

# Farmers opt for sunflower cultivation in Patuakhali

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Cultivation of oil seeds like sesame, mustard and sunflower are gaining popularity among Patuakhali farmers as it helps them to avoid high cost for bottled edible oil and add to family income.

This year farmers cultivated oil seeds on about 35,000 acres of land -- sesame on about 25,000 acres, sunflower on 7,000 acres and mustard on 3,000 acres of land in the district against last year's 15,000 acres, said DAE sources.

Interestingly, a good number of female farmers are getting involved in sunflower cultivation on their land.

"I cultivated sunflower on 0.50 acres of land. I hope to get 8 to 10 maunds (a maund is equal to around 44 kg in local measure) of seeds that will bring me 190 to 200 litres of oil. It is sufficient to meet my family's yearly demand," said Rashida Begum, 45, a farmer of Shialy village under Sadar upazila.

Urmila Rani, 50, of the same village said she cultivated sunflower on her 0.50 acres of lands to meet the family need as prices of edible oil is on the rise.

Eumus Howlader, 60, of Keshobpur village under the same upazila, who

cultivated sunflower on one acre of land, said he did not have to buy edible oil from market during the last three years as oil seed from his field is more than enough to meet his family requirement.

"I learnt from a doctor that oil from sunflower seed is better than bottled oil from the market," he said.

Mostafa Kamal, another farmer of the village, said he sold sunflower oil of Tk 5,000 after meeting his family requirement.

Local farmers are encouraged to cultivate oil seeds including sunflower, mustard and sesame as it helps them to get edible oil at a low cost while price of edible oil in local market is too high, said Abdul Awal, deputy assistant agriculture officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

"Sunflower cultivation is easier, cheaper and more profitable. It requires very little irrigation and small amounts of fertilisers and insecticides. A kg of sunflower seeds brings 500 to 600 grams of oil, an amount more than that from any other oil seeds," he added.

DAE is trying to encourage local farmers to cultivate oil seeds through a five-year project titled 'Market

Infrastructures Development Project for Char Lands Region'. The project started in 2009 and will end in 2013. Under the project DAE is providing training to farmers to hand over new technologies to cultivate oil seeds in these areas.

Brac also brought 180 acres of lands under sunflower cultivation in Sadar, Kalapara and Mirzaganj upazilas of Patuakhali district.

The NGO is implementing a two-year (January 2010 -- December 2011) project titled 'Crop Intensification for Achieving Food Sufficiency in the Coastal Region of Bangladesh'.

Sunflower cultivation on an acre of land costs around Tk 7,000 to 9,000 and oil worth Tk 30,000 to 36,000 is produced from there, said Ashraf Islam, regional manager of Brac.

Weather and soil in Patuakhali district are suitable for oil seed cultivation, DAE sources said, adding that 12 to 16 maunds of seeds are produced in an acre of land and 400 to 600 grams of oil is produced from per kg of seeds.

Local farmers are getting more and more interested in oil seed cultivation as the prices of oil are on the rise, AZM Momtazul Karim, deputy director of DAE in Patuakhali.



PHOTO: STAR

Shefali Begum tends sunflower plants at her field at Shialy village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila. Cultivation of the plant producing nutritious oil seeds has become a good earning source for many people in the area recently.

## UDICHI TRAGEDY CASE OF 1999

# Jessore court summons people acquitted earlier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Following a High Court order for revival of the sensational Jessore Udichi tragedy case of 1999, the chief judicial magistrate of Jessore has issued summons upon the earlier acquitted people to appear before the court within 30 days from the day of receiving the notice.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate's court received the letter from the High Court in this regard on last Monday and issued the summons on the people concerned on Tuesday.

On March 3 of 2010, the Ministry of Home Affairs filed an appeal with the High Court challenging acquittal of the 23 accused in the case.

On May 4 this year, a High Court division bench comprising Justice Siddiqur Rahman and Justice Krishna Devnath issued order for reviving the

case asking all the 23 acquitted people to surrender before the lower court.

Ten people were killed and over a hundred others seriously injured in two bomb blasts on March 6 in 1999, the concluding day of the 12th national convention of Udichi Shilpi Goshthi held at the Town Hall ground of Jessore town.

Two cases were filed in this connection with the Jessore Kotwali police station.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charge sheet naming 24 people as accused of killing ten persons and injuring over a hundred others in two separate bomb attacks.

One of charge-sheeted accused, Tariqul Islam, former minister of the BNP-led four-party alliance government, was later exempted from the charge by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

After a long trial, the District and Sessions Judge of Jessore delivered verdict on June 6 in 2006 acquitting the remaining 23 accused.

The president and the general secretary of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi submitted a memorandum to the government on July 6 in 2006 demanding reinvestigation of the case. Accordingly, the home ministry ordered extended investigation of the case.

The case, however, took a new turn as kingpin of banned militant organisation Harkatul Jihad Mufti Abdul Hannan confessed to his involvement in the bomb attacks.

