

Wrongly fattened cattle still big cause for worry

Low price frustrates most rearers

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Widespread use of harmful medicines and hormones to fatten cattle in Sirajganj and Pabna districts, the country's largest cattle producing zone, poses risk for consumers as the animals are being sent to the market for sale as sacrificial animals ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha.

Meanwhile, cattle farmers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are frustrated due to low prices of the animals in the local markets.

A section of farmers and cattle traders in Sirajganj and Pabna districts have continued using unscientific methods to fatten sacrificial animals ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha, reports our Pabna correspondent.

Around one lakh cattle

are being fattened in the two districts this year on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, according to Sirajganj and Pabna livestock offices.

Of them over 93 thousand are in Sirajganj district. Keeping in view last year's statistics, over 1.5 lakh cattle are expected to be sold from these two districts this time, said livestock officials.

"Many traders reportedly inject steroids like Dexamethasone, Decason, Betamethasone and Periactin to make their cattle fat for gaining extra profit. But use of these medicines to fatten animals is strictly banned," said Dr Wahedul Islam, additional livestock officer of Sirajganj livestock office.

"Excessive use of these medicines causes damage to kidneys and intestines of

cattle. As a result water gets absorbed into the flesh of the cows, making them look bulky but such animals face the risk of death any time. We watch cattle firms and cattle markets but many traders use the harmful medicines, dodging our monitoring teams," he added.

Dr Shafikul Hassan, head of the medicine department of Pabna Medical College, said meat of cows fattened with unauthorised medicines may affect human organs including kidney if it is taken for long.

Visiting different cattle markets of the two districts, this correspondent saw traders buying fat cows, especially for selling in the capital.

Several farmers and cow traders admitted that they

use hormones for fattening the cows.

Our Correspondent, Thakurgaon: Cattle farmers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are frustrated due to low price of the sacrificial animals in the local markets.

During a visit at Boda Nagarkumari hat on Wednesday this correspondent saw hundreds of reared cows and goats at the market.

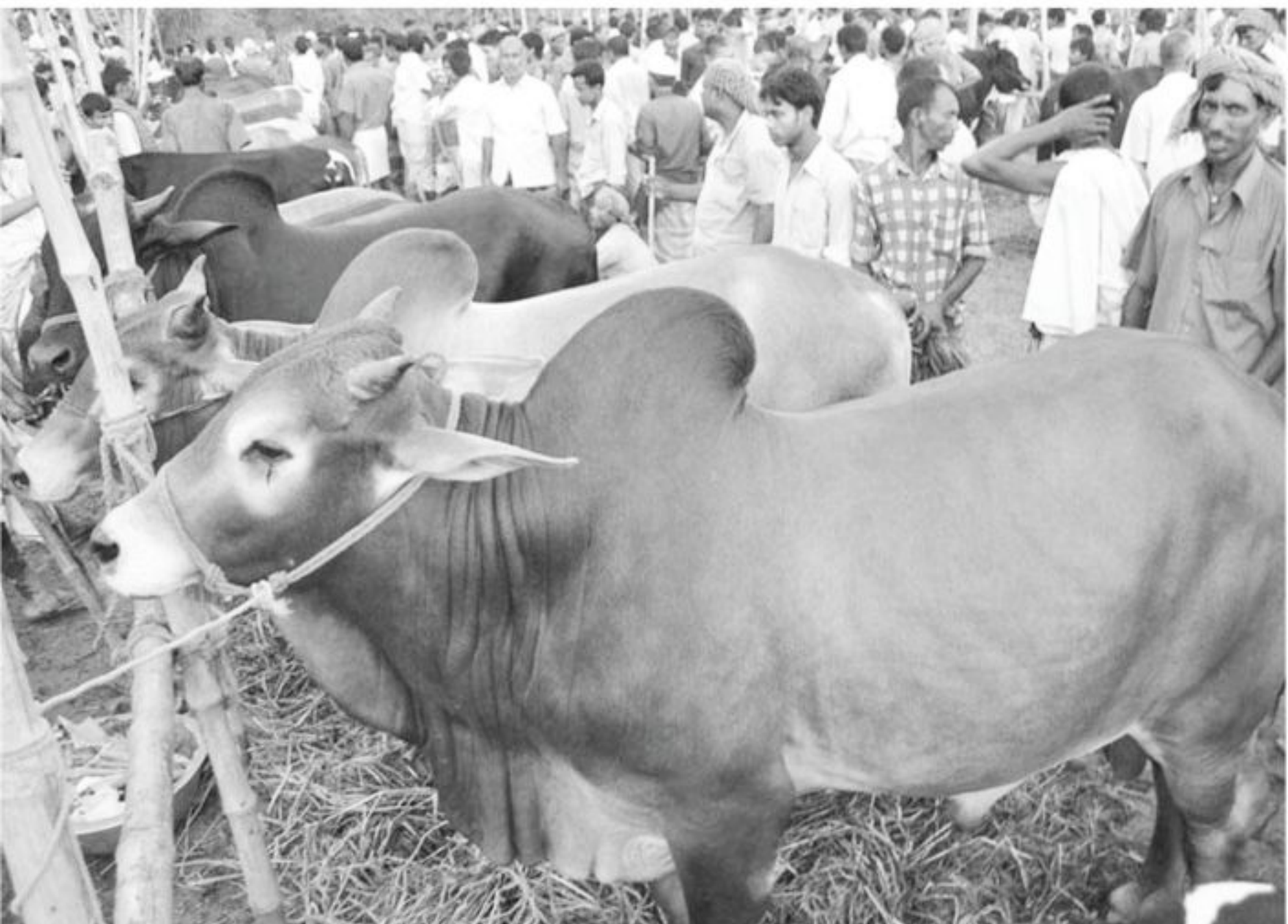
In comparison of bringing cattle, the number of sale was very poor as the market saw small numbers of buyers.

