

## ASHUGANJ POWER STATION

# Landing station size cut to ensure navigability

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The size of the temporary landing station being built on the eastern slope of the Meghna River for unloading the heavy equipment for the under construction 1200 MW plant of Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited (APSCL) will now be reduced by 20 feet.

The decision has been taken as per suggestion of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to ensure unhindered navigability of the river, APSCL sources said.

On Tuesday, an eight-

member team, headed by Md Manzoor Quadir, joint director (Port) of BIWTA, visited the spot where TSK Spain, the contractor of 1200 MW power plant of APSCL, is making the temporary landing base with the help of local workers to unload pieces of heavy equipment weighing over 380 tonnes each.

As the team found that the 70×60 feet landing base may partially hamper the navigation, they advised APSCL to move it 20 feet towards the riverbank.

"One year ago, we gave permission to APSCL to use

the bank of the Meghna River temporarily to land heavy equipment for setting up its 1200 MW plant. Now process is on to renew the permission," said Manzoor Quadir.

"The permission is likely to continue till completion of the plant. In case of any damage or loss to any party due to activities of APSCL, the power station authorities must compensate," he added.

Md Nurul Alam, managing director (MD) of APSCL, said, "The landing base will be used only for setting up the 1200MW

power plant and will be closed after completion of the base. As the pieces of equipment are very heavy, we have to unload those from barges to land, instead of jetty."

ASPCL produces 730MW electricity at present.

Its under construction mega-plant will start power generation in December 2014 and reach 1200MW production capacity by June 2016.

Meanwhile, dispute prevails between two local groups over sub-contact of labourers for the project.



PHOTO: STAR

This under construction base meant for landing of heavy equipment for Ashuganj Power Station Company Ltd will now be reduced by 20 feet towards the bank of the Meghna River to ensure smooth navigability of the important waterway.

## 4 killed in Sirajganj

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Four people were killed in Sirajganj district on Tuesday and the day before.

A man was stabbed to death in a clash over solar panel connection at Hatghorjan in Chauhali upazila of the district on Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Akbar Ali, 40, son of Keramat Ali, a resident of the village, reports UNB.

Officer in-charge of Chauhali police station Shamsul Hoque said, Akbar and his neighbour Abdus Salam had a longstanding dispute over solar power connection in the remote village.

On the day, former UP member Ramzan called an arbitration to settle the conflict between them, where they attended along with their followers around 9:00pm.

As the arbitration sat in, an altercation ensued between the two groups and supporters of the duo attacked each other, leaving Akbar injured.

Later, he died on way to Chauhali upazila health complex.

Police recovered throat-slit body of a young girl in Soyedabad area in Sirajganj town on Sunday night, reports our Pabna correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Nazma, 22, daughter of Abu Zafar of Kashiyahata village in Sadar upazila.

Local people saw the body near the bank of the Jamuna River in the area around 10:00pm and informed police.

Highway police recovered the body of Faizul Islam, 26, from beside the Natore-Bonparha highway in Dadpur area around 6:00am on Monday.

He was stabbed to death and the body was dumped on the spot, highway police said.

The body of another young man Nayan Miah was recovered from near a filling station on the Sirajganj-Bogra highway around 4:00am, OC of highway PS Ali Farid said.

Nayan might have been killed in road mishap,

## IRRI-BORO CULTIVATION

# Farmers face setback for want of saplings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A large number of farmers are facing a setback in the ongoing season for IRRI-boro cultivation due to acute crisis of matured saplings.

The seedbeds were damaged by severe cold and dense fog for which the paddy target may not be achieved this year, farmers feared.

Farmer Manowar Hossain at Dhairkhata village in Sadar upazila said he prepared a seedbed on 15 decimal lands to cultivate IRRI-boro paddy on four bighas land but more than one fourth of the saplings were damaged due to heavy cold and fog.

"I have cultivated two bighas and I will be able to cultivate around one more bigha of land, while the rest one bigha may remain uncultivated for want of

matured saplings," he said, adding that many farmers in the village are facing similar trouble.