Of the 23 people who were earlier acquitted in the case, Ahsan Kabir Hasan and Mizanur Rahman were killed in 'crossfire' with Rab and Alamgir Mohiuddin, also a former ward commissioner, died of protracted illness.

# Poll-related violence in Pabna, Gaibandha leaves 47 hurt

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 70 people were injured in UP poll-related violence in Moulvibazar, Gaibandha, Munshiganj and Sirajganj districts yesterday and on Tuesday night.

In Moulvibazar, post-poll violence in Rajnagar upazila yesterday left at least 28 people injured.

Our correspondent quoted Rajnagar police and local people as saying that the supporters of defeated chairman candidate Kawser Uddin and chairman-elect Milon Bakht clashed at Premnagar village in Mounsnagar Union at around 10:30am, leaving at least 28 people from both sides injured.

Of the injured, 15 are undergoing treatment at

Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital and private clinics while the rest received first.

In Gaibandha, at least 25 people were injured in poll-related clashes in Mahdipur Union of Palashbari upazila early yesterday.

As the supporters of chairman aspirant Touhidul Islam failed to snatch ballot boxes after counting of votes at Mahdipur polling centre on Tuesday night, they put up barricades on Dhaka-Rangpur road, disrupting traffic for four hours from 10:00pm. They also vandalised 10-12 vehicles on the road, according to UNB.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and charged batons on Touhid's supporters, leaving 14 people injured.

In another incident, 11

people, including cops, were wounded in a clash between police and the supporters of a defeated candidate who attacked election officials and tried to snatch ballot boxes on their way to Palashbari town after announcement of election results at Hossainpur polling centre in the same union on Tuesday night.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reported that clashes between the supporters of the elected and defeated member candidates in Char Kewra Union of Sadar upazila yesterday left over 12 people from both sides injured.

At least 10 houses at fultala and Hoglekandi villages were ransacked by the clashing groups. The injured were admitted to

Munshiganj Sadar Hospital. Being informed, police rushed to the spot, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

In Sirajganj, at least seven people were injured in a clash between and the supporters of a member candidate and police at Rashidpur centre in Hatikumkum Union.

Our correspondent quoting police and local people said around 200 people led by member candidate Liton Bhuiyan entered the centre at around 12:45pm. They locked in a scuffle with police and tried to capture the polling centre.

Police fired blank shots to disperse the unruly people and arrested five people, including member candidate Liton Bhuiyan, on the spot.