"I sold two medium sized (70-75 kg meat) cows for Tk 45,000 without any profit. I had bought them Tk 38,000 about eight months ago and spent a good amount for their rearing. Before the Eid-ul-Azha last year I sold two same sized cows for Tk 58,000," said Sirazul Islam of Sakoya village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh.

Sale of cattle this time is poor as farmers are short of cash due to not getting fair price of their agricultural products including paddy and jute, said Hasibul Islam, a cattle trader of Panchagarh.

The number of cattle traders from other districts, especially Dhaka, is much lower too, said another cattle trader Mokhesur Rahman.

Other famous cattle markets including Khochabari Haat, Katihar Haat, and Lahiri Haat in Baliadangi upazila, Jaborhat in Pirganj upazila of Thakurgaon, and Fakirganj Haat in Atwary upazila, and Panchagarh Bazar of Panchagarh district see similar situation.



Impressively bulky cows arrive at Shahjadpur cattle market in Sirajganj district as only a couple of days remain before Eid-ul-Azha. However, driven by the urge to earn more money, many farmers and cattle traders use unscientific ways to quickly fatten the animals, posing health hazard to consumers.

Shibir calls hartal in 4 dists today

600 sued in Chuadanga for attack on police, mandap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

Islami Chhatra Shibir will enforce a half-day hartal in four southwestern districts-Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jhenidah and Kushtia-today protesting killing of a party activist in police firing in Chuadanga on Thursday.

The Shibir man, Rafiqul Islam, was killed when law enforcers opened fire to disperse a group of Shibir activists who attacked a puja mandap at Darshana in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga on the day.

Police filed a case with Damurhuda Police Station on Friday night, accusing 600 identified and unnamed leaders and activists of upazila Jamaat and Shibir units of vandalising the mandap and attacking the policemen.

Three of the accused were

arrested yesterday. They are Jamaat activist Abu Bakkar Siddik, 48, and Shibir activists Saiful Islam, 23 and Jahid Hossain, 20.

Besides, police yesterday arrested two Shibir activists as they put up a barricade on Kushtia-Khulna highway at Chourhas area in Kushtia town.

The arrestees are Hazrat Ali, 22, and Ejaz Ahmed, 23. Both are second year honours students at Kushtia Government College.

