



PHOTO: STAR

Tulsiganga River in Joypurhat district gets highly polluted as huge untreated wastes from Joypurhat Sugar Mills are released to the water body.

# Stop polluting two rivers

*Demands human chain as Joypurhat Sugar Mills drain untreated wastes*

KONGKON KARMAKER,  
Dinajpur

Locals formed a human chain on the premises of Akkelpur upazila parishad in Joypurhat district yesterday demanding immediate steps for stopping pollution in large areas, especially Tulsiganga and Shree Rivers in the district, by wastes from Joypurhat Sugar Mills, the largest of the kind in the country.

Urging the prime minister's intervention to stop draining of untreated wastes of the mill, they also submitted a memorandum to the upazila nirbahi officer of Akkelpur for sending to the PM.

Thousands of people of 20 villages in Joypurhat Sadar, Khetlal and Akkelpur upazilas are suffering from various diseases including stomach problems, breath-

ing difficulties, and skin infections due to the wastes of Joypurhat Sugar Mills, speakers said at the human chain.

The area has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and flies, they alleged.

Besides, the pollution causes depletion of fish resources in Shree and Tuliganga rivers in the district.

Joypurhat Sugar Mills started functioning in 1963 but it has remained without any waste treatment plant still now.

During production season from November to February, huge quantities of liquid wastes from the mill flood Tazurmoar, Sahebpara, Santinagar and Teghar areas and finally find ways to Shree and Tulsiganga rivers.

Recently, the mill author-

ities built a 600-metre-long canal to control the spread of wastes, but with hardly any affect.

"It's really difficult to stay home due to bad smell. The problem has become a perennial one. Many people, especially children and elderly men, got skin problems as the mill wastes polluted the ponds and rivers," said Bimal Chandra of Jalalpur village in Joypurhat Sadar upazila.

Badar Uddin Selim, panel mayor of Joypurhat municipality, said they repeatedly urged the mill authorities to build a waste treatment plant during the last three years but the latter did not take any step.

Around 20 villages of three of the five upazilas of Joypurhat are badly affected due to waste of Joypurhat

Sugar Mills, he said.

Abdus Salam, managing director of Joypurhat Sugar Mills, said, "A team from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology already visited the mill to plan for a waste management plant here. After getting the plan, the construction work will begin."

Kamruzzaman Kamal, vice chairman of Akkelpur upazila parishad, Asia Khanam Shompa, vice chairman of the same upazila, Alamgir Chowdhury Badsha, mayor of Akkelpur municipality, Nabibar Rahman, commander of Akkelpur upazila unit of Muktijoddha Sangsad, Omprokash Agarwala, president of Akkelpur Upazila Press Club, were present at the human chain, among others.

# The keeper of Sufi Shamsuddin's shrine in Dinajpur

BY ANDREW EAGLE

Situated beside the Karatoa River, Dinajpur's Ghoraghat is an unassuming but ancient town. Virat Raja, the king mentioned in the Mahabharata epic, is said to have kept his horses there, which inspired the town's name - "ghora" meaning "horse."

In the fifteenth century, Nasrat Khan, the king of Gaur in current-day Paschim Banga, sent one Ismail Ghazi, described as a very holy man and good officer, to conquer Ghoraghat, then controlled by the Hindu king Nilambar Raja who was based near Rangpur.

The conquest was successful and Ghazi stayed in Ghoraghat. His is one of the five main Sufi shrines in the area.

Another of Ghoraghat's shrines is located unexpectedly beside a champa or frangipani tree in the now-rural paddy landscape of Kazir Bon village, some few kilometres away.

There is little to distinguish the modest white-washed exterior of the tin-roofed building. But down a narrow flight of stairs underground lies the perhaps 150 years old grave of the Sufi Samrat known to locals as Kazi Sadar Uddin (the sign-board at the shrine records him as Sufi Samrat Hazrat Shamsuddin).

The last of the ruins of Kazi Sadar Uddin's house, a few brick wall ruins around an open area, and two old stone steps that are said to have once led to a mosque are the only other markers indicating the site's history.

"His mother is also buried here," says Mohammed Bablu Mondol, current caretaker of the shrine.

"This was his family's graveyard."

Mondol says he is the fifth caretaker and has been looking after the shrine for the last 15 years. It's a simple life he leads, heading to the market each morning and sometimes in the afternoon, but otherwise at the shrine, alone.

Originally Mondol was

accompanied by his wife, two sons and one daughter, but as the years passed, the quiet life as the keeper of the shrine proved not to suit his wife, who left.

Nonetheless Mondol remains. "All of my dreams will come after my death," he says, "I will be with the king of the Sufis in heaven."



PHOTO: STAR

**Caretaker Mohammed Bablu Mondol at the shrine of Sufi Samrat Hazrat Shamsuddin at Kazir Bon village in Ghoraghat upazila under Dinajpur district.**

# Girl gang-raped in Habiganj, 5 sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Moulvibazar

Criminals have raped a 19-year-old girl at Mongalpur village in Madhabpur upazila on February 3, said family sources.

Police and locals said a gang of 4/5, allegedly led by Shuvro Bhattacharya of the village, picked up the girl at around 9:00pm on Tuesday upazila of Comilla district.

The girl along with her mother went to the house of

her brother-in-law at Mongalpur village in Madhabpur upazila on February 3, said family sources.

Police and locals said a gang of 4/5, allegedly led by Shuvro Bhattacharya of the village, picked up the girl at around 9:00pm on Tuesday upazila of Comilla district.

They later took the girl to Chowmuhoni Union Parishad Field in Madhabpur upazila and violated her.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot early Wednesday, rescued the girl and sent her to Habiganj Sadar Hospital.

Yesterday, the victim's

niece filed a case against five people, including Shuvro, in connection with the abduction and violation, said Muminul Islam, sub-inspector of Madhabpur Police Station.

The accused had gone into hiding soon after filing of the case, said the SI, also the investigation officer of the case.

# Earth lifting from farmland, canal for use in brick field

*Kuakata people demand immediate measures to stop the illegal act*

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

Workers employed by a brick kiln owner are taking huge quantity of earth from Lakkhi canal at Kuakata in Kalapara upazila under the district for use in a nearby brick field.

Truckloads of earth from the canal is being taken to Andhar Manik Bricks owned by SM Rakibul Ahsan, mayor of Kalapara municipality,

also secretary of Kalapara upazila unit of Awami League, for the last two weeks, local said.

"We have been cutting earth from the canal land for two weeks and 50 labourers are involved in the job. We take Tk 660 for a truckload of earth," said Md Helal, labourers' sarder (leader).

Locals forbade taking earth from the canal but to no effect, said Md

Salim Howlader, a local resident.

Md Joglu Howlader, another local, said, "They are also taking earth from my own land on the canal bank. We protested the matter but they wouldn't listen. We urge the local administration to take step in this regard."

Md Saidul, assistant manager of the brick field, declined to say anything about the matter.

SM Rakibul Ahsan, owner of Andhar Manik Bricks, said, "I don't know anything about taking earth from the canal. A canal is being dug in the area under a 40-day programme."

Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Jahangir Hossain said he has already asked the people concerned to stop digging earth from the khas (government owned) canal.



PHOTO: STAR

Labourers employed by an influential person have continued taking earth for days from this canal in Kuakata under Patuakhali district for use in a nearby brick kiln.



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