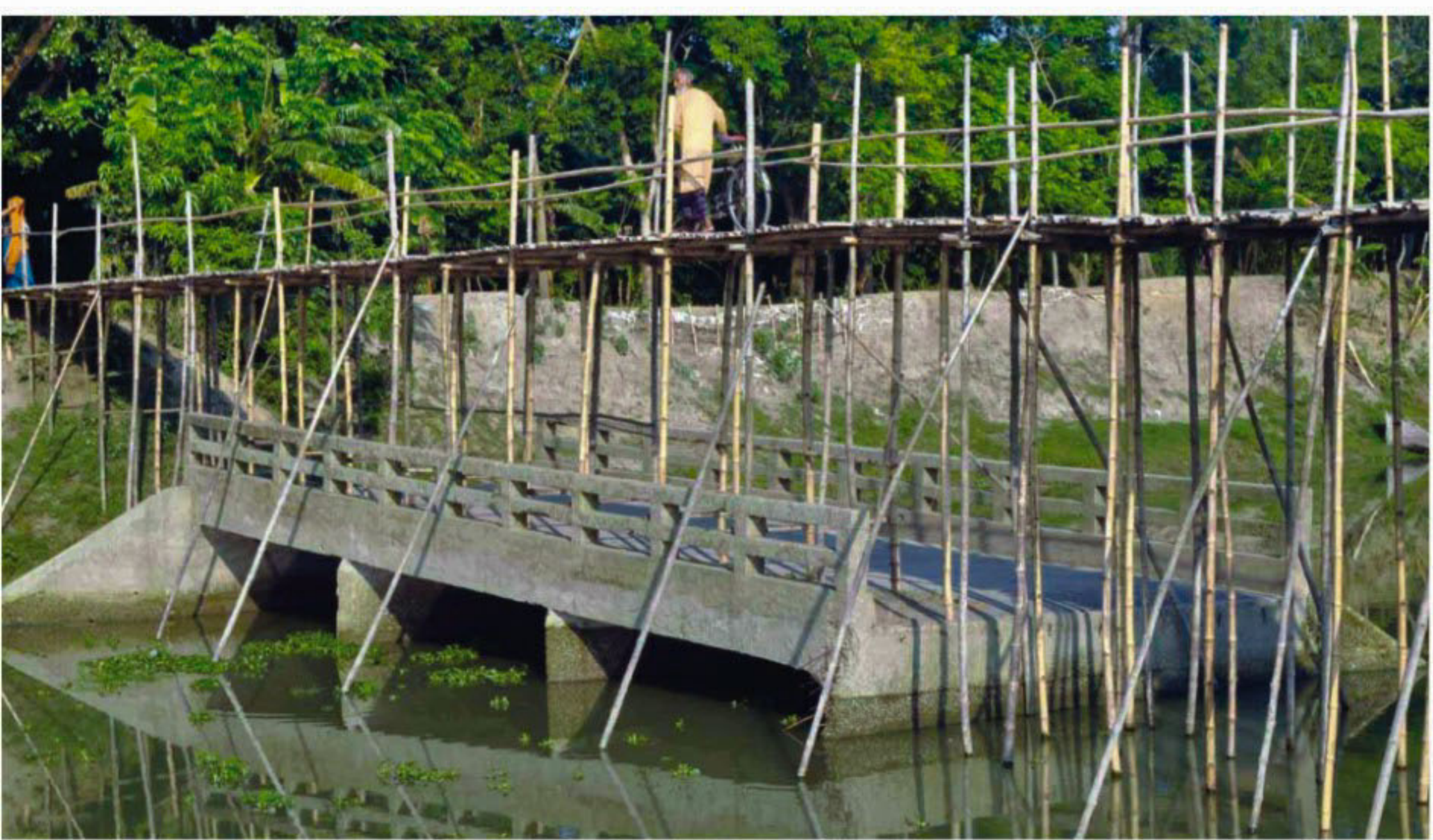


PHOTO: STAR

People of nearby villages have to take a risky walk on this shaky bamboo-made bridge to cross Nayapara canal at Chargovindi Nayapara in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur district as the concrete bridge at the same place subsided during flood in 2009.

# 17 shops gutted in Sirajdikhan fire

UNB, Munshiganj

A devastating fire gutted 17 shops at Sirajdikhan Bazzar in Sirajdikhan upazila headquarters here early yesterday.

Officer-in-charge of Sirajdikhan police station Mahbubur Rahman quoting locals said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a cotton shop of Jamir Uddin at about 4am and soon engulfed the adjacent 16 shops.

The damaged business enterprises include grocery stores, hotel, medicine shops, fast food shops and a rickshaw garage.

On information, fire service personnel from nearby Srinagar station rushed to the spot at about 5am and brought the fire under control with the help of local people at about 6:30 am.

The extent of loss was estimated at about Tk 2 crore.

# Fisherman killed in tiger attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A fisherman was killed in tiger attack yesterday morning near Karamzol forest office in Nalbonia canal area under Chandpai Range of the Sundarbans under Dakope police station of Khulna district.

The deceased was identified as Md Majed Sarder, 40, son of Mohammed Ali Sarder of Pashim Chila village under Mongla upazila. Mihir Kumar Dey, forest

officer of Sundarbans East Zone, said Majed went to the forest for collecting spawn at about 10:00am illegally. While returning, he entered into the forest to collect firewood after berthing his boat at Nalbonia canal.

Other fishermen vigorously looked for him as he did not return after a long time. They found the body and informed the forest guards who recovered and handed it over to the victim's family.

# Three housewives murdered

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Three housewives were murdered allegedly by their husbands in Patuakhali, Satkhira and Sunamganj districts on Tuesday.

Two of them were killed for dowry while the other was tortured to death for not casting vote in favour of her husband's relative.

In Patuakhali, a mother of a child was killed allegedly by her husband for dowry.

Victim Hosneara Begum, 27, died at Patuakhali hospital on Tuesday, reports our correspondent.

Police and family sources said, Hosneara, daughter of Mohammad Ali of Itbaria village under Sadar upazila was married to Jasim Howlader, son of Mostafa of Jainhathe village under same upazila four years ago.

After marriage, Jasim often tortured his wife for refusing to bring money from her father as dowry.

On the fateful day, Jasim gagged his wife and beat her up mercilessly. At one stage, Hosneara fainted. She later died at Patuakhali General Hospital.

In Satkhira, another housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Dargahpur village in Assassuni upazila for dowry on Tuesday, reports our correspondent.

The victim was identified as Fahima Khatun, 22, wife of Abdul Latif of the village.

Quoting local people police said Fahima, daughter of Abul Kashem Gazi of Bhairabghata village in Paikgachha upazila under Khulna district was married to Abdul Latif, son of Mahtab Uddin of Dargahpur village about two years ago.

Recently Latif demanded Tk 50,000 as dowry and started to torture Fahima as she failed to bring the amount.

On Tuesday, Latif beat her mercilessly leaving her dead on the spot.

Police recovered the body with several marks of injuries on her person and sent it to Satkhira morgue for postmortem.

In Sunamganj, a housewife was tortured to death allegedly by her husband for not casting vote in favour of his relative at Chanpur village in South Sunamganj upazila on Tuesday morning, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Parbul Akhter, wife of Abul Kashem of the village.

Local people said Parbul and her parents did not cast vote for Kashem's cousin who was a member candidate in the UP election.

Locals said on Tuesday morning, Kashem locked in an altercation with Parbul over the issue and at one stage beat her mercilessly leaving her dead on the spot.

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