Farmers Azizar Rahman, Naresh Chandra, Mafizul Islam, Kalam Miah and many others at Saniyazan village in Hatibandha upazila said their seedbeds for IRRI-boro saplings were affected by heavy cold and fog.

Seedbeds which were prepared a little late had saplings not matured enough for sowing in the field, they said, adding they were now searching for matured saplings for cultivation.

Farmer Narayan Chandra of Chalbala village in Kaliganj upazila said, in case they failed to collect matured saplings from local people they would have to purchase those from another district.

Department of

Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials in Lalmonirhat said, at least 2,287 hectares of land were prepared for IRRI-boro saplings to cultivate the paddy on 53,600 hectares in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat this year.

Of the total seedbed area, 1,500 hectares were prepared within the scheduled period while 787 hectares were prepared a little late.

These 787 hectares were hit by severe cold and dense fog for which the samplings on these seedbeds could not grow up properly, they said.

Deputy Director (DD) of DAE Abdul Mazid said that farmers can use the cold-hit samplings if do it very carefully.

There is no saplings crisis in the district, he said adding, agriculture officials had always advised the farmers on how to save saplings from cold and fog.



PHOTO: STAR

Irri-boro saplings in vast fields of Lalmonirhat district fail to mature due to severe cold coupled with persistent dense fog during the ongoing winter. The photo was taken from Madonerchak village in Sadar upazila a few days ago.

## 2000 kg hilsa seized near border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized 2,000 kilograms of hilsa fish while those were being smuggled out to India through Gatipara border point here early yesterday.

Acting on a secret information that a huge quantity of hilsa was being smuggled to the neighbouring country, a team of the 23-BGB battalion raided the area early in the morning and seized of the fish worth Tk 17 lakh, said BGB commanding officer Lieutenant Col Mostafizur Rahman.

The BGB team fired 22 gun shots as smugglers tried to resist them. However, no one was injured in the firing.

BGB could not arrest anyone as the smugglers managed to flee the spot sensing the presence of the border guards.

## 2 punished for using chemical in fruit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A man was jailed and his son was fined by a mobile court on Tuesday for using toxic chemical to ripen bananas at Durakuti village in Sadar upazila.

In a special drive, the mobile court caught Mahir Uddin, 58, and his son Jahangir Alam, 18, along with the toxic chemical for yellowing bananas in a room beside their home.

Executive magistrate of the mobile court Aktarunnesa handed down the verdict on the spot in presence of police and locals.

Mahir Uddin was jailed for six months and his son Jahangir Alam was fined Tk one thousand. The court realised the fine money from Jahangir on the spot.

Police and locals said, Mahir and his son had been ripening bananas in only three hours using a toxic chemical which is very harmful for the human being, especially children.

In another drive, two drug peddlers -- Belal Hossain, 38, and Abdul Quddus, 38 -- were jailed by the mobile court near the same spot and around same time.

Of the two convicts, Belal was jailed for six months and Quddus for seven months.

Both are residents of Durakuti village and they had been selling contraband Indian drugs including phensidyl and hemp since long, police said.

## 30 houses gutted

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At least 30 houses, including 10 tin-shed ones, were gutted in separate fire incidents that took place in Kushtia and Sylhet districts on Tuesday.

In Kushtia, a fire broke out at Mohishkundi village in Daulatpur upazila at noon, burning down 20 houses, reports UNB.

Locals said, the fire originated from a kitchen stove at the house of one Khoda Bux at the village around 2:00pm and it soon engulfed 19 other adjacent houses.

Locals doused the blaze before the fire fighters reached the spot.

Affected house owners claimed that the extent of losses from the fire could go up to Tk 20 lakh.

In Sylhet, at least 10 tin-shed houses were destroyed in a fire at Karikona village in Bishwanath upazila in the afternoon.

Fire service officials said the fire broke out at a tin-shed house at Firoz Mia Colony at the village around 5:00pm and it soon spread to other adjoining houses.

The extent of losses from the fire was estimated at Tk10 lakh.