Hemayet Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kushtia Model Police Station, said a group of Shibir men brought out a procession in the town at around 1:30pm in support of their Sunday's hartal and blocked the highway.

Several teams from Kushtia Police Lines rushed to the spot and dispersed the Shibir activists.

Launch staff assault passengers for not paying extra fare

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least four home-bound passengers were injured in an attack allegedly by the staff of a double-decker launch on Dhaka-Patuakhali route following an altercation over charging extra fares on Friday.

Two of them were identified as Mamun Howlader, 32, of Morichbunia village, and Md Kuddus, 30, of Barobighai village in Sadar upazila. Identity of the rest two could not be known.

Mamun, one of injured, told this correspondent that he was on the roof of Sundarban-6 launch. "I locked in an altercation with the supervisor of the launch as he demanded extra fare. At one stage, the supervisor along with two cabin boys attacked me," Mamun said, adding that the launch staff also assaulted three other passengers who refused to

pay extra fare.

This correspondent could not talk to the supervisor as he switched off his cellphone. Contacted, Badrul Alam, assistant director of BIWTA, said no one filed such complaint with him.

Some passengers said the launch staff have started charging the home-bound people extra, even double the fare.

Passengers are not getting tickets from booking office though tickets are available in the black market. Launch staff are selling per single cabin ticket at Tk 1200 to 1500 instead of Tk 900 while the double cabin ticket at Tk 2400 to 3000 instead of Tk 1800, Anwar Sadir, a launch passenger, alleged.

Ticket for each sofa seat is being sold at Tk 800 to 1000 instead of Tk 500, he added. Only two launches ply the Patuakhali-Dhaka route regularly.



Hindu devotees worship Goddess Durga on Mahaastami yesterday, the third day of the five-day Durga Puja, at Barobandar Harisava temple in Dinajpur town, right, a young girl in the role of deity Kumari (virgin) sits on the stage at a temple at Madhabdi in Narsingdi district on the day.

5 fishermen freed from robbers after gun battle

Coastguards arrest two robbers, seize arms, ammo in Sundarbans

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Members of Bangladesh Coastguard rescued five abducted fishermen and recovered arms and ammunition after an hour-long gunfight with a gang of forest robbers yesterday.

The incident took place at Khajurur Char in Sharankhola upazila under east Sundarbans in the district. Acting on a tip-off, a special team of Coastguard west zone led by Lt Commander M Mohiuddin Muzumder raided the den of notorious gang 'Sirsha Bahini' of forest robber Rezaul at Khajurur Char at about 5:00 am.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the robbers opened fire on them, prompting the Coastguard members to retaliate.

The fierce gunfight continued for over one hour.

As the robbers retreated,

the law enforcers rescued five abducted fishermen -- Md Mizan, 25, Md Hassan Sheikh, 15, Anwar Hawlader, 16, Md Hanif Fakir, 19, and Mujibur Rahman, 40 -- from their den. They hail from Mongla upazila of Bagerhat district.

Searching the spot, the law enforcers seized two single barrel guns, two LGs and over 200 different types of bullets.

Coastguard official sergeant Mostafizur Rahman filed a case yesterday noon with Mongla police station and deposited the arms there.

Rescued fishermen told the coastguard officials that members of Sirsha Bahini led by Rezaul abducted them from a spots adjacent to Dublar Char area about a week ago. The robbers took away three traders and demanded Tk 50,000 ransom from each family.

Forest guards arrest poachers, seize deer, traps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Forest guards in east Sundarbans yesterday arrested two poachers along with a live and a beheaded deer.

The poachers were held early in the morning from Haldikhali canal near Charaputia camp under Chandpai range of the mangrove forest.

The arrestees were identified as Manik Sheikh, 25, of Gobindapur village in Rampal upazila and Sheikh Monsur Ali, 52, of Perikhali village under the same

upazila in the district.

Forest official Abdul Hasem yesterday filed a case against them alleging that both were poachers 'by profession'.

He said that the two trapped the two deer in Haldikhali area early in the morning.

Later they killed one of them and were going to the nearby market by boat to sell those. A patrol team of Charputia camp arrested them and seized the deer and materials used for setting up traps.



