Abdul Bareq Molla said, "Nobody submitted any complaint to me in this regard."

Nasir Uddin claimed that they are lifting up sand from the ditch following oral permission from Kalapara upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) to dig a pond there.

"We are giving Tk 2,000 for per 1,000 square feet of sand to the UNO office. We have planned to dig a pond here to meet water crisis of tourists," he added.

Kalapara UNO Md Liakot Ali, also the chairman of Kuakata beach management committee, on the other hand, said, "Some local people started digging a pond about six months ago. Later we stopped the work. I do not know whether the sand lifting is running now. If it runs, I will take step to stop the work."

The UNO, however, declined to make any comment about Nasir Uddin's claim of giving money to the UNO office for selling sand.

# More mayor aspirants vow to check crime, corruption

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mayoral candidates in Khagrachhari, Lalmonirhat and Chapainawabganj have pledged to the voters that they will work for checking crime and corruption and ensuring civic amenities for the townspeople, if elected.

Five mayoral candidates in Khagrachhari municipality during a 'face to face with people' programme at Town Hall ground on Friday evening promised to preserve communal harmony, resist crime and corruption, ensure citizens' right and implement projects for development and beautification of the municipality, reports our correspondent.

Awami League (AL)-backed candidate Nurun Nabi Chowdhury said he will ensure people's participation in planning and implementing development schemes, if elected.

Rafiqul Alam, a Khagrachhari Nagorik Committee backed leader, said he will continue fight against drug, stalking and extortion alongside development work and preserving communal harmony and initiate 'house loan' system if the dwellers elect him mayor.

Dheeman Khisha, United Peoples Democratic Front backed candidate, said the door of the municipality office would remain open for all if he is elected mayor.

All the candidates promised to accept defeat in the election and help the winner in development work.

Sushashoner Jonno



PHOTO: STAR

Sushashaner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), an NGO, organised a human chain yesterday at Mongla, Bagerhat, calling upon the people to elect the right person in the coming municipal poll.

Nagorik (Sujan), a civil society platform working for good governance, organised the programme in collaboration with the Sachetan Nagorik Committee (SANAC) under Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports: Five mayoral candidates in Lalmonirhat municipality made their electoral pledges and responded to voters' queries in 'face-to-face with people' programmes organised by Sujan at collectorate ground Friday noon.

After the question-answer session, the mayoral candidates pledged to meet the voters' demands and eliminate corruption in the area. Independent candidate Chitto Ranjon Roy

Montu promised to free the municipality area from corruption, build a children's park and create a fund for the poor students.

Independent candidate freedom fighter Abdur Rashid said he will try to develop Lalmonirhat municipality into a modern town and ensure all civic amenities.

AL-backed candidate Reazul Islam Rintu promised to complete the incomplete job of father late Makbul Hossain, former chairman of Lalmonirhat municipality.

BNP-backed candidate Hafizur Rahman Babla said he will free the municipality area from narcotics and crimes, if voters elect him. Former mayor Mosharaf Hossain Rana said he will focus on the development of drainage system, roads and educational institutions.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent adds: Four mayor candidates at 'face to face programme with voters' organised by SANAC, a unit of TIB, at Birshreshtha Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Mukta Mancho in front of

Chapainawabganj municipality on Thursday vowed to remain hundred percent corruptions-free and take up massive programme to provide more civic amenities to townspeople.

AL-backed candidate Moinuddin Mondol, also a former mayor, said the entire development programme would be focused on the opinion of the general people, if he is elected.

BNP-backed candidate Maolana Abdu Matin said if he is elected, he would give the town dwellers a beautiful municipality.

Moniruzzaman Monir of Chapainawabganj Unnayan Committee emphasised on freeing the town from drugs and development of drainage system and roads of the town.

Latifur Rahman, also a former lawmaker of Jamaat, said he will construct a cold storage for preserving mango if the people elect him mayor.



PHOTO: STAR

Blooming mustard fields spreading across vast areas of land beside Narail-Jessore road offer an eye-soothing sight with the area sees large-scale cultivation of the winter crop.

# Mustard farming expanding in 10 south-western districts

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Mustard cultivation is expanding in 10 south-western districts.

At least 72,206 tonnes of edible oil seeds is expected to be produced through cultivation of 65,642 hectares of land this year. Last year 60,689 hectares of land was brought under cultivation, according to the sources at the department of agriculture extension (DAE), Khulna Division.

This year the farmers cultivated mustard on 15,959 hectares in Jessore, 8,382 hectares in Jhenidah, 15,256 hectares in Magura,

5,367 hectares in Narail, 324 hectares in Khulna, 864 hectares in Bagerhat, 6,408 hectares in Satkhira, 3,898 hectares in Kushtia, 4,786 hectares in Chuadanga and 4,398 hectares in Meherpur.

"Cultivation of mustard is easier and less costly compared to other crops and we get good profit from it," said Akbor Ali, a farmer, who has brought his 65 decimals of land under mustard farming this season, at Solemanpur village under Kotchandpur upazila of the district.

In 70 to 90 days the crop is ready for harvest. The period

is in between two crops -- Boro and Amon. So there is no major impact on our main crops, Akbor Ali added.

Another farmer, Anarul Islam of Shamai village under Sadar upazila of Meherpur district claimed that mustard farming needs no fertiliser or insecticide. The crop is cultivated on the same plot of lentil and sugarcane, he said.

Mahfuzur Rahman, a seed dealer in Sadar upazila, said mustard seeds were available in time this season which encouraged the farmers to cultivate mustard on more lands.

Mahubb Ur Rahman,

deputy director of the department of agriculture extension in Jhenidah, said they (DAE) have been advising the farmers to bring more and more land under mustard farming.

The Tori-7 variety of the mustard grows better in the gap period when the lands lie fallow. This variety can be harvested in 60 to 65 days, he added.

Additional director of DAE, Khulna division, Bazlul Haque Mia said the massive mustard farming will help to reduce the country's dependence of the imported edible oil.

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<p><b>Other Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proficiency both in Bengali &amp; English.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Candidates having Computer Literacy will get preference.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The candidates in service must apply through proper channel.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Selected Candidates shall execute a Surety Bond to serve the Bank for a minimum period of 5 (five) years.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Both male and female candidates may apply for the post.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Selection Procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Only short listed and valid candidates will be called to appear at the Written Test on General Knowledge &amp; Islamiat subjects.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The candidates qualified in Written Test will be called for Viva-Voce.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No TA/DA will be allowed for appearing in the Written Test &amp; Viva-Voce.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No fee is required to apply for the post.</li> </ul>

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