## UPAZILA PARISHAD POLLS

# 2 BNP, one AL 'rebel' candidates expelled

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Three upazila level leaders, two from Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and one from ruling Awami League (AL), have been expelled for submitting nomination papers as rebel candidates to contest the upcoming upazila parishad elections in Munshiganj, Dinaajpur and Pabna.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reported that town BNP vice-president advocate Salauddin Khan Swapon was expelled from the party on Tuesday night as he is contesting for the post of chairman of Sadar Upazila Parishad election,

defying party decision.

Pabna district unit of BNP yesterday expelled Vangura upazila unit general secretary Nur Mojahid Swapon for not withdrawing his candidature on Tuesday, the last day of withdrawal of nomination papers, reports our correspondent.

The district unit of BNP issued the expulsion order signed by unit

President KS Mahamud and General Secretary Habibur Rahman Tota.

Advocate Mujibur Rahman is contesting for the post of chairman of the upazila parishad as BNP candidate in the upcoming

polls scheduled for February 27. Mojahid submitted his nomination paper as rebel candidate.

In Khansama upazila of Dinajpur, local Awami League leader Abu Hatem was expelled from the party on Tuesday on charge of violating party discipline. He is contesting for the post of chairman of the upazila parishad in the election slated for February 27.

Khansama upazila AL executive committee took the decision in a meeting held at Pakerhat Degree College complex on Tuesday evening, according to our correspondent.



PHOTO: STAR

Police recover eight ballot boxes, 1600 ballot papers and other JS election materials from two places of Pargachha upazila in Rangpur district yesterday.

## Snatched ballot boxes found after 28 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police recovered 1,600 ballot papers, eight ballot boxes and other election materials from two places in Pargachha upazila yesterday, 28 days after the 10th parliamentary elections.

Acting on a tip-off, law enforcers from Pargachha Police Station recovered the ballot boxes, ballot papers and other election materials from a bush near Anandanagar Union Parishad (UP) office and a bamboo cluster at Khamar-Noyabari village in the union.

Md Mokbul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pargachha Police Station, said the election materials, including the ballot boxes and ballot papers, were snatched by criminals from eight polling centres in the upazila on the night of January 4.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent adds: A mobile court fined three upazila chairman and five vice-chairman candidates in Ataway upazila in Panchagarh on Tuesday for violating election code of conduct.

Supporters of the lawmakers became furious and beat up Jamal. When locals were agitating in protest against the attack on Jamal, lawmaker Mukti's bodyguard Hori Babu fired two blank shots to disperse the agitators. Police then took Mukti and his men to a safer place.