SNIPPETS

Housewife commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A housewife allegedly committed suicide following a family feud at Takpara village in Alamdanga upazila on Friday. The deceased is Rehena Khatun, 40, wife of Abdur Razzak of the village. Police and family sources said Rehena took her life by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room at 5:30pm. The body was sent to Chuadanga General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Nine cattle drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

At least nine sacrificial cattle drown as a trawler capsized in the River Chitra at Jamrildanga village in Kalia upazila yesterday morning. Police and locals said a trawler carrying 13 cattle left for the cattle market at Khulna New Market from Mohishkhola village at 10:00am. When the trawler reached Jamrildanga area the it drowned in the river as the driver lost his control over the boat. The loss caused by the accident could go up to Tk 10 lakh, said Rasel Mollah, an affected cattle owner.

Fake medicine factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A fake medicine factory was sealed off in Rajbari area of the town yesterday. Police said on secret information, a mobile court, led by executive magistrate ANM Abu Jahar Giffari, about with the members of Rab-5, raided Bengal Ayurvedic Factory and seized fake medicines and raw materials. The court then sealed the factory. However, proprietor Md Sadequul Islam Shwadhin managed to flee the scene.

Snatchers held from mandaps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police arrested at least twenty-six people, including 25 women, on charge of snatching valuables at different puja mandaps in Kulaura area of the district yesterday and the day before. The arrestees hailed from different areas of Brahmanbaria district. They were arrested on charge of snatching mobile phone sets, gold ornaments and other valuables from devotees at the mandaps, said officer in-charge of Kulaura police station M Hasanuzzaman.

30 hurt as villagers clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Over 30 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups in Rangabali upazila on Friday night. At least 15 business establishments were also ransacked and looted during the incident. Of the injured, Al-Amin, Pahloan, 35, Harun Gazi, 60, Imam Mallik, 25 and Tito Farazee, 42, were admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital while the rest given first aid. Police and locals said, an arbitration meeting was held in Char Bestin area over stealing a fishing boat and net by one Arif of the area. AK Shamsuddin, union unit Awami League president and Md Hanif, secretary of the unit, led the arbitration. Arif was fined and asked to return the boat and nets. But the supporters of Arif protested the verdict, triggering the clash.

Jewellery shop looted

UNB, Rajbari

Robbers looted cash and gold ornament worth Tk 10 lakh from a jewellery shop in the district early Friday. Sanjay Sarma, owner of Lokhnath Jewellers, said a gang broke open the shop and looted 12 tolas of gold ornaments, 40 tolas of silver ornaments and cash Tk1.50 lakh. The incident took place while they were returning home after closing the shop for Eid and Durga Puja. Police were raiding different areas to arrest the robbers, said Setab Ahmed, sub-inspector of Rajbari Sadar police station.

Hard life of Gram Police

They save others' wealth but themselves remain awfully poor

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

As elsewhere in the country, the members of Gram Police (village watchman) in Lalmonirhat are frustrated with their meagre wage of Tk 1900 per month.

They placed demands and staged protests but all went unheeded.

There are 458 Gram Police members meant for preventing crimes in villages of 45 unions of five upazilas under the district.

Despite working hard to maintain law and order and save the villagers from thieves and robbers they live awfully poor life.

It becomes hard for them to arrange schooling for their children as their salary is spent off to purchase food and other essential items, said several members of gram police.