This correspondent could not contact the lawmaker over his cellphone as

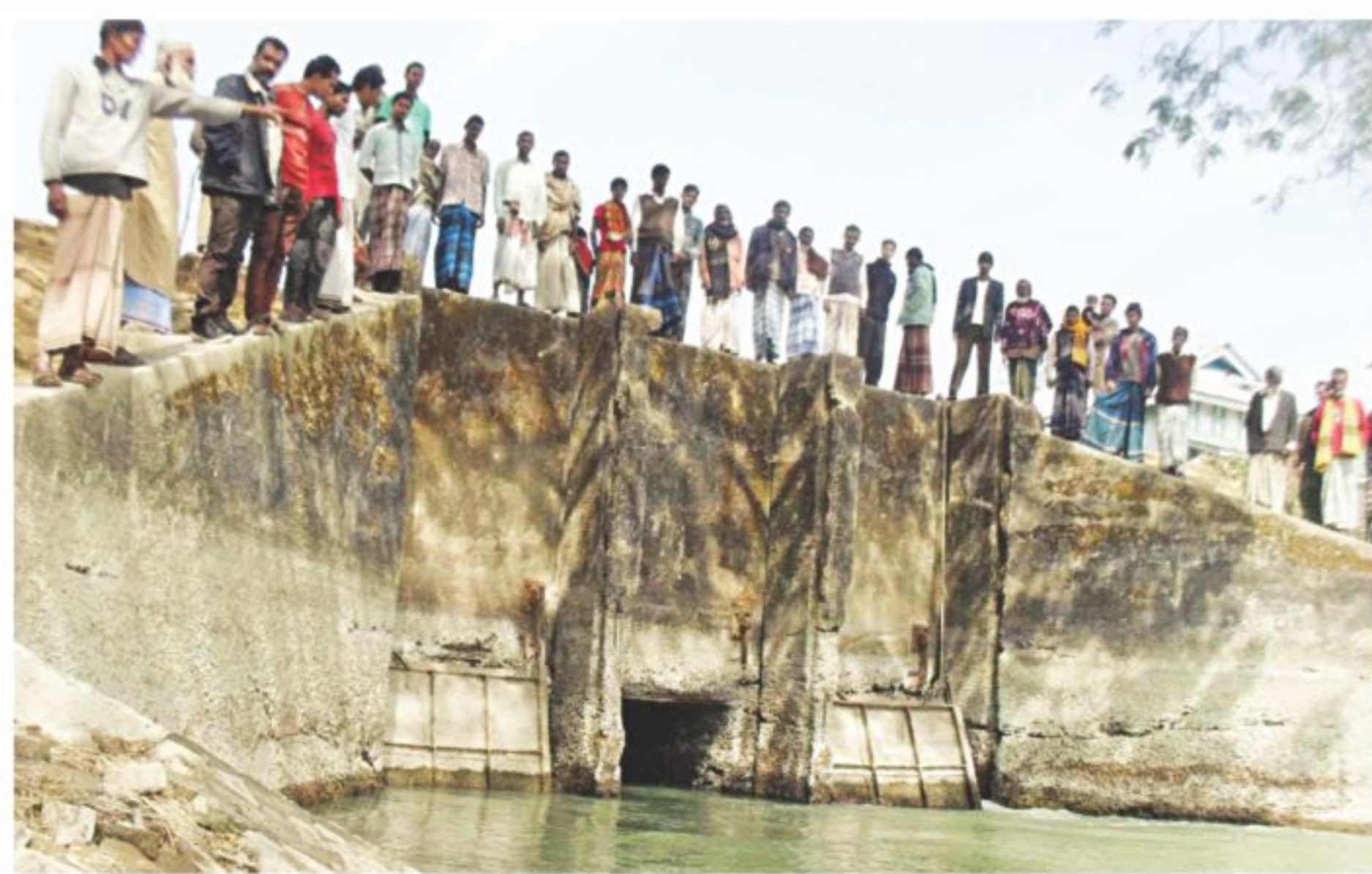


PHOTO: STAR

Saline water affects vast watermelon fields in two unions of Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali district as a broken door of a sluice gate remains without any repair for long.

## SALINE WATER ENTERING CROPLAND

# Watermelon farmers in Kalapara worried

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Saline water has continued entering the cultivable land through the broken door of a sluice gate, much to the worry of a large number of watermelon farmers in Kalapara upazila.

The affected growers of Dhankhali and Champapur unions of the upazila formed a human chain in the sluice gate area on February 3, demanding immediate steps to resolve the problem.

The participants said that the saline water started entering their watermelon fields after one of the three-door sluice gate was broken six months ago.

Over 1000 farmers of the areas were cultivating the fruit for the last few years as it was more profitable than paddy farming.

Kalapara upazila agriculture extension office sources said, about 500 hectares of land in the area have been brought under watermelon cultivation this year. Of them,

the DAE fixed a target for cultivating the fruit on 70 percent of the land in the unions.

Famer Abdur Rashid Akon of Dhankhali village expressed grave concern as he cultivated watermelon on his 26 acres of land this year.

Despite repeated appeals, the authorities are yet to take any steps to repair the broken door of the sluice gate, he said.

Other farmers -- Rashid, Hanif Mridha, Abdur Razzak Mridha and Nazib Sikder of the village -- made similar allegations.

We earned about Tk 50 lakh from selling the fruit last year, said grower Akon.

We will incur a serious loss this year if the authorities did not repair the sluice gate in time, he said.

Upazila agriculture officer Md Moshir Rahman said, non-stop flow of saline water into the lands threatened watermelon cultivation.

Contacted, Kalapara WDB sub-assistant engineer Abul Basher, immediate steps would be taken to repair the broken door of