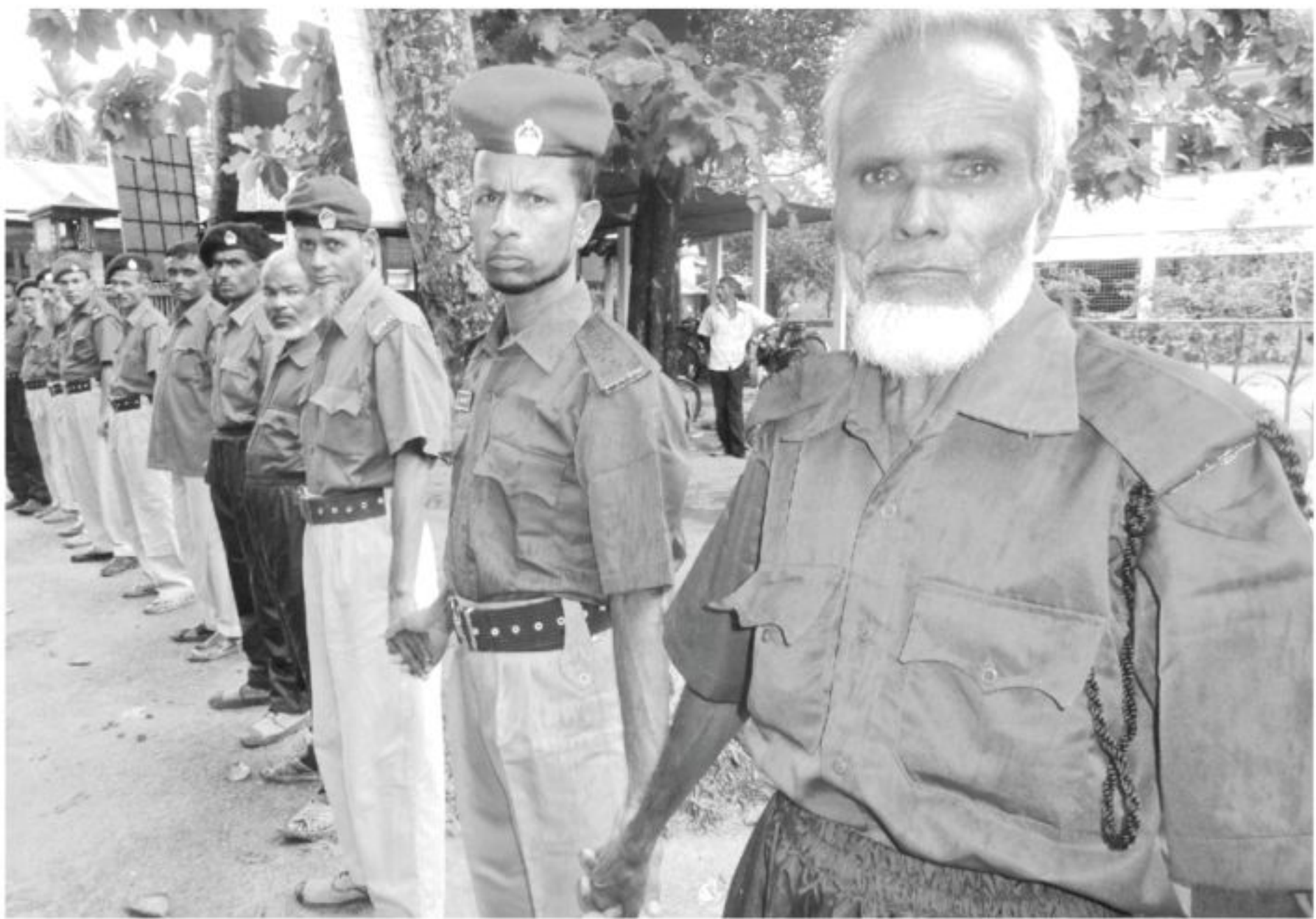
"I have been serving as a Gram Police for 25 years but I could not save anything dur-

ing the period," Nagendra Nath of Gorol union under Kaliganj upazila said with tearful eyes.

"The cost of living increased but our wages remained the same", he said.

Abdus Salam, a member of Gram Police in Hatari union under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said, "We patrol the village at night and do the work of peon at the union parishad office. Sometimes we have to spend sleepless nights. But our wage is meagre."

"The present government in 2011 pledged to arrange payment of the members of Gram Police under the government's pay scale but it is yet to be implemented due to unknown reasons. But it is essential to ensure their normal living in the society," said Maniruzzaman Manir, adviser of Lalmonirhat District Gram Police Karmochari Union.



Village policemen form a human chain in front of Patgram upazila parishad complex in Lalmonirhat district recently demanding arrangement of modest pay for their laborious duty to protect life and property of villagers. Their longtime demand has remained unheeded under successive governments.